

Commentary:

**AGAINST THE SOCIAL IMPRISONMENT OF MEANING:
AMBIVALENCE, AMBIGUITY, AND
POETIC MOVEMENTS TO FREEDOM**

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Abstract

As explained in the target article (Bulcão & Simão, 2019; see this present issue of JISS), psychologists working in Brazil's correctional system often carry out their duties under redundant social control, and with little social support. These psychologists function within a semiotic demand system (Valsiner, 2000), marked by tension between the psychologist's own beliefs, and pressure to conform to social suggestion. One may expect there to be fluctuating levels of ambivalence as the psychologist tries to work in such a condition. The individual may feel ambivalence as they are simultaneously pushed by social suggestion and pulled by their own beliefs. As all meaning emerges through overcoming ambivalence (Abbey, 2012), the situation is quite interesting to examine. As ambivalence increases the likelihood of novel ideas emerging tends to diminish. Dialogical relations with the environment can become monological. In the Brazilian correctional situation, the redundant social control and lack of social support for psychologists might lead one to conclude that dialogical relationships would break down easily, and emergence of novelty would be extinguished or *significantly* diminished. This commentary explores the opposite possibility. Although social institutions continually strive to discourage uniqueness, this commentary will suggest the temporal framework of human lives, the ambiguity this framework entails, and the poetic aspect of meaning-making can help facilitate the emergence of novelty, uniqueness, and preservation of dialogicality, even under great attempts at the social imprisonment of meaning.

Keywords: Ambivalence, novelty, development, ambiguity, poetry, meaning, dialogicality

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COMMENTARY

As discussed in the target article (Bulcão & Simão, 2019; see this present issue of JISS), disquieting experiences may arise for psychologists whose job is to interview inmates in correctional facilities in Brazil. The psychologists' job is performing an interview and reporting on an inmate's preparedness for increased freedom. Psychologists often must carry out these duties under the redundant social control of numerous social institutions, and with little social support for themselves. Understandably, this is a situation often marked by the tension between a psychologist's perspective and the social pressure he or she faces. In this situation, one may expect there to be fluctuating levels of *ambivalence* as a psychologist tries to work in these conditions. The individual may feel ambivalence as they are simultaneously pushed by social suggestion and pulled by their own beliefs.

As all meaning emerges through overcoming ambivalence (Abbey 2012), the situation discussed in the target article is quite interesting to examine, for it's rich with ambivalence. As ambivalence increases the likelihood of novel ideas emerging is likely to diminish. Dialogical relations with the environment tend to become monological. In the Brazilian correctional situation, the redundant social control and lack of social support for psychologists might lead one to conclude that dialogical relationships would break down easily, and emergence of novelty would be extinguished or *significantly* diminished. This does indeed happen, and in numerous situations. With such a high level of social control, lack of support for the psychologists and penalties for violating the status quo (Bulcão & Simão, 2019, p. 82), as described in the article, one might expect the social institutions would have almost total control of the psychologists in their system. Social institutions do indeed continually strive to discourage individuality and the emergence of novelty through the normative assumptions they redundantly set. Yet this commentary will suggest the temporal framework of human lives, the ambiguity this framework entails, and the poetic aspect of meaning-making facilitate the emergence of novelty and preservation of dialogicality, even under great attempts at the social imprisonment of meaning.

Ontological Assumptions: Irreversible Time

Human meaning construction is greatly influenced by the temporal forces of life. Some understand time as merely a shelf for human experience (and in this sense, an inert entity that does not have an impact of the quality and character of our experiences). Here the opposite view is taken. As outlined by Bergson (1913), the human ego endures through time much like a snowball rolling in snow, everchanging as it moves. Bergson's philosophy on the enduring properties of the ego through time suggests no two human experiences can be experienced the same way, even if superficially they appear identical—there can be no sameness. In this sense, *time is irreversible*. Time is not merely a shelf upon which life experiences are placed in a liner fashion, with the possibility of reexperiencing or

reordering. In irreversible time, life and time are deeply interwoven, inextricably linked. One can never “reverse” the course of a moment, even on the smallest of time scale, or the blandest and ‘seemingly identical’ thoughts or actions. And as such, this ontological position influences greatly how we think about the future. If time is seen as a shelf, it is possible to have repetition, and therefore prediction. This is the basis of the use of statistics within the social sciences. However, in irreversible time, no two events ever repeat themselves and as such, the future is unpredictable and unknowable. Referring to Bergson’s (1913) metaphor, the snowball cannot be unrolled! And as it changes shape, we do not and cannot know what it will look like in the next moment. Change is that rapid and constant.

Making Meaning in Irreversible Time: Overcoming Ambivalence

As the future is always going to be necessarily unique compared to the past, prediction is a relatively useless approach to understanding human thought and behavior. Rather, generalizable knowledge can be created, and this can inform us about ways humans are likely to act, especially as they make meaning. Humans make meaning using signs within the irreversible flow of experience. The sign is a mediational tool that organizes one’s relationship with the environment, but its form is influenced by the irreversible nature of time. In irreversible time, a sign does more than its traditionally understood role of merely standing in for something else. For example, in the traditional sense of time, a noise such as a siren could stand in for the presence of an ambulance, letting the person know such a vehicle was approaching. This would allow them to take necessary action. That is, a noise like a siren is referred to as the **representational** aspect of the sign, for it literally re-presents what is in the world at that moment. However, in irreversible time, signs also serve a **presentational** role. This is because, again, the future is unknown and so the individual helps themselves greatly if they have even a vague notion or idea of what could happen next. This way they can pre-adapt to the future before it arrives, guiding themselves from the known (what is in the present to what could be in the future). Individuals do this by considering a vague field of possible meaning for might happen next, therein imaginatively imbuing the sign with some sense of *what could be*. Back to the siren example, the person hearing a siren might begin to imagine that danger could be close at hand. In this way, each sign used to convey an idea says two things simultaneously. It says something about the immediately occurring present moment, the world *as is* while also saying something about the world *as it could be* (Josephs, Valsiner & Surgan, 1998).

Development Through Ambivalence

There is always some discontinuity between the sense of the sign *as is* and *as could be*, for one speaks to what is known in the here-and-now, while the latter addresses an unknown and always new future. This discontinuity is experienced as an ambivalence within the person as he or she attempts to make meaning. Development as a process is

driven by the individuals attempt to reconcile those two ideas, to overcome that ambivalence between these two senses of the sign, *what is*, and *what could be* (Abbey, 2012). In this sense, development is a future-oriented process that is constantly in motion. Any sense of ‘stability’ simultaneously introduces the pull toward instability, toward the unknown based on the anchoring of that pull in the known. Meanings emerge over time though ambivalence, much like improvisational jazz songs. The meaning we make has both a sense of clarity and of ambiguity at the same time, and the emerging music is at once known and unknowable, can never be entirely predicted, though we can very much recognize it.

Levels of Ambivalence

There are different levels of ambivalence existing between each sense of *what is* and *what could be*. As soon as an individual begins to make meaning, there can be an immediate experience of ambivalence in relation to the contrast between the representational and presentational senses of the sign, as discussed above. It is important to note that here, ambivalence can be understood not only as the traditional “diametric opposition” but simply as a kernel with two vectors of any different sizes and orientations (Abbey, 2012). Mild-to-moderate ambivalence occurs through this process, and new signs emerge in a relatively erratic “start-and-stop” like manner (Abbey, 2012). This process of striving towards the future is ideal for the flow of creativity, and the open production of novelty. Signs that appear through this strength of ambivalence maintain the primary function of allowing the individual to maintain a dialogical relationship with the environment, while still guiding themselves forward in time. There may still be changes, transformations and deviations, should the individual sense this is necessary. At each moment, the possible field of meanings for what could come next is flexible, accepting of uncertainty and has optimal potential.

It is possible, however, that the strength of ambivalence may grow past moderate into the maximum a person can experience. In this situation, the dialogical quality of meaning-making that had allowed for the erratic stop-start production in lower strengths is transformed into a monological, inflexible and rigid relationship to the environment. A common example is when a person is prejudicial in their thinking, accepting only one—and usually negative—characterization of a race, culture or ethnicity to describe an individual, and refusing to entertain any other possibilities. These signs are not ideal, for development cannot continue without the dialogical relationship with the world, moreover, these signs are quite inferior at helping the individual preadapt to the future as the future will always change, while this monological sign cannot develop along with time. In this case, as dialogicality has been lost, novelty clearly suffers too, as no new meanings are able to be produced under conditions that prohibit dialogical relationships.

Ambivalence and Psychologists Working in Brazil's Prisons

As discussed in the target article, some psychologists in Brazil have the job to perform an interview and report on an inmate's preparedness for increased freedom. Also clearly documented in the target article is the experience of three such psychologists, all of whom carry out these duties under the redundant social control of numerous social institutions, and with little social support for themselves. This situation appears marked by the tension between psychologist's perspective and one or more forms of social pressure/control he or she faces. In this situation, there are very likely fluctuating levels of *ambivalence* for the individual may feel simultaneously pushed by social suggestion and pulled by their own beliefs.

One might expect that often, due to the power of the social world, ambivalence would easily reach strengths where dialogical relationships would begin to break down and novelty would be gravely diminished or extinguished. For sure, there are instances in the comments of the participants that mimic the sort of monologicality one would expect in situations where an individual is experiencing maximum ambivalence. Yet this commentary will suggest the temporal framework of human lives, the ambiguity this framework entails, and the poetic aspect of meaning-making can help facilitate the emergence of novelty and preservation of dialogicality, even under great attempts to limit individuality and the creation of new ideas.

Participant B

The following is a look at some of participant B's comments. Participant B is chosen for she appears to display the range of strengths of ambivalence, and possible responses. She offers some excellent examples to explore how dialogicality may be maintained, with erratic start-and-stop meaning-making while appearing to experience moderate ambivalence. These comments also evidence the poetic movement that will be explored later in the paper as a means to maintain the creation of novelty in a highly socially controlled environment. She also offers the chance to explore a moment of what for her anyway appears to be maximum ambivalence, and the monological outcome that follows.

Maximum Ambivalence

We begin by looking at the latter—a moment of monologicality from Participant B. In the following comment, Participant B, appears to be experiencing a high level of ambivalence that leads in the direction of monologicalization of meaning and eventual choice to leave the meaning-making process, at least on this issue, as outlined. In the comment, she is discussing the lack of support psychologists in her field of work get.

We can see the ambivalence as it develops. Participant B (Bulcão & Simão, 2019, p. 82), begins with a statement that appears to convey a strong feeling of abandonment, saying, "Look, I don't have much contact with the Council anymore. I think the council doesn't care much about us..." She goes on to say that this abandonment has left her in a

position where there isn't anyone providing her with help and support. There seems to be a desperate and resigned feeling to her comment, "...so I feel like we don't have support. They don't go there, no matter how much we call." She concludes, "I already gave up a long time ago, there is no participation." This comment is a good representation of what can happen when ambivalence has grown toward a maximum level. As explained above, individuals often create increasingly rigid, monological meanings. In some ways we see both here. The meaning that Participant B had made is quite monological (e.g., 'there is nothing she can do,' and 'no one will help,' etc).

Moderate Ambivalence

We now turn to some examples from Participant B where there would appear a lower level of ambivalence and as such, dialogical relationships are maintained, and novelty can grow.

Looking at this comment (Bulcão & Simão, 2019, p. 82) one can see that there is a clash developing between a social suggestion that the Judge should have at least a fairly large say in the reports she writes, and her personal belief that she should write what she herself thinks. On the side of social suggestion she says: "I put it like this: 'apparently yes', 'probably', so that's it, you can't put yourself totally" to indicate that she is supposed to follow the rule of an outside party and not only express her own thoughts when she writes reports. Yet in terms of her own beliefs she writes: "I write the way I think. And if I don't want to answer some question as a psychologist ... it's not because it's a judge's determination."

Notice how opposed to the previous comment, here Participant B has not appeared to experience an escalation to maximum ambivalence. The ambivalence between these positions is evident but the question becomes, thus, how is she able in this instance to keep this ambivalence from escalating to the maximum strength (as in the previous comment)? If we read through the whole quotation, (Bulcão & Simão, 2019, p. 82) a possible solution emerges. She says:

I put it like this: 'apparently yes', 'probably', so that's it, you can't put yourself totally, but I think, **I'm a freer person**, so I think things had to be from a more free form. I write the way I think. And if I don't want to answer some question as a psychologist ... it's not because it's a judge's determination. (p. 82; emphasis added)

The phrase that exists between the two sides of her argument: "I'm a freer person" seems important. This phrase seems to act as a more generalized description of herself, and in that sense, can control meaning at a lower level. Such generalized meanings are not unlikely to emerge from tension (Bullogh, 1912) and in this case seems to effectively mediate the ambivalence from escalating, as opposed to the first example. Participant B

also makes clear that in subsequent times, she was sometimes made to change these more subjective reports, a process which she did not like. Nonetheless, in the face of moderate ambivalence, in this instance here she can be dialogical and creative.

In the same way, we see a continuation of creativity in a later comment. Again, Participant B (Bulcão & Simão, 2019, p. 83) is experiencing ambivalence between the social norm that she professionally supposed to remain objective, and the prison as an institution would likely frown on any loss of objectivity as well. Yet she has a subjective interest in giving what she calls “motherly advice” to the younger men she encounters in the prison. In these instances, with young males who are arrested on drug charges. She appears to experience ambivalence between social suggestion that she should remain objective, and her more subjective desire to fulfill the role of being a “motherly figure” to these men. She marks one side of the tension—the side of her wanting to give motherly advice by saying, “I think it can bring benefit to the sentenced person, ... I see sometimes a lot of young boys arrested, ... around 23, ... because of drug addiction, so it ends up, I don't know, giving a mother, giving advice...” She marks the fact that she is experiencing some ambivalence as she points out that a psychologist in her position should not do this: “...which a psychologist shouldn't do...”

As above, she remains dialogical here and again does not become monological, as in the first example. The question remains how. As before, the entire quotations (Bulcão & Simão, 2019, p. 83) offers an idea. In it she says:

I think it can bring benefit to the sentenced person, including because I see sometimes a lot of young boys arrested, until around 23, so that's because of drug addiction, so it ends up, I don't know, giving a mother, giving advice, which a psychologist shouldn't do, but I'm in such a different environment that I feel free to do it, so I think it might that this is not for everyone, it is not, because not everyone will seize that opportunity. Most will return to prison, but **I have to do my part.**

(p. 83; emphases added)

In reading the whole quotation, it's possible to see that from this ambivalence there has been the emergence of a higher order sign that appears to apply to her, and that therein keeps the ambivalence from escalating. She says, “I have to do my part.” This semiotic construction appears useful to Participant B in maintaining that ambivalence stays at a moderate level, and does not escalate (for example, as it did in the first example from her interview). Again, it also allows for the creation of novelty within an otherwise highly regulated environment.

Circumvention Strategy

Many of these examples from Participant B revolve around creating higher order signs that seem to effectively mediate the level of ambivalence, keeping it below the maximum threshold. These acts constitute the use of a *circumvention* strategy (Josephs & Valsiner, 1998). Turning to Participant A (Bulcão & Simão, 2019, p. 79) for a moment we see a good example to illustrate this concept. For example, in this comment, Participant A is describing the frustration of being beholden to two competing sides, the “board” and the “Secretariat.” These two social forces want opposing things. The ambivalence she feels, caught between the various social forces, is palpable and likely to increase if left to continue the path she is on for most of the comment (see below):

You end up disregarding the resolution of the board for the sake of the institution. As you try to fit in with the reality of the institution, you will break in pieces what the board is making you professional and ethical. that you have to be. So you fail to meet one side or often get in the middle. Part of what the board wants and part of what the Secretariat wants. ***So in the middle you can walk***, so to speak

(Bulcão & Simão, 2019, p. 79; emphasis added)

Luckily, at the crest of this ambivalence, she creates a higher order sign that makes a “possible” way to live out of what might otherwise be deemed and impossible situation. She says, “*So in the middle you can walk...*” This phrase acts to control ambivalence that is building. It also keeps the relationship with the environment dialogical and the process open to development.

Ambiguity and Emergent Meaning

Participant B offer a window into the spectrum of ways ambivalence can influence the process of meaning making. They run the gamut. Her initial comments appear to express maximum ambivalence, the conversion of dialogical relating into monological relations, and the construction of a strong sign, “**I already gave up a long time ago.**” This strong sign also seems to indicate a departure from the meaning-making process on this issue. Other comments, however, suggest possible situations of moderate ambivalence, where dialogical relations with the environment are maintained and novel meanings can be constructed. It is worth repeating that the situation these participants find themselves trying to work in is far from ideal. There appears to be at least moderate tension in each comment, and as circumvention strategies are employed so frequently, it’s possible to conclude that the system of redundant control creates context that is far from one that would most fully support creativity and the construction of new ideas. Yet it is exactly this striving for novelty amidst such forces that push against it that is interesting. Of course, the use of

circumvention strategies can be employed, but there is possibly more occurring to support the creation of unique meaning.

Ambiguity

Ambiguity is a constant part of our attempts to make meaning in irreversible time (Abbey & Valsiner, 2005). Recall from above that within irreversible time, change is a constant. As the ego endures, the human experience continually shapeshifts. Given this, we cannot assume the “present” is the space for making meaning. What might typically be thought of phenomenologically as the present is an infinitesimally small period of time. The here-and-now is infinitesimally small, and only briefly knowable. We also cannot make meaning in the future. Within irreversible time, meaning is made within the *boundary zone* between the ‘present’ and the ‘future’—acting toward the future from a position that forces itself into the ‘present’ as a version of the subjectively constructed past (See figure 1 below).

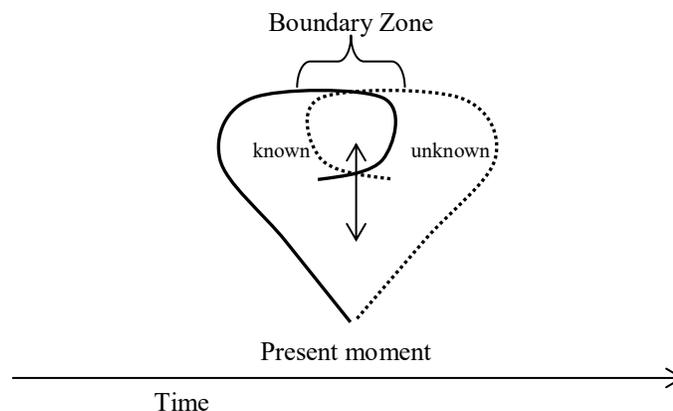


Figure 1. The Boundary Zone

In irreversible time, meaning is ambiguous because it is constantly becoming, simultaneously part of the known and unknown. As one overcomes ambivalence, the presentational sense of the sign—what is known no longer stands, and yet what is unknown has not yet arrived. Any sense of ‘stability’ simultaneously introduces the pull toward instability, toward the unknown based on the anchoring of that pull in the known. In this way, ambiguity isn’t just a moment in the process of making meaning, for example when one is aware that they are ‘confused.’ It is in fact the very element that allows the process to succeed. Without the ‘layer’ of ambiguity within the meaning-making process, the flow of ideas simply could not happen. This is perhaps best demonstrated by thinking about what happens when one reads a poem.

Poetry & Ambiguity

When reading a poem, the reader somewhat implicitly accepts ambiguity into the process. The success of a metaphor, for example, relies on the possibility that words (and entire conceptual wholes) can be used to skew the literal meaning of words that they would have in another literary form (E.g., an academic journal article). As the poet Eliot writes, in the ideal instance the poet's mind readily interweaves things which on the surface are unrelatable:

When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is **constantly amalgamating disparate experience**; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always **forming new wholes**.

(Eliot, 1932, p. 247; emphases added)

As Eliot says here, a writer of poetry has a mind that easily blends things together, allowing the gestalt of this union to emerge. As Eliot describes, this is how the 'noise of a typewriter' and the 'smell of cooking' can merge into a new whole. If one is to limit themselves to the literal meaning of the words and exclude any ambiguous linking of ideas, then meaning fails. In Eliot's sense, the "disparate" being brought together need the field of ambiguity around them to be let free from the literal sense (in the mind of the reader or the poem maker). The freedom cannot be total or there would only be ambiguity. The liberation is just enough for the typewriter to merge into the smells of cooking, and the smells of cooking to merge into the typewriter, creating a new metaphorical whole. Take the following poem:

Paper birch tree and the poet
Even in August still wrapped by winter

If one is to limit themselves to the literal meaning of the words and exclude any ambiguous linking of ideas, then meaning fails. The phrases, "Paper birch tree and the poet; Even in August, still wrapped by winter" makes little sense just by the literal definition of words. But freed a bit into a space of ambiguity while still maintaining contact with the literal, a new whole emerges—The often-melancholy feeling of the poet or artist for feeling so deeply.

Poetic Aspects of Creativity in Redundantly Controlled Contexts

Returning to everyday meaning, it is between the representational and presentational senses of the sign that ambiguity grows, allowing opposites to unite (e.g., I

love him, but sometimes I might hate him). It is as these two ideas join with one another and merge, where hate and love intermingle that the truth of our life can emerge. As with the poem, the literal meanings are not being abandoned, they are very much a part of the meaning-making process. But as they are part of both the present and future simultaneously, the ambiguity of that position is also the very thing that allows space for emergence. Speaking of this quality of the poem, and its inherent ability to allowing “revelations” to “emerge” Freeman (2002) writes, “...It should be emphasized that there is nothing intrinsically defensive or illusory at all about poems. Quite the contrary: **they may very well serve as vehicles of disclosure and revelation, not so much ‘giving’ meaning to experience as ‘allowing’ it to emerge**” (p. 174; emphasis added). In reading the comments of the participants, very much does one get a sense that these interviews describe the experience of opposites intertwined, and emergent truths.

In the same way that ambiguity is responsible for allowing the poem to deliver us the gift of new ideas, so too it is a critical tool in the survival of novelty within the everyday meaning-making that individuals engage in as they work to organize their relationship to the world. As is quite clear in reading participant B’s comments above, individuals are never alone as they make meaning. Rather, social institutions demand particular things of the person. Humans function within semiotic demand settings (Valsiner, 2000) where institutional suggestions prescriptively present the world not as it *is*, but as they would like it—as it *should be*. For the participants in this study, it is likely that one reason they are able to survive for so many years in this context and still create new, emergent ideas despite the many social demands made upon them is that the poetic of the process allows them to constantly transcend each previous meaning. Take for example the poem by Neruda (1969) where he expresses a powerful social force felt by him (e.g., ‘thou shall not covet another’s...’) and the other side of this ambivalence was his personal sense of love for this person (belonging to another):

Another’s. She will be another’s. As she was before my kisses.
Her voice, her bright body. Her infinite eyes.

I no longer love her, that’s certain, but maybe I love her.
Love is so short, and forgetting so long

(Neruda, 1969, p. 71)

As one reads this poem, the social suggestion that one should not covet another, and personal feelings of love rotate back-and-forth. The ambivalence is mild to moderate and the relationship is dialogical, with one answer given and then the other. The poetry is in the movement and ambiguity of this relating of ideas and from the standpoint of this analysis, the knowledge that the normative, prescriptive suggestion cannot dominate, even if it is excessively suggested, as is the case for the participants interviewed. For example,

with Participant B, where she is describing how she wanted to give “motherly advice to the 23-year-old prisoners” [personal], even though she knew she was supposed to remain objective [normative], it’s through the poetry of ideas cycling back and forth, the ambiguity of this relating, that she effectively is able to not be controlled by the normative influence and continues to give advice to the inmates with whom she interacts:

I think it can bring benefit to the sentenced person, including because **I see sometimes a lot of young boys arrested, until around 23, so that's because of drug addiction, so it ends up, I don't know, giving a mother, giving advice, which a psychologist shouldn't do**, but I'm in such a different environment that I feel free to do it, so I think it might that this is not for everyone, it is not, because not everyone will seize that opportunity. Most will return to prison, but I have to do my part.

(Bulcão & Simão, 2019, p. 83; emphasis added)

There is one additional, and equally beautiful aspect of the poetic side of meaning making. Not only does it allow the individual to transcend even redundant social suggestion, it allows him or her to go beyond themselves. Neruda line “I no longer love her, that’s certain, but maybe I love her” [*that’s certain*] can be seen as the boundary marker between the ‘known’ [*I no longer love her*] and the immediate feeling-in to the ‘unknown’ [*but maybe I love her*]. Ambiguity allows for the unity of opposites “love” \diamond “no longer loving” It is the openness to ambiguity and movement to allow for emergence even if that is a complete reversal of what claims is true for the self! Indeed, this is the heartwood of the dialogical self, where new positions can emerge. We see this at times within the interview with Participant B, where what may be a new I-position (such as, “I am a freer person”) emerges from an ongoing cycling of different oppositions.

Conclusion

Social institutions continually strive to discourage the rise of individuality and creativity through the norms they redundantly set with the hope of achieving social control. Yet the temporal framework of human lives, and the poetic aspect of meaning making in daily life remain a powerful opposing force. It can be very difficult to continually challenge the redundant control of such institutions, and this is especially so when they target aspects of life that are extremely important, such as one’s livelihood, the freedoms of others, etc. Ideally, understanding the possibilities for the emergence of novelty even under difficult circumstances leads in the direction of further supporting individuals’ voices. One of the target article’s greatest strengths, in this way, may be offering the opportunity for the psychologists who were interviewed to be heard. Once the dialogue has begun in the interview, there is a possibility it continues within the mind and life of the interviewee thereafter. As discussed here, where there is dialogue there is a fight against social control

that is often successful, at least to some degree. Ambiguity and poetry are perhaps our best weapons against all the tools—some much more aggressive—to fight for the freedom of meaning.

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