

PCE Symposium Athens 2023 “Welcoming Polyphony in a Changing World”

Workshop Christiane Geiser Abstract:

From birdsong to J. S. Bach, from Japanese Renku poetry to D. Bohm`s dialogue –What we can learn while listening to many voices.

My life has always been primarily informed by what I hear. Therefore, the Congress theme has inspired me to revisit some areas that I am passionate about. All of them have to do with hearing, with listening and especially with the subject of polyphony in various forms.

Listening is not at all a passive activity. Real listening as transdisciplinary art, as craft, as skill is a radical way of being in contact to the world.

And what about responding to what we hear? Do we have an independent voice? Or do we follow the main voice? Or have we decided to stay silent?

Working in a person-centered and experiential field, we are accustomed to extending our listening and to helping our clients find his or her voice.

But what about dwelling in a world which is more and more overwhelming with a cacophony of voices that are often more noise than sound and do not find each other to form a soundscape, a dialogue, a togetherness in any way?

In this **experiential workshop** you will hear about and listen to examples of polyphony. While listening you will have a first inkling of HOW you normally listen.

Then you will have the opportunity to try out some versions of listening and talking in groups, using the principles of polyphonic composition to experience new ways to connect to yourself and others and the whole situation.

And maybe we can also find some inspiration as to how we could communicate better in the “changed world” we are inhabiting *and* forming at the same time?

Introduction:

Hello, I am Christiane and I`m living in Switzerland. I think you have read my curriculum and I don`t have to say anything about it -maybe a little bit about the title and how I ended up with my private and professional passions.

When I read the abstract for the conference for the first time, including the long list why we might consider to say s.th about the theme of “polyphony”.... followed by the invitation “... *by unfolding whatever interests you, troubles you, makes you happy or unhappy*” - I was immediately gripped by “whatever, makes you happy”!

Of course, there are some powerful reasons to be desperate about the world, and about humanity in generally, so that we could sink permanently into a state of unhappiness.

Participating in congresses, I've always been one of those who seriously has addressed issues that are important to our profession: how we can make our trainings better, how we can address unnecessary disagreements within our approach, and so on. But this time it was different.

Getting older maybe and being more relaxed while dwelling on these questions I had to deal with when I was younger, this invitation immediately made me think of areas in my life that have made me happy, topics I have enjoyed dealing with, hobbies or passions I have cultivated throughout my life. It soon struck me that all these things have to do with language, with communication, with listening to and playing/singing music, with how one can understand each other at all - with different voices and their sounding together.

And that's how this strange **title** developed, in which I will highlight four areas that relate to these themes.

Music, of course: different ways of playing together, polyphonic forms, what they are and how they differ.

Birdsong: the surprising new findings of science about soundscapes and biophony

Language and literature: could we write or speak together, express our unique voices and still staying with our awareness in the bigger field we create?? And what exactly happens when we translate from one language to another?

The dialogue according to David Bohm: a process in which we learn to think together with the help of a few rules and, thus coming to surprising new insights as a group.

So in this workshop you will need your **ears** above all.

This is a bit unusual for visually oriented people, and it will be easy for auditory people like me.

There's no PowerPoint, there's nothing to read or look at. There will be a handout where you can look up quotes, literature references and audio examples later on.

This is an **experiential workshop**, which means that you can have your own experiences, in the beginning listening to me and the sound examples, and listening to yourself and your own voices inside yourself which will emerge. You will also get a first idea of the way in which you normally are using your voice when you speak. In the second part, you can practice listening and the specific kind of talking that is part of a Bohm dialogue in a group.

And then we can maybe turn to the question, what kind of qualities of polyphonic interactions and communications would be a step forward and a challenge to our world... and where exactly in our life will we start to make a difference??

Handout Workshop Christiane Geiser

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Gendlin, E.T. (1986). Listening is still unknown: We need to get it into every other therapy method. [Roundtable discussion on the continued development of the person-centered approach]. *Person-centered Review*, 1(3), 337-339. From http://www.focusing.org/gendlin/docs/gol_2109.html

Birds and animals

Vinciane Despret, "Living as a bird", engl, 2022 - franz. "habiter en oiseau" 2019 - dt. «Wie der Vogel wohnt» 2022

Bernie Krause, 2015, The Great Animal Orchestra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTbA-mxo858>

<https://www.sciencefriday.com/segments/bernie-krause-human-made-noise-nature/>

Polyphony in music

Examples: **Mozart** Sonata 16 C-Major, Adagio / **Bach**, Prelude and Fugue C-minor, Well-Tempered Clavier, BWV 847 (played bei Vikingur Olafsson)

Polyphonic literature and poetry (Renku)

JAPANESE POETRY AND THE CLIENT-CENTERED APPROACH

Sachiko Hayashi, Toru Kuno, Yoshihiko Morotomi, Mieko Osawa, Mikio Shimizu, Yasuhiro Suetake

In: Congress volume WAPCEP Lisboa 1997 291ff. and in *The Person-Centered Journal*, Volume 7, Issue 1, 2000

Robert Bringhurst, Singing with the frogs

David Bohm, Dialogue

David Bohm, 1994, Thought as a System

David Bohm, 1996, On Dialogue

William Isaacs, 1999, Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together

<https://www.davidbohmsociety.org/>

<https://christianegeiser.ch/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Focusing-und-Bohmscher-Dialog.pdf>

