



In the presence of Hearing, Senses to Listen

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ABSTRACT – In the Presence of Hearing, Senses to Listen – This essay brings together phenomenological studies on the language's poetical dimension to address the actions of hearing and listening as distinct aspects in the experience of producing senses. The paper establishes an interlocution between philosophy and poetics to think about the inseparability between body and world, rhythm and voice, highlighting the educational relevance of the aesthetic experience of listening to the world as a founding resonance of senses that are organized, situated and expressed in language.

Keywords: **Hearing. Listening. Presence. Sense. Voice.**

RÉSUMÉ – Entre la Présence d'Entendre, des sens à l'Écoute – L'essai s'approche des études phénoménologiques autour de la dimension poétique du langage afin d'aborder les actions de l'écoute et d'entendre comme distinctes dans l'expérience de la production des sens. Il se propose une interlocution entre la philosophie et la poétique dans le but de penser l'impossibilité d'écarter le corps et le monde, le rythme et la voix, en mettant en évidence l'importance pédagogique de l'expérience esthétique de l'écoute du monde comme résonance fondatrice des sens organisés, situés et exprimés en langage.

Mots-clés: **Entendre. Écouter. Présence. Sens. Voix.**

RESUMO – Entre a Presença do Ouvir, Sentidos a Escutar – No ensaio aproximam-se estudos fenomenológicos em torno da dimensão poética da linguagem para uma abordagem das ações de ouvir e escutar como distintas na experiência de produção de sentidos. Estabelece-se uma interlocução entre filosofia e poética para pensar a inseparabilidade entre corpo e mundo, ritmo e voz, e assim destacar a relevância educacional da experiência estética da escuta do mundo como ressonância fundante de sentidos que são organizados, situados e expressos em linguagem.

Palavras-chave: **Ouvir. Escutar. Presença. Sentido. Voz.**

Introduction

It starts to rain. The sound of the rain falling on the roof immediately mingles with the music, noise, hissing that vary between loud and low in the ludic exploration of the one-year-old child fiddling the radio in a thrilled way. From the request to turn the radio off (which he does) to listen to the sound of the rain falling, a silence emerges, full of sensations. Long instants penetrate the space and it is possible to sense other sounds. The boy points his finger up and exclaims “Oh!”. The surprised voice and look of the child cause, in the adult, the emergence of images from other times. From the childhood. From his childhood. Rain showers in the field in front of the house. In the countryside, where even nowadays one waits under old sheds for the rain to stop where one can stay listening to senses that come from the aesthetic encounter of the clear sound of a world and the sensuality of a touched body, both interlaced by the rhythm generating this space-time. World and body involved in a rhythmic breath. An enigmatic bond between skin and world that makes us present to ourselves through the aesthesis (*aisthesis*) of the body that one feels to feel. A presence that comes from the wave and from the attrition of the world that is felt in a body open in nostrils, ears, eyes, mouth, humors and corporeal fluids.

From the sound of the rain-world, from this eloquent silence able to engender an aesthetic attention, as silence is not necessarily a sonorous deprivation, but a presence available to the resonance, through which “[...] it is possible to listen to one’s own body to resound, its breadth, its heart and all its reverberant cave” (Nancy, 2007, p. 45), it emerges images and meanings - in the intellectual or intelligible sense of the word¹ - that situate the body in its power of being affected and desiring to be affected by the world. In the sensitivity or aesthesis of listening to oneself, the imagetic power is inseparable from the sensuality of the encounter between world and body in which “[...] each sense specifies the affection according to a distinct regimen – seeing, hearing, sniffing, experiencing –, but the skin does not stop gathering these regimes among themselves, without, however, mixing them” (Nancy, 2017, p. 20). Here, we feel ourselves and the world to glimpse what we are and where we are as an opening of the body to the *thought* of the world, to the outbreak of the real.

The imagetic experience launched by aesthesis of the hearing challenges the educational thought to consider the impossibility of sensitive and intelligible splitting in face of the indivisibility of the presence emerged in the body by hearing and listening². Everything happens in it, the body is constituted in a hybrid process with the perception, through which the experience of the world “is made in us every moment” (Merleau-Ponty, 1999, p. 440). A relation of circularity that forms the ambiguity as mixing or co-implication between body and world (Merleau-Ponty, 1999). Here, the educational action goes beyond the communication of meanings and becomes an experience of production of meanings by means of the availability to embrace the vital movement of the body in the world as a movement of listening that integrates the relation of sense. With Jean-Luc Nancy (2003, p. 65), we conceive sense as “presentation or as coming to the presence”, that is, as what both preexists to a certain signification and also exceeds it, as “simply, there is no provenance of the sense: it presents itself” (Nancy, 2003, p. 66). By means of the aesthetic experience of the body, “[...] the interior and the exterior are inseparable. The whole world is inside me and I am fully outside of myself” (Merleau-Ponty, 1999, p. 546). Distinct ways of the world coming to be felt in us are transformed by us into shared senses, that is, they are organized, situated and expressed in language by us.

In this approach, the conception of language exceeds the sense of representation or identity of a world previously defined. For not being beyond or behind me or my action in the world, the language goes beyond the action of recognition by synthesis of identification of a message and assumes the sense of “a certain modulation of my body as a being in the world” (Merleau-Ponty, 1999, p. 540), which allows to comprise the poetical dimension as “modulation of the existence” (Merleau-Ponty, 1999, p. 209).

The terms aesthetics and poetics call for fields historically marked by deep and extensive meanings that tension educational debates and options. In this essay, we approach them from notions close to their original meaning: *aisthesis* and *poiésis*. The beginning of a word is not only the origin of its emergence, but the sense that remains in it and that assigns its specificity to it. In its ancient Greek roots, aesthetics indicates aesthesis as a primal ability of the human to feel himself and the world - translated by

sensation, sensitivity or for what in general we call what is perceived through the five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell and taste. Poetics, when indicating the plurality of meanings that dynamize the human being in the world by the vigor of acting temporalized by language (Castro, 2004), that is, the daily life of producing, creating, translates the term poetics as a shapeshifter action of the plurality of the senses in language experience, which simultaneously exposes us to the world and situates us in it.

In our view, it is the mystery of the language that makes the phenomenon of education so thought-provoking and makes us to face in and with the writing the fruitful tension between philosophy and poetics, usually kept at a distance from the educational thought. Thus, the option for the essay emerges simultaneously as a way of writing and as a way of studying the approximation between listening, rhythm and voice from the inseparability between sensitive body, world and poetical dimension of the language. A subject that cannot be defined by ways previously marked, but that rather invites to try other paths.

Our expectation, in this essay, is to contribute with an educational thought that does not withhold in an answer, not even an interrogation, but that dynamizes itself in the opening to the experience of thinking the pedagogical availability of being in presence in the coexistence of the vital movement of coexisting in language. A movement that does not renounce to the educational consideration by the aesthetic experience of the eloquent silence, that emerges from a feeling to feel itself (*aisthesis*) of the sonorous body that “[...] always is, simultaneously, the body that resounds and my body as a listener where this resounds, or that resounds because of this” (Nancy, 2007, p. 21). It implies to consider the educational relevance of listening as philosophical resistance to the privilege of the theoretical register founded on the western primacy of the optical model.

Listening: unique relation between body and world

Approaching the phenomenon of listening demands the retention of the embodied experience of hearing e listening. Everything happens in the body, in the sensual privacy of the mundane coexistence. Through it and in it. We consider with Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2014, p. 20-21) that the body, “[...] as stage manager of my perception, [...] does not perceive, but

it is like built around the perception that is highlighted through it”. We do not have a body, “we are a body” (Merleau-Ponty, 1999, p. 278). I am a body, my body in the uniqueness of each sensorial order that, in turn, leads to the differentiated dynamics of the senses. For Nancy (2017), if all the senses participate in the tactile dimension, of touching and being touched, each one modulates this participation in its way, as the difference of the modulations is inherent to sensitivity.

Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (2010; 2015) highlights the substantial relation between body and world, that is, the relation of materiality of the sensitive body with the things-of-the-world. As presences that touch us, “[...] the things are at a distance from or in proximity with our bodies; either 'touching' us directly or not, they have a substance” (Gumbrecht, 2015, p. 9). In the aesthetic experience in and with the world, we deal with presences that touch us, that cause epiphanies³ of perceptions or merely disposition to, for and in perception. Paul Zumthor (2007, p. 81), in the scope of the poetical dimension of language, highlights the ephemeral character of the epiphany when claiming that the perception “[...] is deeply presence. But no presence is full, there is never coincidence between it and me. Every presence is precarious, threatened”. That is, “[...] the sensitive arouses the intelligible and it does so in a constant movement that is not completed or finalized by producing signification or information” (Ghetti, 2013, p. 149). In this aesthetic - and poetical - condition of the impossibility of stabilizing the oscillation between presence and sense, we can embrace that listening, as actualization of the encounter between body and world, contributes for the production of sense (Gumbrecht, 2010) when articulating the vital movement between sensitive and intelligible. A presence under tension of the lived experience, a presence that is in and is world as a relation as substantial, material, as immaterial that affects us in distinct proportions and intensities.

According to Gumbrecht (2010, p. 51-52), for Aristotle there is no *immaterial* sense released from a “material significant”. This allows us to consider the perception as presence in the materiality of the encounters and to understand that the experience emerges as materiality for our corporeality, that is, as a type of *immaterial* materiality for being corporeal, for being in the body and staying in it.

Sonorous waves, invisible materialities, touch the sonorous body and I hear. When I hear, I take ownership or not of the power of the listening related with what I hear. I hear a thousand things, but I withhold listening only the ones I want. However, would the power of the listening be related to the willing? Or could it happen unintentionally, as the ear would be also affected by the sonorous materiality even not desiring to hear nor listen? I hear but I do not listen. I listen and I hear. Even in what I do not hear, I listen to my memories, my thoughts, my perceptions and experienced world, as it has already resounded in me some time. The sonorous vibration throbs in the action of hearing, even when the will of not withholding and listen prevails. I always hear. The body is affected and, even when I do not intend to listen, like to the sound of some random music, the affected body continues humming without me perceiving it. The body is touched by the materiality of the sonorous waves, despite their invisibility. And, being touched, it modulates and is also modulated. Here, the sensitive experience of the body does not make it a passive receptor of senses, it cannot be defined “as immediate effect of an exterior stimuli” (Merleau-Ponty, 1999, p. 29). The senses are not conductors - instruments or means, as they involve sensations, relations, perceptions that concern to “a vital process similar to procreation, breathing or growth” (Merleau-Ponty, 1999, p. 31). Zumthor (2007, p. 86) reminds us that “the hearing (more than the sight) is a privileged sense, the first one to awake in the fetus”, when claiming that

When launched into the world, in the whirlwind of sensations that hurt, the child shows the pleasure experienced with the wonderful opening of the ear. The ear, indeed, captures the space around directly, both when it comes from behind and what is in the front. The sight also captures, certainly, a space; but a guided space and which orientation demands particular movements of the body. This is why the body, through the hearing, is present in itself, a presence not only spatial, but intimate (Zumthor, 2007, p. 87).

The movement of the hearing happens with or without consent. It is an encounter between world and body. I hear. The sonorous vibration does not have a hidden side, it is simultaneously ahead and behind, outside and inside, as it concerns to a “[...] space time: it spreads out in the space or, rather, it opens a space that is its, the very spacing of its resonance itself, its expansion and its reverberation” (Nancy, 2007, p. 32). The sonorous presence, at the same time, vibrates, extends and enters, making my body to

coexist with the sonorous happening. Even against my will, being aware or not of this process, I hear. The presence of somebody who sings dissonantly beside me seems to frustrate the insistence in wanting to sing orderly, as I lose myself when hearing to the other. Despite having sung several times and mastering the musical tuning, I follow, in this in case, not a sense, but the presence of what is being heard and not the voice that is born and vibrates in me. Here the presence is majority. The power of the presence of what I hear is, firstly, a touch in the auditory body. Invisible, however material. And, when I hear, there is also the possibility of listening. In Nancy's words (2007, p. 33), listening "[...] is to enter this spatiality that, *at the same time*, penetrates me: as it opens itself in me and around me, as well as from me and towards me", it is simultaneously opening to me and to the world, "from one to another, and from one in the other" (Nancy, 2007, p. 33).

The act of listening assumes the simultaneous instant of sensitive and intelligible appropriation of what I hear. A sense that is embodied. Materialized in presence in the body and through the body. In it. This allows us to understand that the sense can be constituted both by a linguistic semantics, through the meaning itself that the word⁴ assumes in the language spoken, as through a semantic relation of the sound manifest by the way how it is enunciated, for instance, when we have the same sentence or word spoken in distinct ways. We can observe this distinction in the sonorous modulation of senses from a classic exercise in Theater Workshops. It is about vocalizing the same sentence in distinct expressive ways. We propose the sentence *The night has arrived*. As a sentence, it contains an inherent linguistic sense, but if we modulate the vocal sound, we can shift this sense to other possibilities of interpretation and listening. We suggest, between parentheses, some expressive ways to create certain modulations.

- *The night has arrived! (Glad.)*
- *The night has arrived! (Sad.)*
- *The night has arrived! (Surprised and astonished for having already arrived.)*
- *The night has arrived! (Afraid. Fear.)*
- *The night has arrived! (Terrified, panicking.)*
- *The night has arrived! (With sensuality.)*
- *The night has arrived! (Vibrating. Intense happiness. It was anticipated.)*

In this exercise, we can observe the existence of distinct senses and meanings according to the emotion, or “variation of our being in the world” (Merleau-Ponty, 1999, p. 256), expressed by the way of vocalizing it and listening to it. However, I can also continue only listening and not paying attention to the possible meanings to the interpretation of what is proposed by the world around. Mirna Spritzer (2005, p. 35) reminds that “there is no saying without body, neither disembodied hearing”. This allows us to claim that, even in front of this possibility, the body is touched. I hear. And I am able, in this act, also perceive the resonance of sense. To listen.

We can consider that the power of the sonorous presence is rhythmic, that is, that the sound is formed by rhythmic materialities, which allow to claim that the power of listening involves more and goes beyond the action of hearing. Spritzer (2005, p. 30) considers that “[...] the sense of hearing is a deep sense of relation”. This deep sense of relation is what differentiates and defines listening itself. The act of listening involves a relation of perception and withholding that goes beyond the withholding that happens through the immediate action of hearing, as it is presence. Other and new senses are created with the senses of hearing. When I listen, not only I perceive and withhold, but I also perceive and withhold in presence something with the deep sense “[...] of an accumulation of knowledge that is from the order of sensation and that, for whatever reasons, do not arise in the level of rationality, but they constitute a background of knowledge on which the rest is built upon” (Zumthor, 2007, p. 78). This makes us to consider the educational relevance of the ways we listen to the linguistic signification that the words carry with them.

If we consider the experience of somebody trying to learn to speak another language, initially the expression of this learning happens through its rhythm, its nuances, in the approximation with its sonorous particularity. Just like little children, when they start to mumble their first words, they do not do it with domain of the spoken word, “but when it *constitutes a situation* for them” (Merleau-Ponty, 1999, p. 537). Listening is first heard as rhythm and it is as rhythm that the spoken language is inaugurated in the world, as reverberation for the saying of what was already heard and listened previously. The sound that is made a verb in the spoken voice echoes and reverberates in the world.

In this view, it becomes relevant the educational consideration of the vocal performance as a unique way to articulate sounds, in which what matters the most are meanings through the way of making resound, or through the sonorous semantic relation, rather than through the linguistic signification proposed by the word. Here, all the details matter, as they propose to us a range of senses impregnated in the body. The sound around us, the sound of the media, the nuances of the voice, the trepidation, the breathing, the force, the intensity, the speed, the time. If the voice finishes marked, sung gladly or stretched, cried, the rhythm established by a vocalized projection that I listen becomes relevant, as this rhythm is presence that goes beyond the cultural meaning of the word when affirming itself as perceived materiality in the body. Every detail that characterizes the voice in its manifestations, be it pleasant or disturbing, are singular ways to perceive and to signify the world.

It is through the listening that the voice, as expression of the body, reverberates its infinite rhythmic and luminous possibilities in significances. Way beyond the meanings of one or another language, it reverberates the language that consummates the thought in language action. For Zumthor (2010, p. 257-258), the listener participates in the performance, as

The role that he has, in its constitution, is as important as the interpreter's [...] Gesture and voice of the interpreter stimulate in the listener a replication of the voice and the gesture, mimetics [...] The basic component of 'reception' is thus the action of the listener, recreating, in accordance with its own use and its own interior configurations, the significant universe that is conveyed to him.

We constitute ourselves as speakers in sonorous presences and hearing senses. According to Maximiliano López (2009, p. 30), the voice escapes to the representation for concerning to the affection and the circumstance, for belonging to the intersubjective relation and not to the individuals. For the author, "through the voice, the body lives in the language, insists on it" (López, 2011, p. 60). The voice is rhythmic by a set of affections that undertake tones, forces, characteristics that constitute impressions and registers in the listener body and that emerge in each one and in all as inscription in a time. Meschonnic (2010, p. XXXII) claims that "[...] the mode of signifying, much more than the meaning of the words, is in the

rhythm, as the language is in the body”. The rhythm exists without voice, but the voice does not exist without rhythm.

Rhythm and Voice

Being in language, balancing oneself in movement⁵ of presences and senses is also to be in a rhythm. To approach the phenomenon of the language from hearing and listening, and the possibilities in oralities in the balances in movement, also means to consider its rhythms. Any and all form of language manifestation can only emerge⁶ and be formed by and in a rhythm or rhythms that intercalate. An embryo, since the initial moments of fecundation, is already being formed by a rhythm. Two bodies. Two rhythms. The rhythm of the encounter of two rhythms in two bodies as one. Their tuning, or lack of, in a single rhythm. There is a beat. From the first days of life in the mother’s womb, the embryo with only a few millimeters of life is already like a body to beat and to pulse a rhythm. We are rhythm. The heart, the greatest sign of lovingness between human becomings, is exactly the one that dictates the first proper rhythm. And it is through this rhythmic presence that we are initially touched in our senses and emotions. We live and feel in the presence of the rhythm and in rhythms, we are constituted in emotions, we savor the world and we create meanings.

After all, is the rhythm set or is it born with us? Would it be the rhythm that places the world or is it the world that places the rhythm? This is almost like questioning the paradox of the time being simultaneously familiar to each one and impossible to be explained to the others. At the same time, rhythm and world are felt and perceived by us and, however, we need to learn to feel and to perceive both. Due to the enigma of being the relation between the things and my body definitely unique, “[...] the world is what I perceive, but its absolute proximity, since examined and expressed, also transforms, inexplicably, in irremediable distance” (Merleau-Ponty, 2014, p. 20). An ambivalence that leads us to participate in the production of the world and of worlds. The only belief that we have concerning this is that it is through the rhythm that we enter in the language. (Pause). Silence. The rhythm can only happen in the secular emergence of connected or disconnected instants. Instants that are gathered in continuities and discontinuities of sounds and silence, or in minimal

fractions of perception of each one of these instants. It is inscribed in the time. But also time is marked by it. Times in the time. The language does not exist without movement of the body in close seduction and emergence that weaves the movement in the world and of the world. Rhythm is presence that produces sense. And also conducts senses. The experience of the language “[...] engenders a particular historical process when emerging as experience of temporalizing of the body. Time happens in the body and modifies it” (Richter; Berle, 2015, p. 1034). This is how we learn to establish a language history in the body. To inhabit the language is to inscribe a rhythm in the time.

The mother delights and calms the little child offering a rhythm when bringing her body closer to the child's body and breathing in proximity, being close, present. The mother's breath produces sounds in this movement of being close, in presence in the time of swinging the bodies. The rhythm, calm or agitated, participates of the senses that emerge from the interaction of the language worlds in movement. For López (2008, p. 338),

Rhythm is not only the oldest and most permanent element of the language, as Octavio Paz says; it is also the genetic element of the thought. The thought is born from the rhythm, or rather, it is the rhythm itself. The willing that the rhythm arouses, this tendency, this extending towards something that we do not know how to name, this opening to the indeterminate and to the primary condition of the thought.

All the languages recognize sonorous expressions that are inaugurated in voice. There are sounds without language, culture or nationality. Like a sigh, like the first sounds of the babies in their first days of life, like sounds that emerge from sensations and emotions that make us to stop for surprise or admiration. Even in the apparent absence of vocality, sounds inaugurate in the simultaneity that they establish in us in presence of the vocal culture in and through which we inhabit the world. Zumthor (2005, p. 62) claims

[...] being sensitive to say that the voice is a *thing*, that is, that it has, besides the symbolic qualities, recognized by everybody, not less significant material qualities, and that are defined in terms of tone, timbre, reach, pitch, register. This is true in the extent that the habit, in different societies, often links a proper meaning to some of these qualities [...] The human societies, (perhaps) in opposition to the animal societies, seem to me characterized by the fact that they identify, among all the noises of nature, their own voice

and identify it as an object, as something that is there, threw in front of them, around which a social bond crystallizes [...].

The voice as presence, as social bond, as rhythmic substance in the movement of an apparently ephemeral materiality, can be encompassed in the child learning to speak. Another language is inaugurated when we apprehend a new language. Initially, only rhythms emerge. A mumbling of sounds. The presence of rhythms perceived in the body slowly weaves the experience of language in culturally established signs and meanings. The voice, as presence of rhythmic sound, carries with itself meanings in the secular circularity of the language. Gumbrecht (2012) also claims that the spoken language is presence that touches all our body, even when we do not understand the meaning of the words. “As soon as the physical reality of the language acquires a shape [...] we say that it has a 'rhythm' - a rhythm that we can feel and identify, no matter the meaning 'carried' by this language” (Gumbrecht, 2012, p. 66). López (2011) highlights the importance of the concept of rhythm for the field of the language, because it is about the possibility to welcoming the passage from the theory of the sign to the one of the discourse, a type of “passage from a theory of the language to a theory of the saying” (López, 2011, p. 56). We consider that, in this passage from the sign to the discourse, that is, from the language to the saying, we move from the representation to the presence.

In the theory of the sign, language comes first, and the saying derives from it, language as a system of signs is the withholder of the meaning, while the saying, considered as the practice of this structure, receives the meaning from the first one. [...] But in the theory of discourse the meaning does not depend only on the signs and the relations between them, but also on the extralinguistic elements. We can say, like Benveniste, that the meaning is not only found in what is enunciated, but also in the very act of enunciation. In the performing happening of the saying. [...] In the passage from a theory of the sign to a theory of the discourse, the rhythm is not an element of the form anymore - understood as a combination of signs, assimilated, thus, to the metrics - and became understood as form of the meaning that flows in the discourse, of which the signs are only an element. The saying is not the use of elements of the language anymore, it became understood as creative activity of the subjects. [...] when considering the enunciation an act of production of meaning, it becomes an *ethopoietic* happening, that is, an act of creation of language and world (López, 2011, p. 56-57).

The movement of the language initiated by hearing and listening comes to the world and inaugurates new worlds in and through the voice. The voice, in discourse, becomes presence with sense, escapes to the representation, as it carries “the weight, the heat, the real volume of the body, of which the voice is only expansion” (Zumthor, 2007, p. 16) or signification “as an eminent case of the corporeal intentionality” (Merleau-Ponty, 1991, p. 94). In the language movement, the saying emerges as an act full of meanings in power of intersubjective constitution. The voice, in its performing manifestation, in the act of discourse, constitutes the language. This relation can be understood by what the actor develops in the act of the vocal interpretation, as it is a voice that produces senses. It is a voice in presence with poetical power of a semantics able to situate us in the coexistence, in which “[...] the body provides the extent and the dimensions of the world. This is why the poetical text *signifies* the world. It is through the body that the sense is perceived there” (Zumthor, 2007, p. 77-78). The voice is able to create new senses, constituent of other possibilities to mean the world in the poetical experience of producing language. For Spritzer (2005, p. 30), “[...] the experience of the orality is a corporeal and sensitive experience for the one who says and for the one who hears”. The voice acts in presence for its orality, in an intersubjective relation that weaves senses and distinct signification between what it communicates and what it hears, and possibly listens.

An only-written language cannot be imagined. Writing constitutes in a second language, the graphical signs lead, more or less indirectly, to live words. Language is mediatized, taken by the voice. But the voice goes beyond the language, it is wider than it, it is richer. [...] the voice, using the language to say something, says itself, places itself as a presence. Each one of us can experience the fact that the voice, no matter what it says, propitiates pleasure (Zumthor, 2005, p. 63).

The voice can vary in personal force (intensity), time (speed), volume (pitch), timbre. This variation allows the perception that the orality is prone to the production of senses that go well beyond the grammar. In the writing, the sign remains the same. However, the emergence of the voice makes it possible to modify senses and meanings in many possibilities of language. For Spritzer (2005, p. 22), there are “[...] moments when the voice is the master of the action, that is, when the voice is not an additional

element in the whole [...] but rather the protagonist”. One same word can be said through several nuances and with distinct meanings and senses, making, this way, the sign itself is prone to mobility. For Merleau-Ponty (1991, p. 95), “[...] the signification livens up the word, like the world livens up my body: by means of a deaf presence that awakes my intentions without showing itself openly in front of them”.

The voice is performing, and its extreme greatness is in belonging to the sonorous universe in its various possibilities of signification from the vocal modulation. Voice is body. Body for the narrative action and the exercise of the interpretation. Zumthor (2010, p. 178), when highlighting that “listening, just like the voice, goes beyond the word”, contributes to make us think the complex constitution of the human becoming in language. Especially if we consider the deep educational importance in the ways how we can constitute significations from the hearing, from the presence of hearing the voice, from the point of view of the listening and the inherent intersubjectivity to this process.

This makes us to think the childhood. Childhood here not as determination of a secular state, a chronological phase or stage of life, but as power⁷ of moving oneself and *exposing* oneself to the language experience (Agamben, 2005). It implies to understand, with Agamben (2005), the experience of childhood as language becoming of a being *ex-posed* to the language of others, therefore, as contingent fragility of an indeterminable dependence. Childhood as a state without language, as experience of receiving or conquering, and in this movement to constitute itself in language. As circular movement, as historical as historicizing, of which the childhood experience emerges as secular experience of entering the language, which can only be accomplished in and through the language.

Zumthor (2007) approaches the phenomenon of the voice in the core of the cultures to highlight that the constitution in language of human becomings is related to the place where we are born, to the customs, beliefs, rites, geography and sonorous landscapes referring to situations expressed in first language. It is in the first language, with it, that we are situated in the world. For Bárcena and Mèlich (2000, p. 111), the human becoming apprehends signs in its family surrounding,

[...] a symbolic universe that is conveyed through stories that are told and in which it educates and forms its self (it constitutes itself). This universe is

provided over all through the first language, which allows to organize and to give sense to his world.

The first language represents all vocalized expression of a culture. Cultural characteristics are shaped in the thinking body organizing and creating senses of world and in the world. Keeping silence or pronouncing a word never are indifferent or neutral gestures. The voice is between the presence of hearing and the senses to listen that are not only given significations. For López (2011, p. 61), “[...] the voice belongs to the relation and not to the individuals, and to the way how this relation is established at a particular moment and environment”. There is a movement of senses between what I hear and listen. “The sense of a sentence is not only in the semantic content of the words, but it unfolds like a fluent form through the rhythm” (López, 2011, p. 61). The rhythm and the voice, as well as the language, are between, in relation, in the encounters. This is why they imply considering the historicity of the encounters, always culturally woven, always inscribed in a temporality. They are means and ends, but also beginnings that are not limited. As Zumthor claims (2007, p. 86), “saying anything, the voice says itself”.

A conception of childhood drafted by the pedagogical thought based on previously defined positions, well established as individualized (*im*)position of the not-yet, of the does-not-know-yet or cannot-yet, allows to interrogate if the world effectively provides entrances of access prone to be preestablished, from knowledge stabilized by the logical understanding. Knowledge supported by the conception of child or student as the one who cannot grow up or learn without explanations, without a *stimulating* school environment, that is, without teaching of what the knowledge of an already given world is or would be.

Historically, we inhabit a culture raised from the exclusion of the senses, that is, from the exclusiveness of the sight. Exclusion or exclusiveness that engenders the consecration of the method, of the scientific rationality, of a cumulative knowledge that raises the knowledge, the analysis or the explanation as the only way for teaching and education. No matter how distinct and particular these ways are, they all impose a previous point of arrival. As Michel Serres emphasizes (2001, p. 21), when approaching the privilege of the sight and the exclusion of the body that

feels in the conceptions of knowledge, to abstract “means less leaving the body than breaking it into pieces: analysis”.

Several philosophers underline the privilege of the sight in detriment of the other senses, and the consequent partiality in the cognition and the theories of knowledge, in their critique to a metaphysics centered on the distancing of the optic register, which keeps the instrumental rationality of western modernity. Among them, Merleau-Ponty (1996; 2014) is compelling in his incessant critique to the Cartesian perspective of the disembodied spectator when considering a relation of coexistence between body and world (intersubjectivity or intercorporeality). The philosopher emphasizes the simultaneousness and interaction of the senses when writing that “[...] my perception is not an addition of visual, tactile, hearing data, I perceive in an undivided way with all my being, I apprehend one single structure of the thing, a unique way to exist that speaks at once to all my senses” (Merleau-Ponty, 1996, p. 63).

The challenge lies in facing the hegemony of an educational tradition founded on the knowledge and aimed to the knowledge as access to the world, in detriment of another tradition, to its shade or at its margin, intermittent. Another tradition, the one that prioritizes the educational attention to the way how the encounters and the interactions happen in the common world, not as communication or mobility, but as public space in which one is “*with*” - neither “pro” nor “against” - but in “being together” (Arendt, 2014, p. 223). Being exposed to the things and being exposed one to the others demands from all, in the unpredictability of acting and the singularity of the bodies, action and language.

Here, we face the fruitful permanence of the creative and inventive force of the language as intentionality of the body that perceives senses through the aesthetic attention to the qualities of the life, able to forge language gaps to liven up the mundane things and to assign to them poetical existence by the intimacy of the experience that the body makes of them and of itself. A wisdom and a memory of the body (Zumthor, 2007) able to resist the epistemological primacy of the sight or of the logical understanding (Serres, 2004) as the only way to access possibilities to act and to signify the coexistence in the world.

Senses to Listen

The boy, when pointing to the rain and exclaiming “Oh! ”, in the suspension of the sounds explored in the game with the radio, makes us not only consider the educational relevance of being and willing to be affected by the listening of the world - aesthetics, both by the presence of the radio noises and hissing and the presence of the sound from the rain - but also that

[...] in every saying (and I mean, in every discourse, in every chain of meaning) there is a listening [*entendre*], in its background, a listening; that means: it is necessary that the sense is not restricted to making sense (or being *logos*), but that, moreover, it resounds (Nancy, 2007, p. 18).

This founding resonance, like “[...] first or ultimate depth of 'sense' itself (or of the truth)” (Nancy, 2007, p. 18), concerns the human becoming. The close relation with the action of resound and repercussion makes us to think on the sound and its silence. In what bursts in presences when hearing and in senses to listen. They make us to consider the relevance of the education of the sensitive by the sound of the voices that, through the listening, constitute and reconstitute imagetic experiences launched by the aesthetic attention of the body to the world. This attention to the experienced, initiated by the aesthetics of the hearing, defies the educational thought to consider, with Nancy, that

[...] it is not the language, nor the *logos* in general, that make the meaning, rather the opposite. The meaning in this sense is not a meaning, is not a signification, set or unset, finished or gradual, present or to be conquered. The meaning is the possibility of the significations, it is the regimen of its presentation, and is the limit of its meanings (Nancy, 2003, p. 65).

The language, as a relation of balance in movement, is never depleted, it will never be fully constituted. It is in the continuous movement in which there will always be something of unexpected in search of senses to be made, to be heard and produced, to be listened and signified, as “[...] the ways how we listen impregnate the existence of possibilities of sense” (Ghetti, 2013, p. 150).

For being in the world, in the between of various intercorporeal relations (Merleau-Ponty, 1999), there will always be something to be added to the human becoming in the spiral of continuous flow, of present

instants that intensify learnings in other possible rhythms, consisting in language by the language. Hearing and listening between the presence of the world and the senses that we understand and transform with the other. In the presence of voice, which is in the center of this language movement with the world.

What we resist to, in this essay, is the generalized idea that, to live the world, it is previously necessary to learn to see it to know it, that before living it is necessary to be taught to analyze and to make theory of the living. The children show us shamelessly that it is not so. They show us that the human world is the world of the sense to be made. As the poet Octávio Paz wrote (2012, p. 27) “[...] we tolerate the ambiguity, the contradiction, the madness or the scam, but not the lack of sense. Silence itself is full of signs”. It implies to understand with Hannah Arendt (2000, p. 13) that thinking and knowing are different: to think concerns to the sense and to know to the cognition; or with Nancy (2012, p. 1), when considering that “[...] to think is to place oneself in the ends of the signification. Signification always withholds something, while the thought opens the possibilities of the sense”. We guide ourselves in the contradictions of coexisting in this vital pendulum between sense and meaning. Perhaps to educate is this, to face the contradictions of living, not to eliminate them, but to potentialize choices in the ways to act in the common world⁸.

Notes

- ¹ According to Nancy (2007, p. 17), to distinguish “sensible sense” and “sensitive sense”.
- ² In Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology (1999, p. 440), we can “[...] conceive a subject without a hearing field, but not a world-less subject. [...] the absence of the visual world and the hearing world does not disrupt the communication with the world in general, there is always something ahead of him, the being to decipher”.
- ³ The notion of epiphany, in Gumbrecht (2010, p. 140), designates “[...] overall, the sensation, mentioned and theorized by Jean-Luc Nancy, that we cannot grasp the effects of presence, that they - and, with them, the simultaneousness of the presence and the sense - are ephemeral”. The author highlights that the component of epiphany assumes, in the scope of the

aesthetic experience, the statute of event from three aspects. “First, we never know if or when an epiphany will occur. Secondly, when it occurs, we do not know what level of intensity it will achieve [...]. Finally (and above all), epiphany in the aesthetic experience is an event, as it falls apart as it emerges” (Gumbrecht, 2010, p. 142).

- ⁴ According to Jorge Larrosa Bondía (2002, p. 20-21) “[...] the words produce senses, they create realities [...] The words establish our thought because we do not think with thoughts, but with the words, we do not think from a supposed brilliance or intelligence, but from our words”.
- ⁵ “We need to find a sense in the becoming of the language, to conceive it as a balance in movement” (Merleau-Ponty, 1991, p. 92).
- ⁶ For Morin (2002), emergence is a new quality in relation to the components of the system, having, therefore, besides the virtue of happening when appearing in a discontinuous way, as the system is already constituted, the irreducibility character, as it is a quality that does not allow itself to decompose for the impossibility of being deduced from previous elements: “[...] even when it can be foreseen from the knowledge of the conditions of its appearing, the emergence constitutes a logical leap and opens in our understanding the gap through which the irreducibility of the real penetrates” (Morin, 2002, p. 139).
- ⁷ In Agamben (2006, p. 20), we are destined to the power “[...] and abandoned to it, in the sense that all its power to act is constitutively a power of not acting and all its knowledge, a power of not knowing”. In both, the power is the same. “Man is the animal that can his own impotence. The greatness of his power is measured by the abyss of his impotence” (Agamben, 2008, p. 294).
- ⁸ This study was financed in part by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Brasil (CAPES) - Finance Code 001.

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This unpublished text, translated by Ananyr Porto Fajardo, is also published in Portuguese in this issue.

Received on August 31, 2017

Accepted on March 06, 2018

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