

Splitting the Atom: The Paradox of Proprioceptive Dialogue

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The practice of Proprioceptive Dialogue (PD) was inspired by David Bohm's proposals for a new form of discourse that could address the crisis in communication evident on all levels of society (see Bohm, 1985, 1996; Bohm, Factor, and Garrett, 1991). Proprioceptive Dialogue's experiment in "radical honesty" is set forth in this paper. After defining proprioception and describing the group process associated with it, I bring to light the underlying nature of dialogical interaction by comparing it with conventional discourse. In the latter, self and other are divided and interact superficially in a mechanical space of continuous speech. By contrast, PD involves proprioceptive acts of concrete self-awareness wherein participants split the "atom" (from the Greek *atomos*, indivisible), opening themselves up to each other so as to establish a space of intimate interchange. In studying the dynamics of this process, I examine the roles played by silence and the preverbal body. Also important to PD are the polarities that develop within and between group members. The oppositional tensions that arise must consciously be held in order to release intrapsychic and interpsychic energies that advance the creative exploration of the group. The paper concludes with a focus on the paradoxical nature of Proprioceptive Dialogue, clarified tangibly through the perceptual geometry of the Necker cube.

Keywords: dialogue, proprioception, polarity

The August Master of the Center ... dwelling at the point of the splitting of the unitary energy of life, can be said to wield a divine sword which slices that energy into its two manifestations and thereby creates polarity. This deity, however, is the consummate swordsman who, although cutting into two, does so with such speed and precision that the fluid of life continues to flow between the resulting halves. They therefore remain continuous and intertwined.

The Looking-Glass God

Naum Stiskin (1972, p. 90)

The World Needs Dialogue! So proclaim Cliff Penwell and Peter Garrett in the title of their recent book (Penwell and Garrett, 2020). The kind of dialogue they are referring to was spearheaded in the 1980s by the physicist and philosopher,

This article was inspired by my participation in many dialogue groups over the years, and most recently, in the Vancouver and Victoria dialogue groups, and in the group hosted by Beth Macy and Linda Ellinor. Correspondence concerning the article should be addressed to Steven M. Rosen, Ph.D., 104-2890 Point Grey Road, Vancouver, B.C., V6K 1A9, Canada. Email: stevenrosen@shaw.ca

David Bohm. In his writings, Bohm expressed his deep concern over the growing fragmentation in our culture: “fragmentation is now very widespread, not only throughout society, but also in each individual” (1980, p. 1). Bohm came to believe that the fracturing of social relations might begin to be addressed if we could somehow learn to communicate with each other in a less guarded, more transparent and receptive way, exploring together the basis of our discord. What evolved from considering this possibility was a group practice that has come to be known as “Bohmian Dialogue” (see Bohm et al., 1991), or what I call “Proprioceptive Dialogue.”

Etymologically, the term *proprioception* is from the Latin *proprius*, meaning “one’s own,” and *capere*, to take. Literally then, proprioception means “taking one’s own,” which can be read as a taking of self or “self-taking.” In physiology, the term signifies an organism’s sensitivity to activity in its own muscles, joints, and tendons. But Bohm (1994) spoke of the need for “proprioceptive thought,” which he viewed as a meditative act wherein “consciousness . . . [becomes] aware of its own implicate activity, in which its content originates” (p. 232). What then is Bohmian or Proprioceptive Dialogue (PD)?

The form of discourse in question is not primarily a discussion of concepts or a forum for exchanging ideas. It is an experiment in “radical honesty” in which participants relate to one another on the basis of an awareness of and willingness to share their hidden agendas: underlying assumptions and motives, feelings and projections, defensive maneuverings, etc. Proprioceptive Dialogue requires that we relate to each other by moving in the “opposite direction” from the one in which conventional discourse takes place. Rather than moving forward, moving out to you, authoritatively advancing my position on whatever we are discussing by simply and directly presenting it to you, I relate to you in a more circuitous, reflexive way, by going proprioceptively backward into myself. That is to say, in PD, I relate to you through a bodily sense of my own process of relating as it is occurring in the moment. Just as I can obtain a proprioceptive (or kinesthetic)¹ sense of the muscular activity in my fingers as I type these words, I should also be able to obtain — though not as easily, to be sure — a sense of my defensive “reactions, impulses, feelings and opinions” (Bohm et al., 1991, “Suspension” section, para. 1). Sensing them in this manner, observing them as they are actually taking place within my own embodied psyche, allows me to share them with you,

¹Historian of science Roger Smith (2020) discusses the distinction between the terms “proprioception” and “kinesthesia.” Strictly speaking, “kinesthesia” is a psychological term referring to conscious sensory awareness of movement in one’s body, whereas “proprioception” is a physiological term indicating largely unconscious sensitivity to bodily activity (as noted above). However, Smith points out that the meanings of kinesthesia and proprioception are very often confused in the literature or taken as synonymous. In the present paper, I do not generally use the word “kinesthesia.” Instead I employ the word “proprioception” in Bohm’s broad sense of self-awareness, which is grounded by the word’s etymological meaning, “self-taking.”

and have them be reflected back to me by you. Here I am not just presenting an abstract content, a collection of finished thoughts. Instead I am disclosing — to myself and to you — the thinking and feeling and sensing process that lies behind the finished products. If we can encourage each other to relate in this way, it should allow us to “see behind the scenes,” to read the subtext of our discourse, to make transparent the core motives and concealed tactics that are normally invisible in the defensive posturing of ordinary interaction.

Over the past three decades, I have been actively engaged in the practice of PD. During that same period of time and in the twenty years that preceded it, I’ve also been involved in research on the philosophy of science and, in particular, on subjects, objects, and the space in which they interact (e.g., Rosen 1994, 2008, 2021). The present paper aims to bridge the practice of dialogue and the philosophy of interaction by exploring the underlying nature of dialogical interaction.

The Nature of Interaction in Conventional and Dialogical Discourse

The cultural renaissance that began in Europe some 700 years ago brought with it a new mode of interaction between the objects appearing in space and the subjects before whom they were cast. Owen Barfield noted that prior to the Renaissance, “the world was more like a garment men [and women] wore about them than a stage on which they moved. . . . Compared with us, they felt themselves and the objects around them and the words that expressed those objects, immersed together in something like a clear lake of. . . ‘meaning’” (1988, p. 95). This is surely not to say that there was no sense of individuality in the medieval and ancient worlds that preceded the Renaissance. Greek civilization in particular, with its introduction of philosophical reflectiveness, clearly did much to advance the growth of individual awareness. But with the Renaissance, the sense of separate individuality was strongly reinforced. Human beings now emerged as subjects who were detached from the objects appearing before them yet still able to decisively influence those objects (be they objects of nature or other human beings) through observation and manipulation. And essential to this novel manner of interacting was the continuity of the space in which it took place.

The ascendant paradigm is best exemplified by post-Renaissance science. In the aftermath of the Renaissance, science came to be regarded as a purely objective enterprise in which the scientist operates with cool detachment from what he is observing so as to measure and analyze the phenomenon under scrutiny with maximal precision. The spatial context in which scientific observations were made had to be a continuum. There could be no gaps or holes in this space; it had to be filled in completely if the observations were to retain their exactness.

While the scientific method may be the prime example of the post-Renaissance *modus operandi*, it was hardly the only example. David Lavery (1983) and Jean Gebser (1985) pointed to the fifteenth century introduction of perspective in

art as indicating a basic alteration of perception: the artist now stood completely apart from others and from nature, observing at a distance from the fixed point of reference inside the artist's head. Gebser's recognition of the broad implications of perspective led him to speak of the Renaissance as ushering in a "perspectival world," one involving an "emergent objectifying consciousness" with a "heightening of awareness... accompanied by an increase of personal ego-consciousness" (Gebser, 1985, p. 19). Correlated developments in the field of written expression have been examined by Walter Ong (1977). Ong particularly stressed the far-reaching impact on consciousness of the advent of print (ca. 1450): how this novel medium standardized, objectified, and spatialized language for use by a detached, abstractly self-possessed individual. Given the pervasive influence on human culture of the new paradigm, if it was evidenced in the medium of written language, we could well expect that it would have a similar effect on the spoken word and spoken discourse.

In previous writings (e.g., Rosen 2004, 2006, 2015, 2021), I suggested a formula that summarizes the post-Renaissance framework for interaction: object-in-space-before-subject. Conventional discourse is governed by this formula. Each speaker is a self-contained subject, an insular center of identity standing apart from other speakers. In this closed, self-subsistent posture that shuts the other out, the other is objectified, related to as object. This leads to communication that is typically mechanical and superficial. According to Bohm (1980), in the mechanistic order, entities "interact through forces that do not bring about any changes in their essential natures ... [they interact] only through some kind of external contact" (p. 173). This approach is evident in mainstream contemporary discussion. With each participant holding to his basic position, contact with others tends to be surface to surface. The space of this discourse is essentially continuous. Everyday conversation normally entails an unbroken stream of verbiage. Our thoughts and speech race ahead in a continuous exchange of words, with little silence. In fact, nowadays, we often interrupt each other and talk over each other. We become fully absorbed in the words and any brief silences that arise are ignored.

Proprioceptive Dialogue poses a challenge to mechanical communication. To appreciate how post-Renaissance individuality is called into question in PD, consider the word "individual." This term derives from the Latin *individuus*, indivisible, not capable of being divided. A closely related word is "atom," which derives from the Greek, *atomos*, indivisible. The atomic core of the contemporary individual is armored so heavily that it appears indivisible. In interacting with others, individuals are not likely to undergo "any changes in their essential natures" (to echo the words of Bohm quoted above). These mechanical exchanges are indeed surface to surface not core to core, since the atomic core is well defended against outside influences. In contrast, PD looks to *split the atom*.

In the proprioceptive movement back into myself, I penetrate my own core. Like the splitting of the atom that gave rise to the atomic bomb, a colossal amount

of energy can be released by this self-penetration, but contrary to the catastrophic events at Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought forth by the manipulation of objectified matter, PD's release of energy can be constructive, can lead to social healing and wholeness. For, by opening myself proprioceptively in the course of dialogue, I am opening myself to the other without objectifying her, as happens in the posture of defensive self-concealment.

The notion of a psychically based form of "atom splitting" in fact was advanced decades ago. In her writing on David Bohm, philosopher Renée Weber (1978a) spoke of "psychological atom smashing," suggesting the "analogy of the atom with thought, and with an alleged thinker who authors thought" (p. 20). In our terms, the thinker in question is the post-Renaissance ego. This thinker or ego, "mistakenly believing itself autonomous and irreducible, requires and hence squanders vast amounts of cosmic energy on this illusion" (p. 20). In *smashing* the atomically constituted ego, the energy liberated is "unbound and flowing, characterized by wholeness ... and the force of compassion" (p. 21). Weber described this universal energy as "an energy of love" (p. 21). She further noted that while smashing the atom in conventional physics is a dualistic enterprise maintaining the division between subject and object, psychological atom smashing "necessarily involves the operator or experimenter himself" (p. 21). Weber's prime example of a "psychological atom smasher" was David Bohm.

In Weber's (1978b) subsequent interview with Bohm, the analogy between thinker and atom was carried forward. Here, Bohm spoke of the "transformation of the atom," emphasizing the need for assembling a great enough number of "atoms" to reach the energy required for a "chain reaction." Bohm believed that a *psychic* transformation of this kind would change "the consciousness of mankind," bringing human beings into conscious "contact with the implicate order" (p. 40). But he proposed that no single individual is capable of attaining the requisite level of energy. What is needed is "a number of individuals who are in close relation and who have gone through this [transformative process on their own, though at lower levels of energy] If you had as many as ten people, or a hundred people ... they would have a power immensely beyond one" (p. 40). With this 1978 remark, Bohm foreshadowed the dialogue movement that was to gain momentum in coming decades. And I suggest that the key to the atom splitting that occurs in such dialogue groups is proprioception. The release of energy in Proprioceptive Dialogue and its consequences will be considered in detail in the next section. Note that while Weber and Bohm tended to frame psychological atom smashing in cosmic terms, the present essay takes a more practical approach.

Now, when I interact with others in ordinary discourse, the words at my command typically function in the service of the post-Renaissance ego. It is my determined use of language and speech that provides my ego's armoring. In PD's "splitting of the atom," what plays the decisive role is *silence*.

In what specific sense is silence essential to PD? Silence certainly has its practical advantages in a dialogue meeting. It gives participants a chance to process and digest what has been said, provides opportunities for less loquacious individuals to be heard, and so forth. But in PD, silence means more than that. It is not limited to a cessation of audible speech in which the stream of verbiage can nonetheless continue inwardly. Rather, it entails the *interior* silence that comes from shifting one's attention proprioceptively to the nonverbal concomitants of one's verbal narrative.² Suppose, for instance, that a dialogue participant says something that stirs me up so that a cascade of angry thoughts and words are inwardly unleashed. Though I might normally get caught up in such a reaction, in PD I bring my attention to the wordless workings of the body that accompany the irate words — my jaw clenches, perhaps; I fidget uncomfortably; my posture stiffens; my palms sweat.

In this regard, Bohm collaborator Lee Nichol (2005) notes Bohm's emphasis on attending to the body when practicing dialogue, so that dialogue is not just an intellectual exercise. According to Nichol,

Bohm proposes that we use the body as a source of immediate, concrete feedback for our inquiry.... [He] suggests that we expand our attention — usually focused on our mental reactions arising from provocations to the ego — to include the physiological correlates of these reactions Honest attention to the signals in the body will often give a very different picture of what is happening in our experience than the ego would like to imagine [C]lose, sustained attention to the body, alert to signals like those mentioned above, makes it difficult to maintain the habit of obscuring the actual nature of our experience. One effect of giving attention to the body, thus, is to bring our conscious awareness more closely in line with what is actually occurring. (2005, pp. 22–23)

Therefore, in the example I gave of the physiological reactions accompanying my angry response to words spoken in dialogue — tense jaw, sweaty palms, nervous fidgeting — my preverbal body might be telling me that the other's words in fact feel threatening to me. But I suggest that PD can take me even deeper into the preverbal body and, in so doing, further enhance my sense of what is actually happening within me and between us.

Eugene Gendlin (1978) described a proprioceptive practice he called *focusing*, wherein a psychological issue is addressed by tuning in to the body at a deep level in order to gain a *felt sense* of the problem. Applied to Proprioceptive Dialogue, group members can use focusing in relating to each other. In the example I've given, the proprioceptive challenge for me now would be to bring my attention

²Perhaps a first step in directing attention beneath the bustle of thoughts to the silence within is slowing that thinking down. In his dialogical reading of Heidegger's "Conversation on a Country Path," philosopher Jack Wikse views the slowing down of thinking as integral to Taoist meditation practice. See Wikse's paper, "Slowing Things Down: *Gelassenheit* and the Somatics of Dialogue" (Wixse, 2003).

from those angry words and associated bodily reactions still further down into the core of my body for a sense of their somatic base. What is the anger telling me down there? "Pay attention inwardly, in your body," Gendlin urges, "perhaps in your stomach or chest Sense within your body. Let the answers come slowly from this sensing" (p. 44).

At first, the answer my body gives me might be nothing more than a vague intimation of "what *all of the problem* feels like . . . an unclear sense of *all of that*" (p. 44). Here I feel only "the whole inner aura of the problem" (p. 53). This is the felt sense. But the initially nebulous understanding of my angry reaction can be brought into focus by finding a "handle" for it (pp. 55–57), a word or phrase that resonates with the body's preverbal stirring and gives voice to it. I might come to realize, for instance, that at bottom what triggered my outrage was an underlying feeling of shame. So what started out as anger projected onto another dialogue participant is transformed into an embodied realization about myself. Given some experience with focusing, such insights can come quickly enough to be shared with the group in the course of the dialogue session. By being radically open to ourselves in this preverbal way and sharing it with others who are doing the same, by listening deeply to one another in the course of our mutual sharing, PD fosters a sense of intimacy not possible in the verbal exchanges of conventional discourse. In sum, PD's paradigm of preverbal intimacy "splits the atom," calling into question the post-Renaissance individual's mode of communication wherein self and other are divided and interact superficially in a mechanical space of continuous speech.

The Role of Polarity in Proprioceptive Dialogue

In the previous section, I indicated that the healing that can be brought about by splitting the post-Renaissance atom entails the release of energy. Taking a closer look at what this process involves will sharpen our understanding of PD.

Analogous to atomic fission, where the splitting of atoms leads to the buildup of nuclear energy, a certain kind of intrapsychic energy is built up in the practice of PD. As I indicated at the outset, in drawing back in upon myself proprioceptively, my attention moves against the grain of ordinary discourse. Instead of relating to you by simply projecting my thoughts outward in acts of speech that are oblivious to their preverbal origins, I counteract this outward thrust by moving my awareness inward so as to withdraw the projections. Why is intrapsychic energy generated by this operation? It is because the inward movement does not just come *after* the projection in a linear sequence. Rather, outward and inward movements are superimposed on each other and happen at once, and this polar opposition creates friction, an energy-bearing psychic tension. I often experience this tension in my practice of PD. Groping for a felt sense of the preverbal source of my onrushing words and thoughts feels like swimming against a strong

current. But if I can hold the tension, contain the psychic energy for a sustained period of time without letting it dissipate, the energy may be released in the form of a novel self-insight. In my example, I suddenly realize that it isn't so much anger that I'm experiencing — at bottom, it's shame. (In the metaphor of splitting the atom, for a critical mass to be reached that will eventuate in an energy-releasing chain reaction, the nuclear material must be compressed, held together to allow the energy to build.)

Beth Macy (2022) sees holding the tension of polar opposites as integral to Bohmian Dialogue. Working with philosopher Owen Barfield's concept of polarity, she gives a definition of it taken from Barfield's conversation with psychologist Shirley Sugerma (2008). Here polarity is seen as involving "two counteracting and correlative forces that have separated themselves forming two poles" (Macy, 2022, p. 52). Though the poles stand in opposition to each other, they are linked from within. Bohm illustrates this through his example of a magnet whose north and south poles are not separately existent but are aspects of "one unbroken magnetic field" (1985, p. 73). The interconnectedness of the field is evidenced by the fact that, if the magnet is broken apart, "you get two magnets, each of which has a north and a south pole" (p. 73). Mechanistic thinking would lead us to expect that, in breaking the magnet into two pieces, one piece would give only the north pole and the other only the south. But the field is not divisible in this way, for each piece of the magnet carries within it the north-south polarity of the whole field and, with opposite poles being thus connected to the whole, they are connected to each other.

Macy's idea of polarity applies to the tensions that come into play in dialogue meetings when feelings, thoughts, and conflicting assumptions rise to the surface. Initially these tensions may reflect no more than egoic projections uninformed by an awareness of their unconscious underpinnings. If the blind oppositional energies that have been constellated go unchecked for too long, the group container certainly could "explode." The group needs to hold the tensions long enough to transform them from merely external and potentially explosive oppositions, into *polar* oppositions wherein opposites are internally linked. In PD, the transformation happens through proprioception.

I have already described the intrapsychic polarity entailed in proprioception. I now suggest that proprioceptive activity of this kind where opposing movements of consciousness (projection and proprioception) are inwardly joined sets the stage for *interpsychic* polar relations to form in the group field. It is by going against the grain of my projection that I can gain an insight into myself that can then be shared with the group, a gesture that invites others to reciprocate. In the group proprioception that ensues, the "atom" is split without explosion, for a field of intimate linkages among the participants has been created akin to the magnetic field described by Bohm. Instead of blowing apart, the group can now evolve as new meanings emerge that advance its creative exploration. For David Bohm

(1991, “Purpose and Meaning” section, para. 5), collective innovation of this sort is a primary goal of dialogue.

To be sure, a dialogue group governed by polarity is not all sweetness and light. Tensions tend to persist. There are differences among the members that can bring friction and edginess. But proprioceptive sharing facilitates a cohesiveness that takes the group beyond the mechanical transactions of separate egos butting up against each other. These “atoms” have indeed been “split” and the energy thereby released enables the group to function more like jazz players in an improvisational jam session, with each member spontaneously expressing her unique impulses and understandings while just as much being in dynamic flow with all the other players.

The Paradox of Proprioceptive Dialogue

Macy emphasizes the paradoxical nature of such polarity. Though polar opposites are interdependent and interpenetrating, “they embody the tension of their difference” (2022, p. 52). How can we clarify the enigmatic interplay of identity and difference that underlies the polarities of PD? To bring this paradoxical form of interaction graphically into focus, we turn to a well-known oddity from the psychology of perception.

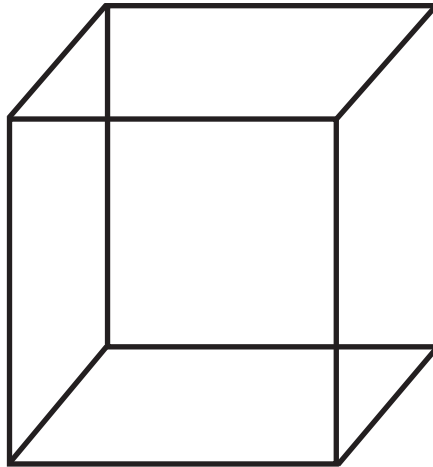


Figure 1: Necker cube.

The Necker cube (Figure 1) is a reversible figure that projects opposing three-dimensional perspectives from a two-dimensional plane. You may be perceiving the cube from the point of view in which it seems to be hovering above your line of vision when suddenly a spontaneous shift occurs and you see it as if

it lay below. Two disparate perspectives certainly are experienced in the course of gazing at the cube but the cube's reversing perspectives overlap one another in space, are internally related, completely interdependent (think of what would happen to one perspective if the other were erased!).

To model more effectively the paradoxical character of dialogical polarity, let us attempt to go a step further in our perception of the cube. Ordinarily, our glance is limited to merely oscillating from one perspective of the cube to the other. But we can actually break this visual habit and view both perspectives at once.

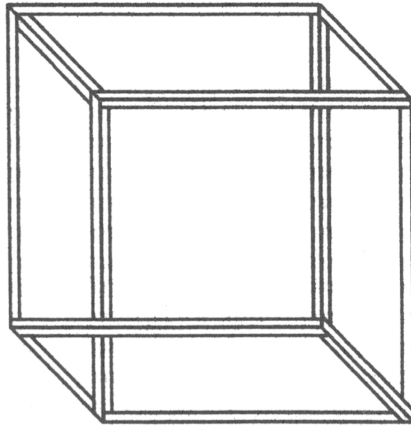


Figure 2: Necker cube with volume (after Ernst, 1986, p. 86; reprinted with permission).

In Figure 2, I've added some volume to the Necker cube, fleshed it out a bit. This modification should make it easier for you to see what I am talking about. When the cube's polar perspectives are integrated as I am suggesting, there is an uncanny sense of self-penetration; the cube appears to do the impossible, to go *through* itself. Here the temporal divergence of viewpoints is surmounted in the creation of an experiential structure whose opposing perspectives are simultaneously given.

But the word "simultaneous" may not exactly fit. I am proposing that we can apprehend the cube in such a way that its differing viewpoints overlap in time as well as in space. Yet what we actually experience when this happens is not simultaneity in the usual sense of static juxtaposition. We do not encounter opposing perspectives with the same immediacy as figures appearing side by side in conventional space, figures that coexist in an instant of time simply common to them (as, for example, the letters of the words on this page). And yet, there is indeed a temporal coincidence in the integrative way of viewing the cube, for perspectives are not related in simple succession (first one, then the other) any more than in spatial simultaneity. If opposing faces are not immediately co-present, neither do they disclose themselves merely *seriatim*, in the externally mediated

fashion of linear sequence. Instead the relation is one of *internal* mediation, of the *mutual permeation* of opposites. Perspectives are grasped as penetrating each other in a manner that blends space and time so completely that they are no longer recognizable in their familiar, categorically dichotomized forms. You can see this most readily in viewing the fleshed out cube. When you pick up on the odd sense of self-penetration of this seemingly impossible figure, you experience its two modalities neither simply at once, nor one simply followed by the other, as in the ordinary, temporally broken manner of perception; rather, you apprehend the *dynamic merging and separating* of opposing perspectives. Or, in the words of Jungian theorist Nathan Schwartz-Salant (1998), the intimate interplay of polar opposites entails a paradoxical process “in which ‘outer’ and ‘inner’ are alternately both distinct and the same” (p. 13).

And this is essentially what happens with proprioception, where the movement of awareness inward to the preverbal body is an inseparable aspect of the projective movement outward into language. Here attention pushes back against itself creating intense polar opposition. If the tension can be held until a “critical mass” is reached, the intrapsychic energy that has been generated can be released as a novel insight. Even as my anger is projectively expressed in language, the proprioceptive passage to anger’s preverbal source brings a tensive awareness that eventuates in a realization of my underlying shame.

We have seen, moreover, that PD carries this intrapsychic paradox into the paradox of field relations that develop in the group. In the course of sharing our proprioceptions, we merge dynamically even as we separate; we are “alternately both distinct and the same” as we strike new notes in our “dialogical jazz,” evolve fresh meanings in the ongoing process of creative exploration.

Postscript

Valuable as it is in tangibly modeling PD’s polarity of inner and outer, self and other, subject and object, the Necker cube does have its limitations. In past writings, I have appealed to a qualitative field of mathematics known as topology, where paradoxical structures like the Moebius strip and the Klein bottle have proven helpful (e.g., Rosen, 2004, 2008, 2021). The Klein bottle in particular is a higher-order counterpart of the Necker cube that has been effective in offering a more complete account of subject–object interconnectedness. While the application of topology to Proprioceptive Dialogue is beyond the scope of the present paper, I have it in mind for future work.

Another possible project for the future involves a different aspect of my earlier philosophical work on subject–object interaction. In my questioning of the classical paradigm of object-in-space-before-subject (Rosen, 2004, 2006, 2015, 2021), phenomenological thinkers like Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Martin Heidegger have played a significant role. Merleau-Ponty (1962) pointed us beyond the

post-Renaissance world of detached egos and their objectifications to a concrete reality he called the *lifeworld* (a term borrowed from phenomenologist Edmund Husserl but put to different use). The lifeworld is an earthly realm of lived experience inhabited by participants who engage in field transactions so intimately entangling that they can no longer be taken as simply separate from each other. For his part, Heidegger (1927/1962) spoke of the down-to-earth, living subject as a *being-in-the-world*, a being involved in “a much richer relation than merely the spatial one of being located in the world We are not simply located there, but are bound to it by all the ties of work, interest, affection, and so on” (Macquarrie, 1968, pp. 14–15). Phenomenological concepts such as these bring to mind the dialogical field of intimate interaction described in this paper. It seems then that fleshing out the relationship between phenomenology and dialogue should be a worthy undertaking, serving as it could to deepen the philosophical grounding of Proprioceptive Dialogue.

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