

leaves them for someone else, even basic thing like going for a walk might be difficult, as everything that was taken for granted is now called into question.

In this paper, we explore the use of diary writing during symbolic rupture. Especially in these periods of symbolic rupture, it's not unusual for some type of diary writing to occur (Zittoun & Gillespie, 2011). Writing in a diary constitutes an act of externalizing one's internal, ongoing, stream of consciousness. In diary writing, the person can create inclusive separation (Valsiner 1997) between the immediate externalized content and the ongoing stream of consciousness. In the present study, participants we aimed to get as close to the stream of consciousness as possible by asking participants to keep a diary of their dreams. Within these diary entries we find a mix of statements, some directly about the dream, while others are imaginations for what the dream might mean and what the future could hold. Contrasting the externalized notions from the dream on the one hand, and a person's imagined interpretations for what the dream might mean on the other, can lead to an emergent new meaning, arising by the individual overcoming the ambivalence of different understandings (Abbey, 2012). This is one reason diary writing can be rewarding: In the process of recording what *was*, and thinking about what *could be*, we can create a new sense of what *is*

In order to study how we make meaning about the self, it's necessary to understand the basic ontological framework within which that process occurs. We here focus specifically on the nature of the conception of time, and how it relates to our daily experience. Time is especially important, for it is the deepest soil for our lives, controlling our progression in life, and our sense of development throughout the lifespan. It's also especially important, as the one mode of conceptualizing time—perhaps the most popular in modern-day science—is fundamentally flawed. The flaw we speak of is owed to the work of Henri Bergson (1913), who compared the idea of time as a shelf that is merely a holder of life events, to his idea that time and human lives are deeply intertwined. The former perspective makes it plausible to engage in the process of prediction, for if time is only a placeholder, events can repeat themselves so long as the other conditions are held constant. This former ontological view sets the stage for the use of many statistical models of human life events, as well as generalizations about the future of individual's lives.

The contrasting view of time, the one that Bergson explored, was one where time is deeply entwined with daily life. Bergson wrote of the ego enduring (*durée*) continuously through time (Bergson, 1913) and so, our lives assume one large, ever-growing tangle of interwoven experiences that changes continually. Rather than being separate from time, human lives are deeply temporal, from the start we assume a pure duration— where our consciousness is freed from keeping past and present experiences separate and instead is allowed to endure through time. Bergson writes:

Pure duration is the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself live when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states...

Figure 1: Openness of the sign to the future

These forms of guidance are ambiguous and incomplete. The meaning in our life—including that about our identity--appears as the imaginations for the future guide our movement while not fully determining it (Josephs, Valsiner & Sorgan, 1999). This process of identity change occurs much like how the song emerges for the improvisational jazz musician

Assuming this reality, understanding an individual's development likely best entails that the researcher makes clear and compatible choices with his or her methodology (Branco & Valsiner, 1997). The fact that we accept the ontological assumption of irreversible time has clear implications for the design we should use to accurately represent the phenomena of interest. Our job, in this case, is especially difficult, because the stream of consciousness is constantly

Figure 2: Two different forms

Looking within the diary entries of those experiencing symbolic rupture, of individuals who are having disquieting feelings, we the researcher can see the creation of the ideal context for emergence. Within these diary entries we find a mix of statements, some directly about the dream, while others are imaginative, about what the dream *might* mean or what the future *could* hold. We frequently encounter ambivalence while re-reading the diary entry. That tension can lead to an emergent new meaning, arising by the individual overcoming the ambivalence of different understandings (Abbey, 2012). This is not ambivalence in the traditional sense of

two different orientations In Condition C it is the discrepancy in strength of forces that creates ambivalence. (Abbey, 2012).

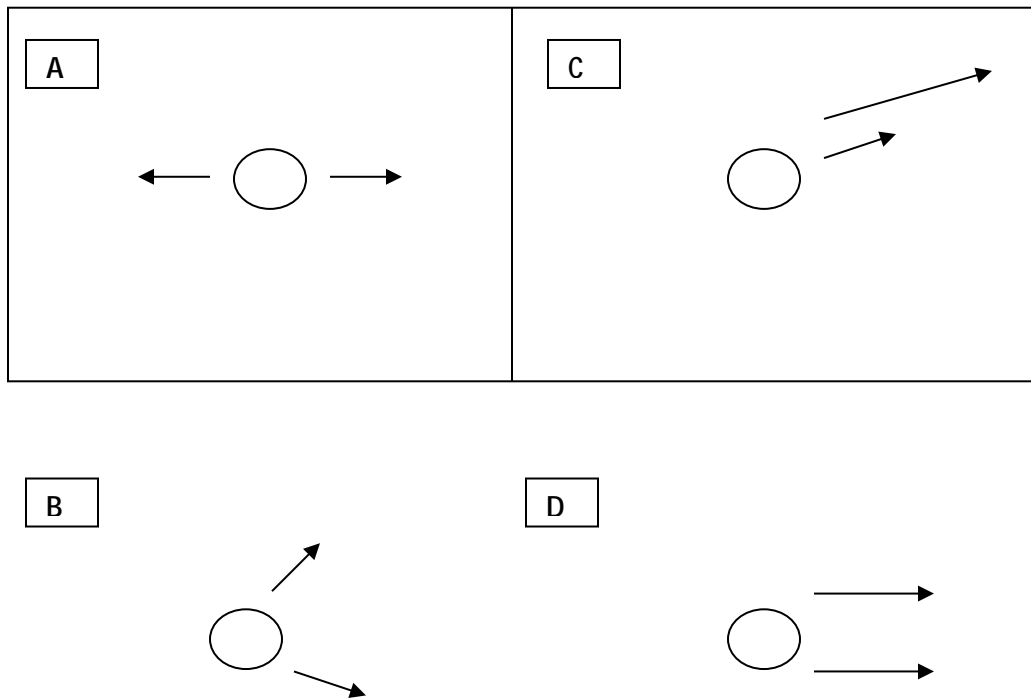


Figure 3: Types of ambivalence

Development of one's identity can occur as the person holds these two notions simultaneously. As he or she feels compelled to resolve the two understandings of the self, he or she may arrive at an emerging, new meaning. For example, the person writes about her partner leaving and her anger. But then, perhaps she notices how peaceful she feels without the constant fighting they

peculiar anxiety, fears of invisible dangers, strains of watching and listening for distant and unlocalised signals. The listless movements of ships and her warning calls soon tell upon the nerves of the passengers; and that special, expectant, tacit anxiety, and nervousness, always associated with this experience, make a fog the dreaded terror of the sea (all the more terrifying because of its very silence and gentleness) for the expert seafarer no less than the ignorant landsman.

Nevertheless, a fog at sea can be a source of intense relish and enjoyment. Abstract from the experience of the sea fog, for the moment, its danger and practical unpleasantness, just as everyone in the enjoyment of a mountain climb disregards its physical labor and its danger (though, it is not denied, that these may incidentally enter into enjoyment and enhance it); direct the attention to the features “objectively” constituting the phenomenon—the veil surrounding you with an opaqueness as of transparent milk, blurring the outlines of things and distorting their shapes into weird grotesques...note the curious creamy smoothness of the water, hypocritically denying as it were any sense of danger; and, above all, the strange solitude and remoteness of the world, as it can be found only on the highest mountain tops: and the experience may acquire, in its uncanny mingling of repose and terror, a flavor of such concentrated poignancy and delight as to contrast sharply with the blind and distempered anxiety of its other aspects. This contrast, often emerging with startling suddenness, is like a momentary switching on of some new current, or of the passing ray of brighter light, illuminating the outlook upon perhaps the most ordinary objects. (, 1912, pp. 88-89, emphasis mine)

As Bullough's narrative description makes clear, through tension new sense of a situation can emerge quite suddenly, creating novel meanings such as the "delight" portrayed here.

symbolic rupture, but also, she is able to begin to redirect how she thinks about her identity, imaginatively fixing this rupture through overcoming a series of ambivalences.

Illustration of overcoming symbolic rupture

Participant A

Entry One

To provide some background, in this first diary entry, the participant appears to be experiencing a symbolic rupture due to her longtime romantic partner abandoning her suddenly. This has created quite a bit of disquiet and unrest, and she is trying to recreate her identity and understand how to relate to the environment without him. The first dream she wrote about in a diary begins with a clarification of the setting. She begins: “Tonight I dreamed about FRANK* my ex-boyfriend as of two days ago.” She describes that in the dream, she was in a shopping center without her former romantic partner. In the dream, she can see him with someone else. She is especially unhappy because this other person is a presumed sexual rival and Frank is having fun with “...a girl who isn’t me” she writes in the diary. She goes on to describe the dream, in it her former partner’s elevated mood state is positive, while simultaneously, she herself is feeling acutely singular: “He seems happy. I’m alone.” As she writes more about her dream, we begin to see evidence of a sense of emerging rupture, “I’m lost without him.” The notion of feeling “lost” without her partner implies the depth to which this has traveled in terms of self-definition, leaving her feeling as she doesn’t recognize herself without the presence of her partner. She goes

it's extremely difficult emotionally. She writes of her dream, "I see him everywhere I go. I cannot escape him, he is ruining my life."

At this point in the description of her dream, there is a sudden shift. As dark as her memories of her dream had been until this point, suddenly she says her awareness makes a qualitative shift to a novel place, and this place is warm, filled with sun, "All of a sudden I jump to a whole new place. Sunny, warm, beautiful. It's Florida." This shift, so sudden is an instance where the stark contrast of two highly discordant meanings may lead to the construction of a high order, sign that is rich in its aesthetic sense. Here, we can see that imagining her ex-boyfriend in the shopping center with another (believed to be promiscuous) woman had a strongly negative tone. However, at the same time, she reports experiencing a "jump" in the path of her dream, where she was lead to a positively valenced "sunny and warm" place. The contrast of the two leave her with one, highly abstract comment, "*It is Florida*" * (*Florida is a state in the USA known for its year-round warmth and beautiful beaches.)

The participant continues in this diary entry to explore the meaning of the dream further, and we see a similar play of ambivalence, with the addition of the use of imagination to guide her future behavior. She writes first about how she first came to the college where these data were collected and immediately we can see a beautiful example of how thoughts about what could be offer direction for how one may begin to ovwha

‘Heart “forgive him” <> Head “Move, maybe transfer schools’

Participant A

Entry two

Notice again how highly abstract signs convey deeply feeling-based emotional meanings (e.g., “everything is positive”) and, may emerge through the contrast of lower-level contrasting meanings. These higher order signs are especially important when trying to overcome symbolic rupture, for the fundamentally reorganize one’s relationship to the environment, providing a

negatively valenced statement of the entry. She writes about how her emotional experiences where I reside presently have been so discouraging that she can't see the environment in any other way: "New Jersey is cold, and Ramapo is giving me negative energy. Not because of the school itself but because of the events that took place in my life while I attended this school."

The last line of her diary is very interesting in multiple ways, she references her dreams as if they themselves were a semiotic mediator, a vehicle to overcome the rupture she was experiencing in her life. She writes, "If I see nothing but positivity in my dreams, I think my heart is telling me to go for it. *Florida...here I come.*" (Emphasis added).

6.0 Emotional Literacy & Dreams

If one is to look at the progression of the participant's emotional experience over the course of these diary entries, the change is quite striking. She begins from the place of heartbreak and symbolic rupture, where she explicitly states not only does she feel alone, she does not know how she is without her former romantic partner. Slowly, through the beauty of imagination, suggestions for widening the field of possible futures becomes real. At first there is only the suggestion to transfer schools. Secondarily, and in a more profound vein likely supported by the higher-order sign she has constructed), she proclaims: "I need to take a chance and just do it" This imaginative notion, filling out the field of possible futures is so wide and brave. It seems this is the key moment where she signals to herself via the diary entry that the symbolic rupture is over, and she is in the process of rebuilding who she is. For one, she knows she wants to be in a warmer climate, that is very important to her. She has imagined living with her friends in a small house and enjoying life in this sunny, temperate space. No longer is she alone and identity-less

Em

Anything that can move us closer to the authentic duration of the ego as it moves with time will help us understand better the development of the human, in all its complexity. Understanding the ambivalences within our self may require a look at the stream-of-conscious dialogue. This dialogue cannot come from responding to questionnaires or interview questions, for it lives deeper within the mind, where the dreams run across our mind's screen.

Transition from dream to waking—where we think about our dream—can provide material for understanding the non-dreaming state of being. In looking at dreams here, we were able to understand how a disquieting experience was quieted and an individual was able to move forward in redefining the self. We were able to see the symbolic ruptures in her life, the ambivalences she was facing, and the promoter sign, “**Florida**” that she used to overcome the

References

Abbey, E. & Davis, P. (2003). Constructing one's identity through autodialogue: A cultural psychological approach. In I. Josephs (Ed), *Dialogicality in Development. Vol. 5 of Advances in Child Development within Culturally Structured Environments*: New York: Elsevier.

Abbey, E. (2012). Ambivalence and its Transformation. In J. Valsiner (Ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Culture and Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bergson, H. (1913). *Time and Free Will*. London: George Allen & Co.

Branco, A. U., Valsiner, J. (1997) Changing methodologies: A co-constructivist study of goal orientations in social interactions. *Psychology and Developing Societies* 9(1): 35–64

Bullogh, E. (1912). 'Psychical distance' as a factor in art and an aesthetic principle.

Journal of Psychology, 5, 2, 87-118.

Hermans, H.J.M. & Hermans-Jansen, E. (2001). Dialogical processes and the development of the self. In J. Valsiner & K. Connolly (Eds.), *Handbook of developmental psychology*. London: Sage.

Josephs, Ingrid. E., Valsiner, Jaan., & Surgan, Seth.E. (1999). The process of meaning construction. In J. Brandtstätter and R.M. Lerner (Eds.), *Action & Self Development* (pp. 257-282). Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage.

Lewin, Kurt. (1936). *Principles of topological psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.

Mayer, J. D., & Geher, G. (1996). Emotional intelligence and the identification of emotion. *Intelligence*, 22(2), 89-113.

Valsiner, J. (2000). *Culture and Human Development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Valsiner, J. (2004). The Promoter Sign: Developmental transformation within the structure of Dialogical Self. Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development