

Dialogicality and Trust

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We have already discussed ‘dialogicality’ during the last three days and I assume that it is apparent that this concept is not used in the same way by everybody. Nevertheless, we all share the main presupposition of ‘dialogicality’: the point of departure is interaction between the self and other, rather than it is the individual’s cognition and the behaviour of a single individual. This presupposition is particularly important when we pose the question about dialogicality and trust, which is the subject of my lecture.

Erikson (1968, p.82) argues that the starting point of the interdependence between the self and others is a sense of ‘primary or ontological trust’ or ‘the ontological source of faith and hope’. For him, ‘basic trust’ is the first mark of mental life of a baby; it is openness towards others, and it exists prior to any feelings of autonomy and initiative. Trust develops through ‘unmistakable communication’ and equally, basic distrust signifies the failure in balancing and integrating the child’s experiences with others. Just like the self develops through otherness, so learning to trust the other means learning to trust oneself; and in turn, Erikson claims, trusting oneself implies trusting the trust of the other. Trust therefore is vital for, and is transmitted by, communication. If we adopt this position, we see that dialogicality and trust are intimately related.

1. Trust

In daily language we use the word ‘trust’ in various ways. We talk about trusting God, parents, friends, institutions, professionals, future, and so on. These forms of trusting involve different kinds of interaction, relationships and communication; quite often, in such usages, ‘trust’ can be substituted by other words like confidence, reliance, expectation, solidarity, and so on. Individuals develop their meanings of ‘trust’ in and through socialisation and communication.

Like other social concepts, *trust* makes sense only in relation to its opposite, whether it is distrust, mistrust, suspicion or otherwise, and in the network of other concepts, for example, belief, solidarity, reciprocity, security, and so on. Because it is

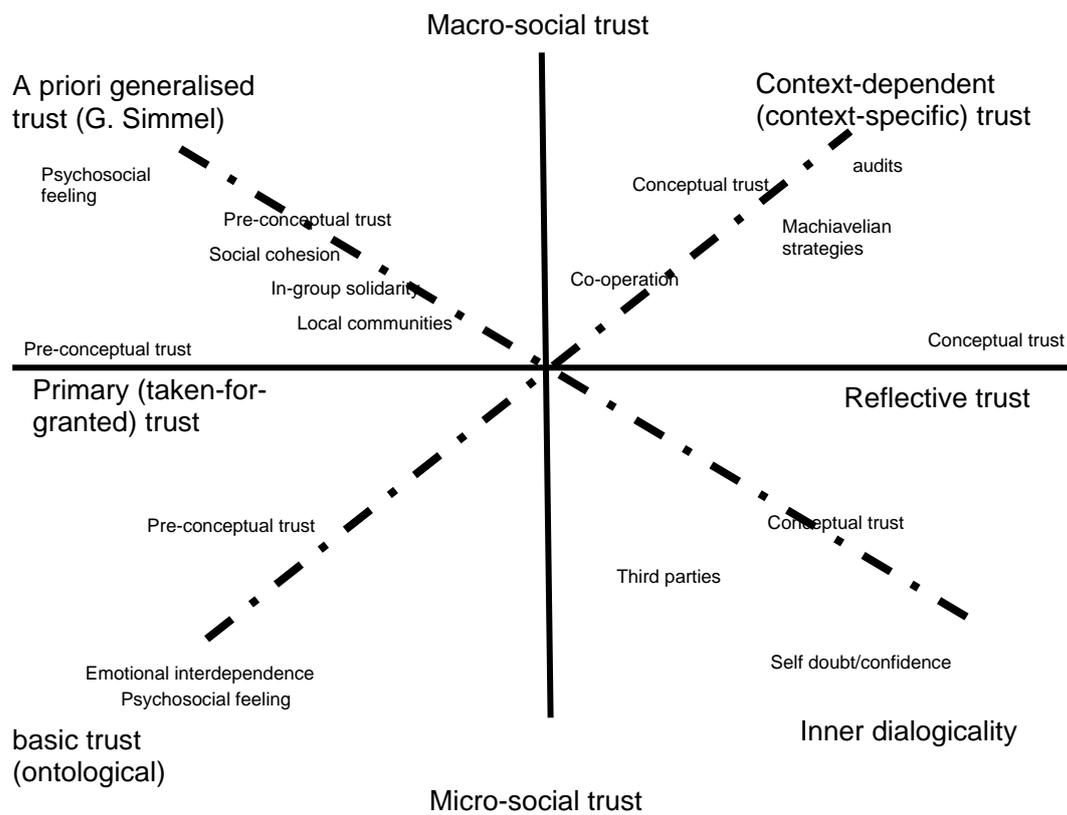
related to different networks of concepts in languages, cultures and socio-political systems, the term 'trust' is highly polysemic.

1.1 Trust as a polysemic concept

So how can we start making sense of so diverse meanings of trust? Different researchers make different choices. Together with my colleagues Per Linell and Alex Gillispie (Markova, Linell and Gillespie, 2008), we have chosen to connect diverse meanings of trust in two ways. First, trust could be placed on the dimension ranging from *primary trust (or taken-for-granted and unquestioned trust)* to *reflective and calculating trust/distrust*. Another way of thinking about different meanings of trust/distrust to suggest that they form a spectrum, on the one pole of which there is interpersonal trust/distrust, a relation between you and I as a *micro-social relation*, and on the other pole there is trust as a *macro-social relation*. Micro-social relations, can be described them in terms of dichotomies such as intimate or familiar (close, kin, acquaintances) *versus* anonymous (or 'a stranger') relations, the 'house/home' *versus* 'street', 'private' *versus* 'public' sphere, or 'informal' *versus* 'formal'. The other pole of the spectrum, i.e. macro-social relations, involves trust/distrust between groups, institutions or society as a whole. Different contexts, e.g. institutions, rules or established guidelines require different forms of trust. Most situated encounters include both explicit and hidden agendas (e.g. job interviews). Different social situations involve different kinds of *context-specific limitations* with respect to trust/distrust. For example, an interaction with salesperson at a supermarket cash-point has different kinds of relevance than a conversation with therapist or psychiatrist. Considering these situations, objects of trust are quite different in nature and in extension.

If we take these two dimensions, i.e. first, *primary or taken-for-granted trust* and *reflective trust* and second, *micro-social trust* and *macro-social trust*, we can represent them graphically along two axes. This representation will create four spaces within which we can locate four orthogonally placed forms of trust (Figure 1). And although we have originally selected these two dimensions intuitively, they can provide a basis from which we may start a preliminary theoretical analysis of trust/distrust.

Figure 1. General structure of the TRUST<>DISTRUST complex



1.2 Primary trust

Let us start with the bottom left quadrant of Figure 1, the boundaries of which are laid out by the *micro-social* and *primary (taken-for-granted)* trust. In the bottom left corner of this quarter could be what developmental psychologists describe as ontogenetic *basic trust* between mother and baby. The idea of basic or ontogenetic forms of trust can be found within various social, philosophical, socio-biological approaches and child development studies, yet it stubbornly resists any clear conceptual elaboration. It is, we could say, a pre-conceptual form of trust. In a very general sense, just like the human species has phylogenetically developed the potentiality to cognize, think and acquire language, it has developed the potentiality to interact with other humans. The evidence from developmental psychology shows that a newborn infant already possesses the ‘openness towards others’, i.e. the capacity to initiate and to respond to communication.

Openness towards others

Depending on the researcher’s focus of interest, ‘openness towards others’ has been given different names. Researchers usually choose their specific notions in

order to express their theoretical priorities and foci of interest – and so, in this case we find terms like ‘innate intersubjectivity’, ‘pre-morality’, ‘virtual other’, ‘attunement to the attunement of other’ - and also ‘*a priori* trust’. All of these notions refer to some kind of an ‘innate sociability’ which may mean no more than a potential for further self/other interdependence and a potential for its differentiation in and through development.

Developmental psychologists like Trevarthen (1979; 1992), Newson (1979), Stern (1985), Papoušek and Papoušek (1975) and Bråten (1998) have been pre-occupied with providing empirical evidence for innate intersubjectivity and innate predisposition for interactional reciprocity.

These early relations between carer and baby are reciprocal but asymmetric. The child depends on parental protection and emotional security. Simultaneously, the parent is driven by the infant’s communication and needs, interpreting his/her behavioural and communicative expressions. Winnicott (1965), too, points to the role of trust in early infant-carer relations. These relations are highly asymmetrical and they involve the infant’s complete dependence on the care of the other. At the same time, the mother lets herself be governed by her infant, thus in a sense reversing or suspending the asymmetries.

Pre-morality

In their conceptualisation of the primary self/other interdependence, Linell and Rommetveit (1998) focus on *pre-morality*, as a developmental precursor of communicative morality in early infant-carer interaction. The authors refer, in this sense, to the infant’s capacity for spontaneous and ‘not reflectively monitored, transcendence of the self into the feelings and intentions of the other’. The infant is already at birth equipped with a readiness for mutual affective attunement, for a mode of dialogical transaction with the responsive adult caretaker that is inherently separate and differently organised from handling unperceptive, unthinking, and unfeeling physical objects (Trevarthen, 1992, p. 104). For Linell and Rommetveit (1998), pre-morality is not yet moral in the usual sense, but seems to involve reciprocities and mutualities which are prerequisites for later moral relations in dialogue.

Speaking specifically about trust which plays a crucial role in his ontogenetic approach, I want to mention again Erikson (1968), who considers ‘basic trust’ as the first mark of mental life. For him, basic trust precedes any feelings of autonomy and initiative; the ego emerges from a stage of physiological equilibration maintained

through mutuality between the mother and baby. Trust evolves through mutual somatic experiences and ‘unmistakable communication’ that perpetuates security and continuity. The sense of basic trust is an ontological source of the self/other relation, just like basic distrust would amount to the failure in balancing and integrating the child’s experiences with others. It is the special quality of the mother-infant relationship that engenders trust.

Transformation of basic trust to reflective trust

Within this space, circumscribed by micro-social and primary (taken-for-granted) trust, the transition from basic trust/distrust involves learning, experience and reflective thinking and feeling. I want to emphasise again that learning to trust other persons also means that one learns to trust oneself and in turn, as Erikson claims, trusting oneself also implies trusting the trust of the other. There are practical consequences of mutual trusting. For example, the child’s trusting the mother is linked to the feeling of security in its own culture.

To take this point even further, educational institutions can provide scaffolding and support for parents, inducing beliefs that what they do to the child makes sense. If the adult feels confident and secure, the child’s trust has a good chance to thrive. For Erikson, each stage and each crisis in the development of the child implies a change in the relationships between the individual and others and between the individual and institutions.

This elementary social responsivity – or pre-morality – which is no more than readiness for mutual affective attunement, eventually transforms into more mature forms of morality during child socialisation. Trust is vital for communication and is transmitted by communication: it carries an obligation, a contract or an ethical component (Bakhtin, 1979/1986; Rommetveit, 1974). Any attempts to escape commitment and mutual responsibility for meaning-making result in non-communication. Both the *Ego* and *Alter* seek visibility and recognition by one another, as each subject actualises his or her potential through interaction and communication.

1.3 A priori generalised trust

Moving to the second quadrant in the top left part of Figure 1, we see that it is circumscribed by *primary* and *macro-social* trust. I would like to suggest that in

the top left corner could be placed what Georg Simmel coined ontological *a priori* generalised trust, i.e. reciprocal orientations of humans toward one another in broader societal contexts. Simmel viewed trust as 'one of the most important synthetic forces within society' (Simmel, 1950, p.318). For him, trust is above all a fundamental psychosocial feeling (Watier, 2002; Watier and Marková, 2004). It is apprehended instantaneously and hence, quite often without awareness of those concerned. And so Simmel wrote that

Without the general trust that people have in each other, society itself would disintegrate, for very few relationships are based entirely upon what is known with certainty about another person, and very few relationships would endure if trust were not as strong as, or stronger than, rational proof or personal observation (Simmel, 1978, p. 178-9).

For Simmel, a force binding society together is *interaction*. It underlies trust, as well as tension and conflict. Groups and societies require both dialectic forces: association and dissociation, harmony and disharmony, conflict and co-operation. And so although there could be no society without trust, so equally, conflict is essential to the persistence of group life (Simmel, 1950).

Returning to Figure 1, generally speaking, the left top quadrant characterises kinds of social relations where society is people's home. Somewhere between the top and bottom and perhaps more towards the middle intersection, we might place the in-group solidarity, which is sometimes referred to as a form of trust (e.g. Collins, 1992). This would include the social binding and bonding of close in-groups, social cohesion and social ties within the family (or extended family, clan etc.), friends, neighbours, co-activists and other local communities.

Dialogicality of trust

Simmel was not the only scholar for whom the idea of reciprocal orientations was of ontological nature. We can find that this idea has deep religious, philosophical, ethical, as well as linguistic roots – and we can say that it is the basis of dialogicality (Marková, 2003; Bakhtin, 1979/1986; Benveniste, 1971). It starts from the presupposition that the *Ego-Alter* dialogically co-constitute one another and that, therefore, one component of the pair does not exist without the other. The self conceives, creates and communicates about social realities in terms of others. All these cases of self/other interdependencies are no more than most elementary ontological – or pre-contractual - forms of sociality.

Transformation of a priori generalised trust through social differentiation

There are two aspects of Simmel's (1950) perspective that may help us to understand how the leap from a priori and primary trust to conceptual and reflective trust could take place. First, there is Simmel's idea of social differentiation. Simmel's ideas of trust start from the presupposition that humans possess the capacity to make distinctions. This means that they perceive and understand phenomena only as distinct from other phenomena, and this includes social relations. Differentiation is a basis of any social relations, whether between individuals or between the individual and society. Therefore, individuality can be conceived only in relation to otherness. Ontogenetically speaking, the child, equipped with an innate capacity for intersubjectivity, learns through action, experience and communication to differentiate between mental states of others, between feelings and between trustworthy and untrustworthy relations.

Historically speaking, social groups, communities and institutions, too, have established themselves within and throughout the framework of social differentiation. Throughout periods of time, human relationships have increasingly diversified and have become 'objectified' and impersonal.

Trust is interdependent with the formation of knowledge.

This brings us to the second of Simmel's ideas, namely that *trust is interdependent with the formation of knowledge*. Any kind of socialisation takes place within different forms of knowledge and determines the degree of trust that people develop with respect to one another, whether it is in the context of child development, politics or cultural socialisation. Since we can hardly obtain full knowledge of one another, trust is situated both within the realm of knowledge that individuals form of one another and beyond its boundaries. In a heterogeneous and complex society like ours, trust is very much person- and content- specific. For example, one may trust the other with respect to a specific activity, e.g. professional competence but not with regard to personal integrity. Equally, one may not reveal to others personal aspects of one's life, belongingness to particular social groups, one's interpersonal relations and so on. As Simmel showed, the meaning of 'a stranger' has changed with the rise of modernity. 'A stranger' becomes someone with whom one has to deal all the time – but here again one deals just with an aspect of 'a stranger' and not with the whole person. Social differentiation has led to the formation of social groups, associations and institutions in which people remain

anonymous and are bound together by impersonal relations. People interact with each other and make transactions on the basis of minimal information. And so we may conclude that historically, differentiation in society and the division of labour has led to multiple, yet complementary features of trust and solidarity.

1.4 Context-specific or limited trust/distrust

Let us make two observations about Figure 1. First, and as I have already commented, the left-hand side of Figure 1 is characterised primarily by trust and distrust as feelings, either based on the interdependence between the self and other, or associated with the search for security and social cohesion. As we move towards the centre and then into the right-hand part of Figure 1, we find that here trust and distrust are conceptualised and rationalised, and progressively transformed into their strategic and calculated forms. We could also say that trust in the right-hand part of Figure 1 is contractual, and is based on obligations and morality. Second, as we pass from the bottom half of Figure 1 towards the top, we move from personal, private and interpersonal trust/distrust towards professional, group, organizational and institutional forms of trust and distrust.

Forms of reflected trust

If we now focus on the third quadrant of Figure 1, it is laid out by *macro-social* and *reflective* trust. The right top corner could be represented by *context-dependent* or *context-specific* forms of trust. This quadrant includes a variety of forms ranging from co-operation to audits, Machiavellian strategies, calculation and the like. Understandably, trust/distrust in daily life is a complex social phenomenon – or we could say, a complex social representation – appearing in different guises. Above all, it is now conceptualized; it can be thought about and is symbolically communicable. It is implicitly or explicitly present in interactions, relationships and communication.

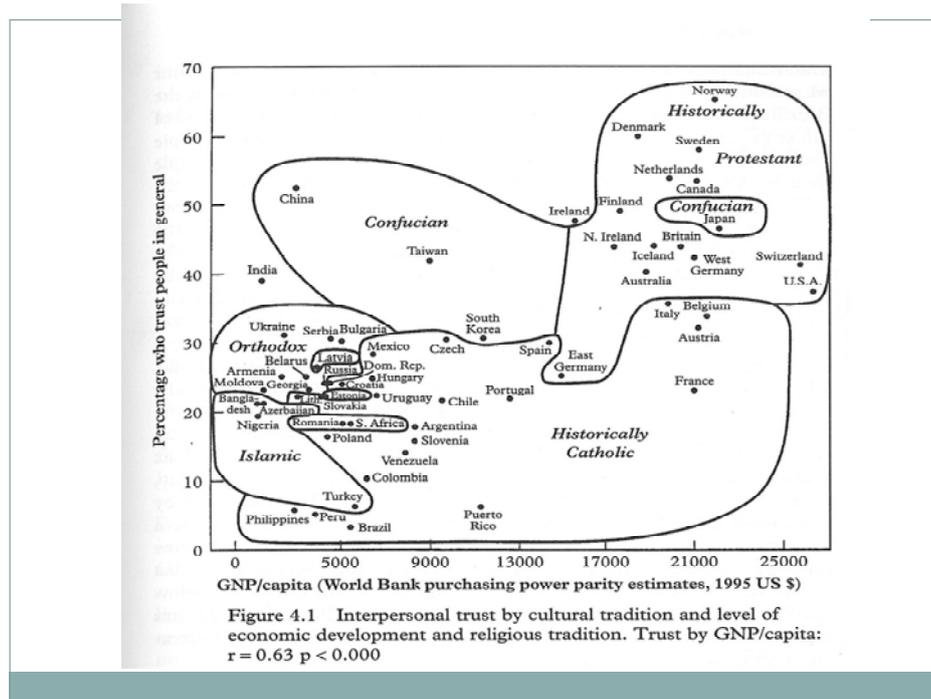
Thus we see that the trajectory of trust in the right-hand side of Figure 1 considerably differs from that in the left hand side. While in the left-hand side we started with immediately apprehended (pre-conceptual) forms of trust, in the right-hand side trust is being established between strangers or institutions and between organizations and groups of various kinds. Once trust becomes established, it can transform into common knowledge and habitual thinking. In such cases it is present as an implicit part of discourse and is no longer thematised and topicalised. It is once

again taken-for-granted and commonly understood. However, in contrast to the left-hand-side of Figure 1, this taken-for-grantedness is secondary; it has arisen in and through reflective thinking. When trust is present, as a result of bracketing one's doubt, there always remains the potentiality of it being brought back into discourse explicitly. And when this happens, that is, when trust becomes explicitly verbalised and thematised, it normally means that, once again, it is no longer taken for granted and that it may have been partly or totally destroyed. Equally, when trust is negotiated, argued about or brought in rhetorically, we can hardly claim that it exists among interacting individuals or institutions. Moreover, and as it is well known, since communication involves different channels, like verbal, phonetic, gestural, and gaze, these can convey different meanings, some proclaiming trust, others indicating, often unwittingly, distrust.

Generalised trust

In addition, the conceptual richness of trust/distrust is due to its developmental and historical transformations. As a result of these transformations, trust/distrust has become a generalised social phenomenon in relation to anonymous and unidentified 'others'; we can mention here 'institutional interactions', e.g. the relations and encounters between professionals and customers, clients, patients, and other lay people. These may include quite different kinds of relations depending on professional categories, communicative (and other) activity types and institutions. For example, we can think of relations to medical doctors, midwives, nurses, judges in court, social workers, taxation officers, taxi drivers, salespersons in a store, sex workers, etc.

We can see in the slide below 'generalised trust' based on scales that evaluated, statistically, levels of generalised, interpersonal and institutional trust and distrust in different countries. These measures of generalised trust/distrust based on the idea of unidimensionality (in contrast to multidimensionality of trust that I am discussing) ranging from high via low levels of trust and then to distrust (e.g. Inglehart (1995). (Problems: Meanings of economic growth in poor and rich countries cannot be judged by the same criteria; notions like 'trust', 'trustful' and 'trustworthy' in different languages are bound to different semantic networks, different histories of nations, their socio-political systems and traditions).



1.5 The inner Self

Finally we arrive at the bottom right quadrant of Figure 1. It is delineated by *micro-social* and *reflective* trust and so we are returning once again to inter-personal and indeed intrapersonal trust and communication.

Inner dialogicality

In the right-hand bottom corner we can place, following Bakhtin, *inner dialogicality*. By inner dialogicality we mean the capacity of humans to carry out internal dialogues, i.e. dialogues within the self. These would include, for example, evaluations of own and others' past and present conduct reflecting on personal issues and making predictions about the *Ego-Alter* future conduct. It could involve either the *Ego's* self-doubts or distrust, uncertainty about the future conduct and intentions of the *Alter*. An internal dialogue can influence or determine the content and thematisation of topics in the external dialogue.

Internal dialogues are not simply introspections or monologues but they involve imagined conversations with different '*Alter*', i.e. symbolically and socially represented kinds of the *Alter* that are in an internal dialogue with the *Ego*. For example, they could be the *Ego's* reference groups, conscience, the super-addressee, and so on.

Trusting the self

Micro-social reflective trust also involves trusting the self or self-confidence. Self-confidence is a socially derived confidence. Others speak through the self in different ways and impose their judgements on the self as invisible super-addressees, e.g. as the 'generalised other' (Mead). They are part of individuals' consciousness (e.g. 'the people', science, tradition), unconscious (e.g. Freud's superego) or conscious (conscience).

Internal dialogues include not only self-confidence but also self-doubt. The essence of mind is not 'an image in the head' but rather, reflective thought leading to the awareness of self as both a doubtful and self-confident being.

Where do we go from here?

Having presented trust as a polysemic concept, two questions remain to be discussed. First, which of these meanings are relevant for deafblind communication and second, and most importantly, what is the relevance of these meanings for practitioners in deafblind communication?

Concerning the first question, in some sense all four basic meanings outlined in the Table 1 are relevant in deafblind communication. Quadrant 1 refers to building the basic ontogenetic trust between carers and child. Quadrant 2 refers to established – and internalised - forms of interaction and communication in a particular culture, for example, to the accepted forms of communication in families, among neighbours or peer groups. Quadrant 3 refers to building secondary trust, e.g. between strangers, carers and a person with a disability. Quadrant 4 refers to trust and confidence within the self – and that, too, is dialogically established between the self and carers. One learns to trust oneself in and through interpersonal trust.

2. Multivoicedness of dialogicality and polysemic forms of trust

These different forms of trust can be illustrated in a dialogue between the carer and a person with cerebral palsy. Dialogue consists of sense-making and sense-creating activities in the socio-cultural space. The fundamental feature of dialogicality is multivoicedness. An utterance or a dialogical contribution is not meaningful on its own but it is directed at the discourse of another person and on the anticipated response. The speaker may take simultaneously different positions, for example, as an author of his utterance, as someone who responds to his interlocutor, as someone who

echoes an opinion of his parents or his political party, or as someone who is anxious about the opinion of his interlocutor.

The extract from a dialogue between a person with cerebral palsy and her carer will show the multiplicity of positions that the carer takes in order to construct meanings jointly with the non-speaker. The girl on the video, the non-speaker is using a board with icons to which she points. She cannot speak at all. We shall see that the carer speaks at least in three different voices; first she voices the non-speaker's part in communication; second, she responds to the non-speaker; and third, she externalises what one could say is her inner voice. Here is a rough transcript of that extract. M = non-speaker; A = carer.

Extract Spider:

M: (*pointing on board*)
(*vocalisation*)

A: Thursday

M: (*pointing on board*)
(*vocalisation*)

A: night

M: ye

M: (*pointing on board*)
(*vocalisation*)

A: was

M: (*pointing on board*)
(*vocalisation*)

A: (*nods*)

.huhh funny

M: after

M: (*smiling*)
(*pointing on board*)
(*vocalisation*)

A: (*laughing*)

M: (*smiles*)
(*pointing on board*)
(*vocalisation*)

A: (*smiling*)

M: (*smiles*)

A: (tuts) went ho::me

M: aye

A: (*nodding*)

(*tats*) I missed all the fun

M: (*laughing*)

A: what did you do

M: (*pointing on board*) (*pointing on board*)
(*vocalisation*) (*vocalisation*)

A: (*smiles*)

Mr. Carver

telling the story – great deal of
shared knowledge – Quadrant 2
shared emotions – culturally
established

voicing inner self
Quadrant 4
eliciting the response
interaction Ego/Alter
reflected relation
Quadrant 3

A: no::
M: (*pointing on board*)
(*vocalisation*)
A: no shoes
M: (*laughing*)
A: .hhh so you had to creep up the stairs with no shoes (.) they would hear you giggling (.)
A: ((tuts)) .hhh (>) I want to ((*pointing on board*)) know though what happened when Judith found the spider because I am not very keen on spiders I know what I would have done how was Judith (.) does she like spiders
M: (*shakes head*) no
A: no so what did she do::
M: (*moving head from side to side*) (*screams*)
A: (*moving head from side to side*) *she screamed*
M: (*rises up out of chair with arms outstretched*)
A: did you hear her screaming
M: (*pointing on board*)
(*laughing*)
A: quick
M: (*pointing on board*)
A: do:::wn
M: (*pointing on board*)
(*laughing*)

We can note that different voices that A is using to co-construct the story with A refer to different kinds of shared knowledge (cultural, e.g. not liking spiders, personal, e.g. appreciating emotional features of the story), dialogically established forms of interaction (e.g. antiucipation of what will happen, expressing interest in the story, inner comments). Just as we can talk about different forms of trust, so also see here dialogically established multivoicedness of the dialogue. A communicates with the whole body, uses different tone to express different voices;

These two features I have discussed, the multivoicedness of dialogicality and the polysemic nature of trust present challenges both for a social scientist and for a practitioner and perhaps this issue should be a subject of our discussion.

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