

# Re-evoking absent people: what languaging implies for radical embodiment

Original study

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**Abstract:** *Re-evoking* examines how languaging enacts human social intelligence. Turning from linguistic tradition, we reduce language to neither abstracta nor form. Rather, as human activity, languaging enables people to co-act as they direct attention within what Margolis (2010b; 2016) calls an enlanguaged world. Given their embodiment, people use languaging to evoke absent others in a flow of action, feeling, judgment, and attitudes. Although based on organism-environment coupling, languaging is also activity that re-evokes the absent. In an enlanguaged world, people use emplaced activity as part of practices, events, situations, artifacts, and so on. Hence, people reach beyond the body as they re-evoke the absent by languaging or, by definition, “activity in which wordings play a part.” As we suggest, absent people are evoked by *othering*. In common domains (e.g. a school), social habits give rise to dispositions during a history of co-acting that, later, can re-evoke absent others and past selves. Having begun with a literary example, we later turn to a detailed case study to show *how* a narrator brings feeling to languaging (in this case, frustration) as she re-evokes other people as they are for her. In conclusion, we suggest that radical embodiment needs to be extended to include how human practices link coupling with social intelligence as people channel what they do with the help of languaging.

**Keywords:** languaging, othering, the absent, radical embodiment, ecolinguistics, distributed language.

“Dasein understands itself initially and for the most part in terms of the world”  
(Heidegger 2010 [1953], 117 [120])

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In a powerful passage from Kazuo Ishiguro’s novel, “The Unconsoled” two middle-aged men from England meet up. Though not exactly friends and located somewhere in Central Europe, they share a distant school experience. One recounts how he met up with other old boys in England. He says, “But you know, when I went back, when I met them in this pub, they immediately started again. ‘Hey, it’s old Parkers!’ they all shouted. They still call me that, as though no time at all had gone by. ‘Parkers! It’s old

Parkers.’ They actually made this big braying noise to welcome me when I first came in, oh God, I can’t tell you how awful it was. And I could feel myself turning back into that pathetic clown I came here to get away from, yes, from the moment they started that braying noise.” (Ishiguro 1996, 199). As the narrator appeared in the pub, the old boys re-evoked a person (or persona) known to them as ‘Parkers’. The greeting ‘Hey, it’s old Parkers!’ enables the others to call on the *absent*. In a sense, then, Parkers is embodied *in* the classmates. For the narrator, the encounter opens floods of past experiences. It is not the name or the nickname that the narrator cares about, “but the rest of it, my God, it makes me shudder just to think of it.” Indeed, it prompts him to *perform* his role as ‘Old Parkers.’ He explains, “they made the braying noise,

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fully expecting me to come bounding up to the table clowning away.” (ibid) Lived experience unites with how responses emerge in a lived story (‘braying’) that plays out in languaging (and a specific ‘world’). As ‘old Parkers’ fell back into his role by ‘clowning away’, he did more than gesture or draw on embodiment -he was performing. The complexity of the encounter of the classmates shows how Parkers’s body moves him to respond to their languaging. By so doing, he re-enacts a specific feeling that arises when he is together with the others. In fact, the encounter (and the concerting of moving bodies) draws on and, at once, makes present what has been hidden for so long. In such cases, languaging *is* how a person acts, perceives, feels, observes and performs tasks and practices or, otherwise said, ‘activity in which wordings play a part.’ (Cowley 2019).

In pursuit of how *languaging* informs social intelligence, we later present an ethnographic example (Fester-Seeger 2021). We focus on how a person engages with the absent which, crucially, *informs* languaging. This has implications for what Chemero (2011) and others call *radical embodied cognitive science* (REC). First, as in ecological psychology and enactivism, the move allows cognition to derive from an environment that enables coordination by living organisms. Hence, rejecting representational views, a history of activity, or coupling, can ground all cognitive powers (in all species). Like others who endorse REC, we deny a mind or brain draws on mental content as one calls or hears ‘Parkers, it’s old Parkers.’ We do not ascribe the events to an intellectual process of situated recall. However, unlike those in REC who use linguistic concepts (e.g. Fowler 2010), trace language to skills (Kiverstein, Rietveld 2021) or appeal to linguistic *bodies* (see DiPaolo et al. 2018), we stress how events beyond the body affect how we make and grasp wordings. Far from reducing to coupling with the environment, languaging extends primate social intelligence (see Sterelny 2010; Ross 2012). In what Margolis (2010b; 2016) calls an ‘enlanguaged world’, human ways of coupling (and languaging) extend social intelligence into rich embedded and performative events. On such a view, languaging has a major constitutive role in personhood. One can therefore ask what enables persons to engage in *activity in which wordings play a part*. Whereas Shotter (2003) treats such influences as ‘background’, we will later show how people draw on bodily moves in, among other things, othering those who are absent.

### 1.1 OUTLINE

We view bringing forth the absent as *othering* that uses diachronic dispositions. These link doings – and coupling – to how languaging re-evokes organic memories and past selves. Given its bodily basis, in 2.0, languaging can be defined as *activity in which wordings play a part*. Then, in 2.1, we sketch the term’s history. In 2.2, we show

how, since the 1960s, the concept has come to influence philosophy, biology and anthropology. In 3.0, looking beyond the bounds of languaging, we stress that, as *activity*, languaging excludes what linguists study (‘forms’), objects, and cultural paraphernalia. Events arise in domains that Margolis (2010b) and Gahrn-Andersen & Prinz (2021) have independently called *enlanguaged worlds*. In 3.1, we suggest that these (e.g. schools) enrich the sense of activities as people use things, hints, wordings and gesturings as we link this to Ingold’s (2022) question of how worlds grow into people. In 3.2, we suggest that, in an ever-changing or specious present, diachronic dispositions prompt people to re-evolve pasts and what is absent. As they do so, one co-acts oneself (in rapid scales) and, at once, re-evokes others. Diachronic use of dispositions links current experience with the absent in ways that, as we suggest, draw on othering. In 3.3, we use systemic ethnography from a case study to show how, in a few seconds, a person’s languaging is redolent with hints that set off such proclivities. A person’s co-acting with herself sets off othering. In 4.0, we return how people to entwine recursively as, with languaging, they make and assess ever-altering experiences framed by an enlanguaged world. As a result, as they engage in a present, they set off self-induced, cyclical effects that include ‘thinking’. In 5.0, we trace human languaging to, not just organism-environment coordination, but how we also draw on pasts, systemic dispositions and, thus, a history of social intelligence.

## 2.0 LANGUAGING

The events in the pub demand narrative and, thus, do not reduce to human ‘coupling.’ Yet linguistic and discursive models often start with code-like units that, given ‘language’, are said to be used. With recognition of the role of prosody, bodies and action, such ‘code-views’ (e.g. Harris 1981; Love 2004; Cowley 2011; Pennycook 2018) are increasingly being abandoned. Many trace ‘language’ to, not brains, but practices that change in space and time (Blair, Cowley 2003; Cowley 2011; Li et al. 2020; Thibault 2021). If one rejects mental gymnastics, one can use van den Herik’s (2022) focus on co-actional behaviour. One thus turns to languaging and denies ‘reality’ to words and rules (or discourse) to ask how human activity enables feeling and perceiving. Descriptions of language become just that—descriptions. Their practices derive (Love 2004; Cowley 2017) from languaging. As for chess, Gahrn-Andersen (this vol.), the term has three senses. First, ‘languaging’ (or ‘chess’) is, in general terms, human activity. Second, pieces, strategies and rules can be used in practices as linguistic/chess *activity types*. Third, both use actual bodies that, together and alone, perform emplaced and monitored activity. While *languaging* includes the three senses, as in REC, movement or, as Berthoz suggests (2012), perçaction<sup>1</sup> is the basis for learning to

1 This happens in rapid cycles that use bodily pico-and micro-dynamics within the enchronic events of perception

talk, sign, chess and, thus, all collective modes of action. Movement (or perçaction) is more rapid than action (or active perception) and shapes the felt or pre-reflective.

We offer neither a theory of language nor, indeed, a linguistic ontology. Through general, game-like, and bodily, in languaging, a person actualises practices and, at once, becomes/performs as a unique being. Given a basis in perçaction, the monitored (or feelingful) activity of perceiving, attending and performing favors co-acting with ourselves and, thus, with others. In 4.0, we show how languaging meshes speaking and acting with pico/micro dynamics as a person vocalizes, moves and gestures. Languaging includes both shouting 'Its Parkers, old Parkers' and the braying. Of course, the braying activity contrasts with the prosody of 'Parkers, it's old Parkers'. Whereas the old boys can hear (and repeat) 'old Parkers' as 'old Parkers', they do not all bray in a specific 'way' (in braying they do not use wordings or, given formulaic status, ways with wordings). Whereas braying is (and describes) sound, wordings are both sound ('nonce events') and open to descriptions as types. Within a setting, wordings can be perceived (and engendered) as ways of acting. Hence, 'wording' too has a triple sense. As neurophysiological, wordings are enacted/understood (by various parties) as nonce events.

In time, linguistic embodiment – wordings and ways with wordings – align with usage patterns, linguistic types and, with literacy, classifying, categorising and even coding the 'verbal'. Just as 'chess' is rule-following, 'language' can be seen as game-like: we use cultural settings that, today, include hardware and programs. Thus, in human forms of life, 'wordings' are, even now, evolving. Yet, in the first instance, languaging is like actually moving pieces in chess. Activity by mobile bodies enact performative skills, feeling and, indeed, selves-in-a-system. Later, we trace this to an enlanguaged world of practices that disclose events, situations, things – and other people. We become who we are through interdependencies, promptings and judgements or *enactive signification*<sup>2</sup> (Malafouris 2013). In making a clay pot, say, a potter is a 'person-in-the-system' (Fester-Seeger 2021) who uses promptings to adjust and, often, better performance (idem for a hunter, singer etc.). A person-in-the-system draws on others (and things) to better herself (or not). She uses bodily pico/micro dynamics together with an *other's* ways and, in time, modes of acting or social habits emerge as do, often, in relationships. A body gains diachronic dispositions that, once familiar, serve to control ourselves by using co-action. This happens, of course, in a common or enlanguaged world of beliefs that we may grasp, misunderstand or, indeed, reject. Before turning to how co-action unfolds, we place languaging in domains of history, theory and place.

## 2.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF LANGUAGING

For a historical linguist, LANGUAGING is an unexceptional English 'form' attested since at least the 1580s (see Cowley 2019). Whenever used, people re-evoked a wording that has long been anchored by letter patterns in block capitals. Whether, written, spoken or otherwise rendered (e.g. by sign or as computer output), there is a sense, in which *languaging* is just a perduring English *form* – a participle, gerund, or part of a verb with many ways of meaning. In English, its appearance coincides roughly with LANGUAGE which, in the 16th century slowly replaced 'tongue', 'vernacular' and 'tonguing' (with various spellings). In the earliest usage we know, Richard Mulcaster discusses the languaging of grammar schoolboys: they use the vernacular to render aloud what they see in Greek and Latin. Their *languaging*, therefore, grants understanding. Read through today's eyes, it is striking that, even then, *languaging* picks out co-actional, constructive, embodied activity cum understanding (through vocal activity where letters re-evoked wordings). In spite of this, theory long ignored languaging and how the vernacular informs understanding. Above all, this was because John Locke's view prevailed: the materials of knowledge were seen as, not wordings (or activity), but ideas based on sense-impressions and 'mind'. Until the term was revived (unknowingly) by Sellars, mentalism placed *languaging* outside philosophy. Empiricists focused on 'words' (often scientized as input/output or as 'forms') utterances, or speech; given Kant's influence, others viewed 'words' as abstractions (a priori forms, symbols etc.) represented in the mind of a 'user'. In parallel, the frequency of LANGUAGE outran LANGUAGING by a scale of (tens of) millions. Yet, languaging continuously 'returned' – people sought ways of describing expression that was judged, characteristically, as poor poetry, prophesy or typical of children (see Cowley 2019). Meanwhile, with phrenology, a hypothetical object associated with LANGUAGE was hypostatized as a 'language faculty'. Later, Saussure (1959) used 'mind' as the anchoring for the dichotomies of linguistic theory (e.g. *langue*/*parole*). Yet, languaging kept coming back. While early usage typically evoked vocal performance, once 'speech' became central to linguistics, *languaging* was used to describe, say, the chiselling of written text (Bross, Bowdry 1939) or, indeed, writing and testing (Lado 1979). As in radical embodiment, languaging is often (or always) public and constructive: it brings energy to 'stabilities' as co-actional activity contributes to practices that also use causal (and statistical) constraints.

Where one starts with living agents, one can adopt Nigel Love's (2004) idea of 'language' (Cowley 2017) as requiring two orders that are each irreducible to the other (*viz.* activity and wordings). In this sense language, or languaging, is distributed both with respect to

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and action. perçaction arises as we do things by drawing on integrating skills and dispositions with both the pico-effects of rhythm and micro events that arise in making syllables and gestures).

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wordings (i.e. as in chess) and as embodied activity. As languaging, talking, reading, thinking etc. bring the flat structures of the world to how people actualize practices by using living bodies. As children grow, they find that, generally, they rely on making/perceiving what can be *described as* words, rules, tones, alphabets, writing systems etc. As with numbers or digits, repeated collisions of the actual, factual, and practical grant wordings cultural roles (idem chess moves, strategies). In Love's (2004) terms, second-order cultural constructs serve populations, groups and individuals. Linguistic embodiment shapes nonce events that, given the role of place, cannot be 'explained' by linguistic types. Given a verbal aspect, the orders co-constitute languaging or, for Cowley (2011; 2014), function in symbiosis. Far from using a mental faculty, languaging is distributed in time, space and across artifacts. As public activity, it allows both third-person description and statistical analysis of population-level norms (based on corpora). It also engenders endophasic experience ('thinking') that, often, prompts first-person reports. Hence, languaging can be described – and investigated – from both 1st and 3rd person viewpoints; it is *activity* in which *wordings* play a part. Before scrutinizing the theoretical context, we emphasise the key points.

- Languaging arises as living bodies actualize practices by means of coordinated activity.
- Human participants – often supported by cultural means – use what happens by orienting, in part to physical wordings (i.e. activity with a verbal aspect).
- One cannot explain wordings by activity; activity cannot be explained by wordings.

### 2.2 LANGUAGING IN PHILOSOPHICAL, BIOLOGICAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONTEXTS

For those with philosophical, biological and other anthropological concerns, languaging is usually linked to, on the one hand, Wittgenstein and Heidegger and, on the other, to Maturana and/or Varela. Notably, Becker (1991) was the first to both specify these sources and, like us, to highlight their role as embodied activity. Famously, he wrote: "There is no such thing as language, only continual languaging, an activity of human beings *in the world*" (Becker 1991, 34). He is concerned to echo Wittgenstein's complaint that 'language' omits the particularity of experience. Becker makes use of the "Tree of life" (Maturana, Varela 1987) without taking an explicit constructivist (or enactivist) line. While those who follow

Varela later suggest that languaging is sense-making (arising for linguistic bodies (see Di Paolo et al. 2018), others emphasise socio-culture and human ways of living. Once heteronomy is granted to linguistic activity, languaging can clarify both neglected aspects of languages like sub-morphology (Bottineau 2012) and allow endophasia to be rethought as thick enunciative expression (Bondi 2020). Others reject sense-making by using Maturana's constructivist approach (e.g., Kravchenko 2011; Raimondi 2019b): weight falls, above all, on its recursivity (Maturana 1978; Raimondi 2019a) and how, over time, languaging connects cultures, biology and living material as humans become observers (see Kravchenko 2011). Over the life span, we use experience, other people's knowledge and languaging to link know-how with, say, common sense, religion, law, science etc. Whereas some regard Maturana as pursuing linguistic reality (in itself), others stress his biologic (Raimondi 2019a). In a series of brilliant papers, Kravchenko (2007; 2009; 2011; 2021) aligns languaging, roughly, with Thibault's (2011; 2021) ecological view of 'first-order languaging'. They treat the face-to-face as central to acting as an observer. For Thibault (2011), first-order languaging binds linguistic patterns into activity and perception: languaging is public speech (or, presumably, signing) as integrated with whole-body activity. However, if Thibault focuses on bodily pico and micro dynamics (in solo and concerted co-action), Kravchenko (2009) treats languaging as pre-eminently verbal, vocal and experienced (he excludes symbolizations, reading, writing etc.)<sup>3</sup> In contrast, we offer a wider view. Like Love (2017), we apply languaging to all forms of activity that use 'language' (i.e. talking, writing, thinking, shouting, dreaming, watching TV etc. etc). Hence, individual activity enacts sociocultural practices – languaging arises as we talk or, indeed, use patternings as texts or use devices from telegraphy to computers. While one can restrict languaging to the vocal, we stress that, with printing and computation, languaging came to include multi-modal resources and semiotic assemblages (Pennycook 2018). However, regardless of differences, for all, languaging is activity in which wordings play a part – activity by living human bodies. Emphasis on living invites a philosophy of process realism. Given this view, Wilfred Sellars used the younger Wittgenstein's picture theory to bring a concept of languagings to the academy. He offers a 'transcendental' view (see Seiberth 2021) by tracing the said to judging. He links human emplacement to what is expressed/said and, thus, naturalises semogenesis. He sketches how, without mind, bodies can engender 'thoughts.' Prompted by what is present (at an instant and a place), parties are moved by expertise and experience to co-act with others and themselves. Isomorphisms enter doings, what is said

3 Kravchenko (2009) needs to separate the use of written patterns from languaging bound up with talk because, as he argues, these open up quite different cognitive domains. As a result, to re-establish what they have in common, he returns to a neo- Peircean view of symbols (Kravchenko 2021), a view at odds with that defended here.

or thought, and indeed implied. For example, biting into a pastry can set off languagings that, for Sellars, may be overt, covert or hidden. When overt, languagings are public – they are activity that includes but does not reduce to wordings. Alongside overt languagings, like Bottineau, Sellars stresses the endophasic. However, Sellars also uniquely stresses that humans use hidden languagings (and thus diachronic dispositions). For example, as we bite the pastry, we may be moved to lay it aside – this is no reflex action. Later, we may say that the contents were *runny* -- without having thought so ‘on the fly’. For Sellars, then, languagings are judgments hereby we engage with the world or, in other terms, part of coactional world-making. In mediating the said with judgments, people mesh knowledge, beliefs, and emplaced experience (isomorphisms). Given real process, we engender unexpected aspects of encounters with the world. While unlikely that Halliday had read Sellars, he too appeals to process philosophy and allows for temporalities to mesh in a symbiosis of the material and the biological. The difference lies in that, whereas Halliday’s semogenesis concerns the sayable, Sellars allows languagings to use isomorphisms that draw on pasts that transcend the known (and, indeed, to remain hidden). As we will show, people make isomorphisms present and, thus prompt themselves to disclose hidden aspects of the world and – just as strikingly – other people. Hence, there can be good reason to attend to wordings (as if they were types). In languaging, emplaced wordings (or nonce events) can disclose things for a listener that would otherwise be hidden. This also applies to reading: as Mulcaster’s (1582) schoolboys show, one can use natural wit. Emplaced use of the vernacular can open up the unknown in a classic text. In our terms, as observers, we bring perception to activity as diachronic dispositions set off judgments about the unknown and unknowable. One can tap into other people’s expertise and knowledge while seeking out unknowns, flaws and challenging ignorance. In order to pursue how this is possible, one must consider the limits of languaging.

### 3.0 BEYOND THE BOUNDS OF LANGUAGING

As emplaced activity, languaging resembles a game like chess in that it uses practices (and second-order cultural constructs) within a human form of life (or ‘activity’). In this sense, languaging arises as people happen (through activity) that draws on a consensual domain (of activity types). It grants multi-scalar complexity to a person’s lived now (Madsen 2017). Echoing Gahrn-Andersen (this vol), as a person, a chess player can appreciate the game, describe parts, moves and strategies and, above all, actualize practices by *playing* chess. Languaging involves personhood as ‘life’, ‘language’ and ‘cognition’ unfold as distributed, evolving processes: in face-to-face settings, therefore, languaging can prompt us to listen, speak, think or perform. People observe, influence each other, respond by doing, feeling and saying that calls forth

action (and perceiving) with mixed results for events, projects, history and a life span of self-constructing. The events of languaging shape a *natural history* as emplaced circumstances enable people to use various pasts (both their own and those of others) to go on and do wayfinding as, at times, they project futures. Where languaging is overt, as it often is, we amalgamate multi-scalar dynamics that *are* both experience and public expression. Rather than posit context, we ask *where* the ongoing activity occurs and how what is present (for someone) channels ways of responding to what becomes present. What lies beyond the bounds of languaging is not me (or I), not us, not activity, and not its material results but the systemic boundaries where languaging takes place. As activity, languaging and attending to what is there can often, take on a verbal aspect (i.e., we talk about what we ‘see’). Although biting into a pastry can set off languaging, this happens in a world beyond its bounds (e.g. of flour, supply chains and a baker’s skill). If we are to reach beyond the bounds of languaging, we must ask what permeates and informs linguistic activity. One needs to incorporate ethnographic concerns to achieve such an outcome. Hence, we focus on members of communities who undertake practices: we stress, first, material things and, second, abstracta bound up with ‘language’ and propositions. Initially, however, we argue that since at least one person-observer is involved, languaging is co-constitutive of experience. It thus excludes:

- Geophysical factors (in many scales and modes of definition) such as physical forces, institutions, situations, events, and what we perceive as concrete or abstract things.
- Non-conscious workings of living bodies and how people ‘exist’ independently of an emplaced history of engaging with selves/others.

As many linguistic resources change at slow rates (e.g. verbal patterns) they spread over artifacts and time: language is polyphonic and re-echoes with voices (Bakhtin 1984). Yet, as activity, languaging is emplaced and, thus, favours human interdependencies. We use bodily pico/micro dynamics in behaviour that shapes the pre-reflective and how the said/done leads to opportunities, feelings, emotions, sayings, tellings, perceivings, attitudes, believings, knowings etc. But languaging *excludes* neurophysiology – in understanders, listeners, watchers, speakers, readers, computer operators, writers etc. Given reliance on activity that includes wordings, like dancers, people display for, to, and with each other in concerted, performative co-action. As Maturana (1988) stresses, recursivity enacts a history of associated display. Hence, languaging shapes relationships such that, with one person, we may draw on character, looks, where I come from, or if I like French wine and, with another, place such factors beyond its bounds. Crucially, in languaging

(including use of ‘texts’), people display and evoke interdependencies that are dialogical and temporal. These arise as you perceive something of *me* (not just display) that evokes (or invokes or provokes) something of *you*. Where not suppressed, I may perceive (or misperceive) the resonance.

Equally, interdependencies arise as I render present aspects of my display and, if not suppressed, I may bring forth in another mode by co-acting with, not you, but myself. Languaging, thus, excludes the conceptions of (a) physical objects; and (b) virtual forms. Even when incorporated into activity – often as wordings – material properties are never themselves present. Languaging does NOT include letters, writing implements, books, computers or screens (neither as encountered nor as physical objects): in themselves, these lie outside how we happen. For many, this is a standard view. Applied consistently, the logic also places abstract and virtual forms beyond the bounds: languaging excludes words, phrases, tones, utterances, sentences and texts. Hence, activity is *constrained* by the rate-independent items/patterns that Nigel Love calls second-order constructs (that often evoke wordings).<sup>4</sup> Languaging thus excludes, not only the objects of structural, cognitive and functional linguistics, but also ‘language’ as it is described/constructed by grammarians, philologists and (many) philosophers. Languaging also excludes what we describe as language systems, dialects, registers, genres, paragraphs, sentences and constructions. It excludes language use, pragmatics, syntax, morphology and phonology, sociolinguistic variables like class, gender and ethnicity as well as covariants such as style, register, variation, social meaning etc. While, in slow scales, languaging evokes clouds of *abstracta* (as we orient to *concreta*), it leaves out (linguistic) meanings, concepts and the like. These startling conclusions follow from tracing languaging to nonce events arising as activity by people-observers. It restricts languaging to what they observe, what is present and, crucially, what makes observing possible. Languaging focuses on people. As Gahrn-Andersen (this vol.) argues, this enables languaging to be part of practices

(that are beyond its bounds). Wordings thus bring great richness to languaging and the sense of lived and living experience which, as in knowing how to play chess, is channelled by what Mead (2015), calls the ‘generalised other’. Observing arises as events/feelings become present and evoke what we will call an enlanguaged world.

### 3.1 THE ENLANGUAGED WORLD

Language – and languaging – are part of “the wider living world” (Steffensen, Cowley 2021, 734) and so, for many purposes, no more need be said – especially if one highlights linguistic experience. Yet, if we pursue *what human is*, languaging must use how human powers co-function with social, cultural and geophysical embeddedness. As Ingold (2022) notes, “growing into the world” means that “the world grows in” us (Ingold 2022, 7). One must ask *where* and *how* such growing occurs. As we have seen, humans have a capacity for using more and less than what is present or, simply, for observing. Using what REC calls ‘coupling’, languaging enacts feeling, thinking, judging and, thus, how micro/pico dynamics inform action at an enchronic rate (i.e. in terms of what we report). Languaging links practices (and the ‘said’) with bodily rhythms and gestures or, simply, *how* we act. So, what aspects draw on the development, sustenance and fulfilment of a multifaceted person whose life span unites a lineage, history, epigenetics and the ongoing experience? The multiscale must unite movements such that, at each instant, certain aspects become present for (at least one) someone (either self or other). As Margolis (2010b; 2016) suggests, such a person inhabits an enlanguaged world<sup>5</sup>. In this world, as we take part in languaging and, we act and perceive by drawing on culture to participate in practices.

Placing languaging in an enlanguaged world resembles, in part, Darwin’s (1981) view of ‘language’ as part instinct and part art. Although his view of instinct is obsolete (acquired habits are not inherited), human ways of doing things *do* unite activity with culturally derived wordings. The enlanguaged world suffices to prompt

4 Although properties of letters/programs and patterns described by lay-people or linguists are beyond the bounds of languaging, we *can* use them in attending to purport or identifying/bringing forth import. In skilled linguistic action (hence many activity types) we presuppose materials/patterns in making use of definition, discussion, logic and debate. In such cases, while these *are* part of languaging, they do not work as pro-optatives (as posits or, indeed, models). Just as in chess playing, they do not function as patterns or materials. Hence, in chess or languaging, people *do/say* things and make moves without knowing what they are doing. They use the interdependency of languages, practices and observing. By contrast, in infants and most animals, perception dominates because their acting and perceiving is less channelled by practices and attendant habits.

5 The observer links what things mean (for us) with how the properties of materials and patterns connect with the enlanguaged; similar views arise with, say, ‘extended human ecology’ (Steffensen 2013) or a ‘linguistic niche’ (Dreon, in press). An early usage of *enlanguaged world* is Vorster’s (2002) theological discussion of how the “enlanguaged world of antiquity” brought a sense to ‘soul’ (or *pneuma*) as part of body. In autopoietic enactivism, some evoke a “linguistically mediated and layered, or “enlanguaged world (Cuffari et al. 2015, 1094)” of an ‘autonomous’ agent. In contrast to cultural view, it leaves out the other, affect and answerability. Finally, Kiverstein and Rietveld (2021) use ‘enlanguaged world’ of how “the affordances of the human ecological niche are interwoven with practices or speaking and writing”. Leaving aside these body-centred alternatives, we treat the enlanguaged world as cultural (Vorster 2002; Margolis 2016) and biotechnical (Gahrn-Andersen, Prinz 2021).

an observer – or artefactual self – to use sensibility and artful modes of coaction (with self and others) that call on embodied and cultural dispositions. Linguaging is coping that changes what is present as persons act with wordings that allow new modes of conscious activity. Margolis (2010a) frames similar ideas as follows:

“What has been missing in nearly the whole of Western philosophy is a sense of the artifactuality (literally: the social construction) of the human self—through an infant’s internalizing the cultural construction of true language. This, the Darwinian element—or, perhaps better, the hybrid cultural creation of our uniquely enlanguaged world, the transformation, the artifactualizing, of the natural world, itself—could not have been adequately conceived until well after the appearance of Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* (1859).” (Margolis 2010a, 47)

Although we reject internalization to present humans as observers who self-construct, we place linguaging in an enlanguaged world where people weave a braid of thought, action and understanding. Within practices, people become actors – they use more than Maturana’s ‘consensual domain’ (Gahrn-Andersen, Prinz 2021) Linguaging unites the physical and biological or, for Margolis, aspects of thought and life are enlanguaged. As we actualize practices, thought and life are both channelled by cultural history (e.g. going to a public school) and also a person’s life story (what happens there). Within cultural domains, we take on ways of moving, gesturing and talking – turns of phrase, ways of walking. While rich in social meaning and facilitated by accommodation,<sup>6</sup> we selectively assimilate the other’s ways. Further, as Gahrn-Andersen (2021) suggests, things, events, people, situations etc. come ‘with concepts attached.’ If a drone appears and hovers, the enlanguaged world affects how we orient to a present thing – even if nothing is said or ‘thought’. A hovering drone elicits experience that uses sociocultural assumptions of such technology (e.g. invading privacy). Just with Sellar’s ‘hidden’ linguagings, concepts and things allow denotative alignment that need not be explicitly uttered. The same applies when artifacts inform observing – given, say cochlear implants, the enlanguaged world allows devices to change human powers (Gahrn-Andersen, Prinz 2021). Thus, whereas Margolis stresses how the enlanguaged encompasses thought, life and doing, Gahrn-Andersen and Prinz add how things and practices bear on neurobiology (and ways of bringing forth newness). In an enlanguaged world, they

argue, brains ready us for “how information is poised for retrieval and immediate use as and when required” (Clark 2003, 69). In other words, emplacement readies us for what comes. Beyond the brain, poise and carefully controlled movement enables co-action such as dance and musical improvisation. As applied to linguaging, poise is part of heteronomy (Steinert, Stewart 2009) or how wordings and actions co-attune brains, bodies and environments. Below, we show how a person uses poise as part of co-acting with herself: through linguaging, she changes what is present for her and evokes others (both absent and emplaced). Such powers arise over a life span of self-construction and denotational alignment as, in an enlanguaged world, understanding can be partial (and grow). Events appear for an individual (idiosyncratically) and in ways that may influence general usage. Hence, beyond activity and wordings, people use what is present in their-surroundings, in organised things (artifacts), and in assemblages of routines (poised by institutions, genres and strategies). They gain both common and idiosyncratic approaches as they manage and assess doings, beings, and becomings in the bodily pico/micro and, at once, engender linguaging. The observable can trigger deliverances of expertise, experience, skills and techniques. In enlanguaged worlds, linguaging is emplaced, part of living and, at once, enables an artefactual self to link history, experience and human modes of life. Much of what lies beyond the bounds of linguaging functions through devices, institutions, routines and ways with wording. Linguaging unfolds in worlds whose features, in Ingold’s (2022) metaphor, grow into a person.

### 3.2 OTHERING: DIACHRONICALLY DERIVED

The passage from *The Unconsoled* shows a human experience of performatively re-evoking the past in affective and aesthetic ways. Each party uses diachronic dispositions for *othering* centred on, not a mind, but, rather, what is evoked for a person-in-the-system (Fester-Seeger 2021). In the pub, others prompt clowning. Fester-Seeger (2021; submitted for publication) introduces a concept of *othering* to extend work on “the diachronic influence and transformative potential of things in human mental life” (Malafouris 2020, 3). Turning from how things affect parties, what Malafouris calls ‘thinging’, she examines how absent persons add to co-action. She brings into account how absent persons affect parties. Human action thus amalgamates temporalities that draw on and enact interdependencies: we remember, re-evolve, expect etc. As we draw on absent persons, we are changed,

6 These are foundational sociolinguistic concepts. Social meaning is classically associated with phonetic ‘ways of doing things’ that people typically use non-consciously as they move from place to place and encounter to encounter (Eckert, Labov 2017). While some give rise to stereotypes and others are markers, many function as unnoticed habits. The concept collides with ‘accommodation’ which captures actual shifts towards and/or away from, among other things, both ways of speaking and what we have called the rich use of pico/micro dynamics (see Coupland 2010). This too is usually non-conscious: it connects closely with features that we associate with othering – especially mimicry of various kinds.

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influenced and, thus, informed by othering. Whereas Fester-Seeger (2021) highlights how the results of the process (diachronic dispositions) enable *presencing* (see, Fester-Seeger, submitted for publication), we now ask how othering is enacted in an enlanguaged world.

Given our social proclivity, othering thrives on variation across individuals, groups, societies and, above all, history. Indeed, it favours better use of distributed agency and, thus, how the plasticity of human beings can be used to draw on othering and create new environmental possibilities or modes of action. Next, we show how othering can draw on – and set off – a tendency to do the right thing (for someone). It allows ‘doing things right’ (or the aesthetic) to anchor how one uses the qualitative to act as one uses experience to follow feelings, make judgements and use the present to sense what is right/wrong. Participative action energizes parties that use distributed systems to actualise practices.

### 3.3 SYSTEMIC ETHNOGRAPHY: OTHERING IN ACTION

We now turn to how othering draws on the interdependencies of the enlanguaged world (including the second-order constructs of linguists). In this context, we show, first, that it is cognitively non-trivial. The concept of *othering* thus clarifies how performative dynamics enrich ‘coupling.’ In short, experience of an emplaced setting in the enlanguaged world enables a person to perform while using co-action to actualize practices. In illustrating the results, we use a person-oriented systemic ethnography backed up by video and acoustic analysis (Fester-Seeger 2021). Evidence comes from how, over a semester, a group of students design a video as part of a joint project. The case is from, what could be perceived by an observer as, a mildly dysfunctional group where parties use their strengths to fill in for each other’s weaknesses. Much depends on deriving dispositions that show ‘sides’ of the others – even if that person is absent. In showing rich and aesthetically charged results, we focus on the most active group member (‘Paula’). Although we highlight a one-to-one interview, just previously, together with the ethnographer and ‘Vincent’ (another group member), Paula has described the project in her leader-manager role.

As she takes the initiative, Paula places absent parties ‘around her’ as, with Vincent, she constructs an

account. This orientation space (McNeill 1992) first emerges as she recalls initial ideas. As in Figure 1, having said ‘yah’ (image A) with a rhythmic hand gesture, she politely presents four perspectives. First, she indicates Vincent’s (image B); then, she touches her chest to indicate hers (image C); next, using a circular gesture she designates the missing Anna’s suggestion (image D); and, finally, (in E) she places the absent Gaby’s idea on her left. Using conventional means, she presents herself as central to a group that unites Vincent with the currently absent members. However, there is more to this than meets the eye: for the ethnographer, it is notable that the group’s least productive members – for Paula – are named last and, as we shall see, they are also placed in the leftmost position.

Half an hour later, in the individual interview, Paula admits that she felt many frustrations. When urged to clarify, as in the *Unconsoled*, she uses dispositions for othering to fill out happenings that, in a shared enlanguaged world, are transparent to the interviewer (Theres). To enhance readability, we summarise what we describe around five points:

1. When prompted, Paula suggests that, while pleased enough about the project, she experienced frustrations with the group.
2. When asked to go on, she alters her poise and, as she says “it could have been better”, she begins to speak as if the group members present to her left.
3. Using whole body action, she shows that, far from accommodating to her, they persisted in silence, blocking her initiatives.
4. Echoing what she heard, she mimics their voices.
5. She shows how she was moved to take up a leader role

Paula chooses to focus on events and, then, re-enacts and re-evokes her frustrations. In helping the reader, we use transcription that shows Paula’s part in bold – picking our wordings and other salient languaging (T is the interviewer and P Paula: in this first exchange, we note a .67 second pause, a short pause (.), drawl (:), self-disrupted speech (=), and a breathy chuckle (.hh)).

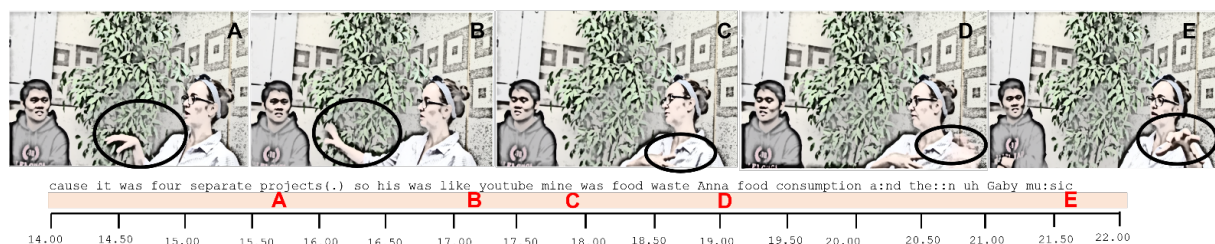


Figure 1: Paula and Vincent in the group interview. Paula placing the absent group members.



**Cowley, Fester-Seeger**

1 T: And now? How how do you= how content are you now with the result and that you decided for the topic?

**2 P: A:h I'm (0.67) was content with the overarching theme bu:t just how like the group dynamic was and how everyone worked together I wa= I'm kindahh frustrated (.hh)**

3 T: O:ka:y- (.)

Listening/understanding is crucial to languaging and, even if performed silently, it brings much to co-actional events (for self and others). Indeed, as Theres asks the question, Paula alters her poise by cocking her head as is shown in Figure 2

in a rhythmical movement time to fit "it could have been better" by drawing her arm in again" (Fester-Seeger 2021, 85). Later, she will extend the orientation space and –as with Vincent –place absent group members on her left. Thus, in 5, Theres requests elaboration by recycling her wordings and thus getting her to act recursively.

5 T: o:ka:y (.) why Ho= how could it have been better? [((unintelligible))]

6 P: [Becau]se I feel like I was talking to a wall ↓ (0.64) you know (.) like when you try to give direction:ns

7 T: [yah]

8 P: o:r you're trying to get feedba:ck

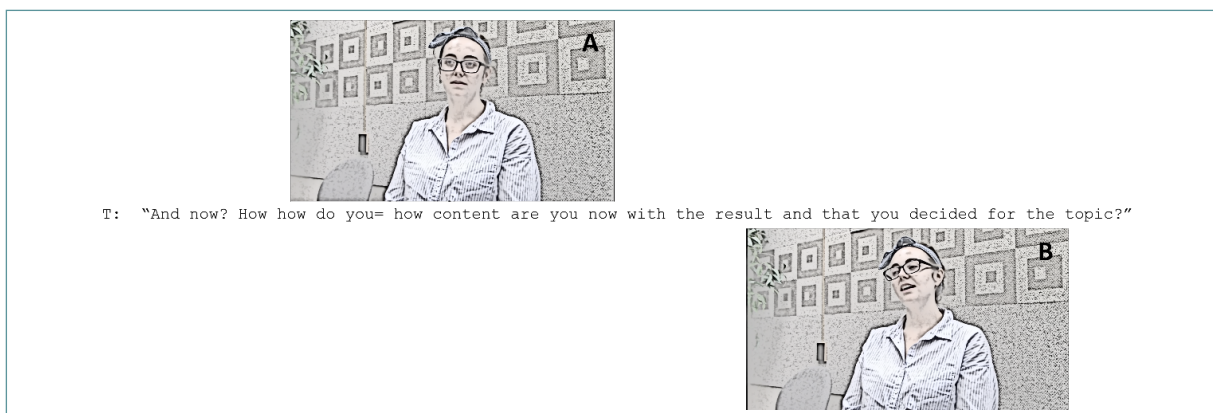


Figure 2: Paula changes poise.

The movement prefigures a new stance or footing: as we will see, she speaks, not as an interviewee, but as having something to tell. Yet, in (2), she begins in third-person mode, reporting that she was content with the theme, but that the group dynamic was less satisfactory. Towards the end of the burst, she 'corrects' (or betters) her way of displaying. She shifts to first-person and follows up with a kind of laugh (I wa= I'm kindahh frustrated (.hh)). She begins to present as Paula-in-the-system: opportunely, Theres responds with a slow 'Okay' (470 ms in length) that Paula allows to become an emplaced pause. The next bursts show a shift in pace (=), and a framing hand movement:

**4 P: because I feel like it could have been better ((hand movement rightwards))**

5 T: o:ka:y (.) why Ho= how could it have been better? [((unintelligible))]

In her new footing, as narrator, Paula draws on feelings from the past (and, thus, othering herself). She draws on co-action to move herself to say that things ('it') *could have been better*. In the ethnography, she shifts from "her prior rather stiff interactional interview-appropriate embodiment" and, then, "moves her right arm rightwards

Rather than answer what she is asked, she reflects on her feeling as Paula-in-the-system. Then, supported by a non-committal 'yah' from Theres, offers three metaphors: (1) it was like talking to a wall, (2) giving directions to someone who cannot understand, or (3) giving feedback (by implication, to no avail). She tries to *explain* from within the system. Of course, the bodily micro/pico grant a precise sense of what she says/does as she plays the narrator who overlaps the question and forcefully hints at her feeling (in the present tense). Intonationally, her uttering falls into two chunks – how she feels and what it was like. Both are energetic – and highly contrastive. She begins with a very high pitch (about an octave over her usual level) and, in the second part (on a continuously descending tone) she drops into a male rage (156 Hz). A long pause of 750 ms follows. She enacts an iconic 'explanation' of how, in her facilitating role, she met silence: in Figure 3, her whole upper body moves as she rests her arms on the table and rises slightly from her chair.



Figure 3: Paula othering herself in relation to the absent group members.

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In subsequent silence and stillness, she holds her mouth slightly open, teeth showing, as if waiting. Then, recursively, she offers analogies – using an impersonal ‘you’. It is like giving directions (accompanying gaze ‘teases out’ an affirmative ‘yah’) or, perhaps, giving feedback (by implication, often a waste of breath). In using these analogies, the final prominences are co-enacted with rightward arm movements. As she retells (or re-evokes) her feeling, her body position becomes prominent as she presents herself at odds with her silent group. As Paula-in-the-system she has distanced herself, re-evoked them as *others* and, for the ethnographer, created a sense that the role is “strenuous” (Fester-Seeger 2021, 88). Like Parkers who is moved to clowning, Paula exudes a sense of trying to energise all-too-silent companions. Then, in spite of minimal feedback, she launches into an elaborate burst of languaging.

9 T:[hm:]

10 P: o:r like (.) you’re planning stuff but everyone kinda tells you last minute o:r .hhhh they would tell you like “o:h we:ll” >cause I would ask< oh what’s your input what’s your ideas what your thou= thoughts, feelings what do you want to add to it (.) (and were) like oh we’re okay with whatever (.)and I am like .hhhhhh hhh I don’t wanna be a dictator but: okay (.) you do this you do that kind of thing .hhh (.64) 11 I oOkay 12 P it’s very nonchalant like o oh yah I’m okay with whatever

Paula evokes a sense of being a person in an orientation space. Plainly, she feels a need to offer more than ‘explanation’. Responding to her own feelings, and co-actions, when starts off by trying to be specific (“o:r like (.) you’re planning stuff”). As she does so, undertakes a surprising shift. In Figure 4, she appears almost distracted as she picks at her right forearm and says ‘you’re (followed by a 317 ms pause). She is no longer gazing at Theres.

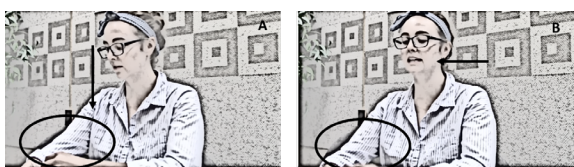


Figure 4: Paul returning to events in the classroom.

After nervous distraction,<sup>7</sup> instead of *explaining*, she re-enacts emotion. While we lack space to describe detail, we note two points. First, as she says, ‘planning,’ her gaze fixates on the table and, at once, her head posture shifts to her left. Orienting to her left, she returns to events in the classroom. She has recursively re-created the orientation space from the previous interview: hence, the expression (“but everyone kind of telling you last minute”) makes her

hint transparent (Theres knows about absences, failures to meet deadlines, mishaps with media etc.). As she unearths the others from her past, pace and excitement grows. Paula-in-the-system displays how *she* did her best, how things could have been better. At least, she does face-work; at best, she creates a learning potential (for herself). With covert hints at the failings of the others, she presents herself as better. She uses presencing (see, Fester-Seeger, submitted for publication.) and the tricks noted by Ishiguro—mocking iteration, striking musicality, jarring repetitions and polyphony. As she gets it all off her chest, she releases pent-up frustration. This is dramatic as she utters: “what’s your ideas what your thou= thoughts, feelings what do you want to add to it.” Not only does she find a very striking rhythm but, as she does so, she shows consistent leftward orientation (see Figure 5)



Figure 5: Paula performing her leader role.

In seconds, Paula has not only said that there were problems with the group dynamics, but she has evoked reasons for her frustrations. As Paula-in-the-system uses an enlanguaged world (shared with Theres and others), she shows the failings (as they are for her). The failings are *not made explicit*: they are evoked by co-actions that prompt her to perform as leader-manager. She displays as Paula-in-the-system and, by so doing, shows why she feels frustrated. In this co-actional performance, she hints at her strengths, how she compensated for weaknesses and, of course, implies more. Given space limitations, we say only that her re-evocation of how she is suggests what she has to learn. While the pedagogical setting contributes to emphasis on bettering and learning, the dynamics here, as so often, place weight on doing the right thing. As Dewey (1971) thought, the affective and the aesthetic bring forth what is lived as good (or not).

### 4.0 AN EVER-CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

A person-in-a-system enacts what Bakhtin (1990) calls ‘a unique position in the world’. Exhibiting uniqueness, Paula discloses part of the enlanguaged world. Far from being *there*, ‘in’ a context (or environment), she

<sup>7</sup> For Darwin (1872) and Dewey (1981), such moments prefigure a kind of semogenesis that Jaynes (1977) calls excerption.

brings othering (and things) to what becomes present. She uses how she cocks her head, whole body mimicry, shifts in pace, taking a first-person stance, metaphor, and a changing orientation space. In languaging, people display as, not only bodies, but as persons with unique ways of speaking, moving, using wordings and managing experience. In an enlanguaged world, the present evokes diachronically derived dispositions that set off co-action that influences how one acts, attends and actively perceives. In the case described, Paula starts as an interviewee, evokes her role, re-enacts what happens, and, then, moves herself to remember and display. While languaging can be wilful, it much more typically depends on making present pico/micro-events that, in themselves, prompt one to set off/draw on co-actional effects. The resulting (unremarkable) happenings trigger habits, as systems-in-a-person (and sets of dispositions) use dynamics of how we speak, move and feel in an orientation space. As lived experience, the present arises as people move or, in Margolis's terms, link artefactual selves to facets of each other. Human orienting and perceiving affect a person-in-the-system who uses affect and aesthetics in recursive acting and speaking. Thus, feeling recycles thoughts and, at times, imbues thoughts with feeling (e.g. adopting a first-person perspective or attending to how *they* seem).

A person manifests uniqueness, emplacement and a changing stance. In using rich dynamics, Paula's orientation space does more than frame understanding. In an enlanguaged world, she makes Gaby the most 'other', re-evokes feelings, draws on events past ('frustration'), and, at once, readies herself for a leader-manager role in the next interview. As part of practices, languaging recursively recycles talk, beliefs and models recursively that bring novelty forth as part of understanding. In Paula's case, she hints at nudging and nagging and, at once, this can feel like talking to a wall: she learns about groups and herself. Yet, the specificity of wordings and hints inform not just what is present (let alone 'there!') but also interdependencies within an enlanguaged world. It allows persons to use normativity, develop habits and manage, say, orienting in space. As primates, human dynamics contribute to social intelligence; and, as humans, we unite practices, the collective and selves whose ways are informed by heteronomy.

Languaging divides embodiment from the performative in ways that challenge folk views of 'language', artificial codes, Socratic tradition and propositional analysis. Rather than seek 'explanation,' ethnography shows that linguistic formalization draws on special practices of observing and *describing*. In this case, they licence the propositions: (1) Paula was frustrated; (2) Her initiatives were blocked; (3) She got little feedback; (4) She ended up in a leader-manager role. Such claims are no more represented as 'thoughts' than they need be made public: they are implicit in the performative or the languaging that occurs in an enlanguaged world. The propositions draw on skilled linguistic action or practices: they use

what Gahrn-Andersen (this vol.) would call careful use of pieces, rules and strategies (words that allow denotational alignment). Since they are based on practices, not languaging, 'language' in no part of gesture control (and tracking), linguistic skills or linguistic bodies. Ours is a strong claim. It suggests that REC does not scale up because it ignores how practices channel linguistic dynamics in performative domains. In Fester-Seeger's (2021) terms, it leaves out how we act as persons-in-systems, who, in time, become systems-in-persons with finely tuned sensitivity to what becomes present. This is how we understand the epigraph from Heidegger, "Dasein understands itself initially and for the most part in terms of the world," (Heidegger 2010 [1953], 117 [120]). We trace this, in one case at least, to evoked dispositions that can re-evoke other people (even if not physically 'here'). In Heidegger's terms, innerworldly things at hand" enable us to elicit "the Dasein-with of others" (ibid). More accessibly, as a unique individual engages with the present and co-acts with absent others, she draws on what Bakhtin (1990) calls answerability.

## 5.0 SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE: RADICAL EMBODIMENT REFRAMED

Languaging and its rich dynamics exemplify primate social intelligence. From early infancy, we feature 'friendly behaviours' like those which Alison Jolly (1966) noted in lemurs – the observation behind the widely accepted hypothesis that primate intelligence is social (see Ross 2012; Cowley et al. in press). Like a lemur, Paula unthinkingly engages with others. Yet, unlike a lemur, she uses an artefactual self to re-evoke absent parties. Oddly, most in cognitive science and linguistics ignore the evolution of social intelligence. Even those who reject mental gymnastics often prefer to mimic Marr (1982) in asking *how* questions of phenomena 'above' a supposed implementational level. Whereas the computational theory of mind posits mental models that 'supervene' on neurophysiology, many in REC seek a comparable view of organism-environment relations. In focusing on response to what is present, we stress that, for social primates, experience (for an animal) is rich and continuous. It does not reduce to 'coupling'. Indeed, as Malafouris (2013) shows, people engage with things that set off signification. With languaging, we show, this is extended by othering. As people engage with others, interdependencies and diachronic dispositions emerge from the rich dynamics arising as bodies actualise practices.

For Sterelny (2010), hominin social intelligence co-evolved with an eco-social niche. We gained extreme plasticity and hypersocial agency (Ross 2007) as trade and other institutions changed practices and, with languaging, we came to narrate selves (Dennett 1993; Ross 2012). By stressing the enlanguaged world, we do not treat 'language' as like a virtual, serial machine. Rather, like Margolis, we stress culture, doing and the rise of artifactual selves. Paula is not just a narrator but, rather,

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re-evokes a lived story. She uses pico / micro dynamics in affective coaction that evokes others and her own past experiences. As with material engagement (Malafouris 2013), we use othering to re-evolve facets of persons (or how they are for us). While brain-enabled, much depends on public languaging in enlanguaged worlds. Hence 'language' is a result – not the basis – for practices: as Gahrn-Andersen (2021) notes, things come with concepts attached. Even for an infant, a drone that hovers sets off bodily pico/micro responding (not thinking). Though the effects align with activity in which wordings play a part ("he was surprised"), this is no way of 'explaining' the pre-reflective. In William James' (1890 metaphor, we must trust the 'saddle on which we perch' (p. 609): 'As we ride onwards, what is present changes as we amalgamate perceiving, actions – and perçaction – in the now. Embodiment is performative, affective and exudes qualities: it depends on diachronic dispositions. Languaging arises in a person at the core of what Becker (1999) calls an 'expressive image' or, indeed, we are Dasein who, as persons, need to be understood as part of the enlanguaged world. As human living beings co-act with others in the world, they do not do so through mental gymnastics, but through their emplacement in an enlanguaged world. They build on linguistic skills that arise in engaging with things and, indeed, a history of othering.

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## Re-evoking absent people: what languaging implies for radical embodiment

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