

## Towards an ergonomic flat telepathy

Etymologically, telepathy describes remote experience –*tele* meaning distance and *pathos* meaning feeling or perception. Despite its theoretical coinage I propose to read telepathy beyond the caricature of getting inside someone else's head and understanding their thoughts, silently. That would somehow portray telepathy –and language– as a set of clear cut meanings or solid concepts, notwithstanding the abstract process these two undergo in order to transform phenomenological inputs into intelligible outputs; ignoring a bodily and aesthetic process that is profoundly linguistic, and, not in spite of it but because of that, highly unstable. Telepathy isn't be just the fleshy version of a smartphone –yet we definitely use a smartphone telepathically.

The very moment we are aware of an experience we are remembering it already, distorting it, mediating it linguistically. “Live” experience would be an illusion generated by a just-recorded stimulus: as it happens with the speed of light, saying we have a *direct* or *instantaneous* experience of something is a colloquial way of overlooking a delay, so small, that reveals itself only at a great distance. Only because this lapse is invisible to the eye, too fast for our own subjectivity to grasp, we shouldn't rule out telepathy as a part of the process, dismissing it as an impossible psychic invention of scientific fiction.

In our contemporary scheme, experience, as language does, differs from this culturally constructed notion of inner meaning or a sensation proper. When thought about, experience is consistently revealed as the conundrum of different “exteriors”; just as an orgasm cannot happen on the absence of stimulus. We don't feel it this way, yet, in retrospect, we cannot imagine it otherwise: our “own experience” is always objectified; our senses are ways of sharing with something else in a variable number of directions to produce what we call sensations. A caress, a reading, a landscape. Even when we have an inner feeling or an internal experience of ourselves, from a headache, to the flu through sadness, we submit to the reification of this pain or sensation as an autonomous object within “ourselves” that happens, takes its own time and space, and leaves. This makes experience somehow manageable, even when it overcomes us, perhaps after we've experienced it. We subdivide the self and treat the experience as a temporary harddrive partition so that even the internal proprioception is materialized sooner or later: that is, formalised or verbalized, and taken care of socially and linguistically. That is why to feel the different parts of your body when you are still, you have to focus on them, name them either with words or with a sense of direction or intentionality, separating yourself momentarily through mind language or meditation, to give that inadvertent constant feeling of being still, a shape you can readapt the self to.

This version of experience is not precisely new and can be easily related to the kantian critique of pure reason and to the different psychoanalytic branches. However, linking our “own experience” to actual telepathy, as modern term coined in late XIX century, might prove to be a horse of a different color. The modern telepathic tale of being able to transmit “what I feel” or “what I think”, without saying a single word, is built upon this assumption that there is something clear to transmit; that there is a total control of the subject; that we can truly decide and define what it is that we feel, or see, or read. This tale, it assumes that when we think we are basically talking in silence, which is quite an inaccurate statement. It indirectly classifies experience as something more truthful to the self than its equivocal rational idealisation –to which it paradoxically owes its very existence.

Eventually, this traditional approach takes consideration for the linguistic role of the body but ignores it as the continuous and blurry organ it is: instead, the body is depicted as the aristotelian proof of an unequivocal identity, or even more, the epitome of private property: you are who you are because your feelings and experiences are privately yours. Under this light the body is the wax tablet where experience leaves its objective physical imprint, allowing for one to know things better from the “inside” of this imprinted body than others do from the outside. However, I am inclined to believe that the illusion of owning the self is based on the quantity and quality of our encounters with certain external objects and not on the “veracity” of these inner experiences, which would be, quite the opposite, consistently distanced, mediated and telepathic. This could help explain synesthetic phenomena, ghost limbs, intuition or analogue magic as adaptations of the self to objects beyond the constitutive neighbouring ones: a sign that we can be equally telepathic when we imagine a moving rock in the middle of the Arctic than we are when touching a keyboard with our finger.

In other words, it is the amount of dealing with our bodily objects that veils distance and creates the illusion of a consistent, enclosed form of sentience that is “ours”. It is not that language or communication are dirty and imprecise. Rather, this apparatus we feel so artificial, is the way the body has been able to imagine the identification and unity of its own parts: by building something, we, that can perceive it just “outside” its surface, with such a minimum delay, it believes it is the thing itself. Based on that, we agree on a definition of experience that can be culturally integrated and socially shared: a unitarian non-transferrable “me”, that is, paradoxically, one of the best allies of capitalism and mass consumerism. Can we, or should we, control that mediation? Not really. But we can write as many versions of it as we deem necessary.

So when we agree that our experiences are unique and non-transferrable and that any verbal or alphabetic forms of it are already a pale shadow in comparison to the true thing, we are ironically eliminating difference and undermining the equivocal nature of language and perception the body produced. We assume everyone knows positively who they are and what they are thinking at any time. We admit the only way for telepathy to exist is to be able to transfer this chimera of a true and positive self experience. We say that everything else, any other intuition or guess, is plain fiction, trickery or mere coincidence.

Yet, if we think that the aforementioned blurriness of the continuous body is also linguistic –that language is not clear but a blur of feelings and signs of every sort– and that experience is not a pure stimulus but that it starts by translating our own experience to ourselves in a dirty, delayed, mediated and contaminated manner –that I cannot be fully sure of what my “own” experience is unless I incur in a considerable amount of belief– , when all that happens, then our “own” experience becomes a regular byproduct of language and becomes subject to all the mediatic aberrations of translation, dissemination and interpretation, making telepathy a mundane, tangible material means of transferring it.

Again, as poststructuralism would put it, it is not only that communication with the other is erratic and absent, but that the very subject proceeds from this negative othering and blind-spot. Postmodernism would argue that we are already blind-guessing what we experience ourselves without having to try it on someone else. The telepathic differential would add to the theory that this constant and psychoanalytical blind-spot make us natural-born-telepaths, while telepathy understood as a technological feat for the transmission of positive information –that cannot be there in the first place– is quite a serious political threat to the otherwise open-ended etymological nature of telepathy itself.

To hear the thoughts of someone else in plain english 5000 miles away, I insist, relegates experience and language to mere letters that are decoded against a standardised dictionary definition. On the contrary, if we embrace that telepathy is inherent to the way the subject experiments themselves, it is not that far-fetched to imagine it can extend that native ability to experience someone else's, through the same erratical speculation and assimilation they already use against their own experience. This approach to telepathy not only draws a scheme of the linguistic othering, but describes the mediated blurriness of the self to its "own" material being. It dismisses erratic translation as the proof that telepathy with other things does not exist. In a framework where experience is essentially elusive, to err in our predictions is precisely what empowers us, telepaths, to participate of an experience that is ours and yet belongs to nobody in particular.

If the past 100 years have debunked the western positivist notion of the self, of language and of experience, telepathy becomes nothing near a paranormal power but a fundamental quality of matter. It is the way we culturally, socially and eccentrically invent our psychic uniformity, at a distance with ourselves, so short, we call it our body, when in actuality, it the body who disowns us, producing the illusory subject we feel we are in order to connect its different parts. Telepathy becomes the ergonomic device for physical and cultural adaptation: it is the tool we use to adapt an absent identity to a set of physical things. Or the procedure by which the matter is dreaming about us; a body to a tool, a place to a mind, a me to a myself. If we picture telepathy as a way of emancipating ourselves from the concept or "our own" thoughts and experiences and as long as we do not take any telepathic reading literally --starting with our own experience-- we can hastily give in to the pleasure of inconsistently and ergonomically predicting what others are thinking. As a matter of fact we are already doing it. We can't stop doing it. Telepathy is acknowledging we have been doing it all along.