

Affecting Gestures*

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ABSTRACT

Gestures are inflected with affect. In the course of a somatic therapy session, a woman conjures up an embryo in the process of gastrulation in the gesture space in front of her body. The gesture iconically represents at once a baby, a baby in a dream, her future self, and the interior of her body. The gesturer's tactile-kinesthetic engagement with these virtual entities makes them palpable to her as well as visible to her interlocutors. Her palpation of her own virtual interior, her virtual others, and her virtual self affects her. The gestures people make as they speak configure the meaning of the words they accompany. Co-speech gestures also configure the feeling the gesturer has about the meaning. The capacity to affect oneself is key not only to how somatic psychology works, but also to how gesturers shape their own affect in ordinary interactions.

Keywords: phenomenology, affect, gesture, somatic psychology, intraaffectivity

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The gestures people make as they speak configure the meaning of the words they accompany. In this paper, I argue that co-speech gestures also configure the feeling the gesturer has about the meaning. Meaning and feeling intertwine in a loop that feeds the feeling back into the meaning, and the meaning back into the feeling. Meaning and feeling affect each other. This bi-directionality is evident in a somatic therapy session in which a woman's gestures configure the meaning of the word *gastrulation*, and her feeling about the meaning. The woman affects and is affected by her own gesture. I designate the faculty of the body to affect itself intraaffectivity. The gesture communicates this intraaffectivity to the perceiver, who affects and is affected by the gesture in the interrelationship Daniel Stern designates as *interaffectivity*. The capacity to affect and be affected by one's own movement is the root of somatic psychology. Psychoanalytic psychology focuses on what the person says. The therapist intervenes at the level of language,

Formative Psychology explores the somatic shape of an emotion with micro-movements that either intensify or lessen the body organizing of an emotional experience.

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affecting what a person means and feels by changing how the person talks about them. Sigmund Freud described psychoanalysis as the talking cure, a method of treatment conducted through an “exchange of words” (Freud, 1963, p. 17). Somatic psychology extends its focus from what individuals say to how they move as they say it. Therapists intervene at the level of the body, affecting what participants mean and feel by changing how they move. The talking cure becomes the moving cure. The affect at work in the therapy session is perceptible in the gesture I analyze in this paper.

Affect theory is the antithesis of emotion theory. Fredric Jameson points out that traditional theories of emotion propose the body as a “monadlike container, within which things felt are then expressed by projection outward” (Jameson, 1991, p. 15). Affect theorists argue that we are not sealed up inside our bodily containers, but connected along various modalities to things inside and outside ourselves. Emotions that used to be understood as feelings inside bodies now surface to become *intensities*, in the term Jameson took from Jean-François Lyotard, moving around, through, and between them (Jameson, 1991, pp. 15-16; Shuman & Young, 2018, pp. 399-400). The changes brought about in the body by its affects ground its actions. This theory of affect is rooted in Baruch Spinoza’s 17th century refutation of Cartesian dualism (Spinoza, 1677). In Spinoza’s philosophy, the universe is a monad composed of both thoughts and things, melding into a single substance qualities that René Descartes split into antithetical substances, *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, mind and body. Spinoza’s affections are modifications of the indivisible mental/material substance of which the body is constituted. The affections of which we become conscious are the ones we think of as emotions. “Emotion is intensity owned and recognized” (Massumi, 2002, p. 28).

Because they are at once mental and material, Amy Schmitter writes:

“... affects can spread through association between their objects, including the most accidental of associations in memory or imagination, as well as through causal relations... An affect can produce new affects with the constitution of the body changes, e.g., appetite can turn to disgust as we become satiated. Affects can spread through our imagination of the af-

fects others feel. They can spread as we reflect on ourselves” (Schmitter, 2022, footnote 6).

We affect and are affected by these associations between thoughts and things. It is this inextricability of mentality and materiality that made Spinoza’s monism the *locus classicus* of affect theory.

Gestures stretch the body into things. As they pass intensities among heterogeneous elements, they constitute visible and tactual evidence of the workings of affect (Massumi, 1987, pp. xvi, 28; Jameson, 1991, pp. 15-16; Seigworth and Gregory, 2010, p. 1). As I reach for something, my hand shapes itself to the object in anticipation of its grasp. The object has taken hold of my body before I have taken hold of it. The shape of my hand embodies the meaning the thing has for me. It and I are conjoined in a loop of intentionality. This is the condition of mutual implication Maurice Merleau-Ponty describes as the intentionality of consciousness:

“In the action of the hand which is raised towards an object is contained a reference to the object, not as an object represented, but as that highly specific thing towards which we project ourselves, near which we are, in anticipation, and which we haunt. Consciousness is being-towards-the-thing through the intermediary of the body” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, 1995, pp. 138-139).

I am not a consciousness contemplating as if from elsewhere other bodies and objects strewn around outside me, a subject in a world of objects; I come to consciousness with objects in the inextricably mental/material substance to which we both belong. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty calls this intertwining of bodies, objects, and others *intersubjectivity*, as if it were a sort of mindreading (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 352). Far more felicitously, in his last work, *The Visible and the Invisible*, he calls it *intercorporéité*, now customarily translated as *intercorporeality* (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 140-141).

Gestures project into the world the gesturer’s consciousness of the world. Merleau-Ponty writes:

“The essence of consciousness is to provide itself with one or several worlds, to bring into being its own thoughts before itself, as if they were things, and it demonstrates its vitality indivisibly by outlining these landscapes for itself and then by abandoning them. The

world-structure, with its two stages of sedimentation and spontaneity, is at the core of consciousness” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 112).

Gestures materialize thoughts as things. They are instruments of invocation: they bring my thoughts before me as things, and mold the things into the meaning they have for me. I now inhabit the space around me as world-structure and my world-structure coalesces and evanesces with my gesture. As Elena Cuffari and Jürgen Streeck write:

“Hand gestures both fit the world and form it. The fitting has to do with what from the environment gestures appropriate. The forming has to do with what gestures disclose – that is, what they reveal, forefront, show in a new light, and create” (Cuffari & Streeck, 2017, p. 176).

The gestures that bring forth the gesturer’s world-structure envelop the perceiver of the gestures in the meanings they draw out of (and into) things. Gestures have made the gesturer’s world-structure not only perceptible to, but also present for the perceiver. Things have been changed. The perceiver now apprehends the world in light of this other consciousness. The pull the gestures exert on objects pulls on the perceiver’s intentionality of consciousness as they pull on the gesturer’s. The perceiver is present to an environment of meanings partially constituted by the other’s gestures.

Intentionality clings to the shape of the hand. Even if my gestures are lifted away from actual objects in my surround, they project into the space around me the objects their shape portends. They remain, in Charles Goodwin’s terms, “environmentally coupled” (Goodwin, 2007). When speakers accompany words with gestures, their gestures project the virtual objects the gestures shape into the space around the body. Gesturers can tether their virtual objects to actual objects to create blended spaces, the term Eve Sweetser takes from Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, for the symbiotic coupling of the virtual and the actual (Sweetser, 2001, p. 305; Sweetser, 2012, p. 13; Fauconnier & Turner, 2002).ⁱ

Co-speech gestures create a world-structure gesturer and perceiver co-inhabit. The world-structure evanesces and coalesces with the gesture. As Elena Cuffari and Jürgen Streeck maintain:

“Speech, painting, music, facial expressions, the written word, and – we add to this list – hand gestures – signify according to a play between conventionality (what Merleau-Ponty often describes as sedimentation) and creativity (spontaneity). This means that the meaning of expressive gesturing (in Merleau-Ponty’s broad sense) is a local, collaborative, and in some cases temporary or transient achievement. We suggest that, in complement to the spontaneity-sedimentation dialectic, intercorporeality and interpretive effort ground the meaning of expressive gesture.” (Cuffari & Streeck, 2017, pp. 174-175)

Co-speech gestures are not representations of the objects the words they accompany mention; they are invocations of intentional objects, the objects as they are for the gesturer. In Cuffari’s rendering:

“A gesture for Merleau-Ponty is the way that meaning inhabits a body and a body inhabits acquired ways of expressing, which is to say, the way that a particular existing, thinking, and communicating body-subject lives – and creates – a particular meaning. A gesture is a meaningful bodily act, the way a human body always transcends itself towards some significance... Expression is the outcome of the dialectic of sedimentation and spontaneity, in that expression is the body’s appropriation of acquired form in a new act of meaning-giving” (Cuffari, 2012, p. 615).

The redesign of the habitual gesture to address the moment engenders the act of creativity as the gesture attunes itself to its object afresh, changing thought, body, and world in one movement.

Gestures draw meanings out of either the objects in the actual space around the gesturer, or out of the objects the gesturer has made present in the virtual space in front of the gesturer’s body – the space

i. In Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner’s Mental Spaces Theory, blended spaces combine elements of a real space with elements of an imagined space (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002). Eve Sweetser extends this cognitive blending to gestures (Sweetser, 2001, p. 305; Sweetser, 2012). Here, the actual body making the gesture is combined with the virtual body the gesture represents.

John Haviland designated the *gesture space* (Haviland, 2000, p. 18). The gesture space is a fluctuating sphere whose rim is roughly defined by the reach of the fingertips. Inside the sphere, gestures materialize objects in an alternate reality, a remembered or imagined world made virtually present to gesturer and perceiver (Young, 2021, p. 92). The alternate reality can take form fleetingly in association with a single gesture, or it can be elaborated into a world inhabited by characters in a narrative acting in their own space. In acts of narration, gestures make perceptible the world-structure of the realities the storyteller inhabits: the actual world of the telling and the virtual world of the tale, both made present by the gestures that accompany the telling (Shuman & Young, 2018, pp. 400, 412). When the alternate reality is contained inside the gesture space, it presents itself as a miniature world outside of which gesturer and perceiver stand, and to which they have unrestricted access – an implicitly objective, detached, and omniscient perspective. When the gesture space expands to contain the gesturer as a character, gesturer and perceiver have access only to whatever that character can perceive – an implicitly subjective, engaged, and biased perspective on events of which the character has only partial knowledge (Genette, 1980, pp. 62-163; Rimmon-Kenan, 1984, pp. 74-82; Young, 2000, p. 88).

Gestures pick out, take hold of, or turn into their intentional objects. Even deictic gestures dispose the body toward its objects of interest, extending it out of its own space toward the object's space. Gestures that outline the contours of their objects inscribe its trace into the air; gestures that grasp their objects impress its shape into the hand, along with the trace of its weight and heft; gestures that make themselves into their objects embody the object's thickness, density, and opacity. In contrast to the deictic gestures, these gestures are in some sense like their objects. They are, in David McNeill's terminology, iconics (1992, p. 12). The gestures that McNeill terms metaphoric deploy iconic gestures toward metaphorical objects (1992, p. 14). Metaphors juxtapose two different domains of discourse. Classical literary theories hold that metaphors bring forward a property the two domains share. Linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue, on the contrary, that the metaphors map one domain onto the other (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 294). "Each metaphor has a source

domain, a target domain, and a source-to-target mapping" (Lakoff, 1987, p. 276). Until the metaphor accomplishes the mapping, it is not apparent that the two domains share any particular properties. The mapping makes the reader or hearer see the target domain in terms of the source domain. As a consequence of this new seeing, an unexpected metaphor can take us by surprise. Metaphoric gestures make the source domain of the metaphor perceptible in the gesture space, and map it onto the imperceptible target domain the speaker mentions but does not materialize. The perceiver's perception of the source domain configures the perceiver's conception of the target domain. Unconventional metaphors give gesturers and perceivers a fresh hold on their intentional objects.

Affects traverse the intentional arcs that connect bodies, objects, and others. Bodies are never unaffected. As the phenomenologist Martin Heidegger held, we are always in a mood:

"For Heidegger, we are always in some mood or other: he discusses such examples as fear, boredom, hope, joy, enthusiasm, equanimity, indifference, gaiety, satiety, elation, sadness, melancholy, and desperation ...We can slip over from one mood into another, but we can never be free of moods altogether...even the pure, 'disinterested' theoretical attitude is a mood with its own way of disclosing the world" (Guignon, 1984, p. 235).

Affects are not bestowed on objects by consciousness but felt in, through and around objects by bodies: mood brings forth a world. Heideggerian moods affect external perceptions as well as internal states – not just because they introduce a subjective bias about what I perceive, but also because I perceive different things in different moods. Affects are not self-disclosive, but world-disclosive. As Paul Ricoeur writes in his phenomenological account:

"Being afraid does not mean feeling my body shake or my heart beat; it is to experience the world as something to shun, as an impalpable threat, as a snare, as a terrifying presence" (Ricoeur, 1966, p. 271).

Moods are not in us; we are in them. Psychologist and psychoanalyst Silvan Tomkins moves out of this dualistic seesaw to argue that affects are neither in the body nor in the world, but in between.

In his analysis, they are bi-directional expressions that animate the world for the body even as they animate the body for the world:

“... affects are not private obscure internal intestinal responses but facial responses that communicate and motivate at once both publicly outward to the other and backward and inward to the one who smiles or cries or frowns or sneers or otherwise expresses his affects” (Tomkins, 1965, p. vii).

We are affected by experiences of our own affects.

Affects cannot be categorized as emotions. “Usually,” acknowledges psychologist Daniel Stern, “one thinks of affective experience in terms of discrete categories of affect – happiness, sadness, fear, anger, disgust, surprise, interest, and perhaps shame, and their combinations.” Stern calls these categorical affects, after Charles Darwin’s classification. But he thinks there are other affects, less susceptible to categorization, which he calls vitality affects. “These elusive qualities are better captured by dynamic, kinetic terms, such as ‘surging,’ ‘fading away,’ ‘fleeting,’ ‘explosive,’ ‘crescendo,’ ‘decrescendo,’ ‘bursting,’ ‘drawn out,’ and so on” (Stern, 1985, p. 54). Vitality affects cannot be correlated with any particular categorical affect. Stern distinguishes among them by their *activation contours* – the intensity, timing, and shape of the behaviors that express them – rather than by the internal states they are supposed to arise from or bring about (Stern, 1985, pp. 56, 146).

“Vitality affects occur both in the presence of and in the absence of categorical affects. For example, a ‘rush’ of anger or of joy, a perceived flooding of light, an accelerating sequence of thoughts, an unmeasurable wave of feeling evoked by music, and a shot of narcotics can all feel like ‘rushes’” (Stern, 1985, p. 55).

As affect theorist Anna Gibbs notes:

“These activation contours qualify the discrete affects corresponding to the pace of rising and falling levels of their arousal... Whether an affect is coming or going is information that is then conscripted into semiotic systems of meaning: joy arriving means something very different from joy departing or deflating” (Gibbs, 2010, p. 192).

Stern continues:

“Expressiveness of this kind is not limited to categorical signals. It is inherent in all behavior... There are a thousand smiles, a thousand getting-out-of-chairs, a thousand variations of performance of any and all behaviors, and each one presents a different vitality affect” (Stern, 1985, p. 56).

Interactants attune themselves to their own and each other’s affects by participating, consciously or unconsciously, in the activation contours of the behaviors that express them (Stern, 1985, pp. 54, 55, 56). *Interaffectivity*, in the term Stern introduces into effect theory, arises in the “match between the feeling state as experienced within and as seen ‘on’ or ‘in’ another” (Stern, 1985, pp. 132, 138). Because affects inflect all behavior with expressive qualities, they “can thus be an almost omnipresent subject of attunement” (Stern, 1985, p. 157). As affect theorist Thomas Fuchs writes:

“... in every face-to-face encounter, the partners’ subject-bodies are intertwined in a process of bodily resonance, coordinated interaction and ‘mutual incorporation’ which provides the basis for an intuitive empathic understanding. It can also give rise to self-sustaining interaction patterns that go beyond the behavioural dispositions of isolated individuals. According to this concept, emotions may not primarily be localized within a single individual, but should rather be conceived as phenomena of a shared intercorporeal space in which the interacting partners are involved” (Fuchs, 2016, p. 196).

The mimesis that attunes interactants to each other is not an imitation of the behavior that expresses the affect; it is a translation of the intensity, timing, and shape of the behavior into other intra- and intercorporeal modalities. Gibbs describes it as “isomorphism without identity” (Gibbs, 2010, p. 195). “Affect attunement, then, is the performance of behaviors that express the quality of feeling of a shared affective state without imitating the exact behavioral expression of the inner state” (Stern, 1985, p. 142). The intentional arc of a gesture is just such a mimesis of affect. The web of gestural arcs interactants display over the course of conversations materializes the interaffectivity their attunement creates.

Somatic psychology

The practice of somatic psychology makes use of this perceptible interaffectivity to bring about somatic change. Somatic psychology is anchored in a monistic understanding of the body that abjures the false dichotomy between mentality and materiality. The body is not materiality magically infused with mentality, nor is the mind disembodied immateriality detached from the flesh. Somatic psychology invests materiality with mentality at its root. Somatic psychologist Stanley Keleman describes this investment as an emotional anatomy.

“Emotional anatomy is layers of skin and muscle, more muscles, organs, more organs, bone, and the invisible layer of hormones, as well as the organization of experience. Anatomical studies tend to depict images that are two-dimensional, thus missing the most important element, emotional life. At the same time, psychology, which is committed to the study of emotion, lacks an anatomical understanding. Without anatomy, emotions do not exist. Feelings have a somatic architecture” (Keleman, 1985, p. xii).

In his own work, Keleman brings out, dismantles, transforms, and reconstructs this somatic architecture to bring about changes in his subjects’ affective experiences.

Every year in mid-winter, Keleman held the Dream Workshopⁱⁱ at the Center for Energetic Studies, his institute in Berkeley, California.

During his 1995 workshop, Keleman showed a film about gastrulation in order to demonstrate the formation of emotional anatomy. “Gastrulation is an early developmental process in which an embryo transforms from a one-dimensional layer of epithelial cells, a blastula, and reorganizes into a multilayered and multidimensional structure called the gastrula” (Muhr, Arbor, and Ackerman 2023, unpaginated). Workshop participants told stories of their dreams. They dream their bodies and, in the workshop, embody their dreams. “By various

techniques of practice, Keleman appropriates certain gestures as apertures through which to pull the dream embodiments into the space of interaction – the therapeutic space – where they can accrete somatic change” (Young, 2002, p. 47). In the dream narrative I examine here, the dreamer, Victoria Ruiz, has recounted a dream of having a child. In somatic theory, human beings evolve different embodiments for different stages of life: the infant body yields to the child body, which transforms into the adolescent body, which gives way to the young adult body, and so on over subsequent life stages. Within the body at any stage, a new body is already taking form for the next stage even as the old body loses hold. On this occasion, Stanley takes the embryonic body, of which Victoriaⁱⁱⁱ dreams, to be the coalescing body of her future self.

Sphere

After Victoria has narrated her dream:

Stanley: “What is the experience now, you know, there’s this child, having this fourth child, right? What is that like, something coming from your inside.”

Victoria: “Uh, it’s a feeling of getting more used with my powers, my-more calm. And uh ...” Victoria follows her partial utterance by forming a sphere over her belly with rounded arms and hands, a sphere that is both herself and outside herself.

The sphere gesture affect

- The sphere gesture is a double iconic: it is a baby and it is a second self.
- The gesture space is a blended space: it is an iconic representation of a pregnant belly mounted up over Victoria’s actual belly, and it is the interior of her body conjured up outside her body.
- Her body both stretches itself outward, swelling from within toward the outer curve her arms of-fer, and opens up a hollow space between itself

ii. Therapy sessions from the Dream Workshop of 1995 were videotaped for Keleman by his videographer Terry McClure. Clips were uploaded for my transcription and analysis from McClure’s video cassettes by visual anthropologist Peter Biella, who also captured and edited the still photographs for publication. The analysis was conducted and published with consent from all participants.

iii. The name of the participant is pseudonymous.



a. "Something is inside."



b. "Something is going to come out."

Figure 1. *Inside/Outside*

and her body as an interior in which something can take form.

- The body is drawn into the hollow it makes for itself gesturally. For the gesturer, the gesture space and whatever is represented within it is not just seen, but felt. It has tactile-kinesthetic presence.

Inside/Outside

At the same time Victoria speaks:

Stanley: "Something is inside."

Victoria: "Something is inside. Something is going to come out." She wraps her arms around underneath the large oval shape she has just delineated (Fig 1a), and shifts the sphere to her right (Fig 1b).

The inside/outside gesture affect

- The coming out is not represented as a birthing or as a rupturing of the membrane that constitutes the rim of the gesture space. It is represented as a detachment of the whole gesture space from its adherence to her body, or as the instantiation of the displaced gesture space as a container with a separate exterior, a container that can be moved aside.
- This introduces the oscillation between being the gesture space, and being in dialogue with the gesture space that sets up a vibration between them. She is in interaction with herself as she is in interaction with others, objects, and spaces. Interaffectivity becomes intraaffectivity.

Gastrulation

At the same time, Victoria makes this gesture:

Stanley: "What is that like. What's it like to have an inside?"

Victoria: "Very mysterious, very powerful. Very alive. Very moving. Like the second image of cells on this movie with the gastrulation."

The gastrulation gesture affect

In George Lakoff's analysis, metaphors take language from a source domain and direct it to a target domain. The source domain for Victoria's metaphoric gestures is the substance she manipulates with her hands; the target domains are the abstract ideas she mentions: mystery, power, life, movement. Lakoff argues that concrete source domains are designed to project entity status on target domains that have none (Lakoff, 1987, p. 276). The substance materialized in the gesture space that is iconic for the inside of her body is at once Victoria's felt interiority, the iconic and metaphoric baby, and her new body.

Gastrulation is the early stage of embryonic development in which the zygote splits and folds. The image is in her mind because the therapy group has just seen the film of this process. But the gesture exceeds the requisites of iconic representation. It is both more and other than gastrulation. It is this gesture that makes it clear that the gestures are animating Victoria even as she is animating the gestures.

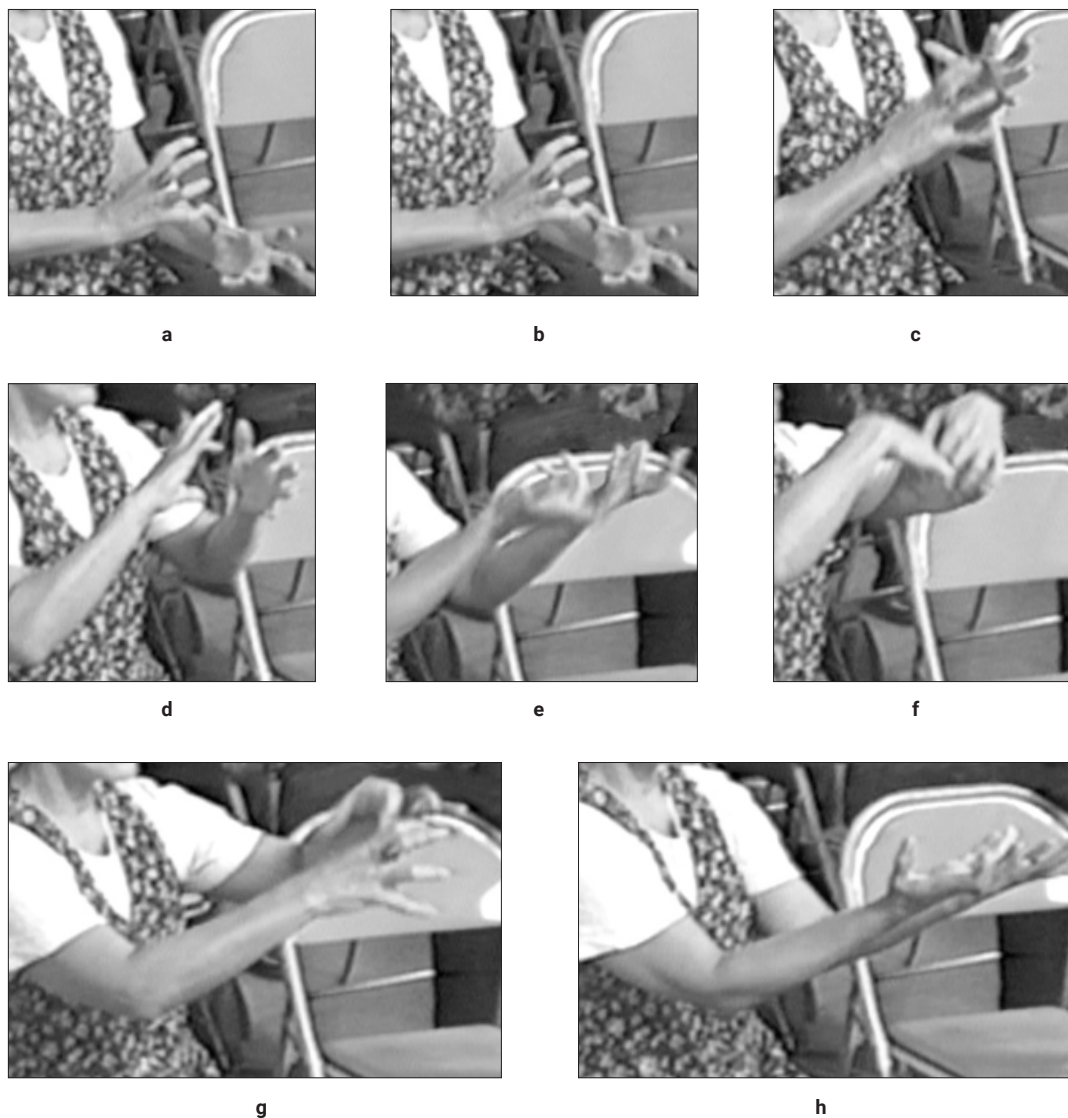


Figure 2. *Gastrulation*

- a** "Very mysterious, very powerful" – She wiggles her fingers while raising her hands one above the other from her lap, lifting up and layering the substance of her feeling, which fluctuates on its surface.
- b** "Very alive" – She kneads the substance, which expands and contracts under her still wiggling fingers.
- c** "Very moving" – She turns her hands around each other as the substance leaps and flows from hand to hand, beginning to spin.
- d** "Like the second image of (cells)" – she lifts up the modulating sphere and opens her hands toward the upper right hand corner of her gesture space, and on cells, she taps the corner with her right forefinger, pegging the image.
- e** No speech. Stretches.
- f** "On this movie with the gastrulation" – she forms a constantly transmuting substance that folds in on itself again and again from another side.
- g** No speech. Invaginates.
- h** No speech. Pouches out into a new sphere reminiscent, as she says, of the gastrulation of an embryo in the film Keleman has just shown.



a. "comes up"

b. "through the spine"

c. "through the brainstem"

d. "makes something"

Figure 3. *Tube and Hemisphere*

- a** "comes up" – In the gesture space in front of her body, Victoria creates a tube in a single gesture
- b** "through the spine" and the substance flowing upward in the tube – The gesture indicates both form and movement.
- c** "through the brainstem" – The substance issues from the neck of the tube into two hemispherical shapes.
- d** "makes something that balloon out and tuck back in" – She replicates this ballooning out with her cheeks in a face gesture. She adumbrates the tuck in a popping gesture of the cheeks and in a sounding gesture of the lips, and she replicates the uprising of the fluid in an intonational gesture of gurgling and in a plosive gesture of the lips. At the same time, she describes the tube as her spine and its neck as her brainstem so that the two hemispheres are iconic for her brain.

Circle

Stanley: "Right. Where do you experience it?"

Victoria: "Here." As she says this, she brings her right hand up to her belly and rubs it in a great circle.

Stanley: "Settle into it." Victoria brings her other hand up over her belly and swells them outward.

The circle gesture affect

This is the moment Victoria, as it were, rubs the gesture back into her own body. It is as if she were undertaking to impart to herself the affect she is generating in the gesture space, at once pressing it into and holding it away from her body.

Tube and hemispheres

Stanley: "Now what is this gastrulation feeling in your brain?"

Victoria: "It feels like something that comes up, through the spine, goes up through the brainstem, makes something" (Fig 3a-d).

The tube and hemispheres gesture affect

This gesture is very intricate in itself, and it reverberates in several places in Victoria's body. The fluid effect she describes has now been transferred inward so that it both represents and affects the interior of her body. The sheer kinesthetic virtuosity of the gesture suggests that it involves her whole body.

Bubble

Stanley: "So let's stay with that. That's it." Let's go with that movement.

Victoria: "Like bubbles." She sketches in a one-handed pipe gesture with the bubbling noise, but with her hand angled toward her own interior rather than mounted in front of her body.

The bubble gesture affect

Here deixis has an intentional arc. It is as if pointing at herself has thrown the gesture into her body. Pointing gestures act as virtual pseudopods that extend the body out toward its indicated objects. It is not just the gesturer's body that responds to the point. We sometimes feel other people's pointing at us as a prick in the membrane surrounding our gesture space, and we wince. Victoria's self-pointing pricks the membrane between the gesture space in which she represents her own interior and her interior itself.

Conclusion

Victoria's gestures animate the interior of her body even as they animate the embryonic baby, the baby in the dream, and her future self. She is affecting and being affected by her own gestures. This intraaffectivity enters the body into a dialogue with itself. The dialogue materializes in the interplay among the alternative embodiments brought forward in the therapeutic session. The intensity, timing, and shape of her affect modulates as it traverses these embodiments. Affinities and disparities among embodiments create a vibration Fuchs describes as *intrabodily resonance* (Fuchs, 2016, p. 7). The body is alive to its possibilities.

Somatic practice brings this intraaffectivity to the gesturer's attention in order to make it possible for her to affect herself intentionally.

Merleau-Ponty writes:

“To pay attention is not merely further to elucidate pre-existing data, it is to bring about a new articulation of them by taking them as figures. They are preformed only as horizons, they constitute in reality new regions in the total world” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 30).

Under this condition, I form a new self, not because I undertake to think something about myself or to do something to myself, but because I come to myself refigured in the new regions my affect makes perceptible. Somatically, an old body deliquesces as a new body coalesces. Victoria's gestures are luminous instances of the affects all gestures animate within, across, and between bodies.

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