

# Vis-á-Vis-á-Vis. The Three-dimensional and artistic view of a problem

## Vis-á-Vis-á-Vis. La vision artística y tridimensional de un problema

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### Abstract

ANPO (A Non-predefined Outcome) is an art-making methodology that employs structuralist theory of language (Saussure, Lacan, Foucault) combined with Hegel's dialectic and the theory of creation of space by Lefebvre to generate spaces of dialogue and conversation between community members and different stakeholders. These theories of language are used to find artistic ways of representing a topic that community members have previously chosen. The topic is approached in a way that allows a visual, aural, performative and gustative form. To achieve this, the methodology is split in four main steps: step 1 'This is not a chair', Step 2 'The topic', Step 3 'Vis-á-vis-á-vis' and step 4. 'Dialectical representation' where the defined topic is used to generate artistic representations.

The step 1 is a warm up exercise informed by the Rene Magritte painting 'This is not a Pipe'. This exercise aims to help the participants to see an object as something else than an object but as a consequence of social implications. Step 2, participants choose a random topic and vote for it. The artist/facilitator does not predetermine the topic, participants are the one who propose it and choose it. Step 3, will be analysed in this publication and finally step 4, the broken down topic is taken to be represented and analysed in different ways.

**Keywords:** dialectic, communities, language, artistic representations and liminality.

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### Resumen

ANPO (A Non-predefined Outcome/ Un resultado no predeterminado) es una metodología artística que emplea teoría estructuralista del lenguaje (Saussure, Lacan, Foucault) combinada con la dialéctica de Hegel y la teoría de la creación del espacio de Lefebvre, para generar espacios de diálogo y conversación entre comunidades y sus diferentes miembros. Estas teorías del lenguaje son usadas para encontrar una representación artística del tema que los miembros de la comunidad han previamente seleccionado. El tema es representado a través de formas visuales, auditivas, corporales y gustativas. Para lograr esto, la metodología se divide en cuatro pasos principales. Paso I. 'Esto no es una silla'. Paso II. 'El tópico'. Paso III. 'Vis-á-vis-á-vis' y finalmente el Paso IV "Representaciones Dialécticas" donde el tema es usado para generar representaciones artísticas.

El Paso I es un ejercicio de calentamiento basado en la pintura 'esta no es una pipa' de Rene Magritte. Este ejercicio tiene como objetivo ayudar a los participantes a ver un objeto como una consecuencia de implicaciones sociales. En el Paso II, los participantes escogen un tema cualquiera y votan por él. El artista/facilitador no predetermina el tema ya que son los participantes quienes proponen y escogen. Paso III, será analizado en este artículo y finalmente el Paso IV, donde el tema es desglosado y representado artísticamente..

**Palabras clave:** dialéctica, comunidades, lenguaje, representaciones artísticas y liminalidad.

**Summary:** 1. Introduction, 2. Section I. Opposites define the community, 3. Section II. VaVaV’s third space and its mathematical model, 4. Section III. The message hidden behind words, 5. Section IV. Conclusion, 6. Appendix A. References.

### 1. Introduction

This art-making methodology as well as the name ANPO is based on my thoughts/research and it is part of my own invention. The ANPO methodology is a thesis in progress and this publication is an abstract of the chapter IV of final thesis.

Below a diagram that represents ANPO steps. The highlighted square shows the step that is presented in this publication.

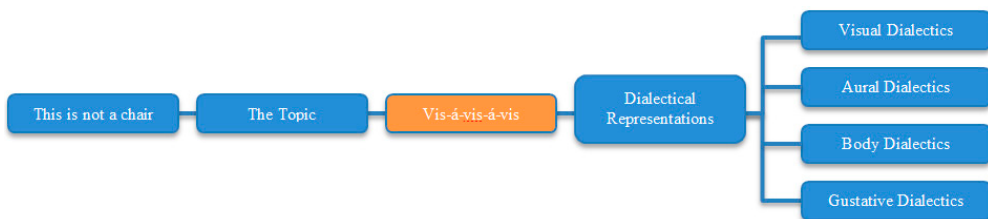


Diagram 1. ANPO steps.

Vis-á-Vis-á-Vis; hereinafter called ‘VaVaV’, is a dialectical game where participants describe opposite meanings of keywords. The participants are asked to describe the topic utilizing words associated with it. After that, they give the opposite meaning of every keyword already mentioned. Then, a further refinement process is undertaken and participants are asked to define the opposite word to each of the general group of keywords. VaVaV is informed by Saussure’s structuralist theory of *semiotics* (Anderson, Hughes, & Sharrock, 1988), where each word is a *part-within-the-whole* (Anderson et al., 1988) and belongs to a systematic differentiation in which words are different in form, therefore in sound and concept. The part-within-the-whole only differentiates from it other part through the opposite meaning of the word. For example, if a man declares: I’m happy, he is directly declaring that he is not sad. This opposite affiliation is what makes language a constant system of contradictions and oppositions.

These contradictions connect VaVaV to a three dimensional dialectic and Lefebvre’s theory of *the production of the space*(Lefebvre & Goonewardena, 2008). Lefebvre proposes a dialectical form related to language “*Syntagmatic dimension - Paradigmatic dimension - Symbolic dimension*” Each dimension is independent from the other but shares points of encounter with the other. The Lefebvre’s dialectic is reinterpreted as “*Definition – Dialectic - Hidden Message*”. Definition is then, what the *liminal communita* (Thomassen, 2009) understands about the topic in terms of social categorizations. Dialectic is the contradiction always present in every definition and the hidden message is the ‘overcoming’ and represents how the *communita* (Thomassen, 2009) feels about the topic. ‘*Definition – Dialectic - Hidden Message*’ generates points for encounters that allow an understanding of the social context within the liminal community. They can be represented in three-dimensional

coordinates as (X: definition, Y: dialectic, Z: hidden message). Every point added to the three-dimensional dialectic and provides valuable information for the artist/facilitator who can use them to decode the hidden message in a specific social context.

The importance of the Hidden Message rests on the possibility that the artist/facilitator can understand the nature of the community's interaction, as well as bringing endless possibilities to reflect on what is really happening within the community.

VaVaV intends to create an *anti-structured* (Bial, 2007b) process of participation where participants feel confident outlining their ideas about a topic. Through the participants' interactions the artist/facilitator receives hints that assist him to understand the Hidden Message in the participant's engagement. The activity develops liminal *communitas*, provides opportunities for participants to remove themselves from the dominant surrounding society and allows them to express their identities in ways that may not be possible to express within their permanent communities. The ANPO's *communita* developed during the experience makes a temporary *kinship* group and in where their backgrounds and social differences momentarily disappear to give way to an anti-structured space which is expanded in the final section of this article.

## 2. Section I. Opposites define the community

Vis-á-Vis by definition is to be face to face to the opposite, to mould our own structure through the things that we are not (University, 2014). Based on this definition and taking into consideration the interaction that this step generates, the task was named Vis-á-Vis-á-Vis. Vis-á-Vis-á-Vis is a game of words and it is described as the opposite of the opposite. The participants, who are part of this task-interaction, are asked to provide a definition in terms of a theme that has been previously selected. They then break down the topic into keywords. After that, they are asked to give the opposite meaning of every keyword already mentioned. Then, a further refined process is undertaken and participants are asked to define the opposite of the last group of keywords. This triadic approach is part of a dialectical game in which, the last opposite definition is that which, produces a description of the situation-theme.

The conception of the opposite is depicted from a structuralist and dialectical point of view; structuralism as a philosophical component in linguistics and dialectic with regard to a three-dimensional representation of the participants' ideas. Both structuralism and dialectic contribute to an understanding of the participants' answers provided during the experience. The use of the structuralism-dialectic gives form to the proposal of VaVaV as a methodology to work with communities and promote social cohesion within the participants.

It is through the examination of Saussure's work in relation to the differentiation of the sign that VaVaV can be understood. Saussure was interested in how a word earns its particular meaning. His answer to this puzzle is the systematic differentiation of one word and another, due to their distinctive form (Pettit, 1975, p. 7)<sup>1</sup>. 'Mother' is different in sound from 'lake' and 'house' and so on. The differences that distinguish a word from another word are what give a word an identity. Words are differentiated in sound and concept (Pettit, 1975, pp. 7-8).

Saussure declares:

*“A difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences without positive terms ...a linguistic system is a series of differences of sound combined with a series of differences of ideas” (Saussure, 1966, p. 120).*

This involves a differential structure in the language that Saussure defines as a ‘*part-within-the-whole*’, definition that becomes an important pillar in the structuralist theory in which there is unity and diversity; where diversity of appearances hides reality.

To understand the unity within the diversity it is enough to give an example: a man who declares: I’m happy. The part-within-the-whole is ‘happy’. The whole is the relationship between the opposite of the word happy, which is sad. Thus, the whole is happy-sad. When he claims that he is happy, he is directly affirming that he is not sad. This opposite affiliation is what makes the language a constant system of contradictions and oppositions, where, for any word to exist the word must reaffirm its opposite. It is this opposition is what defines VaVaV.

Something that stands out in Saussure’s work is that the ‘*system of differences*’ entails inevitable social connotations. The constant contradiction in languages relates immediately to social behaviours and how human beings define themselves. If one says I’m left wing, he is immediately affirming that he is not right wing. Thus definitions lead to social contexts where society builds boundaries to constantly clarify what ‘it is’ and what ‘it is not’. It could be difficult for a person to define himself as the ‘whole’ when society asks for a ‘part’. Declaring: I’m neither this nor the other will categorize the person as ambiguous, which is the opposite of clear.

The social statements of ‘what it is’ and ‘what it is not’, creates labels and categorizations that produce polarizations in language. No matter how hard we try to flee from these labels, we always end in a social categorization that defines us through opposites and creates a mindset of who we are. A vivid example of this is the social use of the word ‘gay’ and its opposite definition ‘straight.’ The Oxford dictionary defines straight as:

*“Extending or moving uniformly in one direction only; without a curve or bend: a long, straight road” (University, 2014).*

That means that if one claims to be ‘straight’ this places him ‘in the upright direction’, while the other part within the whole is defined as curved or bent, in which case it is what society defines as gay<sup>2</sup>.

Societal definitions whether in political contexts such as left/right wing or also physiological contexts such as gay/straight, are linked to a constant system of contraries. This dialectical relationship engenders social contexts in which the nature of the contradiction is always present. The dialectic engendered in VaVaV through the exploration of a theme does not escape from this system of definition and dialectics where participants associate a topic with keywords. Every keyword mentioned is immediately affirming its opposite, generating a concept of space that overcomes the dialectical understanding of the topic.

In Appendix A, a hypothetical example of how VaVaV works is outlined. The topic selected by the participants is ‘work’. Participants define what ‘work’ is for them using keywords. However, for the participants, the initial definition of work is framed in parameters related to social categorization and linked to natural instinct to define the topic ‘work’ within these parameters.

Following the theory of the Saussure, the definition of work can only be completed if the dialectical relationship of work prevails. This means that when the participants define what work **is**, they are immediately defining what work **is not**. It is in these opposites where the systematic differentiation of language occurs as well as the beginning of the dialectical thinking. Participants have been suggested to see the topic through a system of contradictions, where one word does not exist without the other. However, this does not guarantee the whole definition of the topic but leaves the topic in a kind of contradictory space where it can be defined by keywords and their opposite. Hence, to overcome the contradiction, a third space of analysis is produced wherein the topic meanders over the contradictions and lands in unknown ground. This is what it is demarcated as the opposite of the opposite or Vis-á-Vis-á-Vis.

When participants overcome the dialectic of ‘*what work is - what work is not*’, and are asked to redefine again what work is not, a three-dimensional dialectic is generated, such as ‘*what work is - what work is not - what (work is not) is*’. In this third space of analysis it is possible to infer what the participants consider the actual definition of the topic. In this space, a ‘Hidden Message’<sup>3</sup> overcomes the dialectic giving the artist/facilitator a tool to understand better the interest and emotion of the participants.

In the example of Appendix A, work is defined as a stressful activity, one that produces difficulties and is framed into a measured parameter; but at the same time ‘work’ generates firmness, salary and a feeling of reward. This definition yields questions such as, why is work stressful and difficult? Is this because participants struggle to find a job or it is because they are working in something that they do not enjoy? Why is firm? Is this because they feel rootless or it is because others depend on their salary? In summary, what is the job/work situation for the participants?

With this information, the artist/facilitator has the opportunity to open a conversation with the participants to understand how the topic is affecting their lives, as well as reflecting about what the participants are facing in their daily lives. It is through this dialectical thinking that VaVaV generates a connection between opposites and social implications within the community. Dialectical thinking is:

*“the recognition that social reality is marked by contradictions and can be understood only through the comprehension of these contradictions” (Lefebvre & Goonewardena, 2008, p. 30).*

### 3. Section II. VaVaV’s third space and its mathematical model

The dialectical process that VaVaV unfolds generates a third space of dialogue and enables understanding of the participants’ backgrounds and realities and maintains syntony with the theory of the Production of the Space by Henri Lefebvre. Where

Lefebvre understands social reality in a three-dimensional dialectic related to Hegel and Marx's dialectic.

Hegel's dialectic of "*Thesis – Antithesis – Synthesis*" (Fox, 2005, p. 43)<sup>4</sup> is the result of terms that negate and contradict each other. The core of the dialectical thinking is based on the German concept of 'das Aufheben des Widerspruchs' [the sublation of the contradiction].

*"Aufheben signifies, on the one hand, negation and overcoming; on the other hand, preservation and placing on a higher level. This ambiguity is completely lost in most translations for example ...English (transcend or sublata)"* (Lefebvre & Goonewardena, 2008, p. 30).

Based on the Aufheben, Hegel defines as thesis the intellectual proposition that is unsatisfactory and incomplete. This unsatisfactory proposition entails negates the thesis, producing the antithesis, which is also, on reflection, inadequate. So, the third term '*synthesis*' sets apart from the contradictions and generates a new stage that overcomes and preserves (or sublates) the prior stages of thesis-antithesis and arises as a higher rational unity (Spencer, Krause, & Appignanesi, 1996, p. 86).

According to Lefebvre, Hegel dialectic takes place in the concept, that is only in thought and it cannot be applied to reality. For Lefebvre, it is more important to grab real life in all its contradictions:

*"Hence, Lefebvre follows Marx who "stood" Hegel's dialectic "on its feet" and gave precedence not only to the idea but also to the material process of social production"* (Lefebvre & Goonewardena, 2008, p. 32).

In the dialectical materialism of Marx, thesis and antithesis are not just contrary but are a stage of no reconciliation. This entails the triadic dialectic of Marx as "*Affirmation – Negation – Negation of the Negation*".

Hegelian and Marxian dialectics are based on contraries. In response Lefebvre defines:

*"three moments that are left distinct from each other; without reconciling them in a synthesis – three moments that exist in interaction, in conflict or alliance with each other. The three terms or moments assume thus equal importance, and each takes up a similar position in relation to the other. In this way a three-dimensional or triadic version of the dialectic emerges"* (Lefebvre & Goonewardena, 2008, p. 33).

In the triadic version of Lefebvre, every idea/moment is independent from the other but shares partial parts. Thus, it is possible to make a quadrant representation of this, where every axis represents a different moment. This assumption was the starting point to connect Lefebvre's three-dimensional dialectic version with the Vis-á-Vis-á-Vis system in order to grasp what the methodology is trying to achieve.

A point in the space has three dimensions. Every dimension represents a plane and depending on their combination, it is possible to delimit the position of the points. In two-dimensional representation these planes have coordinates such as (X and Y), (X

and Z) and (Y and Z), but it is only when X and Y and Z get-together that the three-dimensional representation occurs.

However, a single point is an infinitesimal of the whole, and the whole is made up from countless points, as shown in figure N°1. In other words, if the 'whole' is the cube, represented in the figure, made from a combination of countless points, then only with endless coordinates can the cube be depicted as a defined figure.

Akin to this, the social context also has countless points and a social situation can be thought as a three-dimensional figure that requires deep understanding. When the situation is approached just from one point of view, the whole understanding of the problem gets lost in such a simple representation, just as an iceberg looks small on the surface but is larger under water. In picture N°1, it is possible to appreciate this phenomenon: the iceberg appears to be smaller than its actual size is. Social contexts can be analysed employing this logic, by which the simplification of the situation produces a tiny understanding of the complete situation.

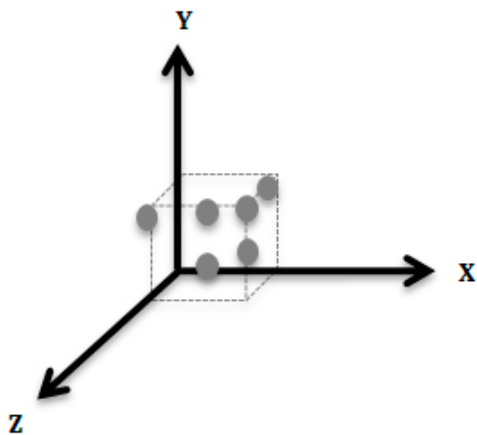
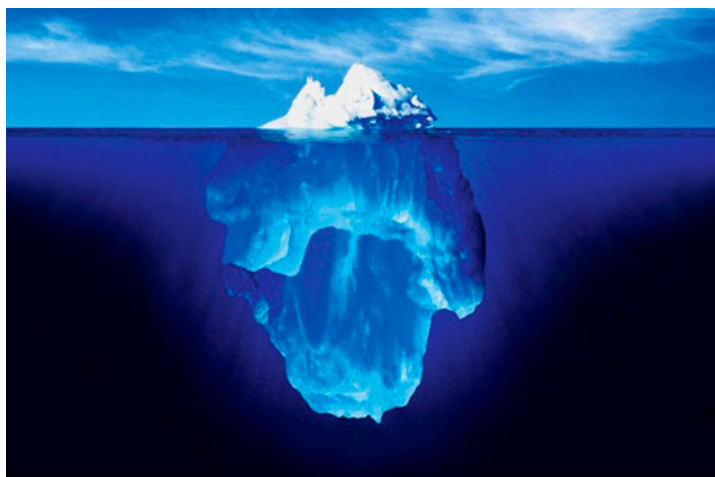


Figure 1. Representation of endless points in the space.



Picture1. Iceberg.

Lefebvre readapted his spatial dialectic of “*Form – Structure – Function*” (Lefebvre & Goonewardena, 2008) into an innovative triadic construction of “*Syntagmatic dimension - Paradigmatic dimension - Symbolic dimension*” (Lefebvre & Goonewardena, 2008) related to the theory of language. Again, every part is independent from the other and shares points of encounter with each other. In his dialectic, the syntagmatic dimension is the classic dimension of language and grammar and deals with the relationship between signs, combinations, sentence structures and others. On the other hand, the Paradigmatic dimension<sup>5</sup> is a metaphorical process related to a system of meanings, where one term can be substituted for another that shares similarities in some aspects but differs in others when analysed in different contexts. The last dimension, the symbolic dimension aims to relate symbol and society through instinctive, emotional and irrational social facts. The symbol thus forms part of a social structure and:

*“serves as a pillar for allegory and fetish. It constitutes the basis of the social imaginary that is different from the individual imaginary ...symbols are inexhaustible...and their formalization is not possible”* (Lefebvre & Goonewardena, 2008, pp. 34-36).

In figures N°2 and N°3, it is possible to appreciate the three-dimensional dialectic of language that Lefebvre proposed. In these figures every ring is independent and shares a common space. Lets imagine now, that the interception between the three rings/spheres produces a figure. This figure or solid (as it is denominated in mathematical language) represents the complete analysis of the situation. However, in order to get the best approach to the true situation, it is important to get as many data as possible.

Employing the example of ‘work’, the three-dimensional approach of the idea is presented in a triad such as:

‘what work **is** - what work **is not** - the opposite of what work **is not**’.

This is reinterpreted as ‘Definition – Dialectic - Hidden Message’. The definition then becomes that which community understands about the topic in terms of social categorizations. Dialectic is the contradiction always present in every definition. Finally, the Hidden Message is the overcome of the dialectical relationship between ‘Definition - Dialectic’ and represents how the liminal community truly feels about the topic. Every triad of the approximation of the topic generates a layer or a point in the whole structure of the topic. In Figure N°4 six points with six coordinates are represented. X is equal to definition, Y to dialectic and Z to the hidden message. Thereby a three-dimensional representation of the point is (x, y, z) or (definition, dialectic, hidden message).



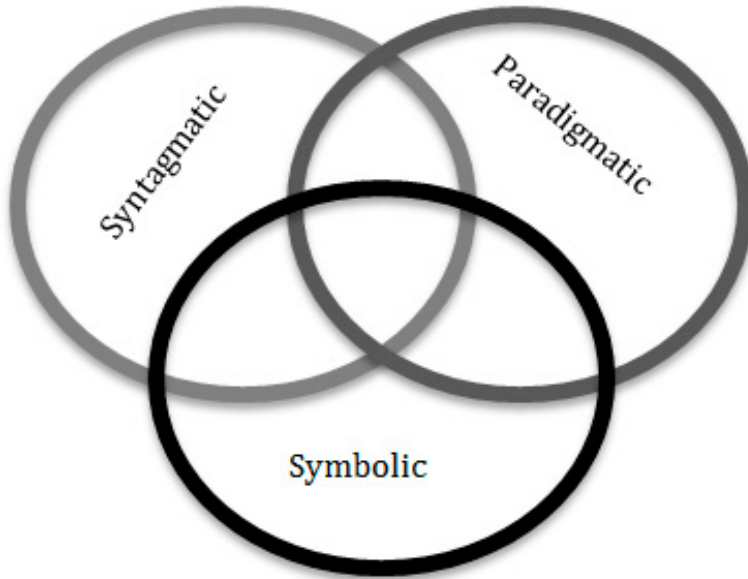


Figure 2. Two-dimensional representation of Lefebvre's dialectic of language.

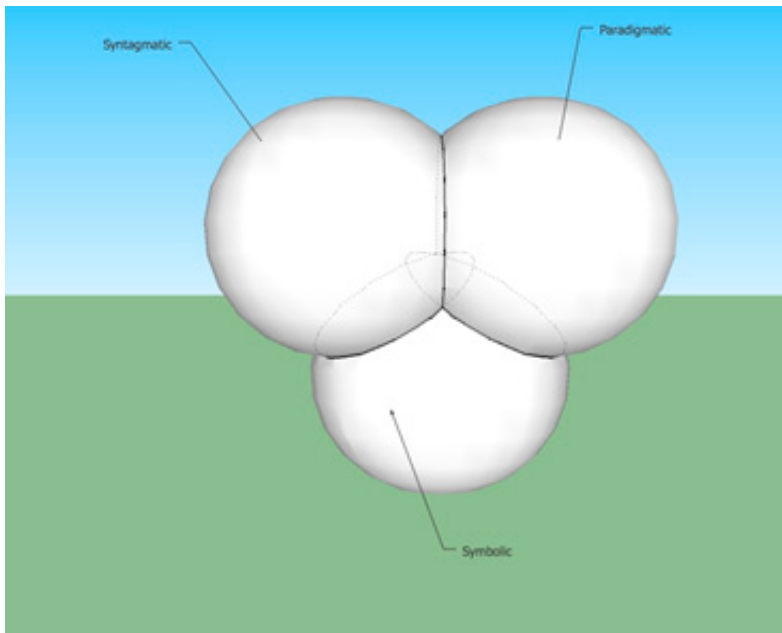


Figure 3. Three-dimensional representation of Lefebvre's dialectic of language.

The points represented are:

**Point 1.** (Effort, Relax, Stressful)

**Point 2.** (Challenging, Easy, Difficult)

**Point 3.** (Income, Expenses, Salary)

**Point 4.** (Time, Timeless, Measured)

**Point 5.** (Rewarding, Penalty Award)

**Point 6.** (Stability, Unstable, Firm)

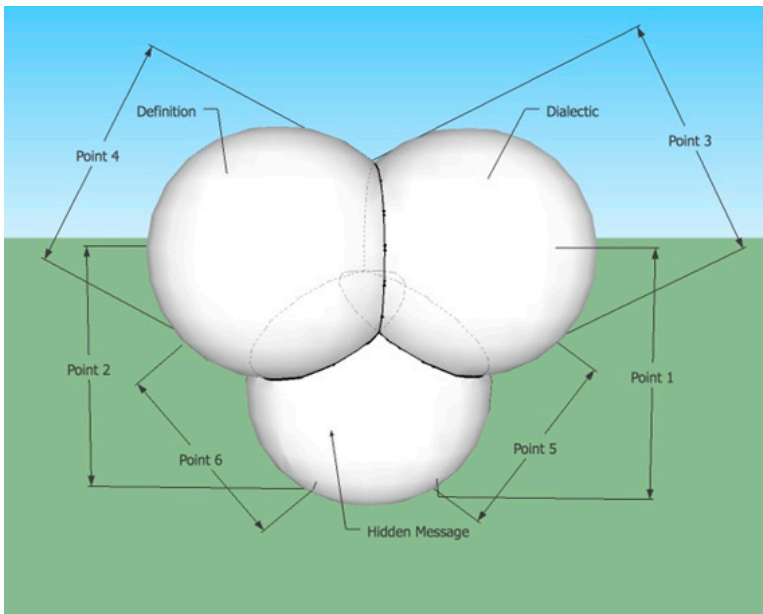


Figure 4. Three-dimensional representation of VaVaV.

When employing VAVAV to work with communities, the intention is to create as many data points as possible in order to give form to the figure/situation. Each data point in the whole geometry of the solid helps to mould the understanding of the topic and its social context. The points added contribute to define the topic itself and have the same importance in the analysis of the social context as a whole.

#### 4. Section III. The message hidden behind the words

At this point the methodology becomes active and generates spaces for engagement and reflexivity through overcoming the contradiction: 'Hidden Message'. Therefore, this space is open to be critically reflected upon different forms, depending on the participants' inquiry:

- Through the exploration of the senses as it is suggested in Appendix A, where participants reflect on different possibilities to comprehend the 'Hidden Message' employing visual, aural, performative and gustatory tools, informed by sensory ethnography methodology. As part of this new discourse, participants have the chance to experiment with the topic in a realm beyond words. Therefore, the topic

does not become an abstract definition chained to keywords, but a relationship between keywords and senses, and this produces unusual ways to understand and represent the topic.

These representations allow participants to generate their own regime of truth and knowledge at the same time that it helps them to explore ways of perceiving and analysing realities in *unconventional*<sup>6</sup> forms. Hence, participants generate their own “*regime of truth*” (Foucault, 1980). This new regime of truth expresses culture with no words and at the same time transfers a hidden message to the realm of the senses.

- Through the generation of a new discourse, informed by the theory of Michael Foucault, participants have the possibility to critically reflect upon the meaning behind the definition of the topic that they have come up with. This generates space for the engagement and dialogue about the ‘Hidden Message’ and it may produce assumptions as the result of the collective process of reflexion. Participants may explore the contradictions, doubts, dilemmas, questions and possibilities of this reflexion and the social implications in their reality. What is this definition of the topic telling us? What is the hidden message that we have to decode?

Through a psychological reflexivity. In relation to this part, it is important to explain that the ANPO methodology has not been developed to produce psychological reflexivity, however, the active space that is generated through the dialectical game proposed in VaVaV allows this approach. The theory explored in this regard was connected to the Jacques Lacan theory of the unconscious (Grigg, 2008; Lacan, 16 September 1966; Lacanonline; Lavers, 1971; Miller, 1993; Ver Eecke, 2006). For Lacan, the unconscious is created by language and expressed by syntax; a body of rules that build patterns of behaviours. The acquisition of speech works through a symbolic order and is:

*“the primary element in the acquisition of culture, that is in the submission of free ranging instinctive drives to that symbolic order. By acquiring language, we allow our instinctive energies to be canalised and organised”*(Anderson et al., 1988, p. 112). By acquiring language, human beings integrate instinct and channel it via words.

## 5. Section IV. Conclusion

VaVaV unfolds a three-dimensional dialectic that induces participants to work together toward a common definition of the topic. There is an open acceptance of diverse opinions no matter what the participant’s backgrounds and social status. Their ideas are intrinsically related to their personal traces and languages and are placed at the free use of the team. Looking for a definition becomes the main aim by which participants momentarily forget their social structures and enter into a ‘*temporal dimension*’(Thomassen, 2009, p. 16).

The temporal dimension that VaVaV ignites and its further development along the ANPO Experience, is based on a dialectical process that involves a constant reasoning between ideas and their opposites and moreover, between structures and ‘*anti-structures*’(Bial, 2007b, p. 90). The anti-structures generated allow participants to be part of the experience leaving behind their immediate social differences and

structures. Their interactions and ideas are what count. Therefore, their structures in terms of where they live, how much money they earn, their skin colour, or any reference in regards to their social status disappears temporarily. This temporality is what creates the ‘liminal-phenomena’ (Bial, 2007b; Thomassen, 2009) that takes part in ANPO.

The ‘liminality’ (Bial, 2007b; Thomassen, 2009) that participants experience has similarities with the concept of ‘anti-structure’ (Thomassen, 2009) that Victor Turner proposes. In his work on the Christian pilgrimage (Turner, 1978), Turner argued that:

*“pilgrimage shares aspects of liminality because participants become equal, as they distance themselves from mundane structures and their social identities, leading to a homogenization of status and a strong sense of Communitas” (Thomassen, 2009, p. 15).*

Hence, in the temporary dimension of these Communitas, becomes possible to suspend social norms, challenge them and perhaps transform them (Bial, 2007a, p. 27).

Turner made a distinction between Liminality and Liminoid (Thomassen, 2009, p. 15). For him, liminality refers to any ‘betwixt and between’ situation or object that produces a transformation or an irreversible change. In comparison, liminoid experiences are the product of modern consumerist societies and:

*“do not involve a resolution of a personal crisis or a change of status. The liminoid is a break from normality, a playful as-if experience, but it loses the key feature of liminality: transition” (Thomassen, 2009, p. 15).*

On the other hand, McKenzie (Bial, 2007a) goes away from the difference that Turner suggests and defines a normative dimension of liminality, the so-called liminal-norm.

*“The liminal-norm operates in any situation where the valorization of liminal transgression or resistance itself become normative –at which point theorization of such a norm may become subversive” (Bial, 2007a, p. 27).*

The liminal-norm suggests that the normative can be transformed and vice versa. Also any conceptual model designed to produce transgression and transition is limited in terms of formal and functional aspects (Bial, 2007a, pp. 28-29). In other words, it is possible to transcend the social structures creating models of interaction that generate transgression, however, these models will be always limited by their functionality within participants in order to generate an anti-structured space.

In this anti-structured space participants do not know often to each other and the interaction with each other is anchored to their signifiers and how they share them with other. Nisbet in his book ‘The sociological Tradition’ (Nisbet, 1967, p. 47) defines a community as:

*“all forms of relationship which are characterized by a high degree of personal intimacy, emotional depth, moral commitment, social cohesion and continuity in time”*

The point of differentiation with the ANPO's *communita* is that participants do not rely on the continuity in time, yet they still share emotional depth and intimacy with their own stories, moral commitment and their backgrounds, this produces a socially cohesive interaction that makes them emphatic to others.

The liminal-norm created through ANPO shares a geographical proximity in terms of the place where the activity is held as well as and social interaction through the tasks that participants perform. The tasks suggested in the VaVaV have an educational intention and look for the creation of anti-structural spaces in order to provide opportunities for participants to remove themselves from the dominant surrounding society and to express their identities in ways that may not be possible in their permanent communities. Hence, the focus is stressed on an intensive encounter that promotes participation (Cohen, Winter 2006, p. 40).

The encounter that generates the ANPO's *communita* starts with a standard group interaction between participants who do or do not know each other. In this type of interaction participants fear to be judged by the other, especially if that 'other' has a religious, cultural or social belief that differ from the participant's environment. The artist/facilitator prompts participation emphasizing the dialectical construction of the topic. With this, he/she tries to encourage them to break their inner dialectic 'participation – no participation'. The artist/facilitator makes efforts to promote a stage of liminality through VaVaV, however, the participants are the ones who must deal with their personal signifiers before being involved by the anti-structured environment. They decide if they will open widely to the experience or not. The struggle in terms of participation confirms what McKenzie (Bial, 2007a, pp. 28-29) states about the liminal-norm and how its functionality limits the conceptual model that in this case, the ANPO unfolds. For this reason, even though the model-methodology outspread in VaVaV attempts to create participation and anti-structure, the development of this relies on participants who are the ones responsible to make it functional.

This functionality of the model relates to the hidden message that every participant brings to the experience and how this interacts with the hidden message of the other. Their mutual interactions are circumscribed to individual self-esteem and behaviour in front of others. Moreover, it is related to psychological matters and the fact that:

*“the greater part of our daily actions is the result of hidden motives which escape our observation”* (Le Bon, 2001, p. 60).

Many authors have written in regards to the hidden motives that make an individual react the way he/she does in front of others, whether the interaction is related to communities or crowds (Le Bon, 2001; Nisbet, 1967).

Through the differentiation between ANPO's *communitas* and crowds, a better understanding of this kind of interaction emerges. Especially because crowds and ANPO's *communitas* share similarities in regards to the way they congregate, heterogeneity of the participants and collective mind but differ in terms of leadership. The first one looks for equality while the second follows a leader who 'hypnotizes' the participants.

Gustave Le Bon defines crowds as a gathering of individuals of any nationality, profession, sex, etc. who congregate to achieve a common goal. The sentiments of all persons take the same direction and “*their conscious personality vanishes*” (Le Bon, 2001, p. 13). The characters are apparently unified due to the evenness of the environment and three main characteristics appear. The first is sentiment of ‘invisible power’ that allows the crowd to perform any act fearlessly. The second is the ‘contagion’ where the individual sacrifices his personal interest for the collective. The third is that the individual who is part of the crowd can become different to himself as an isolated individual (Le Bon, 2001, pp. 17-18).

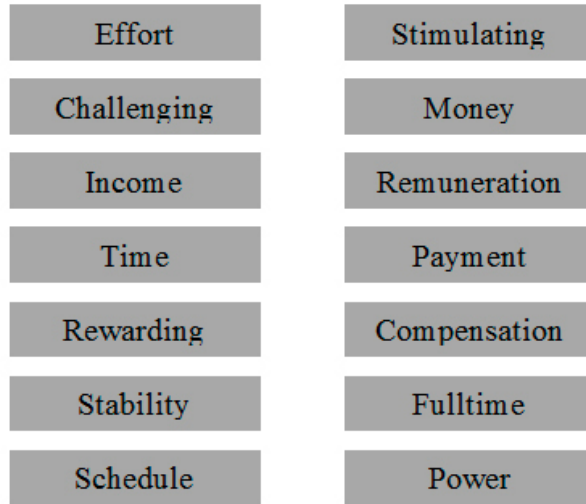
The ANPO’s *communitas*’ mind shares similarities with the psychology of crowds in relation to the invisible power, the sense of contagiousness, where the mood of one or more participants can be extended into the whole group, and the sense of community, which impulses temporary changes of personality in the participants. Yet, the members of a liminal experience do not ‘vanish’ their conscious and this is due to their being integrated in a political system of equity. The dialectical structure of ‘shepherd – sheep’ disappears to give way to a congregation of members with the same weight in their opinion and actions. In order to create this egalitarian *communita* it is important to develop truthful relationships within participants, a connectivity that generates a temporary kinship. This comradeship is what will produce the identity of the group and will unify the backgrounds, cultural and social differences in a common fellowship with one expression within an anti-structured environment.

In conclusion, every step in ANPO has been designed to generate a liminal-norm nonetheless; it is with VaVaV that the transition starts. When participants enter into the dialectical threshold of defining a topic through contradictions, they face a reality that demands ‘sense and denotation’ (Zalta, Fall 2014 edition) and at the same time disconnects them from the social analysis to insert them in a world of language, meanings and contradiction. They are in a threshold of the Hegelian dialectic of ‘thesis-anti-thesis-synthesis’ or specifically in the three-dimensional dialectic of ‘Definition – Dialectic -Hidden Message’ that VaVaV produces. The overcoming of the contradiction is to define the topic using the inputs from each participant. Participants are induced to a kind of ‘*rite of passage*’<sup>7</sup> where they leave behind their social structures to make ideas generated in an anti-structured environment. In this space, their social status is put on hold and they work together toward a common goal. A goal that shifts depending on the steps in the methodology and it is further represented as visual, aural, tactile, and gustatory forms of the topic. These representations produce a symbolism of the topic through the exploration of dialectical relationships into the liminal experience that VaVaV ignites.

## 6. Appendix A

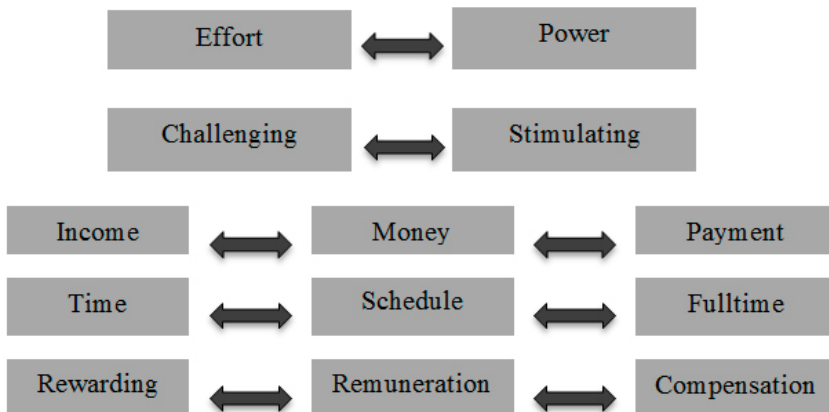
What is work?

Let’s suppose that participants define work as:

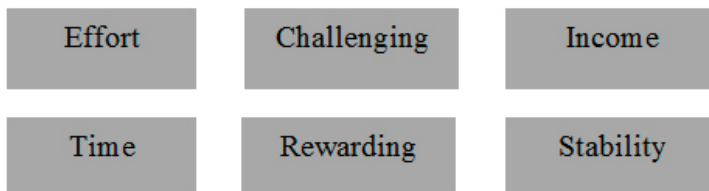


All keywords are written in a whiteboard. The first task for the artist/facilitator is to associate the keywords that relate to each other. The reason behind this is that most of the words are synonyms of the others. Hence, in order to create a better understanding of the topic, the definitions that participants have given are associated with as many words as possible. It is important in this step that participants help in the process of association otherwise the sense of teamwork could be lost.

In the group of words aforementioned there are some similarities such as:



In this regrouping there is possible then to establish a definition of ‘work’ as:



In addition, it is possible to infer that:

a) The keywords, ‘the part within the whole’ are related to a social recognition of the topic that has been selected. This means that participants’ answers are led by their own perception of what the topic is.

b) Participants wish to answer ‘correctly’ in order to avoid being misunderstood or judged by other participants<sup>8</sup>

Now, the new task is to find the opposite of these keywords or the whole, as Saussure defines

Effort	≠	Relaxation	Challenging	≠	Easy
Income	≠	Expenditure	Time	≠	Timeless
Rewarding	≠	Penalty	Stability	≠	Instability

The last task is to find the opposite of the opposites. To make this task easier for the participants, it is imperative that the artist/facilitator writes what the topic is not. For instance, in the hypothetical case that it is being analysed:

- Work is not relaxation
- easy
- expenditure
- timeless
- penalty
- instability

So now, the participants are asked to apply VaVaV, giving opposite keywords

Relaxation	≠	Stressful	Easy	≠	Difficult
Expenditure	≠	Salary	Timeless	≠	Measured
Penalty	≠	Reward	Instability	≠	Firm

Hence, for this community, work is defined as following:

- Work is stressful
- difficult
- salary
- measured
- reward
- firm



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## Notes

1. What Saussure defines as form it is a relation of four factors involved in each word. These factors are the form and matter of the signifier and the form and matter of the signified. Where signifier is, in linguistic, related to the sound or the power of communicating through voice and the signified is the concept that this word intends to transmit. This is further discussed with details in this chapter.
2. There is not interest in analysing what it is considered socially good or bad but define aspects or situations through the opposite. The examples above are just used to give a social context for the idea of the opposite and how this is related to the VAVAV methodology.
3. The hidden message is a terminology employed to define the overcome of the dialectical relationship of the topic. This is explored in the third section of this chapter.
4. “Although this model is often named after Hegel, he himself never used that specific formulation. Hegel ascribed that terminology to Kant” (Fox, 2005, p. 43).
5. (Lefebvre & Goonewardena, 2008, p. 35) “This concept refers to Roman Jakobson, who developed a two-dimensional theory of language, distinguish between two kinds of classifications of a linguistic sign” The first is the combination or context where every sign is the result of a combination of signs and the second is the selection or substitution, which consists in the substitution of one term for another.
6. The unconventional forms that these representations take are reference to more than the facts that connect language and sensory expressions of a definition than to an actual validation of the art form. Hence, the word ‘unconventional’ is not suggesting that the artwork produced by participants is, in any way, ‘avant garde’ or different to any artwork done before in the history of the arts but the unconventionality of interconnecting keywords and their representations as a substitution of the academic understanding of the keywords.
7. Arnold Van Gennep published *Rites of Passage* in 1909. “In *Rite of Passage* Van Gennep started out by suggesting a meaningful classification of all existing rites. He distinguished between rites that mark transitions in the passage of the time (eg. Harvest, new year), whereupon he went on to explore “the basis of characteristics pattern in the order of ceremonies”(1960:10). Stressing the importance of transitions in any society, van Gennep singled out rites of passage as a special category, consisting of three sub categories, namely *rite of separation*, *transition rites* and *rites of incorporation*. Van Gennep called the middle stage of the rite of passage a *liminal period*”. (Bial, 2007a, p. 27).
8. This is further explored in the last section of this chapter.