

Reviewer: 3

Comments to the Author

This essay is not publishable—not in CT or anywhere else.

1. The paper fails to deliver a phenomenology of listening, as promised. Not only that, it demonstrate almost no knowledge of phenomenology or of "communication" (as a phenomenon, a possibility, an object of study, or a field). At times, the author provides a nice discussion of some of the common variety ideas from Pierce, but readers can get that directly from the primary source.
2. The author does not identify the problematic into which the paper seeks to intervene. Normally, this is accomplished by sustained review of relevant literature, the theories and/or speculations offered by that literature and through which the problem emerges justifiably as a problem for examination. As it stands, I am not sure what features of "communication" or "listening" or the "art of listening" and/or phenomenology this paper seeks to contribute original research and insight.
3. Building on the previous point, the paper demonstrates virtually no recognition of communication theory, research, or scholarship on any of the terms invoked in the essay including, listening, hearing, communication, language, understanding. There is simply nothing on offer in the paper that makes a contribution to the scholarship that readers have come to expect from CT.
4. If the author wishes to revise the paper, one direction I would recommend taking is to discuss Pierce's oeuvre as phenomenology. His work is almost always read as semiotics. The author even quotes the famous sentence by Pierce that many scholars use as a starting point for a semiotic analysis drawing from Pierce. So, an interesting and original line of discussion could be why we need to read Pierce not as a semiotician but rather as a phenomenologist—what are the benefits of this?

There is an obvious distance to go to bring the discussion up to the level of rigor, originality, and theoretical sophistication that readers expect from the research published in CT. I strongly recommend that the author take his or her time to read the literature in our field and defer attempts to publish until much later.

Detailed comments:

- p. 3, line 41: "An equal partner in the full communicative act..." First, the presupposition of a "full communicative act" must be explained in order for the argument to proceed. What is the problematic into which this essays seeks to intervene? Is it the possibility of "communication"? Is it the uncertainty of "shared understanding"? Second, I am not convinced that speaking is an "equal partner" to "listening." Speaking is active (at least conscious speech may be presupposed as active), whereas listening may certainly be active, but it occurs in reception, of being spoken to or spoken about as well as being engaged with in discourse.

- p. 3, line 51: "Tellingly..." Of what? Does the author mean to indicate that an example is to follow his/her presupposition about the "equal partner" relation between speaking and listening? Jazz (interaction via the language of music) as an example of the nature of the relation between speaking and listening in communication is entirely misleading and untheorized. Playing an instrument (engaging with others in the language of music) may be a form of expression, but it is far too simplistic to suggest that doing so is to "say" anything at all. The leap from speech and language (p. 3, line 41) to music (p.3, line 51) to art (p. 4., line 27) is immense. The author must explain what he/she means by "musical metaphor"—metaphor for what?

- p. 3— . I suspect that some readers of CT would cringe at the ease with which the author uses the term "art" and "artful" throughout the paper.

- p. 4: The author invokes for a second time the vague idea of "rethinking communication." What does this mean? I'm not sure why anyone would read past p. 4 without a more rigorous account of the problematic to which the paper is addressed.

- p. 4: There is a radical contradiction in the definition of phenomenology provided by the author and the citation he/she provides from Heidegger. Is phenomenology an enterprise in allowing phenomena to show themselves as they give themselves to be seen? Or, is it an enterprise in understanding the "meaning" of phenomena as they are experienced? This contradiction, and the summary on p.5 of what it means to "study something phenomenologically," suggests that the author has, at best, only a weak grasp on the basics of the phenomenological enterprise as it unfolds from Husserl to Heidegger. Were the author to revise this paper for another purpose, I recommend deleting these passages and cut to the chase in the discussion of Pierce.

Further, the article needs a sustained review of the literature on "listening" in communication and elsewhere (in philosophy, psychology, etc). On p. 5, the author lists works "put forth by Lapari and others" that he/she will depart from and add to. The discussion would benefit

significantly from a review of that literature—it would offer the terms of the problematic that remains invisible in the paper.

- p. 5, lines 32-39: The author offers a definition of phenomenology by Pierce, and then, in the very next sentence states the following: “Although Pierce offers a similar definition of phenomenology...” This is confusing.

- p. 6: “Listening is almost universally understood as a kind of outgoing, active attentiveness (citation removed for blind review).” This claim and its “citation” is not scholarly and is completely unacceptable. If it is true that “listening is almost universally understood as” x, y, or z, then it should be rather easy, and necessary, to list multiple published sources that substantiate such a dramatic claim.

- p. 6: By the bottom of page 6, Pierce’s famed Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness has been referred to the author three times, including the reference to it in the essay abstract. It is not until p. 7 that a discussion of this framework begins. Unfortunately, that discussion returns to the example of jazz improvisation. I’m not sure using this example aids in explaining Pierce’s framework, and it does not help clarify the point the author (presumably) wishes to make about “communication.” The article would benefit from reducing the delay in arriving to a discussion and basic explanation of Pierce, and getting on with how this applies to the problem of “listening.”

- p. 9; 14-15: Prior to the nice discussion of Quality (p. 9), the author states that it (Quality) can be discerned by singular consciousness; however, the author then invokes “mind” when referring to the musician, and then “experience,” presumably of the same agent. Why mind? Why “experience”? Mind, consciousness, and experience are technical terms that are not interchangeable, at least not without some very careful and reasoned explanation. Later in the paper (p. 14-15) the two terms (mind and consciousness) are again named, but not sufficiently distinguished.

- pp. 9-11: At this point the author should begin to deliver on the promise of a phenomenology of listening vis-a-vis communication, rather than focusing on jazz.

- p. 12, line 41: “Mediation makes learning, and therefore, listening possible.” This presupposition (a sweeping, meaningless claim) has been posited, not demonstrated or proven by the passages that precede it. I thought the faculty of understanding, and the capacity for intention, make “learning” and “listening” possible.

- p. 16: "Our conceptual distinctions between hearing, listening and attuning are therefore derived from the three modes of consciousness." This presupposition has been posited, not proved or sufficiently developed by the previous passages. At this point in the paper—more than half way through—I am still waiting for focus to turn to "listening" and for the promise of a phenomenology of it to be offered.

- p 16: The author claims that Pierce's theory of consciousness encourages a distinction not only between hearing and listening, but also, between hearing, listening, and attuning. It does? How is that so? If the problematic into which this essay enters is to be found here (an opening in Pierce's philosophy, let's call it, or a ground on which raising the question of listening and/or hearing is justified), then that would have to be clearly argued—and it is not.

- p 17: The word "two" should be "to." In that same sentence, the author claims that "hearing occurs" when we "react to some verbal stimulus..." To the contrary, hearing is a capacity to receive sense data. Aural reception of sense data ("hearing") is not contingent on reaction to that data. Later on the same page the author equates "hearing" with understanding (or, at least with "acknowledgement" of the presence of the other and the intent of the other's words) without making much of an attempt to sufficiently theorize this colloquialism (a problem that scholars have spent entire careers examining). On this point I would encourage the author to read the classic book, *The Pragmatics of Human Communication*, by Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson.

- p 17-19: The analysis of "listening" (as a practice, an experience, a possibility—we are not sure) lacks any theoretical depth, barely moving beyond the commonplace. It is not in the least sense a phenomenology of listening. I would advise the reader, should he or she be interested in pursuing the topic in the future, to read at least some of the important philosophical works on the topic of "listening" (e.g., a recent book by Jean-Luc Nancy; works of psychoanalysis; or the extensive communication scholarship on "dialogue," including works of communication ethics on Levinas, Buber, and even Ong), as well as the literature on "speech" (two that come to mind are *La Parole* by George Gusdorf, and *Speech and Phenomena* by Derrida), as well as the literature on "silence" (numerous articles published across the humanities and social sciences, and a classic book of phenomenology on this topic by Don Ihde.)

- p 23: The conclusion suggests that the author knows little about the field of communication, its central commitments, the problems that characterize its major theoretical currents, and its contributions to knowledge produced over the past century. Contrary to the author's claim, his/her paper has not offered much to "usefully challenge existing ways of conceptualizing human communication."