Aesthetics, Ethics and Politics
from the Perspective of the Soma

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INTRODUCTION:
PHILOSOPHICAL MOVEMENTS AND SCHOOLS
FOR SOMAESTHETICS

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Significant philosophies always create a philosophical movement independently of the philosopher's intention. Nevertheless, in the present situation of philosophical pluralism (the modern and postmodern democracies allow the abundance of philosophical movements), it is worth establishing philosophical schools since otherwise, people cannot hear and recognize even the most important new ideas: one philosopher's voice sinks into the ocean of books and online journals as a drop in the sea. It also depends on personality. Richard Rorty never wanted to establish neither a philosophical movement nor a philosophical school. He was perhaps too shy to create and organize such social phenomena. As a founder of neopragmatism, he left this question on time. Contrary to him, Richard Shusterman, Rorty's disciple in the field of neopragmatism, is the person who likes to create and support philosophical schools. As a result of his efforts, there are plenty of philosophical schools, forums, and institutions all over the world, which deal with somaesthetics that was invented by him. It is beyond question that somaesthetics has become a philosophy and a movement. It has become a philosophy since Shusterman interprets philosophy as an ethical art of living and his pragmatist aesthetics plays a central role in it. However, it has also become an international, philosophical movement since somaesthetics covers already an interdisciplinary field. It is so "because the body – as our tool of tools and the central site of our experience -- is crucially related to the many disciplines that concern human flourishing: not only the arts but politics, education, historical and social sciences as well as health sciences and even technology."[1] It follows obviously from the situation that somaesthetics embraces so many different tasks, which cannot be covered by one philosopher's time and energy. It needs a philosophical movement.

Following the successes of the conferences in 2014 ("Aesthetic Experience and Somaesthetics," Budapest, Hungary) and 2017 ("The Soma As the Core of Aesthetics, Ethics, and Politics," Szeged, Hungary), which drew over twenty participants in both cases from across the globe, we also organized a conference in 2018: "Somaesthetics: Between the Human Body and Beyond" (Szeged, Hungary). The conference of 2014 resulted in papers already published in our indexed journal, *Pragmatism Today* and others published in a volume with Brill.[2] Our new conference sought to broaden the conversation of somaesthetics by engaging not only aesthetics but also the other fields of culture. We invited not only aestheticians who deal with somaesthetics, but also experts, teachers, and researchers in the field of arts, philosophy, ethics, life sciences, social sciences, and politics. Hungarian participants established the *Hungarian Somaesthetic Forum* and connected their work to the above mentioned international, philosophical movement of somaesthetics.

The present issue of the *Pragmatism Today* delivers mostly the best papers of the Szeged conference of 2017. It starts with a keynote essay of Richard Shusterman followed by an interview with him (ch. I). Then we offer a selection of the papers connected to somaesthetics and given at the Szeged conference of 2017 (ch. II and III). Nevertheless, we also publish more general papers on pragmatism (ch. IV), among others from Richard J. Bernstein and Alan Malachowski, and we close our present issue by two interesting book reviews (ch. V.).

Shusterman's essay („Body Consciousness and the Excentric Self: Between Plessner and Somaesthetics") provides a newly developed argument against Merleau-Ponty's standpoint on the basis of Helmuth Plessner's philosophical anthropology. This rich, thoroughgoing

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[1] „Richard Shusterman in Budapest. An Interview" In: Pragmatism Today. Volume 5, Issue 2, Winter 2014, p. 10.

[2] *Aesthetic Experience and Somaesthetics (Studies in Somaesthetics, Book 1)*. Brill Academic Publisher, 2018.

article investigates the question, „how one can know one's body or somatic self"? After a short introduction to somaesthetics' essence and purposes, Shusterman explains the German distinction between „Leib" („the lived, feeling body or the body as intentionality or subject") and „Körper" („the physical body as object"). He makes it clear that not only Husserl with his concept of „Leibkörper," but also Merleau-Ponty preserved the traditional philosophical dualism between subject and object, mind and body inherited from Plato and Descartes. Shusterman offers, on the one hand, an effective criticism both Husserl's and Merleau-Ponty's standpoint on the basis of Plessner's „excentric positionality," which overcomes this dualism, saying that we should not conceive „the positional center, the subject, as a fixed reality" but it is a socially and situationally determined, always changing position of „Leib sein" („being a Leib") and "Körper haben" ("having a physical body"). On the other hand, Shusterman develops further his somaesthetics on the basis of this excentric positionality, which makes possible the smooth and rapid transitions not only between different social roles of an individual, but also the transitions between the spontaneous and the reflective self-consciousness. – László Kőszeghy collected very interesting questions in his interview, which helps us to understand Shusterman's somaesthetics much better.

We can find the best lectures of the Szeged conference in 2017 in the next two chapters. In chapter II, „Soma, Politics, Ethics," we might read the paper of Matthew Crippen („The Soma in City Life: Cultural, Political and Bodily Aesthetics of Mandalay's Water Festival") who shows „bodily perceptions and practices and their place in our experience" in the vein of Shusterman's „analytic somaesthetics." „Mandalay's Water Festival is overwhelmingly a shared experience, but not just because it coordinates people into group celebration. It is also shared by virtue of supplying a kind bacchanal rupture that and erodes normal boundaries between self and other. This rupture relates to the political dimensions of the festival, which seems a pre-

reflective protest reaction that governing authorities attempt to control in order to keep the population in check." Manuela Massa focuses in her paper („The Political Role of the Body") on the question „How should we conceive of the female body in the context of a patriarchal society in which woman is dominated by male authority?" She explains to us Simone de Beauvoir's solution in *The Second Sex* and shows its legal and political dimension. Elizabeth Kurian tries to explain in her paper ("From *Homo Sacer* to the Yogi: The Soma as the Awakened Sacred Body") how „proper somatic training, as well as conditioning in mindful awareness, can foster inner self-discipline." She also illustrates how somaesthetic practices can help us to improve not only our bodily but also our mental capacities, and what kind of ethical and political problems should be solved even by those people who understood that „there is nothing more beautiful or sacred than devoting one's life for the wellbeing of fellow beings." Éva Podlovics begins her experiment with re-constructing Heidegger's ethics („The Role of Others to Become Ethical in Heideggerian Sense and its Relation to Pragmatism"), and then shows the similarities between his early philosophy and pragmatism.

In chapter III, "Soma, Art, Technology," we can read somaesthetic analyses of dancing, singing, music, and technology. The first two papers deal with dance and its somaesthetic interpretation. Katalin Vermes ("Whose Body? The Phenomenology of Somatic Group Dynamics") compares, on the one hand, the existential and intersubjective aspects of Shusterman's somaesthetics and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological description. Having almost the same topic of Shusterman's essay, it is worth reading the two texts together. On the other hand, Vermes shows us her specialty, the psychodynamic movement and dance therapy, which is a Hungarian psychotherapeutic method. Nóra Horváth ("As Close As Possible to the Ungraspable – Somaesthetical and Deleuzian Investigations on the Choreographical Work of Pál Frenák") tries to work out the principles of a new dance philosophy. She would like to integrate Deleuze's

sign theory with Shusterman's somaesthetics and use it as the basis of her new project. Anne Tarvainen and Stefano Marino wrote on singing and rock music. Tarvainen ("Democratizing Singing: Somaesthetic Reflections on Vocality, Deaf Voices, and Listening") explains to us the anti-democratic feature of our societies in connection with the somatic norms of singing. Presenting the case of a deaf popular music singer, she shows us astonishing situations how people reject the nonnormative voices and bodies. Marino („A Somaesthetic Approach to Rock Music: Some Observations and Remarks") defends popular art, especially rock music in the vein of Shusterman's somaesthetics against the charges of the philosophers, first of all, that of the Frankfurt School, who represent the view that there is an abyss between high culture and popular culture. Robert Smid ("Bodily Techniques of the Digital: Remarks on the Spoof of Immateriality and the Revolt of Somatic Gestures") shows and defends the bodily techniques of the digital "as an autonomous branch of cultural techniques." His text represents the best posthumanist arguments for our digital future.

In our next chapter (IV. "On Pragmatism") we are glad to publish Richard J. Bernstein article ("Ruth Anna Putnam: A Pragmatic Thinker for our Time") on Ruth Anna Putnam's pragmatist philosophy. As Bernstein says, his main aim is to show the originality of her imaginative and vital pragmatic thinking. Alan Malachowski offers a shaded version of Richard Rorty's Nietzsche-interpretation by the help of Bernd Magnus contribution. Martin Ejsing Christensen („Is John Dewey's Thinking about Social Inquiry a Historic Failure?") proves the positive features of Dewey's social philosophy against Isabelle Stengers, and Olivier Gaudin („Pragmatist Views of Urban Experience: Sensorial Perception in Urban Studies") shows „how classical pragmatist views of sensorial perception may contribute to current research on urban life."

Already from this short description of our issue, the interested reader can see the richness of topics and approaches related to pragmatism, especially to somaesthetics. As the editor of the present selection, I hope that transforming a little bit the meaning of the Latin phrase "Habent sua fata libelli," our articles will also find their understanding readers!

I. SOMAESTHETIC PROLOGUE

Body Consciousness and the Excentric Self: Between Plessner and Somaesthetics

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ABSTRACT: This essay argues that Helmuth Plessner's theory of excentric positionality provides the project of somaesthetics with explanatory support on epistemological and ontological issues. After presenting Merleau-Ponty's argument that the somatic subject cannot possibly explore its body and body consciousness, an argument that challenges the somaesthetic project of improving body consciousness and performance through somatic reflection, the paper considers how the pragmatist response to this argument can be strengthened by introducing Plessner's theory of excentric personality to provide a deeper critique of Merleau-Ponty's position.

Keywords: Plessner, Merleau-Ponty, somaesthetics

I.

Philosophy, from its Socratic beginnings, has affirmed the goals of self-knowledge and self-improvement for more virtuous action. Yet the pursuit of self-knowledge poses many problems: psychological worries that preoccupation with self-examination leads to depressive, obsessive rumination; ethical and social concerns that sustained focus on the self leads to selfishness and isolation that impoverishes experience both for the individual and the groups to which she belongs; ontological questions about what sort of entity is this self that one seeks to know.[1] Moreover, there are diverse epistemological problems of how it can be known, which often differ according to the differing ontological character ascribed to the self, including, of course, that it does not really exist. My purpose in this essay is to explore a particular problem of self-knowledge: how one can know one's body or somatic self, a problem that takes multiple forms including Descartes' famous contrast of the direct knowledge of one's minds via the vivid transparency of consciousness to the mysterious obscurity of one's inner bodily state, a contrast that motivates his identifying the true self with the mind alone.

I shall instead treat the problem as it emerges in the context of contemporary philosophies that highlight embodiment as an inalienable feature of the human self, recognizing its evolutionary heritage and animal nature along with its distinction from other animals. I focus on a puzzling problem of somatic self-knowledge that is most powerfully posed by Merleau-Ponty, surely one of the twentieth-century's most important philosophers of the body, who celebrates its subjectivity cognitive power while paradoxically problematizing its capacity for critical self-knowledge. In the twenty-first century, pragmatist somaesthetic philosophy has tried to resolve the problem by countering Merleau-Ponty's arguments, but its efforts have not been entirely satisfying, partly because of its minimal theorization of the soma's ontological and epistemological character (Shusterman 2008). This paper argues that the somatic philosophy of Helmut Plessner (1892-1985), a leading figure in the German tradition of philosophical anthropology who remains very influential in contemporary German thought, could provide somaesthetics with considerable philosophical support in these matters of somatic ontology and epistemology, particularly through his notion of excentric positionality.

As Plessner remains a largely unfamiliar figure in Anglo-American philosophical discussion, so somaesthetics is hardly a household name and requires a brief definition here: Grounded in pragmatist thinking, it is an interdisciplinary research field concerned with the study and cultivation of the soma (the physical, living, sentient, purposive body) as a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation (*aisthesis*) and of creative self-fashioning. An ameliorative project that integrates theory and practice, it aims to enrich not only our abstract, discursive knowledge of the body, but also our lived somatic experience and performance. Somaesthetics therefore involves a wide range of knowledge forms and disciplines that structure such somatic care or can

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[1] Some of these psychological, ethical and social problems are analyzed in "Self-Knowledge and its Discontents: From Socrates to Somaesthetics (Shusterman, 2012).

improve it. One of somaesthetics' principal goals is the improvement of somatic consciousness, to make us feel better in our bodies in two ways: to enjoy more satisfying somatic feelings and actions (which are always accompanied by bodily feelings of some kind) and to perceive those somatic feelings and actions with greater accuracy and clarity (Jay 2005; Shusterman, 2008, 2012; Turner 2008, Tedesco 2012; Voparil and Giordano 2015.)

We can distinguish various levels of body consciousness. We can even speak of a level of body consciousness beneath our ordinary waking consciousness. When we are asleep and thus essentially *not* conscious (by the standard meaning of the term), we still demonstrate a very basic intentional body consciousness, for example by unconsciously rolling to the center of the bed when we get too close to falling off the edge. Ordinary waking conscious, which is much clearer, involves both perceptions of objects in the world and perceptions of our feelings in reaction to those objects. Besides feeling the cold rain that falls, one feels the body's shivering reaction to it. We feel the point of a pin but also the pain in the finger that it pricks.

Many of our conscious feelings and movements, however, are felt only in the background of consciousness, without our having a clear and explicit awareness of them. When walking down a flight of steps I must feel the position and contact of my feet on those steps in order to descend them smoothly but typically I have no explicit, focalized awareness of those feelings of contact or placement. Nor do I have a reflective awareness that critically assesses the feelings of contact and movements of placement to consider how graceful or efficient they are and whether they differ from one foot to the other. As Merleau-Ponty argues in his powerful critique of intellectualism and his corresponding defense of the body's essential intentionality and capacities of perception, we do not normally need these higher, explicit or reflective levels of body consciousness to successfully navigate the world and perform the actions necessary for the effective conduct of living. Our spontaneous, immediate body

consciousness (already trained through the prior mediation of habit) is sufficient for performing our actions without specific, explicit attention to our bodily feelings and movements. We want to take a sip of coffee, and we spontaneously reach for it, grasp it, lift it to our lips, and sip it without any intellectual calculation of the proper positioning and pressure of grip in our hands, the touch of our lips on the cup, and the regulation of our breathing so that we will not swallow the coffee in the wrong way. Our actions can be so automatically performed, especially when our attention is focused on other matters (for example, the paper we are reading), that we may not even be aware that we are drinking the coffee. In order to highlight the wonderful efficacy of our unreflective, spontaneous body consciousness (which he describes in terms of "natural marvels"), he contrasts it with the brain damaged patient Schneider who needs to reflectively calculate his bodily movements to do what normal people can do with unthinking, spontaneous ease (Merleau-Ponty 1962).

Somaesthetics likewise celebrates the marvelous efficacy of our unreflective body consciousness, but recognizes that despite the general excellence of our spontaneous perception and performance through unreflective body consciousness and acquired habits of action, there are times when these habits of perception and action are far from optimal. Many normal people suffer from habits of excessive muscular contractions or other forms of faulty posture or movement that eventually result in pain, injury, or unsatisfactory performance although capable of performing the desired function to some extent or for some time. These detrimental somatic habits can be corrected to enable improved functioning and resultant improved quality of experience, but the correction of such somatic habits requires taking them out of the background of what Merleau-Ponty celebrates as "the unreflective life of consciousness" of our "primary subjectivity" (Merleau-Ponty 1962, xvi, 402) and bringing them instead into the foreground of explicit reflective consciousness. Somaesthetics therefore insists on the important role of

focused, thematized, reflective body consciousness for the quintessentially philosophical task of self-knowledge but also for the more general meliorist task of improved perception and performance. While affirming, with phenomenology, the essential primacy of spontaneous "primary subjectivity" in our somatic perceptions and movements, somaesthetics insists that we often need the complement of explicit observation and reflective consciousness in these matters to improve our quality of life and conduct.

On this point, however, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology presents a serious problem to the somaesthetic project. He claims that we cannot really observe one's own body, arguing that it "defies exploration and is always presented to me from the same angle...To say that it is always near me, always there for me, is to say that it is never really in front of me, that I cannot array it before my eyes, that it remains marginal to all my perceptions, that it is *with* me." Moreover, I cannot change my perspective with respect to my body as I can with external objects. "I observe external objects with my body, I handle them, examine them, walk around them, but my body itself is a thing that I do not observe; in order to be able to do so, I should need the use of a second body" (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 90-91). "I am always on the same side of my body; it presents itself to me in one invariable perspective" (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 148).

Somaesthetics, in contrast, appeals to our ordinary somatic experience to argue that we can and actually do observe our lived bodies. We observe our faces or bellies, not only through our eyes and mirrors but through the touch of our hands, to observe whether we need to shave or to diet and exercise; we can observe our feet are dirty by seeing, feeling, or even smelling their lack of cleanness; we can observe the position of our arms and legs not only by seeing and touching them but by feeling their position from the inside, proprioceptively. In short we can explore our bodies not only from the different perspectives of the body's

different senses. Beyond these ordinary practices of somatic observation, a variety of meditative disciplines are structured on heightening the soma's conscious critical self-examination.

Merleau-Ponty nevertheless argues that observation of one's lived body is in principle impossible, for theoretical reasons. His argument seems to rely on two underlying philosophical assumptions. The first is the very deeply entrenched presumption that critical observation requires some separation – a critical distance – from what is being observed. But since we can never separate ourselves from our own bodies, then it seems impossible for us to observe them, despite our feelings of doing so in everyday experience. The second assumption is that a subjectivity that perceives or observes must be essentially different from the object of observation. But since the body as one's "primary subjectivity" is the perceiving, intentional, active subject, then it can't also be the perceived object. If we recognize the body as the subject, it cannot be perceived as an object since its entire essence and role are fully focused on the subjectivity of perceiving, feeling, and purposively acting.

Defenders of somatic reflection can challenge the presumption that the distance needed for critical observation of the body requires an impossible out-of-body perspective. We can critically examine aspects of our somatic experience without going outside our bodies to some putative disembodied mind. We use a finger to probe a small bump on our face; we use our tongue to discover and remove the traces of food on our upper lip or on our teeth. We discriminate or assess our pain *within* the painful experience, not only after it has passed and we are, in that sense, beyond or outside it. In short somatic self-examination provides a model of immanent critique where one's critical perspective does not require being entirely outside the situation critically examined but merely requires a reflective, detached perspective on it that is not wholly absorbed in the immediacy of what is experienced. Rather than being

seen as external, the perspective can be better described as somehow more peripheral to or aside from the focus of one's attention and experience. In other words, if the immediate focus of attention constitutes the absorbing immediate center of experience, then reflective somatic consciousness could be described as decentered or in Plessner's terminology as having "excentric" positionality (Plessner 1928/1975; Plessner 1941/1970).

These perspectives through which one's somatic subjectivity steps back and examines its own somatic experience are sometimes achieved by effortful disciplines of attention (such as yoga, *zazen*, etc.) but the subject's position of distanced or decentered reflection in which he observes his body with explicit focused attention often also arise spontaneously through experiences of somatic dissonance where unreflective spontaneous coordination is disrupted, thus stimulating a decentered, reflective critical attention to what is going on. We can understand the possibility of immanent yet critical distance by recognizing the complexity of the soma and its modes of consciousness. If the soma involves a complexity of intentional functions and forms of perceptual awareness, then critical somatic consciousness involves some aspects of the soma's complex array of systems examining other aspects of that complexity. This line of argument is essentially all that somaesthetics has provided to explain the possibility of somaesthetic reflection or critical introspective body consciousness.

II.

Because of its practical melioristic thrust and because it could rely on the everyday fact that we do observe our bodies, somaesthetics has not yet sufficiently theorized the ontological nature of the soma that enables this decentered, reflective perspective. Although it often emphasizes how somatic conscious repeatedly moves back and forth from spontaneous unreflective perception and performance to modes of explicit observation and critical reflection, somaesthetic theory

has not yet clearly articulated the complex structure of human nature that permits this play of changing perspectives. Plessner's theory of excentric positionality fills that gap while likewise providing a more precise formulation of the soma's complex constitution.

To explain this contribution properly, but also to understand the essential context and content of Plessner's somatic philosophy, we need to consider the "body" terminology that shapes his theory. This in turn requires examining its German terms and their historical philosophical usage. The German language has two words with rather different meanings that are commonly used for what in English we simply call body. These German words for body -- *Körper* and *Leib*, with their accordingly different cognate grammatical derivatives (*körperlich/leiblich*, *Körperlichkeit/Leiblichkeit*) -- are typically opposed in philosophical discourse on embodiment. To put the contrast most simply, *Körper* denotes the physical body as object while *Leib* typically signifies the lived, feeling body or the body as intentionality or subject. This conceptual contrast is not confined only to German but has been adapted into French by Merleau-Ponty who sharply distinguishes what he calls "*le corps propre*" (which can be identified with the German *Leib* and is generally translated into English as "the lived body") from the body as physical object or *Körper* (Merleau-Ponty 1945). This strong contrast, though rightly pointing to the complexity of our embodied existence, can be seen as threatening to generate a problematic somatic dualism somewhat analogous to body/mind dualism. Somaesthetics intentionally introduced the term soma as a key defining concept of the project in order to embrace both *Körper* and *Leib*, not merely to avoid the linguistic suggestion of a dualism of two bodies but also because the somaesthetic project concerns the body both as perceptive, active subjectivity but also as a physical, malleable medium for self-stylization and the material, corporeal expression of one's tastes and values.

The phenomenologist Edmund Husserl was the first to provide a systematic discussion of *Leib* and *Körper* (for

instance in Husserl, 1913 and 1960). Though distinguishing between *Körper* as physical object-body and *Leib* as lived or experienced body, he did not seek to erect a sharp dualism between the two. Both are aspects of the same living human body, and he therefore sometimes speaks of that body as the *Leibkörper*, both to underline the underlying union of the two terms and to give phenomenological primacy to the *Leib* as that with which one starts in one's experience of the world. *Leib*, for Husserl, is therefore the *Nullpunkt* or absolute "here" that generates physical measurable, mathematical spatiality without being itself spatial in this objectified or naturalized sense (Husserl 1934). The *Körper*/*Leib* contrast generates the related distinction between *Körperlichkeit* and *Leiblichkeit*. The former concerns the structural morphology of the body -- the skeletal bones, inner organs, afferent and efferent nerves, muscles, air canals, blood vessels, blood and other fluids, and also the neural structures in the brain; while *Leiblichkeit* denotes the lived dynamic experience of the body, its living flow of life as it is experienced or localizable in inner lived feelings or sensations. Adapting the Husserlian *Leib/ Körper* distinction, Merleau-Ponty celebrates the importance of "*le corps propre*" or "lived body" which he construes as a bodily subject, exhibiting basic intentionality and including consciousness of a prepredicative, unreflective form and which he sharply contrasts to the body as mere physical object "*le corps comme objet*" (Merleau-Ponty 1945). In emphasizing the marvels of the lived body's spontaneous unthinking actions in contrast to the reflective calculations of mechanistic physiology, he shows no regard for the value of reflecting on our bodily actions and feelings. Our body, he instead insists, wonderfully guides us, but "only on condition that we stop analyzing it" and its feelings in reflective consciousness, "only on the condition that I do not reflect expressly on it" (Merleau-Ponty 1964, 78, 89).

III.

Plessner's somatic theory involves a multiple critique of this phenomenological tradition. First, he criticized Husserl's concept of *Leib* for being localized. Although *Leib* was distinguished from the *Körper* as not being spatial, Husserl nonetheless located it as inner in contrast to the externality of the *Körper*. This suggests that the *Leib*, though allegedly nonspatial, is somehow *in* the body as an inner spatial thing or some mysteriously immaterial, nonspatial soul dwelling within our physical body. This problematic suggestion is strengthened by the fact that Husserl identifies *Leib* consciousness with inner feelings or sensations of self, such as proprioception and the inner sense of self which he calls one's "sphere of peculiar ownness"; this seems all too analogous to the old dualism of an inner mind or soul that is the true self (of one's "exclusive ownness") inside an outer, spatial body that Plato likened to a prison and Descartes to a machine (Husserl 1960, 93-94). Plessner instead avoids reification of the *Leib* as some entity inside the *Körper*, even when he speaks of human experience in terms of *Leib im Körper*. *Leib* is not a thing; neither an object nor a transcendental subject, *Leib* is a way of experiencing oneself and one's world. It is the form of lived, immediate experiential behavior that is differently lived and interpreted in the variety of cultures in which it is expressed. It is thus also different from Merleau-Ponty's identification of the lived body's "unreflective life which is… unchanging, given once and for all" (Merleau-Ponty 1962, xiv).

Plessner's background in both animal physiology and human sociology shapes his more fundamental critique of the phenomenological understanding of the *Körper-Leib* relationship. Phenomenology's approach of taking the transcendental subject or individual conscious self as the starting point, Plessner argued, was too deeply trapped in traditional dualisms: body and mind, subject and object, self and other. When Plessner speaks of the essential "ambiguity" of our existence as "a lived body in

a physical body [als *Leib im Körper*]," he emphatically is not suggesting the duality of some spiritual or mental entity residing in a different material one (Plessner 1970, 34). Moreover to simply connect the terms *Leib* and *Körper* with or without a hyphen and then describe them as a union of different forms of being is likewise insufficient to escape the sense of dualism these words convey.

Eschewing the idea of a transcendental subject or self as the foundation for a theory of personhood, Plessner (already in *Grenzen der Gemeinschaft,* Plessner 1924/1981) replaced such methodological individualism with a broader social theory of the sociocultural constitution of persons through the different roles that society gives them (which does not preclude persons creatively finding or inventing new roles for themselves). He likewise shifted the ontological characterization of *Leib* and *Körper* from fixed entities to active functions of taking positions or adopting roles. Rather than being constituted by a single, basic, primordial self-consciousness, the person will display multiple forms of self-consciousness according to the different roles she plays in society. Our experienced somatic consciousness is not an ontological, universal given revealed by phenomenology but instead a social product. Not only our actions but our feelings are the product of habitus formed by our sociocultural world. As Plessner paradoxically puts it,

"man is 'by nature' artificial" because humans can only be what they are through the social-cultural world they inhabit and incorporate (Plessner 1931/1981, 199).

Not confining himself to mere critique of phenomenology's *Leib*/*Körper* distinction, Plessner elaborated the distinction in his own way in terms of *Leib sein* /*Körper haben* (*being* a *Leib* or living body and *having* a physical body), beginning with his 1928 master work *Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch* and into his post-war writings.[2] This is far from an analogue

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[2] Contemporary discussions of Plessner have simplified the orthographical form of this terminology to *Leibsein*

of the Platonic dualism (e.g. in *Phaedo* and *Alcibiades*) where the self is defined as an immaterial soul although having a physical body (which it can use and in which it is contained as in a prison), Plessner's intention is entirely different. Both *Leib* and *Körper* are physical and both are living.

Rather than ontological distinction between different kinds of entities (immaterial and material), that are rival candidates (or combinatory partners) for constituting the true self, Plessner's distinction between being *Leib* and having *Körper* is an expression of a fundamental ontological complexity of relationships within the self in living an "existence [that] is ambiguous: *as* a physical lived body – *in* the physical lived body" (Plessner 1970, 36). It is a matter of two basically different relations or positions taken toward the body, two contrasting ways that the self relates to its body in actual practice or behavior, as being a *Leib* and having a *Körper*. Each human being must manage "this double role" because "every kind of learning, e.g. grasping…, standing, running, and so on" is based on it. A human both *is* a physical "living body (head, trunk, extremities, with all that these contain)… and *has* this living body as this physical thing." "Thus bodily existence for man is a relation, in itself not unequivocal, but ambiguous, a relation of himself to himself [*sich*…*sich*] (or, to put it precisely, of him to himself)" (Plessner 1970, 34-35).

This relationship or positioning can and should change in terms of the different functions or roles persons perform at different times, the different tasks they seek to accomplish, and the different conditions or circumstances they encounter and in which they have to act. What does not change is the essential linking of these different somatic relations. "Both orders are entwined in each other and form a remarkable unity," and we must hold on to both though they may seem "mutually exclusive" in their logic (Plessner 1970, 36). On the one hand, in being *Leib* (which means living one's physical body as one's experiencing subjective core), the

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and *Körperhaben*, and I will follow this practice here.

Leib is the absorbing, perceiving focus through which we experience rather than an object of perception or experience. On the other hand, one also must take that same physical living body (one's own body with its various parts) as an object that one perceives along with other objects localized in space and thus experientially outside the perceiving core of subjectivity; and in this way, one has one's own body as an object (*Körperhaben*). As Plessner articulates this ambiguity: "I must insist on the absolute focal reference of all things in the environment to my body [*Leib*], or to the center of perception, thinking, initiative, and sympathy persisting 'in' it, i.e. to me or the 'self' in me; *and* I must give up this absolute focal reference in favor of the relative localization of all things, including my body," even as the location of my consciousness (Plessner 1970, 36).

In this sense, through its ability to objectify or distance itself from its center of consciousness, "the human position can be understood as excentric"; it can experience, observe, and know itself from outside its experiencing center (Plessner 1970, 36). Human life, moreover, demands both perspectives of having a body and being a body, while moving between these perspectives of being "outside and inside" the center (Plessner 1970, 36-37; see also Krüger 1999, 130-134). Sometimes it is difficult to reconcile both perspectives; for example an explicit focus on looking at one's feet (from the *Körperhaben* perspective) when walking a beam may well disturb our spontaneous sense of balance (for those feet are seen as separate objects from one's center), while seeing those same feet while we are absorbed in *Leibsein* centeredness) will cause no such problems.

In *Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch* Plessner articulates this notion of excentric positionality in much greater detail by contrasting it with animal embodiment. An animal also has a *Körperleib*, a physical lived body that it experiences and that relates "to its positional center, to the absolute here and now" but this center "does not appear to the animal as an object"

(Plessner 1928/1975, 288). The animal thus does not perceive its center as its center; in other words, its "living body is denied full reflexivity," which would require "that the center of positionality, whose distance from the living thing's own lived body grounds the possibility of all givenness, be at a distance from itself" so that this center can be given to it. (Plessner 1928/1975, 289).

However, that perspective to which the experiencing, observing center is thus given is not an additional center through some "multiplication of the subject's core" but rather it is the center itself taking its excentric position (Plessner 1928/1975, 289-290) To posit an additional center or inner self for the positional attitude of observing one's center or self would not only lead to an endless multiplication of centers, whereby each observing center would need to be given in perception or experience to another excentric center that would observe it but which in turn would need to be given to a further excentric center from which it could be observed. Remember that this perceived need to posit a further somatic subject in order to observe one's own body or somatic subjectivity forms a key part of Merleau-Ponty's argument against our capacity for somatic self-examination and thus against the value (if not also the very possibility) of somaesthetic reflection.

Plessner provides a refutation of the argument by showing that we do not need an additional observing body for the soma to observe itself. The human organism or soma can do this for itself. Hence there is also no need to posit an observing inner mind or soul to observe the soma's experiences, its perceptions, feelings, actions, and thoughts. We should not, Plessner argues, conceive "the positional center, the subject, as a fixed reality" (*Leib* or mind) inside the organism, when this center instead "only exists as an execution" or "a positing" of the living organism through its vitality and focus (Plessner 1928/1975, 290). The "total reflexivity" characteristic of the living human body (or what somaesthetics terms "soma") is achieved through its ability to make its "center of positionality be at a

distance from itself" so that "the reflexive character of the centrally represented body is given to itself"(Plessner 1928/1975, 290). The human organism, Plessner explains, is still "absorbed in the here and now, lives out of the center," but "it has become conscious of the centrality of its existence" and thus "knows of itself" and can examine itself as center (Plessner 1928/1975, 290). This reflexivity creates the 'I' which Plessner describes as "the vanishing point of its own interiority" that is always "behind it," because one can always regard each experiencing center from a further excentric position. This 'I' – as what is "removed from its own center in every possible [experience] of life and is the observer of the scene of this inner field [of experience]" constitutes "the subject pole that can no longer be objectified or put into the object position" (Plessner 1928/1975, 290) and thus exists as if "without place…in a spatiotemporal nowhere-never," thus giving rise to the familiar idea that this 'I' is an immaterial soul (Plessner 1928/1975, 291).[3]

IV.

Having presented Plessner's theory in his own terms, using frequent citations from his own complex language (albeit in English translation), we can clarify this theory further by reformulating and applying it to a central issue for somaesthetics: the contesting values of spontaneity versus reflection and the need for integration of these modes. Spontaneity is the realm of *Leibsein*. In this somatic mode, a person relates to her living body or soma unreflectively by simply acting and perceiving

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[3] We cannot here explore the question of what exactly enables humans to take this excentric position. Is it the complexity and modularity of our brain systems; or the complex social nature of human life with its need to play different roles and to recognize them in other people; or perhaps the use of language to refer to and thus to reflect on things that are remote in time and place, and thus not in the "here and now" that defines the centric position? All three of these possible explanatory factors are interconnected. One may wonder whether other higher primates, to the extent that they resemble humans in such factors, come anywhere near an ability to take an excentric view of themselves.

through it as her experiencing center; hence the soma is not thematized as an object of perception or reflection (whether as an inner or outer object). The person here *is* her soma, since she simply unreflectively or spontaneously lives her life and acts effectively through its (*leiblich*) intentionality and intelligent activity in the world. Being fully absorbed and identified with the soma's experiential (*leiblich*) center, the person experiences and acts in the world and on her own soma through this center, but does not reflect on this experiencing center as an object of conscious. She uses the soma effectively as a tool in the world but does not objectify its experiencing somatic center as such a tool; nor does she calculate and deliberate reflectively about how she is using the tool. The use is spontaneous and uninhibited by reflection on one's soma and how to use it.

This freedom from deliberation and inhibition typically makes the spontaneous movement smoother and more effective. William James, a past master of applying somaesthetic reflection for his research in psychology, insists on this point in arguing against somatic reflection in the field of action. His maxim for successful sensorimotor performance is "Trust your spontaneity and fling away all further care," elaborating that "We walk a beam the better the less we thing of the position of our feet upon it" (James 1962, 99; James 1983, 1128). Such unreflective somatic intelligence is so effective because it is largely the product of sedimented habit in using our bodies to perceive and act in the world. Because these habits form our second nature, they can perform their tasks spontaneously without our pausing to think about how to perform them. Moreover, because these habits are sedimented from the different experiences a person has through the different roles she plays and the different social conditions in which she lives, the person's spontaneous somatic experience and performance (or *Leibsein*) is not some presocial, primordial, universally shared type of bodily experience. No matter how immediate this spontaneity feels, it is always a mediated immediacy, mediated by habit-

acquired skills and learning, just as the immediacy of aesthetic experience is. I may experience a Shakespeare sonnet with an immediate sense of its beauty, yet that experience relies on my prior learning of English and the conventions of poetry.

The sedimentation of habit that creates spontaneously effective perceptions and performances involving familiar actions in familiar roles likewise enables the spontaneity of smooth transitions from one role to another. Among the habits we acquire are habits of transition between roles with their corresponding somatic subjectivity. That is how a policewoman can move smoothly from her tough professional somatic subjectivity as a cop to the tender somatic subjectivity of a mother caring for her infant without having to reflectively deliberate or rehearse how she should changer her behavior and feelings in changing between roles.

Another sort of transition with which we become habituated is the transition from spontaneous somaesthetic consciousness to reflective somaesthetic consciousness, from *Leibsein* to *Körperhaben*. When a person relates to her soma as *Körperhaben*, not only is the soma objectified as something that the person has, but also her experienced consciousness as soma is objectified and thus becomes thematized or reflective. In thus objectifying the soma and its consciousness as something the person experiences as having rather than simply being, the person is distanced or decentered from full identification with her body as *Leibsein*. She can explicitly examine and reflect on her somatic self (including its perceptive, experiencing center) as if she were in some sense outside it.

Human life involves many situations when persons can and must take this reflective or excentric perspective to their somatic organism and its somatic consciousness. They not only objectify their somas when reflecting on its external appearance through practices of self-examination (with or without mirrors), often for purposes of grooming, adorning, and reshaping (through cosmetics, clothes, jewelry, dieting, bodybuilding, etc.) or purposes of health (examining a cut, bruise, or swelling) in some sense outside it. People also, though less frequently, engage in critical reflection on their somatic consciousness, examining their experiencing center from the excentric position. Besides the special meditative practices devoted to such examination, we find reflective somatic consciousness in everyday life, for example when we critically assess our feelings of energy or fatigue, when we diagnostically appraise a pain we are feeling to determine its source or probable cause, or when we evaluate our mood or emotional state because we find it somehow troubling or disruptive. According to the circumstances they encounter and the purposes and experiences they have, persons maneuver between the spontaneous centric position of *Leibsein* and the reflective ex-centric position of *Körperhaben*, decentering themselves from full identification with the soma, in order to take proper notice of some somatic problem that takes us out of the spontaneous flow of *Leibsein* or to work at systematically improving somatic experience or performance by making the experiencing acting soma an object of thematized consciousness.

Most often, our transitions between spontaneity and reflection are themselves spontaneous and rapid. Such transitions are second nature to us because both perspectives are essential to the soma's ambiguity. In Plessner's words, a person's "transition from being within his own lived body to existing outside of his lived body is the irreducible double aspect of existence, a true split in his nature. He lives on both sides of this split" and thus needs to move efficiently between both perspectives (Plessner 1928/1975, 292). Inability to move from one perspective to the other would render human life exceedingly difficult and constitute a serious pathology.

The spontaneous, centered perspective is the one we more often take and more easily maintain and regain. Adopting a sustained and systematic program of somaesthetic reflection usually requires good reasons

and also some degree of effortful will. Improving one's habits to achieve improved performance is one central motivation. Consider an example: Though a golfer's swing should work best when his attention is fixed on the ball and not on his own body, a slumping golfer may learn from his coach that the placement of his feet or his way of tightly clenching his club while contracting his torso muscles unintentionally puts him off balance and inhibits movement in the ribcage and spine, thus disturbing the flow, power, and accuracy of his swing. At this point, the golfer should release from his spontaneous (*Leibsein*) consciousness and engage in sustained somaesthetic reflection about his posture and somatic feelings (e.g., proprioceptive feelings of weight and tension, kinaesthetic feelings of movement) so that he can clearly recognize the bad habits of stance and swing, inhibit them, and then self-consciously transform his posture, grip, and movement until a new, more effective habit of swinging is established. Once established, such focused reflective somaesthetic attention can then be relinquished, thereby enabling the golfer to return to a more effective spontaneous somatic consciousness whose object and focus is the ball, not the soma and its conscious feelings of balance, tension, and movement. Nonetheless, as the golfer's skill and habits of somaesthetic reflection have been reinforced, they can be reapplied with greater ease in future cases where his spontaneous habits prove inadequate, including a relapse into the earlier swinging habit he has just corrected.

Both spontaneous and reflective somatic consciousness (*Leibsein* and *Körperhaben*) are essential for a person's flourishing, for successful functioning, improved performance and developmental growth. Somaesthetics celebrates the value of both. If spontaneity is more fundamental and closer to the lived, immediate enjoyment of life, while somaesthetic reflection seems more distant and difficult to sustain and apply systematically, then this more difficult endeavor requires more effort to develop greater mastery of its multiple uses. This includes the ability for somatic self-

reflection to turn itself off when it threatens to bury the spontaneous joy of life under the gloom of relentlessly morbid self-critical study.

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Body Consciousness and Philosophy – an Interview with Richard Shusterman

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Richard Shusterman (1949) is the Dorothy F. Schmidt Eminent Scholar Chair in the Humanities at Florida Atlantic University. He was the keynote speaker of the conference "The Soma as the Core of Aesthetics, Ethics and Politics" that was organized in Szeged in 2017. This gave me the idea of conducting an interview with Prof. Shusterman; his widely translated research encompasses philosophy, art theory, and questions of embodiment, which, being a Master of Arts student in Aesthetics, I find truly intriguing. I asked him about somaesthetics—the vibrant and interdisciplinary discourse around the manifold relations between the body, philosophy, and art—which was initiated by his works.

The neo-pragmatist Shusterman regards philosophy as an art of living – this idea had a crucial role in the formation of the somaesthetic project which regards the "lived, sentient, intelligent human body", i.e, the soma, "as a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation (aesthesis) and creative self-fashioning". As a discipline of both theoretical and practical dimensions, its aim can be described as "the critical meliorative study of the experience and use of one's body".

KL: Dear Richard, probably the most fascinating aspect of somaesthetics is the way it comprises both theory and practice. While the body as a subject matter of philosophy or theory has become widely accepted, you recounted many incidents where you were criticized or not taken seriously by academic philosophers because of somaesthetics' essential practical dimension. According to your experience, has this "Platonic–Cartesian–Idealistic" bias and disregard for somatic cultivation changed since you first introduced the idea to the academic community? Did the proliferation of theoretical writings on the body bring about a change in prejudice against somatic self-cultivation?

RS: The answer to your question is not a definitive and clear one. There has been some change toward greater openness, but not as much as I had hoped for; and the overcoming of the prejudice against somatic self-cultivation in academic settings has, in my experience, been achieved in some disciplines more than others. Most of the practical somaesthetics workshops I have been invited to give in academic settings have been for teachers and students in the arts (music, dance, painting, architecture, and performance) and in technological design. Occasionally, I have done such work for anthropologists and people in sports science. Philosophy still seems to be largely resistant, although I know of a few colleagues who are now experimenting with introducing somatic exercises in their philosophy classrooms (usually exercises relating to yoga or mindfulness meditation). I have also occasionally included some exercises in somatic awareness in my philosophy classes, but I don't do much philosophy teaching in recent years, and the courses I do teach nowadays (doctoral courses in the philosophy of culture) are not focused on somaesthetics. I believe my students more urgently need other topics of instruction, and I am a bit reluctant to give the impression that I am using the classroom to proselytize for somaesthetics.

KL: From the point of view of practitioners of different disciplines promoting heightened body-mind attunement—hatha yoga, for instance—to what extent is philosophy, i. e., the analytic branch of somaesthetics, part of your body consciousness workshops? In what ways is a somaesthetic training session different from other types of somatic trainings?

RS: My workshops are usually given in academic contexts and are sponsored by academic institutions other than my own. The participants in the workshops are students who volunteer for the workshop experience because of their interest. I include no more than twenty-five students in a workshop, and I usually preface such a workshop by a theoretical lecture about somaesthetics that is given the night before the workshop begins and

that is open to the larger university community. During the workshop, I also give mini-lectures of between 5–15 minutes to the workshop participants in order to explain some of the philosophical and physiological principles of somaesthetics that underlie and guide the workshop exercises and to explain how the exercises serve to promote the somaesthetic aims of the workshop as a whole. These mini-lectures are informal talks that arise out of the experiences of the exercises – and they are not given in an academic style full of references to famous philosophers. The exercises in body consciousness and mindful movement that I give in the workshops are largely based on the Feldenkrais Method (in which I am professionally certified) but I also use a number of other exercises in mindful movement and somatic awareness that I have discovered in the many years I've studied somatic methods.

Perhaps I should also explain that I do not give these workshops at my own home institution because my teaching obligations need to be met through more traditional kinds of instruction and because I am reluctant to use the "bully pulpit" of my own seminar room to promote my own theoretical projects. The academic semesters in the United States are too short to cover all the theoretical material I would like to include in my seminars, so that is another reason why I don't take the time to introduce practical somaesthetic training into my classroom.

I also would not want to oblige my students to perform such training, if they do not want to do so; and if I made that training part of my seminar, they would be forced to engage in such training, which is not what they could reasonably expect to be required to practice in in pursuit of their academic degree.

KL: You have been asked many times to describe the genealogy of somaesthetics. You have always emphasized the importance of the fact that you started your career as a "hardcore" analytic philosopher—which still bears importance regarding your style of argumentation—and that by the end of the 1980s you turned to pragmatism, greatly inspired by John Dewey's works, and started to view philosophy as an art of living. You have also highlighted the significant impact East-Asian philosophy had on your thought.

It has been twenty years since in Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life,[1] *you coined the term somaesthetics. In what ways have your idea of somaesthetics changed since then? You labelled* Body Consciousness[2] *as a rather philosophic interpretation, and* Thinking through the Body[3] *as being more concerned with somaesthetics' diversified applications to daily life and the arts. Does this show a shift of interest from the analytic to the pragmatic and practical branches of somaesthetics?*

RS: Somaesthetics emerged for me as a natural consequence of my turn to pragmatism. It derived from two main pragmatist ideas: first, the idea of pragmatist aesthetics that both the creation and experience of art involve somatic activity and engagement – including our emotional reaction to artworks (as all our emotions involve the body). If the body is so important to aesthetic experience, it then seems logical to cultivate its powers of perception and performance in order to improve our aesthetic experience.

Second, the pragmatist idea of philosophy as an art of living clearly suggests the argument that since the soma is the inevitable and necessary medium through which we live our philosophical lives, then by cultivating the soma we can enrich our capacities for our philosophical art of living. Analytic philosophy had very little to do with the basic idea of somaesthetics, but as you rightly remark, the basic analytic style of thinking has informed my writing and critical style of argumentation

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[1] Richard Shusterman: *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life.* Routledge, London, 1997.
[2] Richard Shusterman: *Body Consciousness.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2008.
[3] Richard Shusterman: *Thinking through the Body. Essays in Somaesthetics.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012.

in critically interpreting the somatic theories of other thinkers and in defending my own somaesthetic views.

In one way, my conception of somaesthetics has significantly changed from when I introduced it twenty years ago. Initially I considered it would be a sub-discipline of philosophical aesthetics or more generally a sub-discipline of philosophy. But because somaesthetics has been fruitfully adopted and developed by researchers in other fields: political theory, cultural and gender studies, health education, and technological design, I now recognize that it is an interdisciplinary field that has its roots in philosophy but that transcends the limits of its origins.

I have not, however, lost any of my interest in the philosophical issues of somaesthetics. In fact, the first few essays of *Thinking through the Body* are focused on philosophical issues before I move on to more detailed studies of somaesthetics in the arts and everyday life. After my book, *Body Consciousness*, which was devoted essentially to issues in philosophy of mind and action, along with somatic dimensions of ethics and politics but without any sustained discussion of distinctively aesthetic questions, I felt the need to demonstrate the fruitful use of somaesthetics for study of the arts and aesthetic experience. In the same way, because the body has long been associated with low carnal interests, I devoted my first full book on somaesthetics to the more meditative dimensions of somaesthetics, hence the title *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics*. I wanted initially to distance myself from the stereotype carnal interests of food and sex that could discredit the whole project of somaesthetics. But once that book established the cognitive legitimacy and spiritual dimension of somaesthetics, I later turned to the somaesthetic study of eroticism and eating, not only in *Thinking through the Body*, but in later texts.

KL: Somaesthetics also endeavors to unite art and philosophy. Your latest book, The Adventures of the Man in Gold,[4] *focuses on this transgression and many other forms of hybridity, ambiguity, and liminal experience, such as gender construction. Could you tell me about the relation between somaesthetics and gender?*

RS: Yes, *The Adventures of the Man in Gold* or in its French title, *Les Aventures de l'homme en or* is certainly a hybrid. The book, which is based on my work in performance art with the Parisian artist Yann Toma, is bilingual and composed of text and image (namely, color illustrations from my performances as the Man in Gold), fact and fantasy, and as you note – philosophy and art (both visual and literary).

Some scholars might think that writing such a book involving my work in performance art signals a departure from my philosophical work, but this sort of engagement in artistic production is a logical consequence of my pragmatist approach of integrating art, philosophy, and life. A philosopher of art can learn a great deal about art by adopting the perspective and experiences of a creative artist, a perspective that is different from that of the observing art consumer or interpreting critic.

The philosophical tale was an influential genre in the eighteenth century (with writers like Voltaire and Diderot), and there is probably as much philosophy in the story of the Man in Gold as in my other books of philosophy. Storytelling allows you to suggestively condense many rich and complicated ideas into symbolic actions, characters, and metaphors. Because the Man in Gold capers around in the skin of a shiny gold lycra body stocking, the sort of garment that so-called real men would be too embarrassed to wear, he has encountered many negative remarks about the strange sort of gender he embodies – a man in gold with a deep appreciation of feminine qualities that he seeks to some extent to

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[4] Richard Shusterman: *The Adventures of the Man in Gold – Paths Between Art and Life / Les Aventures de L'Homme en Or – Passages Entre L'Art et la Vie.* (English/Français) Hermann, Paris, 2016.

embody, just as the Daoist sages did. And I'm sure you noticed that Laozi, the legendary founder of Daoism, who advocated and privileged the feminine principle, is the only philosopher cited in the book. In fact, because I insisted in including the Chinese version of those quotations, the book actually contains three languages.

As to your specific question, there is a close relationship between the fields of somaesthetics and gender studies. In recent years, there have been a number of useful and influential somaesthetic texts by feminist writers on gender. Somaesthetics has an essentially pluralistic approach to somatic subjectivity. It criticizes the typical approach of fundamental phenomenology that assumes that all human beings in the world have the same basic somatic subjectivity and experience, defined by the fundamental human ontological condition. My view is that different people living in different circumstances, with different kinds of bodies or bodily experiences, could well have significantly different somatic subjectivities that need to be addressed philosophically but also in terms of practical care. This is one reason why my book *Body Consciousness* devoted a chapter to the somatic subjectivity of women and the elderly, whose somatic differences have often been used to marginalize them socially and economically. That chapter works closely through the ideas of Simone de Beauvoir but also engages with more contemporary feminists.

Human bodies are obviously physically sexed bodies, but somaesthetics affirms that one's soma is also largely shaped by sociocultural forces and experiences. A person's soma is already being shaped before birth, in the mother's womb, by the food that she eats and the activities and environment she engages in. From childhood, a society's established gender roles further shape the somatic behavior and appearance of a person. People are quickly taught to imitate the somatic behavior and appearance that define their gender roles, but sometimes this does not fit with their inner sense of themselves. Recognizing this lack of fit is a matter of

somatic consciousness.

The further step of making the somatic adjustments to relieve this discomfort is also a somatic task – of learning to adopt different, more satisfying habits of behavior and learning to become more comfortable with different feelings. In short, since gender is always felt and expressed somatically, there is a close relationship between somaesthetics and gender studies. My own work in this area has been very limited compared to that of other writers. Somaesthetics, as I've always insisted, is not my own personal theoretical possession but a research field (of theory and practice) that requires and now involves many thinkers.

KL: You repeatedly criticize the tradition of philosophical aesthetics, including Alexander Baumgarten, founder of aesthetics as a discipline, and Kant, Schopenhauer etc., for largely neglecting the body's role in aesthetic appreciation and falling short of acknowledging the crucial importance of somatic cultivation. However, you make truly intriguing historical discoveries, i. e., reinterpretations of classic philosophers as pioneers of somaesthetics. Such is the case with Edmund Burke, whose "recognition of the crucial bodily dimensions of aesthetic experience needs to be taken more seriously".[5] Do you think other philosophers of "taste"—from Italian and Spanish courtly theoreticians to British thinkers of the unfolding civic culture—could also be reinterpreted this way? Taste, their key notion, inherently involves the idea of its meliorative cultivation, and great emphasis is put on the representational dimension of the body, which is acquired through awareness in action: gestures, posture, etc.

RS: Yes, I think there are many figures in the history of aesthetics who have important somaesthetic aspects to their thought and who have useful somaesthetic insights to offer to today's theorists. You are right to identify early theorists of taste as an excellent source for a

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[5] Shusterman 2012, 146–147.

somaesthetic reinterpretation of past aesthetic thought. Besides Burke, there were other eighteenth-century figures who were concerned with taste and our somatic senses: Hume, Voltaire, and Diderot, for example. One can find fascinating somaesthetic ideas also in another eighteenth-century aesthetician, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, often celebrated as the father of art history and who is usually associated with German rationalism. This year marks the 300th anniversary of his birth in 1717, and in March I gave a paper on his somaesthetic approach to sculpture at an international conference on his work in Naples. You are also correct in thinking that courtly theory in the Renaissance, such as Castiglione's *Art of the Courtier,* contains fascinating discussions concerning somatic training for proper behavior and appearance in pursuing a somaesthetic art of living.

KL: When you were a PhD student in Oxford, your main focus, as an analytic aesthetician, was the philosophy of literature – your first two books addressed this topic. How can somaesthetics and literature be related? As a theoretician and practitioner of somaesthetics, you argue that the body is central in the creation and appreciation of art, and therefore, if we improve our senses, our bodily performance, our experience of art will thusly improve. One would think that literature, the branch of art that is least tied to the physical—the "most unrestricted of the arts",[6] according to Hegelian hierarchy of art—would depend less on bodily consciousness than dancing, for instance.

RS: You are certainly correct to note that Hegel privileged literature as the highest of the arts because it seems to be the most ideal or least physical and to remark that literature seems rather distant from somaesthetics' focus on the body and its sensory perceptions and performance, while these matters are instead central to music, dance, and the visual arts. It is also true that far less has been written about the somaesthetics of literature than about the somaesthetics of other arts.

This does not mean, however, that somaesthetics has no significant role to play in the study and practice of literature. Let me just briefly outline some directions of research for literary somaesthetics. Apart from the study of somatic metaphors in poetry and fiction, there are a number of other topics worth exploring. Literature, as I argued in my very first publication when I was a student at Oxford,[7] is an art that is both oral and written. The oral character of poetry – expressive tone, meter, and rhythm – are very much somatic matters that relate to breathing and voice. Oral performances of literature also involve gesture and posture. This is even clearer when the oral performance of literature takes dramatic form; we should not forget that theater is a literary art.

Moreover, there are somaesthetic dimensions to be discovered also in the written or printed form of literature: there are, for example, proprioceptive and kinesthetic dimensions of reading when our eyes must follow the lines of text across a page or down a page; there are visual dimensions of different fonts and line-spacing; and an imaginative poet or printer can play with these dimensions in creating an aesthetic experience for the reader. Moreover, as there is no emotion without the body, the understanding of the emotions we read about and experience in reading literature could perhaps be better understood through more developed body consciousness.

KL: It might be said that postmodernism, however varied its definitions and interpretations may be, is very often connected to the transcending of binary oppositions, of false dichotomies such as mind/body, subject/object, self/world, activity/passivity. You do not very often use the term "postmodern". For example, it only appears

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[6] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: *Aesthetics. Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T.M. Knox. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975, vol. II: 626.

[7] Richard Shusterman: „The Anomalous Nature of Literature". *The British Journal of Aesthetics,* 18/4 (1978), 317–329.

once in your book Body Consciousness. *And, it seemed to me, even that one mention expresses your wish to keep your distance from the concept. Is that so?*

RS: In *Pragmatist Aesthetics*,[8] published at the beginning of the 1990s, I made significant use of the term "postmodern," describing and analyzing hip hop as a postmodern art and cultural form but also describing contemporary ethics as taking an aestheticized postmodern turn. Like some other American theorists who had used the concept of postmodern (Richard Rorty, for example), I came to see that its use became so widespread, variable, contested, and confused that it was no longer very useful in communicating my ideas. Many earlier ways of thinking (Deweyan pragmatism but also ancient Chinese theories of complementarity) also powerfully opposed dichotomous thinking, so it was neither necessary nor useful to continue to invoke the very ambiguous and contested notion of postmodernism. In some serious intellectual circles in which I worked (for example that of Pierre Bourdieu), the trendy, relativist, superficial side of postmodernism was very much distrusted, and I did not want somaesthetics (already a vulnerably provocative idea) to be rejected by associating it with superficial trendiness and transgression – for example, of a simple transgressive reversal of the dualistic hierarchy of mind versus body.

KL: You refute criticism of somaesthetics that argue that body consciousness practices completely withdraw one's attention from the outside world and get one absorbed in their bodily feelings, thus generating melancholia and hypochondria. Might it be the case that somaesthetics can actually help us overcome those distressing experiences of not being able to stop thinking about our otherwise automatic bodily processes such as breathing or blinking – just to mention some less severe disorders?
RS: Yes, one of my crucial points is that sensitive body

consciousness is always also a conscious of the world beyond your body. The soma is in constant and essential transactional engagement with the world. Strictly speaking, you cannot ever feel your body alone. If you close your eyes to ignore the world and try to feel only your body, you will (if you are at all sensitive) also feel the chair you are sitting on, the bed you are lying on, the floor you are standing or walking on, the water in which you are swimming, the air that impacts your skin and that enters your respiratory system. One's will power of mind and attention is ultimately a somatic affair so you are right that we can develop our powers of attention and mental control through disciplines involving somatic consciousness and training, and that such training can also help us prevent an excessive, uncontrollable, morbidly hypochondriac focus on our bodily feelings and health.

KL: Judging by the title of the conference in Szeged, "The Soma as the Core of Aesthetics, Ethics and Politics", it aims to put more emphasis on somaesthetics' link to our socio-political environment. You contend that the practice of somaesthetics is not merely a selfish act of the isolated individual, and you regard engagement in somatic cultivation as a means of self-liberation from bodily habits imposed on us by hierarchies of power. Could you explain more how we should conceive of somaesthetics' ethical dimension?

RS: I could begin my response by continuing the line of thinking from my previous answer. Because the soma is always in transactional engagement with its environment, our achieving a higher level of somaesthetic awareness makes us more sensitive and appreciative of our environment, an environment that is social as well as material or natural. Somaesthetics thus should lead to an improved environmental consciousness that promotes better environmental and social ethics.
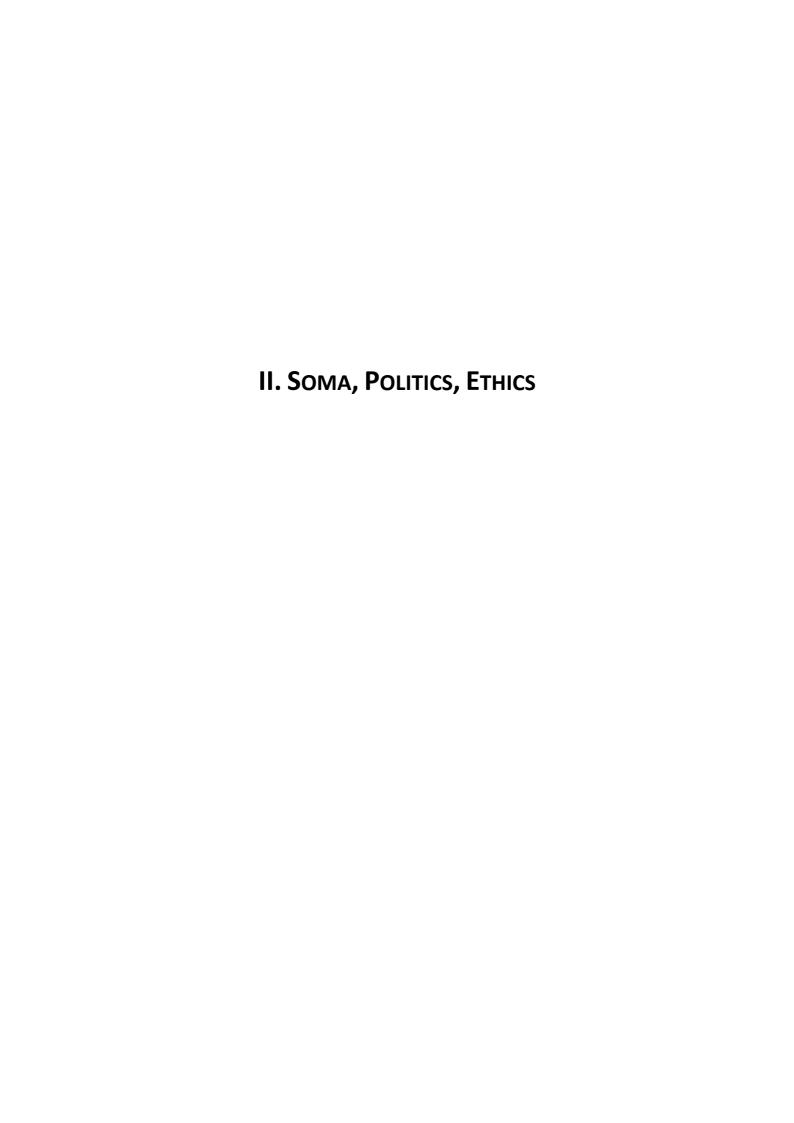
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[8] Richard Shusterman: *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art.* Blackwell, Oxford, 1992.

We perceive and understand other people through our own somatic perception of their somatic appearance and behavior. We do not need to know the language of a person to understand from his somatic behavior – his facial, gestural, and postural expression – that that person is in pain or distress. We can understand and empathize with people through our somaesthetic powers of perception and feeling. Similarly, without the bodily strength or ability to perform certain actions (such as swimming to rescue a drowning child), we cannot perform ethically virtuous acts of caring for others. Moreover, because somaesthetic training can develop will power and greater resources of physical strength and endurance, it can give people the energy, discipline, and confidence to engage more effectively in ethical and political action in order to combat injustice and oppression that are typically imposed on and felt through the body.

Let me conclude this interview with another example of the ethical and political potential of somaesthetics that has obvious relevance in a Europe increasingly pervaded by foreign bodies, many of which are fleeing severe dangers and bringing with them a real sense of those dangers; dangers that threaten to disrupt the established harmonies of the diverse European communities to which these foreign bodies come. How to avoid punishing them further through racial and ethnic prejudice?

As I explain in detail in *Body Consciousness*, our racial and ethnic prejudices are often the unconscious products of unpleasant but largely unnoticed somatic feelings produced by our encounters with others whose bodily appearance (in sight, hearing, or smell) is somehow disturbingly different. We often don't even realize or admit to having those somatically generated prejudices because they work viscerally beneath the level of consciousness. We cannot control them or transform them without first recognizing them in ourselves, and we cannot do that without a better somaesthetic awareness.

I should close this interview, however, by recalling an important point that I've often made but is too often forgotten. My advocacy of somaesthetics is not an assertion that the somaesthetic approach in itself can provide a solution to our ethical, social, and political problems or even to the problems of aesthetics. Life and art very complex affairs that require a very large toolbox with many tools, methods, or orientations. Somaesthetics, in my opinion, provides some very useful and much neglected tools but it needs to be complemented by other forms of inquiry and action.

II. Soma, Politics, Ethics

THE SOMA IN CITY LIFE: CULTURAL, POLITICAL AND BODILY AESTHETICS OF MANDALAY'S WATER FESTIVAL

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ABSTRACT: In this article, I contemplate the Water Festival in Mandalay, a city in Myanmar, focusing on the richly somatic—that is, emotional and embodied—qualities of the event. I aim, in particular, to develop an account in the vein of Shusterman's "analytic somaesthetics." This means describing bodily perceptions and practices and their place in our experience. While not offering prescriptions or what Shusterman calls "pragmatic somaesthetics," Mandalay's Water Festival—as an aesthetic gathering that is both bodily and political—emphasizes relations between the soma and values. In making my case, I lean on Dewey's accounts of experience and especially his aesthetics, also pulling modest support from phenomenologists and embodied cognitive scientists. I do this in an effort to account for immediate perception and to connect it to pragmatic and phenomenological concepts of experience as culture. What I aim to show is that festivities in Mandalay—including their cultural, political and religious dimensions—arise in ways comparable to immediate sensorimotor experiences, which on Deweyan, Merleau-Pontian and more recent embodied accounts emerge when doings and the actions consequently undergone coordinate around things encountered. On a political level, I argue that the festival involves taking control, being controlled and losing control, and suggest it is a pre-reflective protest reaction, which governing authorities allow to occur, while also attempting to restrain it.

Keywords: Buddhism, Mandalay, Myanmar, Phenomenology, Pragmatism, Somaesthetics, Water Festival

I. Introduction

Mandalay is mass pandemonium during Myanmar's Water Festival, a celebration based in Buddhism that has people soaking one another in a symbolic cleansing for the New Year and cathartic release against a historically oppressive military regime. That the festivities are particularly out of control in Mandalay is emphasized by the fact that the city has historically been excluded from media coverage, which instead focuses on the tamer celebrations in Yangon and Naypyidaw, a secretly built

city and new capital since 2006. For close to a week, children and adults douse people in the streets, on motorcycles and through train windows. Festivities center around a massive palace and symbol of military authority at the heart of the city, with pumps pulling enough water from surrounding moats to flood streets to a point that children swim naked in them and in drainage sewers.

In this article, I speculate on why the Water Festival in Mandalay is particularly intense, and relate this back to the richly somatic—that is, emotional and embodied—qualities of the celebration. My aim is to develop an account in the spirit of what Richard Shusterman (1999) calls "analytic somaesthetics," which "describes the basic nature of bodily perceptions and practices and also … their function in our knowledge and construction of reality" (p. 304). While I do not take the next step of offering prescriptions or what Shusterman calls "pragmatic somaesthetics," Mandalay's Water Festival, as an aesthetic coming together that is both bodily and political, highlights connections between somaesthetics and values. I frame the analytic portions of this paper in John Dewey's thinking and especially his aesthetics, drawing modest support from phenomenologists and more recent embodied cognitive scientists. I especially focus on pragmatic ideas equating experience to culture and phenomenological concepts of worldhood. Both of these notions start with the premise that experience arises when bodily capacities and sensitivities synchronize around things and practical handlings, and it follows from this that the bulk of life unfolds pre-reflectively. Worlds—whether the socially intricate ballets of parties or the practical sphere of a carpenter working with wood—build in like manner; and insofar as our involvement is always concerned and interested, mood and emotionality critically bind worlds together—points emphasized in the writings of Dewey and Martin Heidegger, and also stressed in Shusterman's account of the body.

What I aim to show is that cultural festivities in Mandalay—including their political and religious dimensions—emerge in ways comparable to immediate

sensorimotor experiences, which on Deweyan, Merleau-Pontian and more recent embodied accounts arise when doings and the actions consequently undergone synchronize around things encountered. Picking up on a hint in a recent article on Shusterman's somaesthetics by Ewa Chudaba (2017), I also want to show how the festival involves taking control, being controlled and losing control, and how this relates to the political situation in Myanmar. More generally, I suggest the Water Festival is a sublimation, or what I frame as a pre-reflective catharsis and protest reaction; and that governing authorities—consciously or otherwise—use the Water Festival to vent pressure while attempting to keep locals in check.

II. The Body and Pre-Reflective Life

Since the late 19th century, a growing number have argued that much of psychic life occurs below or just at the limits of consciousness, with Friedrich Nietzsche (1887) and Sigmund Freud (1915) prominently defending this position. Thinkers in pragmatic and phenomenological traditions—though not always so keen on the notion of "unconsciousness"—similarly emphasize that most of our doings, whether mental or physical, are pre-reflective. Newer cognitive models repeat the basic point, positing that most information processing transpires automatically, with little or no reflective thought. In line with this, psychologists have found that "nonconscious information-acquisition processes are incomparably faster and structurally more sophisticated" than "consciously controlled cognition" (Lewicki and Czyzewska 1992). Standard interpretations credit this outcome to brain activity; and although neural involvement is unquestionable, an additional reason that a great deal occurs below or just at the limits of consciousness is that myriad functions occur through non-neural bodily structures. Thus while Shusterman (2008) claims to differentiate himself from thinker such as Dewey and Maurice Merleau-Ponty by stressing "'lived somaesthetic reflection,' that is, concrete but

representational and reflective body consciousness" (p. 63), embodied positions entail pre-reflective experience.

What I specifically want to emphasize—and what will become relevant when discussing Mandalay's Water Festival—is that pre-reflective experience involves a synchronization of bodily capacities around environmental contours. This occurs on a range of levels and indeed in variety of organisms. One case in point is the astonishing multigenerational migrations of monarch butterflies, partly accounted for by mountain ranges funneling them to their destinations (Crippen 2016a). Another is the knee and other anatomical structures solving complicated problems of physics when striding over ground (Chemero 2009, p. 27; Long 2011, Ch. 5). Expressed generally, the capacities and structures of the body and things it encounters limit possibilities of action (see Crippen 2016a, 2017a). In the case of humans, this constrains possibilities of experience, thus providing a bodily analogue to the Kantian *a priori*, something that Dewey at least acknowledges (1920, esp. pp. 89-91). So whereas we can roll wine bottles between our palms, comparable actions and experiences are impossible with laptop computers. In qualitative experience, moreover, the smoothness of a bottle is not accounted for simply as an aggregate of pressures and sensations received by and integrated in the brain. It is also the way the surface "utilizes the time occupied by our tactile exploration or modulates the movement of our hand" (Merleau-Ponty 1945, p. 315). Enactive cognitive scientists such as Alva Noë (2004) and Erik Myin and Jan Degenaar (2014) advance comparable points, using Paul Bach-y-Rita's (e.g., 1983, 1984; and Kercel 2002) sensory substitution devices as an illustration. Here a camera mounted on the head transmits stimulation through vibrations on skin or electrical current on the tongue. Individuals who actively explore their surroundings come to develop quasi-vision in a relatively short time. This indicates perception has less to do with mere stimulation patterns than with the way sensory and motor function synchronize in action when dealing with the world.

Heidegger's (1927) concept of ready-to-hand likewise indicates that what we normally regard as "cognitive processes" are more appropriately understood as practical engagements with the world. Thus in the case of smartphones, most "know" the keyboard in use and not reflection, and could not draw a diagram of its layout from memory. Seen accordingly, practical know-how of smartphones is an embodied understanding of how to negotiate a world of digital devices—"world" here understood in the sense that we also speak of the world of parenthood, students, teaching, Hungarian culture and so forth, where entering a world means being primed for certain kinds of habitual activity without having to consciously reflect.

Cities are of course more complicated than surfaces of bottles, smart phones and the like. Yet they nonetheless offer social and physical terrains through which our bodily capacities and experiences integrate. In Mark Johnson's (2002) assessment, architectural and urban settings are "beautifully situated right at the heart of [the] organism-environment transaction." They are "spatial and bodily, so that they draw out and mobilize "our pre-reflective bodily engagement with the physical dimensions of place and space (pp. 76-78; also see Crippen 2016b). I aim to demonstrate this to be so in the case of the Water Festival in Mandalay, first, by showing that experience of it—both ordinary and aesthetic—is emphatically somatic and consequently pre-reflective; and, second, by demonstrating that what has been said of bodily-environment coordination applies on a group or social level.

III. The Body and Aesthetic Experience

Shusterman emphasizes what he sees as the somatic turn in philosophy (e.g., 2000, pp. 154-181). He regards this as a fairly contemporary development, albeit one rooted in the past, especially the ideas of pragmatists, phenomenologists, post-structuralists and East-Asian thinkers (see Shusterman 2012a). The term "somatic" expresses the necessary involvement of the body in experience. In the case of Dewey and Merleau-Ponty—two thinkers Shusterman is deeply indebted to—a somatic position implies that perception is a total coordination that occurs through modes other than but also including traditional categories of sense, for motor, intellectual and emotional capacities are also involved, say, when we savor a favorite food or scan a much loved view (see Chudaba 2014, 2017; Crippen, 2014). Shusterman, echoing Dewey in particular, further urges that the somatic turn marks a break from the notion that aesthetic engagement is confined to the experience of fine arts. As Shusterman puts it, "[b]ringing aesthetics closer to the realm of life and practice, ... entails bringing the body more centrally into aesthetic focus, as all life and practice—all perception and cognition, and action— is crucially performed through the body (2012b, p. 140). As such, somaesthetics is a suitable model for considering city life and aesthetic experience within it.

The claim that experience is somatic—whether advanced by Shusterman or his pragmatic and phenomenological predecessors—is more than a simple truism that the body is a necessary precondition. The emphasis on the body specifically stresses that anything counting as integrated experience arises from actions and capacities coordinating around contours of the world. To offer a relevant case in point, suppose I stride around Mandalay Palace during the Water Festival, as I in fact did. I press my legs and feet into the ground, with my body adapting differently to match the unevenness of gashed sidewalks or roads, or to deal with the resistance of water flooding the ground or the slipperiness of wet surfaces. Sometimes I lean and scurry to avoid blasts from hoses. Sometimes I snake to negotiate crowds. Many things grab my attention, and emotional tugs nearly everywhere pull at my eyes. In consequence of all these maneuvers directed at my environment, my body undergoes particular motions and a variety of other actions, synchronizing with my surroundings. Pulses of gait, posture, gaze, emotions and the scant reflections I have all adjust to what I encounter. My doings and undergoings, in Dewey's

language, fall into rhythmic connections of "means-consequence." Integrated experience of my environment is the result.

Although such integration is necessary for aesthetic experience, it is not enough to achieve it. Here Dewey's (1934) philosophy is particularly helpful once again. He writes: "we have *an* experience"—a term he uses to connote the aesthetic—"when material runs its course to fulfillment. Then and then only is it integrated within and demarcated in the general stream of experience from other experiences." Such an experience "is rounded out so that its close is a consummation and not a cessation." It "is a whole and carries with it its own individualizing quality and self-sufficiency. It is *an* experience" (p. 35).

To consider another real-life illustration, imagine once again I am at the Water Festival. I stroll mid-morning with my friend Steve, who was my travel companion. The air is heavy with heat and moisture, as it nearly always is in Myanmar. Rays faintly filtered through humid atmosphere beat our sticky faces and shoulders. Sun dazzled water sprays and flows almost everywhere, with the festivities more out of control in informal areas where locals have dropped pumps into the moats surrounding the palace. There, they spurt so much water that children swim in the streets and drainage trenches, and vehicles are submerged at least to the mid point of their tires, sometimes higher. By comparison, only gentle trickles rain from corporate stages, with good-looking youths gyrating mechanically to blaring dance music. Locals seem mildly interested in foreigners, taking extra pride in dousing us. It occurs to me that my wallet may get damaged, so I abscond it in my backpack. Swarms as dense as I have experienced in this country—which normally discourages mass assembly—jostle us. Hemmed in, I tread over the bumper of a jeep while crossing the road. The driver flings what are probably indignant curses. People are celebratory. Alcohol abounds, with a youth in an overfull truck-bed passing a tea-colored concoction in a plastic bottle for me to gulp. Yellowish-white Thanaka—

a cosmetic made of bark said to provide UV protection—streak faces, often in ornate patterns. My eyes fix on the varnished glow of youthful skin, and equally on the affable sun wrinkles worn on older faces.

A thick crowd presses us. A man—likely in his early 20s, albeit appearing older than he probably is—waylays us. He keeps asking my name, and I keep repeating it. An ugly grin slashes his face, teeth permanently stained red and oozing with what looks like blood, but is in fact saliva mixed with an addictive blend of areca nut, lime mineral, tobacco and betel leaf. I am friendly and polite, though also confused. A worried glance over my shoulder, and I see my backpack opened and discover my wallet missing. Steve and I briefly wander in a haphazard and hopeless bid to discover the thief. My stomach is pitted. I feel lightheaded and empty, but also calmer than expected. Returning to the hotel, I make calls to cancel cards. The clerk advises a visit to the police station. The officers there are unexpectedly attentive and concerned, but everyone knows it is a lost cause. Not wanting to ruin the day for Steve or myself, I act light-hearted. Food nearly always boosts my mood, so we go searching for "food-porn," our word for the tantalizing fare in this country and others we have visited. We stop at a restaurant, and have a beer and stray increasingly farther from the city center. A waterway with lanes, scattered buildings and trees lining both banks captures our attention. Though still in the city, the scene has a rural ambience. We enter a Buddhist temple along the channel and near a rickety bridge, and a monk gives us some wood-bead prayer ropes that we wear as bracelets. We come upon a middle-aged group celebrating along one of the shores. Loud music streams from tinny speakers, and men grab us, dancing. They share food and beer, and then demand an exorbitant sum. We walk away.

It is mid-afternoon and sweltering. We approach a muddy river with a marshy shoreline coated with reeds. What appears to be an island greets us, though it may be a peninsula. Long, lush grass and what resembles dead bamboo encrust the far shore. There are also dwellings

erected with vertical grey-weathered rough-cut planks and rusty metal roofs, some hovering above the river on stilts. Canoes jumble both banks, and a woman gestures that she can take us across. Once on the other side, she—like the earlier revelers—overshoots outrageously in the sum she demands. Though we were prepared to pay, we walk away, not having smaller denominations and not trusting we will get change. We wander along trails, some sandy and some hard packed, and gently penetrate tranquil villages with rustic edifices made of wicker or rough-cut planks, all the while not sure how we will return to the mainland. People here are warm and welcoming, though seemingly unaccustomed to tourists. We cross a group cooking a deep red stew over an open wood fire, and we motion to buy some. They dish out generous servings, and refuse our money. We amble by another temple—a modern-looking brick structure—and are invited in to "sit with the Buddha." The people here are generous and offer us food again, but we decline.

Somewhere along the way, a peculiar old man latches onto us. He acts both joyful and distraught. Laughing almost constantly, he guides us to a grave, then weeps, blowing snot from his nostrils. He keeps following, laughing. In the eyes of residents, he seems to be the local buffoon. Though not especially concerned, I am wary because of the earlier theft. In one attempt to ditch him, we do a kind of stationary dance to let people hose us—and him—with water. He sticks with us. Eventually we find a causeway across the river, and we jump from it to lower ground, and he finally gives up. We drift towards the hotel, our bodies aching from the day. We stop periodically to take blasts of water and also for an evening meal. Despite and partly because of the theft and other trials, along with the beauty and intrigue of nearly everything we experienced, this is unequivocally the most absorbing, memorable and best day of the trip.

A first point to note is that this day stands out from the stream of ordinary experience. It also stands out from my experience of travelling in the past. It is an enduring memorial to what travelling and soaking in unfamiliar cultures and places can be. A second point is that I am especially merged with my environment. Under normal circumstances, my bodily movements synchronize around my worldly dealings, but my focus meanders. Throughout this day, my physical actions, my perceptual capacities, almost my whole being integrates with things, events and people I encounter. A third point to note is that my experience is highly dramatic. The day has ups and downs, and these introduce rhythms of tension and repose. Variations in scenes and occurrences—for example, the angry man gesticulating at me, the gift of prayer ropes and food, the discovery of the muddy river and island, concerns about not being able to return to the mainland, the peculiar man who fastened to us—stand as mini-climaxes. The main crisis, obviously, is the theft, and the remainder of the day, which we do more than salvage, supplies resolution. For these reasons, the day stands out as *an* experience. To re-quote Dewey (1934), it is "demarcated in the general stream of experience from other experiences" (p. 35). It is highly integrated. It carries "its course to fulfillment" (p. 35), or rather a series of interconnected culminations, with notable highlights. Like focal points in paintings or climaxes in novels, these fulfillments and highlights pull the experience into a unified whole that "carries with it its own individualizing quality and self-sufficiency. It is *an* experience" (p. 35).

IV. The Water Festival as Cultural Life

As with individual bodies, multi-organism activity synergically coordinates around environmental contours. Illustrative examples from the non-human world includes birds falling into dynamic, self-adjusting wholes when migrating, or beetles coordinating to roll dung rapidly over significant distances. Another especially astonishing case is the Portuguese man o' war, a colony of organisms that resembles a jellyfish, complete with venomous tentacles. Like instances of group activity in the human world abound, whether in football matches,

toasts at a Budapest dinner or casual banter between colleagues, and they are comparable to coordinations that form bases of our perception of the world (see Crippen 2017b).

The kind of bodily coordination just described happens on a more global level as well and one specifically recognizable as cultural, a point John Steinbeck illustrates beautifully in his 1939 *Grapes of Wrath*. During the Great Depression, he writes, people "scuttled like bugs" to California,

> and as the dark caught them, they clustered … near to shelter and to water. … Thus it might be that one family camped near a spring, and another camped for the spring and for company, and a third because two families had pioneered the place and found it good. And when the sun went down, perhaps twenty families and twenty cars were there.
> 　　[…]
> 　　Every night a world created, complete with furniture—friends made and enemies established; a world complete with braggarts and with cowards, with quiet men, with humble men, with kindly men. Every night relationships that make a world, established (pp. 264-265).

So in the same way that the night-time world of the migrants gathers around a common concern for water, companionship, space for tents and a dream of a better life in the west, a weekend-world of late night revelry and early morning hangovers may be organized around wine. So too may the agricultural, industrial and commercial world, not to mention the physical space, of a wine-producing region. This illustrates some of what Heidegger (1949) conveys when he notes that "the Old High German word *thing* means a gathering to deliberate on … a contested matter" (p. 172). A contested matter is a matter of concern, and in the just mentioned examples, life and therewith worlds gather around a concern for particular things. Hence Heidegger adds that "The thing things world" (p. 178).

That worlds gather around things does not mean things are first there and worlds only appear afterwards. In the case of bottled wine, the thing is literally a crafted item, a physical and cultural product of the human

world. But more crucially, it is made into the kind of thing that it is for us by the ways in which it stands as an object of concern or importance in our worlds. William James (1879, 1890, Ch. 22) maintains that what a thing is for us—its essence—varies with our interests, ends, or in other words, concerns. Wine is a social lubricant in the world of the reveler. In the storekeeper's world, it is a commodity. For the chemist, a complex mix of compounds. Taken together and applied to Mandalay, this suggest that the festival not only organizes around interactions with the physical space of the palace, moat and other urban features. It also coheres and becomes what it is by virtue of people's concerns.

So what are some of the concerns of people in Mandalay? To begin with, Myanmar, a former British colony, has been regarded as one of the more isolationist and oppressive regimes in the world. Things are changing, however, with a growing tourism sector, and Myanmar becoming trendy among those who deem themselves as "adventurous." The political climate is changing too, though the military still retains a great deal of control, with a guaranteed 25% of seats in parliament, among much else. The formerly zealous media censorship is also loosening up. But even individuals who seem progressive in the eyes of the West retain troubling tendencies. For example, religious xenophobia remains strong even among progressives. Demonstrating this are the rampages against Muslims and that the politician San Suu Kyi, former darling of the West and Nobelaurate, has in fact turned a blind eye to abuses against Muslims, sometimes led by Buddhist monks.[1] She has even purged her own party of Muslims,

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[1] Such rampages seem out of character for Buddhist monks. However, a contributing factor is that the population is encouraged to dedicate a year of service to monkhood in youth and then again in adulthood. Thus many who appear in monk's robes are, in effect, drafted laypersons. In everyday life, monks exhibit habits out of keeping with conventional conceptions of Buddhism. For example, they allow kilometers of souvenirs to be sold in pathways leading to temples and permit billboard advertisements in them. They toss garbage from train windows. Many also smoke. They thereby violate the

according to some reports. Such occurrences have in fact been ongoing for years, albeit only recently gaining prominent media attention.

While human civilization in Myanmar is ancient, Mandalay—a city of a little over a million located in the middle of the country along Irrawaddy River—is relatively young. It is a past capital of Myanmar, and as in other cases in the country's history, it was founded at the behest of the ruler of on February 13, 1857. Construction of Mandalay Palace begin the same year, and it is a center piece of the city. Square in shape, relative to the city, it is gigantic. It is completely enclosed by four walls, each over 2 km, which are in turn surrounded by water-filled moats.

Most in Myanmar agree that Mandalay's Water Festival is the wildest, and one decisive factor is the city's structure: the Palace, with its water-filled moats, is centrally located and encompasses a significant portion of the city's area. Together the Palace and moats form a locus where activities, ideologies, hopes, frustrations and joys are publically expressed, and this outpouring makes the location what it is during this period. At the same time, because the celebration coordinates around the Palace and moats—much as hands do around bottles or lungs around the humidity or dustiness of air during breathing exercises—the festival and bodily movements are co-determined and to that extent controlled by the environment. On a more immediate level, the same occurs, for example, because wading through water or crowds has a different character than walking on dry ground or empty roads.

The status of the palace is a little ambiguous in the eyes of locals, who are said to resent tourists visiting it on the grounds that it was built with slave labor. The resentment may simultaneously arise from the fact that it remains a symbol of state authority, with signs outside reading, "The tatmadaw [army] and the people

empathy to nature that is often associated with Buddhism. Moreover, they transgress that central Buddhist precept that desire—and especially needless ones such as smoking—are primary sources of suffering.

cooperate and crush all those harming the union" or "only when the army is strong will the nation be strong." Entry, moreover, is reserved for military and government officials during the Festival. Thus while physically embedded in the city, the Palace is cut off and made more distant. However, the water and canals that consecrate the Festival simultaneously pull the Palace and the city into each other's neighborhood.

During the festival, enough water is launched from the canals that surrounding areas flood to the point that a first impression might be that a natural disaster had hit. The water is literally deep enough in some portions that children swim in the streets and in nearby sewers. Cars obviously stall. And what goes on here sets the tone for the entire city, which is similarly wild throughout, albeit often with reduced water because less is conveniently available, though residents inventively find sources. Revelers also take advantage of string of channels, small lakes and the Irrawaddy River just a little outside the city center.

Now it might seem that I am emphasizing physical structure and paying less attention to culture, but I hope to show the two are intertwined. In the earlier example about the Great Depression, Steinbeck (1939) goes on to say that "[a] certain physical pattern is needed for the building of a world" (p. 266). In his example, this includes objects of concern such as "water, a river bank, a stream, a spring, or even a faucet unguarded." And he says that "there is needed enough flat land to pitch the tents, a little brush or wood to build the fires," and more besides (pp. 266-267). On a hypothetical level, though things do not play out so neatly, one could imagine Mandalay's Water Festival taking similar form over a period of time in the past: one group goes to the moat for the water and because it is a good gathering place; others come for the same reason and for the company; booths are set up and soon you have a little world, with its own patterns of experience. The sense of experience here is like that Dewey used when he said that experience is equivalent to culture—"culture" here understood as embodied and habitual patterns of

activity that constitute both our worlds and experiences, as when we talk about the "French experience," "culture" or "world," or the "world" or "experience" of parenthood. This notion is also familiar to phenomenologists, especially those in a Heideggarian and Merleau-Pontian vein.

To repeat, Heidegger suggests that worlds gather around concerns, and Steinbeck gives a nice illustration of how this plays out. So in addition to a wish for water, space and company, what are other concerns of people in Myanmar during the water festival? Above all, people want to have fun. Most of the country—including many shops, all public transport and so forth—shuts down during the celebration. Also important is the symbolic cleansing or catharsis. After all, this is among the stated reasons for the soakings. Additionally, there is catharsis in the sense of acting out against an oppressive regime. People also seem to enjoy the anonymity of being in a crowd, and sometimes where masks resembling that worn by one of the main characters from the movie *V for Vendetta* (2005)*.* And then there is the urge to just be naughty, to lose control and violate norms, but this is simultaneously a way of seizing control, particularly against oppressive conditions. The situation is comparable to sex. As Chudaba argues, sex can involve, for example, Reichian methods of releasing orgasmic energy (see Shusterman 2000, esp. p. 176), while simultaneously being more "about losing control than controlling" (Chudaba 2017, p. 91).

The naughtiness and losing control plays out in a variety of ways, some innocent, some less so. First and for most, it includes soaking others in water and getting soaked. Virtually everyone partakes, with children taking especial delight, sometimes squealing as they soak passing motorcycles, pedestrians, people through train windows and more. There is an inversion of authority since adults are typically targeted, but also participate in the game both by soaking and by, for example, almost playfully closing metal slots over glassless train windows to block barrages of water, in a kind of synchronized transaction with revelers. Tourists

are especially popular targets not only among children, but also adults.

Another inversion of authority occurs insofar as people seem to be acting out against the regime, and instilling a kind of pandemonium not typically permitted. In fact, large gatherings are normally forbidden. The naughtiness includes, moreover, conventional forms of acting out such as public drinking and sharing bottles with random strangers, often even from passing vehicles. At the more extreme end, theft goes on, with tourists especially targeted, normally very rare, among other reasons, because of penalties involving hard labor. This is only ubiquitous around the Palace and only during the Festival, presumably because the crowds create both safety and opportunity. Yet the opportunity here afforded is in keeping with the general naughtiness of the festival.

So these are how some basic concerns play out, and the concerns and their effects are similar once again to Steinbeck's example and thus also to Dewey's account of experience, both aesthetic and ordinary. Here people's concerns for water, naughtiness and a central location push them towards the most prominent structure in the city, the Palace, around which their activity organizes. And with this as the center of festivities, the wildness radiates through the city, giving Mandalay the reputation as the best place to be in Myanmar during the Water Festival.

Crucially, the Palace also answers concerns of the government. Subtle control is exercised by allowing cultural events to occur on official stages—for example, songs and dances; and by allowing various corporate entities to set up large elevated stands along the canal with attractive, fashionably dressed young men and women mechanically bobbing to blaring dance music and showering people with gentle trickles, as opposed to the almost fire hose rushes delivered by some of the informal pumping stations. The habitual and hence pre-reflective informality of the everyday world of Myanmar seems an additional pre-condition of the Festival taking the wild form it does in Mandalay. It also relates to the

government's response, which seems to be to let people act out, but in a controlled way, with the palace area even officially shut down and cleared after certain times of night. As a central locus, moreover, the palace helps ensure that the main force of activities is confined to the four streets surrounding it.

Arguably, then, a basic concern of government authorities is restraining people who, while accustomed to political oppression, are not especially used to being regulated.

There is informality in everyday life in Myanmar, which, in spite of political oppression, is much less regulated and in this sense freer than the West. Such informality is common in other impoverished regions because poor people often depend on it to get by, yet it varies between country, with Myanmar on the high extreme. For example, as trains pull into stations, you will encounter numerous food venders, with some engaged in activities that would be totally impermissible in the West, for example, walking around with devices with boiling oil heated by coals selling samosas and assuredly doing so without any kind of formal license. Venders will hop on trains ready to prepare and sell food. They will then leave the car, and come back at a later stop to retrieve the dishes. You can sleep or sit on the floor of trains or under seats if you can fit; sit with your feet dangling off the back smoking a cigar despite no smoking signs and so on. The police on the train do not care. Distinct from the military, unarmed and very informal too, they often remove their uniforms to escape the heat once the train is on its way. It is all no problem. Random motorcycles will pull up and offer rides for a negotiated price. Three or four people and children can pile on too. No problem here either. The habitual informality of the everyday world of Myanmar seems an additional pre-condition of the Festival taking the wild form it does in Mandalay. It also relates to the government's response, which seems to be to let people act out, albeit in a controlled way, with the palace area, to repeat, officially closed and cleared after certain times of night. As a central locus, to repeat once more, the palace enables the confinement of the main force of activities to the four streets surrounding it.

Another important cultural factor worth re-emphasizing is that the festival partly originates in religious ceremonies consecrated with water. Etymologically, the word "religion" connotes a kind of binding together, and the palace and moats are loci around which things bind. This in fact captures and retraces central themes of this article. It recollects Heidegger's (1949, 1951) later work, which speaks about jugs, chalices and bridges gathering people and worlds, while also emphasizing religious and consecrating aspects. This, in turn, suggests a more complicated, cultural version of basic sensorimotor coordinations and aesthetic experience as described by Dewey and Shusterman. Only in this case the city and therefore activities within it and especially the festival are organized around the Palace and moats. In some ways they are also tied and constrained by it. This too is captured by the idea of binding that is etymologically connected to the word "religion," and is, moreover, a central feature of the festival. It central because while the festival is a space for losing control and thereby seizing it from an oppressive regime, it simultaneously involves being controlled or constrained by both the environment and the regime. On Chudaba's (2017) analysis, this marks a departure from Shusterman's account, which emphasizes increased bodily control through breathing exercises and other measures. This combination of taking control, being controlled and losing control—mirrored in the religious, political and informal aspects of the culture—infuses both the festival and the space, to a significant extent making them what they are for the nearly weeklong event.

V. Conclusion

In this article I set about doing what Shusterman calls an "analytic somaesthetics" of Mandalay's Water Festival or what otherwise might be thought of as a pragmatic body phenomenology. The reference to the latter, in addition to describing what was done, draws attention to the historical importance of pragmatists and phenomenologists to embodied outlooks, along with their influence on Shusterman. I will review what has been argued.

An initial grounding point was that human experience emerges through practical transactions in the world. This means that the human subject and other factors in the world mutually work upon one another, as when a tourist's stride presses into a sandy trail, and the trail presses back, modulating and patterning the tourist's gait, so that a series of interactions integrates into experience. Here experience is not merely integrated in the sense that it pulls together, but also in the sense that it arises out of a "thoroughgoing integration of what philosophy discriminates as 'subject' and 'object'" (Dewey 1934, p. 277). Again, the yielding sand modifies the tourist's tread, the tourist's tread the sand; and through this mutual shaping—this integration of one to the other—the sandy quality of "soft give" is realized and brought concretely into experience. The same holds for other perceptional modalities, as illustrated by the case of sensory substitution devices. Notice that while brains are involved in such transactions, the doings and undergoings that centrally constitute experience are not, as the saying goes, "in the head." Based on this, one would expect the bulk of worldly dealings to be pre-reflective, which they in fact are.

Shusterman rightly suggests that the somatic turn in philosophy comes with increased recognition that aesthetic experience is not confined to fine art. A second point accordingly stressed was that aesthetic experience is a variety of everyday experience. This means that the family of features characterizing the latter also characterizes the former. As the two are not mere equivalents, however, it also means the former encompasses something more. Aesthetic experience is more integrated than generic experience in the degree to which it hangs together, involves mutual adaptation of subject and object and unites the subject's capacities into joint action. As with experience in general, it entails creative and active engagement, reconstruction and transformation, yet here too in higher degree. An aesthetic experience is occasioned by what might loosely be called a concentrated sense of reality. To borrow once more from Dewey (1934), it "is defined by those situations and episodes that we spontaneously refer to as being 'real experiences'" (p. 36). It has a singular quality: it stands out as unique, as a unified whole partly because of its narrative-like quality, and it is literally the sort of experience that we speak of in the singular, as when we say, that was *an* experience. It also stands as an enduring memorial to what some kind of thing or event may be. On this account, an aesthetic experience may be summarized thus: it is an experience that builds dramatically in time, culminating into a coherent whole, yet a whole within which and through which things are transformed into sharper and more coherent forms.

What is true of aesthetic experience on an individual level holds on a social level. Though not typically emphasized, this is consistent with Dewey's thought and hence with the intellectual trajectory leading to Shusterman. Dewey in fact argues that the feeling of being isolated within our own private sphere of subjectivity is symptomatic of a kind of pathology or breakdown, with thinkers ranging from James to Nietzsche to Heidegger also defending this position. For Dewey, aesthetic experience is the contrary of such breakdown (see Dewey 1934, p. 19; also see Kestenbaum 1977, p. 27). The bulk of scholarship on aesthetics, however, appears insensitive to this. It overwhelmingly adopts the model of the lone perceiver engaging with works of fine art or beautiful, sublime settings. This is in spite of the fact that throughout most of history, not to mention everyday life, aesthetic

experience has been overwhelmingly shared in rituals, memorable feasts, formal and informal celebrations, romantic episodes and other social gatherings. Mandalay's Water Festival is overwhelmingly a shared experience, but not just because it coordinates people into group celebration. It is also shared by virtue of supplying a kind bacchanal rupture that and erodes normal boundaries between self and other.

This rupture relates to political dimensions of the festival, which seems a pre-reflective protest reaction that governing authorities attempt to control in order to keep the population in check. Among the revelers, the situation is akin to a child being in the sun too long, then throwing objects in frustration to vent without knowing why; or like the giddiness that arises after a long week and leads one to let lose with friends in a non-calculated way. From the government's side, the situation is akin to parents or friends, who know complete containment is dangerous and accordingly allow frustrated individuals to act out, but only within degrees.

It is not just the repressive situation in Myanmar that makes the festival take on its bacchanal form, however. The informal everyday cultural habits of the Burmese also feed the pandemonium, and contribute to the richly somatic—that is, emotional and embodied—quality that binds the celebration together into a culture or world. Notice that cultures and worlds are shared. For pragmatists and phenomenologists, they are also exemplars of experience, as when—to repeat—we speak of the culture, world or experience of student life or the Budapest experience, culture or world. Worlds, however, as Steinbeck observes, require physical patterns, and this is also so of the Water Festival. Thus, much as the activities of the hand synchronize to the contours of a bottle, the Festival's organizing locus is Mandalay Palace. Aside from centrality, size and physical and historical prominence, the palace is a good gathering place insofar as its moats supply water and the palace furnishes a symbol of authority to act out against.

The palace, as the physical and emotional core of the Festival, with its source of water and its religious significance that involves a ritual cleansing for the New Year, is accordingly the pole around which human bodies synchronize. It is also where they lose control and where others attempt to reestablish it. Together this makes the festival what it is for the nearly weeklong event, while also making the space around Mandalay Palace what it is during this period.

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THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE BODY

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ABSTRACT: How should we conceive of the female body in the context of a patriarchal society in which woman is dominated by male authority? Simone de Beauvoir's analysis in *The Second Sex* provides an answer to this question: namely, that the female body is an instrument capable of asserting and determining "her being" in the world, with an awareness of the dominance of man. Therefore, the body is to be analysed as a social factor of discrimination, in which the difference between the genders ascribes a political discrepancy which can attend the legal status of the body.

This contribution centres on the notion of the body in Simone de Beauvoir and the rules for its perception: these determine the nexus "being-otherness", which, because of the difference between the genders, becomes important on a political level.

Her re-evaluation offers a possibility for giving form to woman's desire without male mediation, so that the body, through awareness of men and women, can recognize both as subjects, where, at least, the reciprocity of their relationship will not be abolished by the miracle of two different classes of genders. That's why the political form of a woman's body should be singularized to obtain one reciprocal alterity. Thus, 1) first, I will demonstrate how the body has always been connected to reality, so that it works as a discriminating *social* factor, even at times for the same womanly functions. If, in fact, a sexual discrepancy can be ascribed to men and women in their way of existence and co-existence—the nit is the body which takes the shape of a destiny—then it is a priority for woman to obtain a universal view of her body that is able to exceed a different quality of human experience to establish a reality which crosses biological difference.

This implies 2) exploring the nature of the female body and its inter-subjective dimension; therefore, we must also look at the influence that the difference between the sexes has on the relationship that a woman entertains with "her" world. We will discover the political role of the body that makes the decrease of the gender difference impossible due to quality and propriety values that are historically sedimented. That's why the same concept of female emancipation and the creation of an independent sense of herself can produce a new system in the political reality. The biological feature of woman allows the realisation of a society in which the difference between sexual bodies acquires a universal access that establishes the different experiences of the human being. Although there is also a certain sense of belonging concerning the female body, it is nevertheless "naturally" associated with the procreation of the species. So, I will illustrate 3) the precarious balance woman must experience when she has to arrange her needs with those of the species in general. This implies an analysis of the social implications of the natural difference between the sexes and an objective analysis of woman's role in society, assuming that neither she nor society has any need to reproduce. The result will be a transcendental concept of freedom that could also be interpreted as the creation of social reality.

1. The connection between the female body and reality: A new way to re-determine society?

The relation between the female body and reality, between her biological constitution and her freedom in the world as an independent existent, isn't often recognized. Nowadays the condition of woman seems to be the biological termini which defines her as "*tota mulier in utero*",[1] or just an incubator used to carry a pregnancy to ensure the species' continuation. The consequence of the condition for which the female body is intended—namely, her womb—must be forgotten to appreciate what she *really* is, specifically, her individuality as an independent subject to male dominance, capable of affirming herself—despite her

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[1] Beauvoir, Simone de, and H. M. Parshley. *The second sex / by Simone de Beauvoir. Transl. and ed. by H. M. Parshley*. n.p.: New York Knopf, 1965. 13. – Further: De Beauvoir, Simone, The Second Sex.

biological connotation in modern society. Despite this, her individuality and her subjectivity get lost any time her body is considered from a purely biological point of view: the consequence of this physical consideration of the female body is her objectification and subjugation to male authority. Nevertheless, if a phenomenological perspective is applied to the living sexual body—which implies an analysis of the *phenomena* relating to it, like the sociality of gender and the sexual discrepancy which emerges from the different biological connotations— then it is possible to break the asymmetrical relation between the sexes, namely, the objectification of the female body and its domination by the male. This relation has an ontological basis because it refers to the *essential* difference between the genders, which is based on this duality between subjugation by the male and objectification of the female. This correlation typifies patriarchal society, where the objectification of the woman *le chair* is reported as opposed to the subjective activity of the male—namely, the *corps*.[2] Given this "value" for this phenomenon of gender difference, it is possible to look at what these sexual aspects mean, regarding the interrelation that everybody establishes with other bodies and the world.[3]

Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) offers a very important perspective on this subject. In this book, she develops a theory which seeks to escape the biological reductionism which is supposed by this kind of society and which treats the female body just as a biological data. Through a very long examination, which is based on de Beauvoir's consideration of the possible reasons for woman's subordination to man (these being, from her point of view, the biological, historical, material, and psychoanalytic, which are each rejected by her),[4] she achieves the outcome of the structural

obstacle for female independence and the norms of society. According to de Beauvoir, these laws are assigned to transcendence. If woman's transcendence cannot be realized, because of the structural power which created the relationship between the genders through which woman lost her individuality and has been made subordinate and inferior to man, then this subjugation is also reflected in that it dooms her immanence to inferiority. If this is the case, then "her condition has remained the same through superficial changes, and it is this condition that determines what is called the 'character' of woman: she 'revels in immanence', she is contrary, she is prudent and petty, she has no sense of fact or accuracy, she lacks morality, she is contemptibly utilitarian, she is false, theatrical, self-seeking, and so on."[5]

For this reason, only if this law preserves an ontological basis can woman reach being through force of will.[6] This question has obviously created different kinds of problems concerning transcendence. First of all, it refers to de Beauvoir's equivocations with ontology. In this respect, it might be that the relation of the body to the world shouldn't be considered as a *brute fact*; rather, the body expresses "our relation with the world, and it is why it is an object of sympathy or repulsion."[7] Another question concerning transcendence is that regarding its role, because it has occupied almost two different positions in philosophy. In this regard, Nadine Changfoot observes that "first the subject of transcendence is an agent of her and her becoming. This resonates with a more liberal conception of freedom where a subject is presumed autonomous from the outset and makes the most rational decision possible for her/his happiness […] Second transcendence is a matter

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[2] Cf. Tiukalo, Alicja. 'The notion of the body and sex in Simone de Beauvoir's philosophy'. *Human Movement*, 1 March 2012, Vol.13(1), 79.

[3] Heinämaa, Sara. 'Simone de Beauvoir's phenomenology of sexual difference'. *Hypatia*, 1999, 14. Jg., Nr. 4, 119.

[4] Cf. Changfoot, Nadine. 'Transcendence in Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex: Revisiting masculinist

ontology'. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 2009, 35. Jg., Nr. 4, 394.

[5] De Beauvoir, Simone. *The Ethics of Ambiguity, tr*. Citadel Press, 1948, 587.

[6] Changfoot, Nadine. 'Transcendence in Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex: Revisiting masculinist ontology'. *Philosophy & Social Criticism,* 395.

[7] De Beauvoir, Simone. *The Ethics of Ambiguity, tr*. Citadel Press, 1948, 17.

of relational freedom whose actualization shifts according to the differences of the subjects in question."[8] De Beauvoir conceived that this concept was misread by patriarchal society, which is moreover inscribed on the sexed body. This misreading has developed into a violence which marks the male body as powerful, so that the female body covers itself from immanence.[9] This consequence of transcendence was criticised by feminists in the 1970s because, from their point of view, transcendence depends on ontology. De Beauvoir was accused of privileging value, which appertains to masculine society. Instead, the male is considered—also with a critical perspective—superior to woman. The consequence of this consideration is that the individual doctrine of authenticity, which connotes woman, was dismissed.[10]

But Simone de Beauvoir had a solution to this kind of society: namely, to restore female subjectivity as producing social process,[11] which involves her entire existence. So, from this perspective, female anatomy isn't considered destiny; instead, biology can explain what woman represents in her social environment. De Beauvoir's solution is to consider the woman in her *overall* social context. Following her analysis, I have already used, in relation to the female body, two expressions—'biological' and 'society'—to make clear

how their application prior to the twentieth century is problematic. This is because these two words, which connote the female body, imply that it can be used like an instrument, and enshrine discrimination between the genders. Interestingly, they are used every time that there is a political or economic dependence or a social dependence, which creates a subordinated/hierarchical relationship between female and male. Moreover, it must be recognized that, according to the defenders of patriarchal society, these differences between the genders exist because of biological differences, and has as an effect the oppression of woman by man.

An interesting consequence of this phenomenon—even considering the physical body as responsible for woman's constitution—is her *enslavement*, wherein two traits have to be recognized: that the woman's "grasp upon the world is less extended than man's, and she is more closely enslaved in her species."[12] For sure, this *enslavement* regards what de Beauvoir attributed to patriarchal society, where the female body becomes the shape of destiny capable of entirely influencing her existence, where she ends up being enslaved by male authority. According to de Beauvoir, this phenomenon appeared once slavery occurred in history—namely, when man "has recourse to the labour of other man, whom he reduces in slavery. Private property appears: master of slaves and of the earth, man becomes the proprietor also of woman."[13] Hence the question turns on what the *property* of other men means. If we focus on the word 'property', which comes from the Latin '*dominium*', then it is possible to discover that the word '*dominium*' is used every time there is the practice of slavery. The explanation that Luis de Molina gives in *De Iustitia et Iure* (1588) to the *dominium paternum* could clarify what kind of property is related to *dominium*: exactly that property that man exercises over woman. According to Molina, it is recognizable as the power that a married man exercises over his wife, his children, and his servants, as a "natural"

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[8] Changfoot, Nadine. 'Transcendence in Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex: Revisiting masculinist ontology'. *Philosophy & Social Criticism, 392.*

[9] Cf. de Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 573. "If she seems to man so 'physic-al' a creature, it is because her situation leads her to attach extreme importance to her animal nature. The call of the flesh is no louder in her than in the male, but she catches its least murmurs and amplifies them. Sexual pleasure, like rending pain, represents the stunning triumph of the immediate; in the violence of the instant, the future and the universe are denied; what lies outside the carnal flame is nothing; for the brief moment of this apotheosis, woman is no longer mutilated and frustrated."

[10] Changfoot, Nadine. 'Transcendence in Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex: Revisiting masculinist ontology'. Philosophy & Social Criticism, 393.

[11] Hughes, Alex; Witz, Anne. 'Feminism and the matter of bodies: from de Beauvoir to Butler'. *Body & Society*, 1997, 3. Jg., Nr. 1, 48.

[12] Cf. de Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 79.

[13] Cf. de Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 80.

institution. This *dominium* is a kind of power which can be considered prior to the state and all that concerns the division of property.[14] In his book *Recht* (2016), Matthias Kaufmann points out that the word *dominium* can have different variations depending on the context in which it is used: it can indicate "exerted dominance" and "property", depending on the argument to be carried out.[15] In *The Second Sex*, it is possible to find out the kind of *dominium* which regards property, in order that woman embodies the qualities of mother and becomes the property of man. This is something that appears, for example, in Oriental society: the female body "is not perceived as a radiation of a subjective personality, but a thing sunk deeply in its own immanence."[16] This characteristic of *dominium*, which is exercised by male authority over woman, happens every time that there is the phenomenon of woman's enslavement to the human species. In addition, de Beauvoir recognizes the restriction to domestic duties as pure domination by man.[17] Standing out from here is the principle of patriarchal society, which is based on private property. In this kind of society, woman is subjugated to man: she depends on his sexual caprices, and with him there is often the condition of adultery and fornication, because woman and her body are just objects to be used for his own purposes. Another factor which above all must be considered is that woman depends on man economically, and this generates a kind of social oppression by which woman is subjugated.

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[14] Cf. Alonso-Lasheras, Diego. *Luis de Molina's De Iustitia Et Iure: Justice as Virtue in an Economic Context*. Brill, 2011, 104.

[15] "Das Wort dominium variiert in seinen Verwendungsweisen zwischen „ ausgeübter Herrschaft" und „Eigentum", was in den Argumentationen entsprechend, ausgenütz wird, später differenzierte man zwischen einem dominium proprietatis, welches das Eigentum bezeichnete und einem dominium iurisdictionis, womit die Herrschaft der Regenten über Freie benannt wurde, während Sklaven eben zum privativen Eigentum gehörten." Cf. Kaufmann, Matthias. *Recht*. Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, Berlin, 2016, 186.

[16] Cf. de Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 176.

[17] Cf. de Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 80.

For this reason, de Beauvoir investigates the concrete reference to the reality in which the female body finds itself: the adult woman to whom this consideration is related is subjugated by man's dependence. She is incapable of breaking free from male authority, and therefore their marriage is also influenced by male dominance, and with him it becomes a way for her to make a career in society. This kind of twentieth-century woman becomes the target of de Beauvoir's study because, although she had the possibility for economic independence, she nevertheless behaved in a way which, complicit with other women, promoted her oppression by man.[18] Hence the biological factor and male domination seems to be, in this context, something which has to be admitted: woman has to be dominated, so much so that "the male finds in the woman more complicity then the oppressor usually in the oppressed."[19] For this reason, the same body works as a social factor of discrimination: to some women of the 20th century, to be female implies being subjected to male authority and losing every individuality. The sexual discrepancy between the genders becomes obvious through the plexus which is created between the relation of female oppression and the preservation of her otherness as an independent subject from the male in society. The tale of both—oppression of woman and preservation of her individuality—created a sexual discrepancy because of the biological consideration of the female body, in which men and women are different subjects of the same society. While these sexual discrepancies exist between the genders, the notion of the body does not have to be intolerably vague, but is intended as a concrete medium capable of establishing a relation with man, which can also influence the relation between the genders in society. This is possible—and it is this last thing which will be pointed out in this chapter—if man as the Other sees woman not only in her *Körper*, but also as *Leib*, the female has to be able to

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[18] Card, Claudia (Hg.). *The Cambridge Companion to Simone de Beauvoir*. Cambridge University Press, 2003, 20.

[19] Cf. De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*.

represent the experience to herself as such.[20] That means that both genders are able to create a symmetry which gives both harmony as such. To obtain that, man has to recognize the aspiration to transcendence in woman, and woman has to accept his immanence.[21]

In the next chapter, I will focus on these two aspects. I will clarify how the harmony of transcendence and immanence can result in a relationship between the genders which is based on respect of the other and mutual freedom. In this way, the biological etiquette with respect to female individuality will be overcome.

2. The body as Being-in-Otherness: A new way for harmony between the genders

According to de Beauvoir, the claims on the body and the difference between the genders can be overridden: Despite that, this is not intended as a greater philosophical sophistication, because this proposes a very close kinship with the *situation* that reflects itself in the historical context. Examining the situation in which the body is integrated implies taking into consideration not only the specified technical, economic, and social development of the world, which is experienced by the individual, but also implies taking the body as lived experience, where corporeal experience appertains to the living being.[22] In patriarchal society, "women have no grasp on the world of men because their experience doesn't teach them to use logic and technique; inversely, masculine apparatus loses his power at the frontiers of the feminine realm. There is a whole region of human experience which the male deliberately chooses to ignore because he fails to think it: this experience woman lives."[23] Giving priority to woman's experiential side means valuing the relation with the world by which the human being lives. According to de Beauvoir, this relation must be intended—as was shown in the last chapter—as an overcoming of all the social conventions and requirements of patriarchal society, with a preference for the authentic aspect of woman's life. This character is assumed as a way to obtain freedom and to avoid what Martin Heidegger in *Being and Time* (1927) understands as "the they" in the context of the world analysis. "The they" achieves an understanding of Being as a whole, so that he can put his own self and his possible ought to can be allowed to happen in the world, because this question is a constitutive moment of worldly existence according to the context of law, which requires one to "rule," which keeps the Being-with-otherness. According to that, the world obtains another configuration because it is intended as a relation between two elements, language and law; with language, the world becomes perceptible, so the worldliness of the world of every existence refers to the right of the people. This process systematically puts through a kind of law which takes people and brings their objective reality into an owning being. For this reason, on the one hand, this shows the objective determination of the people. On the other hand, it seems to be already determined in what is revealed. This can provide the laws of the subject: so, the "ought to" of the exterior appears as something which is required to be an objectivity whereby the human being reveals itself as subject. Assuming that for Heidegger *Being-in-the-world* became the formal indication of being-there, which is not first locked up within itself, neither does it have to step outside itself to meet the external world, this means that the human being is always already standing out *in* a world. So what Heidegger intends as "Dasein" has to surpass selfhood to get what the world wants to show; therefore, there is a surmounting of a

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[20] Cf. Mirvish, Adrian. 'Simone de Beauvoir's Two Bodies and the Struggle for Authenticity'. *Bulletin de la Société Américaine de Philosophie de Langue Française*, 2003, 13. Jg., Nr. 1, 81.

[21] Vgl. Giuliani, Regula. 'Spielräume der Freiheit. Feministische Utopien seit den 50er Jahren: Simone de Beauvoir, Luce Irigaray und Judith Butler'. *FZG—Freiburger Zeitschrift für GeschlechterStudien*, 1998, 4. Jg., Nr. 7, 164.

[22] Cf. O'Brien, Wendy; Embree, Lester (Hg.). *The Existential Phenomenology of Simone de Beauvoir*. Springer Science & Business Media, 2001, 51.

[23] De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 581.

selfish dimension in favour of the Others: so what Heidegger identified as selfhood becomes the condition to get the otherness dimension. This can also be defined as what is wrong in the tradition of metaphysics; here Dasein is always considered in its singular dimension, and this approach goes back to presence at hand, which Heidegger avoids to re-situate value in ontology. Moreover, by "the they", "the Being-with-one-another dissolves one's own Dasein completely into the kind of Being Others in such a way, indeed that the Others, as distinguishable and explicit vanish more and more."[24]

This small digression is useful to show how Martin Heidegger's concept of "the they" is reflected in de Beauvoir's conception of the way to obtain authenticity, because the "being authentic" of woman implies avoiding the objectification of her body by the gaze of the Other and recognizes that "if I wish to define myself, I must first of all say: "I am a woman."[25]

This implies not only getting back the law in which she can obtain her authenticity—namely, her individuality inside society—but also eliminating the language that is used by patriarchal society, which is based on self-justification. Indeed, through the myth that this society "imposed its law and its costume upon an individual in a picturesque, effective manner [...] Through such intermediaries as religions, traditions, language, tales, songs, movies, the myths penetrate even into such existences as are most harshly enslaved to material realities."[26]

This world isn't scared by society anymore, with the risk of being subjugated by the male; when woman is able to affirm herself by male authority, although her biological characteristic, her Being, will be able to present the necessary condition to preserve her independence in case of her relationship with the *other* partner: as a result, she becomes authentic. In this condition, where both genders are independent from one another, and where Simone de Beauvoir ascribes the ideal relationship between the genders, there are "entirely self-sufficient human beings to form unions one with another only in accordance with the untrammelled dictates of their mutual love."[27] In this context, the concept refers to the dichotomy which is established between people, between "me and you", every time that a relationship is created, where it is necessary to again consider what the body means for Simone de Beauvoir, because it seems to be that de Beauvoir tries to stress the ideal concept of *self-sufficiency*, which becomes the canon of reference for a balanced relationship between the genders.[28] To object to this consideration, we have to consider the analysis of de Beauvoir in the philosophical context in which it appertains: her thought cannot be ascribed only to the existentialist because she also belongs within the phenomenological tradition and she knows the principles of Husserl's thought.[29] Using Husserl's principles as an instrument to conduct this confrontation can clarify, not only how this movement influenced her philosophical analysis of the body, but also the plexus which determines itself between authenticity and individuality. Therefore, if we take as reference the phenomenological tradition in which Simone de Beauvoir was involved, then it is possible to specify three aspects of the phenomenon of "woman" and her "body" that are necessary to consider:

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[24] Heidegger, Martin. *Sein und Zeit* (1927), translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson as *Being and Time*, Blackwell, Oxford 2001, 164.

[25] De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 15.

[26] De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 266.

[27] De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 453.

[28] Mirvish, Adrian. 'Simone de Beauvoir's Two Bodies and the Struggle for Authenticity', *Bulletin de la Société Américaine de Philosophie de Langue Française*, 80.

[29] Obviously, as Margaret Simon points out, Simone de Beauvoir was also familiar with the work of Merleau-Ponty. In the *Phenomenology of Perception* in particular, Merleau-Ponty submitted "the living body to an extensive and thorough study in the first part." Because I am concentrating on the political role of the body, I will not investigate the influence of Merleau-Ponty on Simone de Beauvoir here. Margaret Simons' book *The Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir: Critical Essays"* is of interest in this regard, in that it analyses the connection of de Beauvoir and phenomenology. Cf. Simons, Margaret. (Hg.). *The Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir: Critical Essays*. Indiana University Press, 2006.

1. The distinction between "*Leib*" and "*Körper*", according to Husserl;
2. The relation between transcendence and immanence;
3. The Openness of woman to world;

The first point which needs to be developed concerns the notion of living body and the sexual relationship between the genders. Pointing out the "living" characteristic of the body means privileging the aspect of its activity, as something that is capable of acting in the world. However, in his lecture "Thing and Space" (1907), and again in the second part of *Ideas* (1913), Husserl refers to two important concepts which determine the role of the body in space, even as his argument encloses two nodal points: the body's objectivity and spatiality. According to Husserl, we have to distinguish between *Körper* and *Leib,* precisely between the physical body and its living flesh, because "in the case of perception, which is here our immediate interest, there accompanies this relation (inasmuch as perception is a lived experience) to the Ego a perceptual relation of the Object to the Ego-Body [*Ichleib*] as well and, further, a certain constitution in the character of total perception, by virtue of which I have my standpoint and, pertaining to this, a certain perceived environment, to which the thing belongs which I in each case call specifically the perceived, the just-now seen or heard."[30] Husserl's point is that there is an essential difference of perception between the "physical body" and the "living flesh", because one represents the active (*Leib*), while the other is the passive and resistant object (*Körper*).

In her critical comparison of de Beauvoir and Husserl, Margaret Simons suggests that "the living body is primary for Husserl, and that it appears essentially as the expression and instrument of the spirit. It is not a separate reality, but it is the horizon of all our activities, both everyday dealings and scientific idealizations."[31]

It is possible to find this difference again in *The Second Sex*: the body is considered as an instrument which gives the possibility of the radiation of subjectivity. It makes possible comprehension of the world because "it is through the eyes, the hands, that children apprehend the universe, and not through the sexual part."[32] Nevertheless, man remains the active part of sexual activity because he gives sense and value to all the functions which concern this exercise.[33] Contrary to that, the female body presents the characteristics of an object in society, an object which is used only to condescend to the desire of man. From this perspective, the sexual act is given the characteristic of a service which is assigned to woman, from which it is possible to deduce that her preference is ignored, so that marriage becomes a way to deny her man's liberty.

This reflection induces us to consider the second point of this analysis, concerning the relationship between transcendence and immanence, because "in both sexes is played out the same drama of the flesh and the spirit, of finitude and transcendence."[34]

If woman must be considered as a subject which embraces transcendence and freedom, like man, then the "drama of the flesh" conception of the body can be overridden, because a new condition by which there is a reciprocal need for one another can be developed in *loving* experience. Therefore, "the erotic experience is one that most poignantly discloses to human beings the ambiguity of their condition; in it they are aware of themselves as flesh and as spirit, as the other and as subject," so there isn't any assumption for eternal hostility between the genders. In this context, the same humanity is to be considered as something more than an agglomeration of species, because it concerns an historical development. Indeed, "it is impossible to demonstrate the existence of a rivalry between the human male and female of a truly psychological

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[30] Husserl, Edmund. *Thing and Space: Lectures of 1907.* Springer Science & Business Media, 2013, 9.

[31] Simons, Margaret. (Hg.). *The Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir: Critical Essays.* Indiana University Press, 2006,

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[32] De Beauvoir, Simone, The second sex, 273.

[33] Cf. de Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 423.

[34] Cf. de Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 684.

nature."[35] Therefore, her dream of castration must be reduced to her desire to deprive man of his transcendence. Traditional marriage doesn't give any possibility for woman to realize her transcendence with man: it imposes the condition that man is the one that is able to produce, fight, and create the totality of the universe and the infinity of the future. Consequently, woman is confined in her immanence and she is not able to get out of it, where the only purpose that she has is to preserve balance within the micro society, the family, that she creates by being housebound. The meaning of their love is also devalued within these confines, because it is reduced to wifely affection for the male. The only purpose that she has is "the continuation of all human species through time to come."[36] The reason for this is that it is codified that woman is inferior in this society. So how can balance between the genders be established again? Definitely not if woman tries to destroy the truth of man and his values, because in doing so she is only defending herself. A woman who defines herself as emancipated wants to be active, "a taker, and she refuses the passivity man means impose to her."[37] Being doomed to male authority cannot give any solution, because "all oppression creates a state of war."[38] For this reason, if woman tries to realize transcendence in immanence, she will not be able to change the condition of *dominium* in which she finds herself. Here I come to the third part of my argument: this *vicious* circle can be broken if woman in her openness to the world has the same condition of man, where marriage is based on the free agreement of both genders.

The society to which de Beauvoir aspired is basically founded on the equality of human beings, where the possibility for an open future is laid out and the achievement of the own objectivity is realized.[39] But

what is the role of the Other in this context? How can the body be the core of the political difference between the genders? Both of these questions will be analysed in the last chapter. In this chapter, I will clarify how the natural differences between the genders disappear if woman is able to deploy her transcendent concept of freedom in society.

3. "Woman will be always woman." Also if she is considered as "Other"[40]

The society that de Beauvoir aims to create overrides the differences between the genders: it is based on their equality if it is understood that the concept of woman, as the "dominant" male intends it, doesn't exist in itself; instead, it is just a product, an elaboration of this kind of society. Another facet of patriarchy is that "life has worn in his eyes a double aspect: it is consciousness, will, transcendence, it is the spirit; and it is matter, passivity, immanence, it is the flesh."[41] This mistake, which leads to the objectification of woman, is caused first of all— as has been shown—by the role that her body assumes according to its biological value in patriarchal society. Indeed, woman is the myth of femininity incarnate, the Other which is negated from man to preserve this dominant sense of themselves.[42] This has happened because the myth has reduced her to a conscious being, a human essence naturally submissive to the male. So, de Beauvoir indicates that some expressions such as "Thank God for having created woman," or "Nature is good since she has given women to men," which belong to the religious context as a demonstration that woman, as "happy accident", nevertheless appears in her own Being, which is an instance independent from him, as the Other regarding man, who represents the subject— namely, the real "Being"—in this case. The importance

[35] De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 674
[36] De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 422.
[37] De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 676.
[38] De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 675.
[39] Cf. Moser, Susanne. *Freiheit und Anerkennung bei*

Simone de Beauvoir. Ed. diskord, 2002, 187.
[40] De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 682.
[41] De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 134.
[42] Changfoot, Nadine. 'Transcendence in Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex: Revisiting masculinist ontology'. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 2009, 35. Jg., Nr. 4, S. 399.

that she attached to history is obviously different: if we think about the condition of Spartan and other Greek women, then we can see that there were some consistent discrepancies among them. A Spartan woman had access to the State, while a woman in classical Athens had no legal personhood and had to be dedicated to her *oikos*, namely, economics regarding her family and all consequential duties. This myth of the woman also aligns with her consideration of her body from childhood as an object in modern society, which creates on this basis the legal norms that woman must follow to became a "woman,"[43] since the same representation of the world became a work of man. All the priority is given to his action and works, and, consequently, the meaning of the individuality of woman, as a subject capable of affirming herself in the modern world, disappears. If the rules that the myth ascribes to the consideration of woman are followed, then she will be intended as the Other, namely, "it remains nonetheless true that she is always defined as the Other,"[44] in that man seeks the Other as nature in woman, and all that derives from this approach is fellow being.

This idea, of woman's Otherness and the consequential consideration of the female body as an object of male subordination, can be changed. The possibility is given if there is a genuine sexual reciprocity between two active, living bodies; in this way, woman can then obtain the meaning of freedom and emancipation. Nevertheless, a "woman who expends her energy, who has responsibilities, who knows how harsh the struggle against the world's opposition is, needs like the male not only to satisfy her physical desires but also to enjoy the relaxation and diversion provided by agreeable sexual adventures." [45] When there is this mutual appreciation of sexual experience, and

consequently when there is no place for masochism and sadism, and when the body is not considered as a mere object,[46] subjugation of woman will not be found. Contrarily, the body will give both authors of this sexual experience mutual pleasure. The inherent contradiction that the woman must live—namely, between herself and the Other—can be overridden in support of the collaboration between the two genders. So, the abyss which has separated woman and man, and which has existed since earliest childhood, and which establishes that woman *was made*, gets through eroticism and love that which takes on the "nature of free transcendence and not that of resignation,"[47] a relationship between equals. The reason is that "as a matter of fact, man, like woman, is flesh, therefore passive, the plaything of his hormones and of the species, the restless prey of his desires [...] If, however, both should assume the ambiguity with a clear-sighted modesty, correlative of an authentic pride, they would see each other as equals and would live out their erotic drama in amity."[48]

Therefore, both genders are conscious of the last *drama* which unites all living existence, and which regards their finitude and transcendence: time will consume their essence, so they will have at last the same need: the liberty of their life.

4. Conclusion

The body as the core of the political difference between the genders, as an instrument capable of determining the difference between male and female, must be overridden, because man and woman are constituted by the same finitude substance. The time of their biological constitution is always present and equal for both. Moreover, there is any biological prerequisite which enshrines this difference. The myth which is always given

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[43] Changfoot, Nadine. 'Transcendence in Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex: Revisiting masculinist ontology'. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 2009, 35. Jg., Nr. 4, S 399.
[44] De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 133.
[45] De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 648

[46] cf. Mirvish, Adrian. 'Simone de Beauvoir's Two Bodies and the Struggle for Authenticity'. *Bulletin de la Société Américaine de Philosophie de Langue Française*, 84.
[47] De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 684.
[48] De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*, 685.

to woman for the constitution of her body is that of a delicate Being needing the support of a man, able to conduct her by the pathway of her life. Contrarily, Simone de Beauvoir shows how woman is independent from man, despite her menstruation, her uterus, and the interlay constitution of her body. The vindication of her independence is not seen just a kind of subjugation of woman by man, but as a kind of prevarication, where eventually the roles are inverted, and woman dominates man. This solution would not make any sense, because justice can never be done amid injustice: The relation between both must be equal. So, an *emancipated* woman, who is conscious of her body and of her biological constitution, must consider herself an existence independent from man and must continue to exist also recognizing him as subject. This relationship is based on mutual respect between the genders. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that male and female are never victims of each other biologically, but are both victims of their species, so that their relationship undergoes oppression by institutions which they haven't created. As a result, life through the equality of man and woman surely loses its "salt" and "spice": the woman showing herself autonomous, will be denied those conveniences in society which are attributed to her and which "she has to" follow and which for sure do not concern sexual adventure, which she has with man, where, in that case, reciprocal freedom of the genders can also be found. So, what can the solution to achieve equality be? A mutual respect must exist between woman and man which can give a kind of conscious liberty. Through that the genders, also in their difference, obtain their place in the world.

FROM *HOMO SACER* TO THE YOGI:
THE SOMA AS THE AWAKENED SACRED BODY

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ABSTRACT: This paper negotiates a few binaries which have been dominants in the Pragmatic philosophy-life relationship. By such an exercise it examines how those dominants can be somaesthetically re-assigned to modify the quality of that relationship. The dominants that express themselves as binaries are the body, the mind and human efficiency. The binaries issuing out of the historically and politically contingent body is the sacred/damned split that Agamben problematizes in *Homo Sacer*. The binary issuing out of the cognitive and semantic fields of the mind would be the consciousness/unconsciousness states. Barry Allen's *Striking Beauty* examines the body-mind compact in four possible states of competence. Finally, the *Yogasutra* of Patanjali is invoked to reconcile the body-mind conundrum that, through a somaesthetic integration of body consciousness and mindfulness vitalizes the individual; so much so that the socially weakened and politically proscribed individual discovers a transformational purpose. The spirit of the somaesthetic intervention lies in an inward movement which aims for a greater focus of energies and clarity of purpose. The tone of theorization must necessarily be one of loud introspection. Hence, it might seem that the paper reads like a monologue while actually it is a dialogue with the self.

The 36th Chamber of Shaolin portrays cinematic situations of somaesthetic cultivation which perspicaciously argue that a beautiful mind and body can be developed through a rigorous somatic education. This education involves both persistent physical training as well as conditioning of mindfulness where the body is opened for self- investigation. The candidate who chooses a somatic education deconstructs the notion of the "beautiful" and establishes that the beauty of a person lies not in his/her appearance alone. It radiates from a person who has a clear purpose for life which ultimately leads him/her to a spiritual illumination. There is nothing more beautiful or sacred than devoting one's life for the wellbeing of fellow beings. Possibility, potentiality and power of the Soma is salvaged to solve the problems that are ethical challenges in the political and social spheres. This paper suggests that a proper somatic training as well as conditioning in mindful awareness can foster inner self discipline. It also illustrates how body intelligence enables the individual to be dynamically immersed in the ethical and political issues of the state. Somatic awareness and mindfulness are necessary for any performative act, including martial arts. Its relation to and relevance in everyday life cannot be overstated.

The paper reads the film, *The 36th Chamber of Shaolin* as a Somaesthetic working out of the Greek idea of the "Sacred Man" [the body that is, at the same time, sacred and accursed]; which is also the eponymous image of Giorgio Agamban's study [*Homo Sacer*] of how the individual is, simultaneously, fed the illusion of being liberated and yet compelled under totalizing gestures by the State as the purveyor of power. The paper works out the ambivalence of the Body of the Sacred Man. He defies the State [the king] and hence is culpable of treason and subject to Capital punishment. At the same time, the Sacred Man does so for the state [the people who are crushed and oppressed]. And the people want him to live. The gestures of defiance and sacrifice happen as Somaesthetic performances. The state is the Body politik which is in need of melioration. The hero, San Te, vows to rid the state of suffering by empowering the physical state of its oppressed citizens (teaches them Kung Fu) and, himself, masters the Somaesthetic art towards his Sacred goal: creating 'a brave new world' for the citizens.

The myth of *HomoSacer*[1] is read, after Agamben's stubbornly political exegesis, as legitimately depicting the situation of the citizen in the socio-political context of the sovereign state. Further,it implicates the state in the project of de-humanizing the individual into a bare-life over which the state has absolute constitutional control and power. This may well be the case with individuals who, as citizens, are by a cruel chance subjected to the dynamics of a state that enforces a sovereign control over the body through the machinery of containment like the law, the police, the security establishment, surveillance and so on. The individual's powerlessness is not negotiated in Agamben as his individual is somaesthetically inert; that powerless-ness is exploited to maintain the master-slave paradigm. In the *36th Chamber*, the individual's powerlessness becomes the instrumental cause for negotiating the relationship with the state, and this negotiation is possible only because San Te is somaesthetically energized.

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[1] Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life.* Stranford University Press, California. 1998. Print.

Homo Sacer is, after all, a myth. So, it does have enough space for the enterprise of exegesis. Agamben's reading of the sacred/damned binary as the citizen who can be killed but not sacrificed, does not occur in the modern context of citizenship because the idea of sacrifice is anachronistic in modern democracies. However, the only similarity between Homo Sacer and the modern citizen is the legal provision to ban the citizen from the state (*bios* to *zous*). In ancient times, citizenship was invested on select individuals on the basis of their ethnicity, class, gender and so on; it was denied to women and children. Such a nominated citizen, when declared a homo sacer, (a) has his fundamental rights suspended and (b) his killing is not tantamount to an offence. In the modern state, an individual is born with citizenship that makes him/her a potential Homo Sacer, in which the right to kill the citizen is vested only with the state. In an equation that one draws by relating the individual body to the state as an aggregate of individual bodies, one would see how, Agamben, alarmingly, argues for the obvious: the lopsidedness of power in favour of the state which leaves little choice for the citizen but to acquiesce to the forces of coercion. After all, Agamben's theorizing of Homo Sacer is to establish how modern democracies degenerate into totalitarian regimes. The body in *Homo Sacer* is the living body which can be killed at will. Bleak though this conclusion is, one needs but to examine the individual citizen as a corporeal body for any possible redemption.

This paper reverses the myth of Homo Sacer by privileging the individual body over the state. It invokes the image from biotechnology of the 'totipotent cell' which can exist as the individual with the power to become the organism (the State). The "power" that one associates with the state may as well apply to the individual as a body. If one turns away from the state to see what power resides within the common citizen, one turns away actually, from the state to focus attention on the body that has been ignored, neglected, undermined, even sacrificed at the altar of the state. There are times in the history of the state where the body of the common citizen was a marginal existence. Ironically, individuals choose to remain so subjugated like living through plagues that are not always caused by rats. Under these circumstances one does not think of asserting oneself as much as one thinks of hiding, dissolving, erasing and anonymizing oneself. These are times when names, as they appear in the records of the state, can spell danger for they give those away who choose to stand up against an oppressive regime. In difficult times, then, the dispirited citizen prefers to be 'unknown' and fears his own name that might be on the black list. The state, on its part, needs such names identified and isolated; sent into exile or erased through a lawful de-capitation.

The condition of citizenship is withdrawn by the state without allowing for the individual to defend himself/herself; their volition is suspended. Agamben does not explicitly say what would be the fate of such a citizen. But from Agamben's context of totalitarianism and the concentration camps, we can understand that, the homosacred individual will always have a desire to return to dignity; from being denationalized to being nationalized. Conversely, the question of the homosacered individual being accepted by the society is irrelevant because the state does not rely on the consent of society to declare one a homo sacer. So, society's opinion is of little moment. However, when one re-examines the equation, one finds enough evidence for how oppressive regimes have had to break at some point in their history and they were broken by individuals who first inspired themselves before they inspired others who were desperately seeking liberation from enslavement. Unless the broken body and spirit of the individual is repaired, one is far from the project of breaking the stranglehold of the state. The point of awakening is when the individual examines the causes of his/her powerlessness. They feel a compelling urge to cultivate the body that has been lying fallow, untilled and untrained.

In order to prop up the argument metaphorically, it reads the film, *The 36th Chamber of Shaolin* (1978)[2]. It also reads together the somaesthetic propositions of Richard Shusterman as well as the Eastern somaesthetic maxims of Patanjali's *Yoga Sūtras*[3]. What unites them like a common thread running through different ideologies is the principle of "cultivation of the body". It is a gradual evolution through *svādhyāya* and *abhyās:* the self- awareness and self- realization that puts one on the road to self- learning. Of course, one does not discount the valuable role of mentors; but they are facilitators in an otherwise lonely journey. Then, there is mindful repetition of one's learned skills; the absorbed practice that leads to perfection. The film depicts the many stages of that perilous journey. Shusterman has spoken about the aesthetics of cultivating the *soma*. While Shusterman works through Western Philosophy to reclaim the lost territory of the body from a state of oppressive rationalism and intellectualization, Patanjali provides the traditional somaesthetic wisdom, which in the east, is not just philosophy, but life itself as it ought to be lived.

This paper reads the film through the philosophy of Kung Fu as laid out by Barry Alen in *Striking Beauty*(2015)[4].Even when Alen enumerates the benefits of martial arts training as the somaesthetic cultivation through physical exercises which promotes health and enhances endurance and, eventually, leads one to the understanding of the value of self defence, he also traces an evolutionary trajectory of somaesthetic awareness and consciousness, that begins on the margins of the body and moves into the deeper body (body consciousness) and travels further into the awakened mind (mindfulness) to, finally, arrive at the truly enlightened state of "superconsciousness" or the special kind of concentration which Barry Alen calls *wuxin*: no mind.

In an earlier paper, the authors invoked the four stages of somaesthetic development of the "Peaceful Warrior" as obtain in the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patanjali. These four stages are: the Sleep stage or *Nidrāvasthā*; the Dream stage or *Svapnāvasthā*; the Awakened stage or *Jāgratāvasthā* and finally *Turyāvasthā* or the Superconscious stage. On the frame of Patanjali, the authors superimpose the four stages of consciousness articulated by Alen. The burden of this paper is to extend the logic of the individual as a "Peaceful Warrior" to his/her situation of being a sensitive and valuable microcosm of society. The authors also invoke the image of the totipotent cell in Tissue Culture. The cell,when it acquires all the vital elements that amount to totipotency, ceases to remain an individual cell. On the contrary, it transforms itself into the source of regeneration and revival of the organic system that is, apparently, in a state of disrepair.

The journey of the "Peaceful Warrior" situated in a social relation can be re-configured in terms of somaesthetic competence that the socially committed warrior acquires. In order to revive a social order that is reeling under an oppression regime; a state of enervation when the individuals feel a general sense of despair and drained vitality, one must undertake an adventurous journey like San Te's in *The36thChamberof Shaolin*. The journey of San Te is reworked in this paper as happening through four stages of competence. The somaesthetic ideas of Shusterman can be gainfully rephrased using Barry Alen's four stages of the Kung Fu practitioner: 1st Unconscious Incompetence, 2nd Conscious Incompetence, 3rd Conscious Competence, and 4th Unconcious Competence (SB 154).[5] San Te's four stages of competence also demonstrate how in certain socio- historical situations, especially when totalitarian regimes hold sway, the individual is like a dying cell; too weak to contribute to the life and health of the organism

[2] *The 36th Chamber of Shaolin*.Directed by Liu Chia-Liang.HongKong:Shaw Brothers Studio,1978. Film.
[3] Iyenger, BKS. *Light on the Yoga Sūtras of Patanjali.* Delhi: Indus imprint of Harper Collins, 1993.
[4] Alan, Barry. *Stiking Beauty- A Philosophical Look at the Asian Martial Arts.* New York: Colombia University Press, 2015.

[5] Alan, SB, 154

that is society. In such situations, one finds the argument of Agamben: "Power penetrates subject's very bodies and forms of life (HS 10)[6];or, Foucault's argument about the ubiquitousness of power that is entrenched in social life, as absolute, incontrovertible pronouncements.

One would have to re-visit Gramsci's position on power, that it is more "nuanced" than the way social scientists have preferred to see it, in order to turn bleak political prognostications of Agamben and Foucault into the historic moments when an individual body can, capturing and galvanizing the collective will of a people, breach hegemonic order and cause a regeneration in the body politik of society.[7] Emerson reminds us that "every institution is the lengthened shadow of one man" ("Self Reliance")[8]. In our own time, Mahatma Gandhi rose, an individual against the might of an empire and brought it to its knees. And Gandhi, in his own way, was a courageous and enterprising practitioner of the philosophy of Somaesthetics. Einstein's tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his seventieth birthday also, uncannily, hovers around the somaesthetic construct "such a man as this one ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth."[9]There is a vindication of the totipotency of the individual in Gramsci that one will have to strain to see in Agamben and Foucault.

So long as one exists in a state of inertia and despondency, one is existing in a state of inaction and purposelessness which is to exist outside one's body; outside one's self. It is a state of not being able to recognize the spiritual and mental power that resides inside the physical body. This state of Unconscious Incompetence is verily the *Nidrāvasthā* or Sleep state that the *Yoga Sūtras* talk about. The individual located in the biopolitical context of Agamben or Foucault is one whose body is subject to the law that binds every citizen in a lopsided pact where the power resides with the state. With that power, the state can even kill the individual body, depriving it of all sacredness; an abject dispensability. What in Agamben seems like a categorical statement with a frightening finality is only a state of ignorance, unconscious incompetence in Barry Alen. It is not the end; only the beginning of a journey towards totipotency.

For long, the apparent complementarity between law and justice was seen as a fact of nature and only a few have been able to see them as mutually exclusive. Hannah Arendt agrees that Law cannot guarantee justice. She also believes like Machiavelli and Hobbes before her, that power and violence too cannot provide justice. Arendt sees through the fact about many autocratic regimes for whom, "Out of a barrel of [a] gun grows the most effective command, resulting in the most instant and perfect obedience." She, with her clear-sightedness rejoins, "What never can grow out of it is power" (Arendt 1972, 152)[10].For a political philosopher who preceded Agamben and Foucault, she is more plausible when she argues that power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert (143). Although this thought is firmly rooted in a rebel politik, Arendt's prescription for political power to control collective action arises from uncensored consensus; not from the barrel of a gun (Alen 174).[11]

In order to manufacture "uncensored consenses" individuals like Mahatma Gandhi or San Te, the filmic warrior, must become *Satyagrahis* or knights sworn to defend the truth. Gandhi retreated into a period of studying the country and its sovereign rulers beforeembarking on his mission of gathering "uncensored consensus" with non- violence. San Te too begins his journey after a period of introspection. He understands that he, like his fellow citizens, has been

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[6] Agamben, HS , 10

[7] Daldal, Asli. "Power and Ideology in Michael Foucault and Antonio Gramsci: A Comparative Analysis"*Review of History and Political Science*. June 2014. Vol 2. No.2 pp 149-169.

[8] Emerson, Ralph W, and Stanley Appelbaum. *Self-reliance, and Other Essays*. New York: Dover Publications, 1993.

[9] https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/452888

[10] Arendt, Hannah.*Crises of the Republic.* San Diego. Harcourt Brace and company. 1972.

[11] Alen, SB,174.

"the production of a biopolitical body [which] is the original activity of the sovereign power" (HS 11)[12]. The sovereign, here, is the Manchu government which uses the martial mechanism of Kung Fu to suppress the people. In order to empower oneself like the totipotent cell, San Te must, first, unlock the secrets of Kung Fu.

San Te, like the cell that prepares for a transformational journey, recognizes the need to influence the biopolitical order. The first step in this direction is to see the chaos around him;the mayhem only opens his eyes to the lack of will in the citizens to stand up against an oppressive emperor. The capitulation makes him look at his own body that is powerless to undertake the perilous journey. He decides to run away from the slough of despond (in Bunyan)[13] to a place where the body, the mind and the spirit can be strengthened and the level of consciousness raised. While, in Agamben, the apostate is degraded from *bios* to *zoe* (a bare life), in Shusterman, the consciousness of the body causes the reversal of that order: one becomes more empowered by consciously submitting to a physical regimen of repairing those practices that militate against the human as one with cosmic dimensions. The physical is a door that must needs be opened. In the case of San Te he realizes the need to, forcibly, open that door by turning up at the gates of the Shaolin Temple.

One must needs cross the threshold of Unconscious Incompetence to realize that sacredness of the body is not a largesse of the state but a state of the awakened mind. The Manchu who swept in from the North, established the Qing Dynasty, also called the Manchu Dynasty, held sway for 268 years from 1644. They had annexed territories to the extent of present day China through brute military power. San Te is a citizen during the reign of the one of the Manchu emperors. In the beginning of the film narrative, San Te's brother is captured by the sovereign and he is executed in public.

That gesture of public brutality seen through Bordieu, is symbolic of how the sovereign exercises power over the bodies of its citizens. While the executed rebel is apotheosized as a martyr and a hero, the Manchu soldier, through his warning, "You don't know, who I am", only underlines the dual position of the sovereign who is " at the same time inside and outside the juridical order" (HS 17)[14]. While the sovereign is with the people, his grim warning, simultaneously, locates him outside the people, and above the law.

An elderly citizen, weakened by age and powerlessness reminds the onlookers that "for those are in charge…[they] must be very humble." The aged man, who finds himselfspeaking does not realize that his spiritual and mental capitulation happened long before his body gave up. His case proves Agamben's evaluation that "politicians…want to reduce all constituting power to constituted power" (HS 31)[15]. However, one voice from the crowd thinks aloud which amounts to challenging the status quo, however feeble it seems: "Does man have a right to say what they believe in or must they always do what the government says?" This new spirit must be juxtaposed with the words of the sovereign (the Manchu General)whose idea of crushing the rebels is to "use every method to capture these men and then kill them". The idea of crushing is a physical gesture of doing violenceto the bodies of the rebels. When the rebels are forced into a "state of exception", they stand up and question the exception by examining their choices. San Te exhorts his fellow citizens with words with the persuasive potency to magnetize "uncensored consensus": "I think we have choice. Only those who are afraid have no choice". San Te, thus, crosses the threshold of Unconscious Incompetence by the sovereign. Even when he arrives at Shaolin, he is subjected to a state of exception. In the beginning of the film, we are told: "Shaolin is [a] restricted [place], only monks are allowed."

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[12] Agamben, HS ,11.
[13] Bunyan, John. *The Pilgrim's Progress.* London: Simpkin Marshall and co, 1856.

[14] Agamben, HS,17.
[15] Agamben, HS, 31

Pursued as an outlaw by the sovereign in order to be killed and denied an entry into the Shaolin Temple, San Te resolves to sharpen his purpose. After the death of his father, San Te and his friends travel to the Shaolin Temple. On the way they are engaged by the Manchu soldiers. In the flight that ensues, his friend is killed. He decides to doggedly knock at the gates of the Temple till the monks see his steely determination. San Te makes his journey to the temple, alone, as a "Peaceful Warrior". With nothing more to lose and firm in his purpose, San Te excludes himself from the state, to which he would return at a more opportune moment, in order to become a Homo Sacer in a more positive sense. He is not afraid to lose his life in the process of empowering himself.

San Te understands the crucial importance of his body. It is, at once, a symbol of resistance and regeneration of the existing social order as well as instrument for translating the idea of resistance and regeneration into purposive action. His concern for his people (the state) makes him remove himself from it in order to be located outside; as a visible counter weight to the sovereign. The decision to enter the Shaolin Temple atall costs suggests his new awareness about the sacredness of his own body that must become a political weapon. When the sacred suffuses the body with a heightened purpose, it transforms the body into soma, thereby, empowering it to challenge even the sovereign.

The stage of Conscious Incompetence sets in when San Te sets out for the Shaolin Temple. He is a body that defies all descriptions. He is not a proper citizen. He is, by law,a renegade. He is not yet a hero nor is he the sacrificial body that the sovereign is seeking to be captured and put to death. In fact, the consciousness of his utter vulnerability marks the beginning of the second stageof consciousness. Anyone wishing to please the sovereign, could kill San Te without inviting the charge of murder.

Before arriving at the Temple, San Te immerses completely in the radical thoughts of Master Hao. Though the students are unaware of Master Hao's revolutionary activities they unquestioningly gravitate towards him for the moral strength he provides. In order to transform himself into an engine of political and social change, San Te realizes the need to be trained at a place where deeper experience can be acquired. The Shaolin Temple, symbolizes such a place where nothing superficial is taught. The students submit themselves body, mind and spirit. Now that kind of complete absorption alone can be a wholesome somatic experience like a wholly aesthetic experience. In "Soma, Self and Society", Shusterman moves on a similar plane of equation: 'As with aesthetic experience, some dimensions of somatic experience wall out a deeply personal response rather than an impersonal satisfaction'.[16]

The "deeply personal response" springs only from a somatic plane that is prepared by circumstances, like the ones that harden San Te's resolve, to move his consciousness from without the body inward and, further, into the innermost core. There is a complete identification with the cause; of awakening oneself and, through the built conviction, awakening society at large. One shuts out all other purposes to this one overriding purpose, as one's duty. San Te is reminded by the monk about "Sacrifice.[And] a righteous call for duty."

The idea of "sacrifice" must be placed in perspective. It is the situation of giving oneself, totally and unconditionally to a cause. There is the "idea" itself before sacrifice. The humanity which informs the idea gives it a special dimension requiring of the Peaceful Warrior to internalize and live the idea. There is a phase of cognition involving the mental faculties that are energized to involve the soma for the realization of the higher purpose. The physical body itself undergoes a process of fine tuning like preparing a sensitive instrument. Such a body becomes a highly responsive

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agent that can accurately read the signs and adequately respond to the needs. While *36ᵗʰ chamber* stays on the singular subject of "Shaolin techniques that could be taught [so that]…the people can use it to fight the Manchu troupes", Shusterman details a more elaborate purpose for the fine-tuned body:

> Somaesthetics connotes both the cognitive sharpening of our aesthetics or sensory perception and the artful reshaping of oursomatic form and functioning, not simply to make us stronger and more perceptive for our own sensual satisfaction but also to render usmore sensitive to the needs of others and more capable of responding to them with effectively willed action. (BC 43)[17]

The broad purposes of Somaesthetics as laid out by Shusterman originates at the point of heightened cognitive awareness. It is the point at which the body shakes out of the inertia of sleep and dream states. It wills itself towards a sensory and aesthetic perception that re-works the body and mind on the lines of a higher body consciousness and a finer mindfulness. Needless to say, there are morally firm injunctions, recognized as self- discipline that improves the functionality of the body; re-shapes its physicality. A very significant development when the new purpose takes over is the activation of a transitprocess; it is a vital movement from an absorption in the self to an expanded consciousness that accommodates others in society as the larger concern. That transition is vital also for the reason that it pushes the individual towards willed action.

While Shusterman speaks of an academic program that "involves social critique and historical inquiry with respect to body norms and practices" one would be able to recognize that a society which has been politically controlled yields clues about those norms and practices[which] both reflect and reinforce through our habits (Soma, Self and Society). San Te's arrival at the Shaolin Temple suggests the social critique of a historical

situation where political power has compelled the bodies of citizens into habits where the enforced submission as a norm has caused the surrender of self-regulation of choice and willed action. The arrival at the Temple is, by itself, a gesture of defying this historical situation and to commit the body to the recovery of the control that has been wrenched away from the individual citizens.

The arrival at the Shaolin Temple, then, becomes the beginning of new practices that unite body consciousness and mindfulness in every moment of life and in every action. So the transition that Shusterman suggests and which San Te demonstrates results in the closing of the gap between theory and practice. That way, SanTe transits from the persecuted individual to the philosopher-warrior for whom the philosophical ideal is harmoniously married to martial action; philosophy and politics merge, each into the other, like a Gramscian complementarity.

The *Yoga Sūtra* too sees the wisdom in action being reinforced with spirituality:

I.20   *śraddhāvīryasmṛtisamādhiprajña
          pǔrvakaḥitareṣām* (LOY 73)[18]

Practice which leads to perfect action must be nourished by trust in the precepts, the confidence in the meaningful outcomes, a vigor of the mindful body together with a keen memory and a power of absorption. The trust, in the *Yoga Sūtras*, is *aśraddhā* which "issues from revelation, faith, confidence and reverence" (75). When the philosopher warrior chooses to consciously empower himself and then become a weapon to eradicate the slumberous complacency of a spiritually effete society, he "transits from an excited but incompetent individual to one who has learned to extract the sacredness and power from the body, thereby, discovering the "Soma" in order to re-engineer the self. This stage marks the beginning of Conscious Competence in San Te.

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[17] Shusterman, Richard. *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics.* Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2008.

[18] Iyengar, LOY, 73.

Conscious Competence also begins from a cognitive stage. The initiate, recognizes for the first time that there is a body, which though appears fallow, possesses the fertility to bring latent faculties alive. Kung Fu Philosophyattends to the truth about drills of Shaolin that "serve to put…[one] in touch mentally with our physical selves, so that we no longer remain strangers to our own bodies". Through these drills which are *abhyas* or mindful repetitive, physical routines, the initiate is able to witness the stages of somatic awakening.

III.15 says*: kramaanyatvam*[19]
        pariṇāmaanyatvehetuḥ. (LOY 200)

That means: Successive Sequential changes cause the distinctive changes in the consciousness (LOY 200). The metaphor of the potter that Iyengar uses is relevant in the present context. The mindful repetition may appear to the casual observer as if the potter is patting a lump of earth. But the trained hands of the potter that beats the clay from the outside and supportively shapes it from the inside is engaged in a creative tension that balances the forces that conjoin aesthetically to form the pot.

Kabirdas, the fifteenth century Sufi poet too has elucidated the qualities of a teacher by invoking the image of the potter at his wheel:[20]

> *Guru kumharsikhkumbhhai, gathgath kādhaikhot*
> *Antarhāthsahārdai, bāharbāhaichot*

'Guru is the *potter*, the disciple is the unbaked *pot*. The Guru, like the potter cures the flaws with care, protecting with one hand from inside while the other hand pounds from the outside'. Shusterman too pays a tribute to his Japanese master by invoking the paradoxical compact of the benign disciplinarian. Bodhidharma, who introduced to the Shaolin monks 18 movements derived from traditional Indian Yoga, was a benign disciplinarian; like the potter, he was firm with the gesture of beating the body from without even as his other hand went into the mind and soul to provide succor and support. There is a firmness that is needed to shape the body and an equal degree of delicacy needed to shape the mind, so that in their fine balance, the flow of *Chi* energy may be realized.

The film demonstrates the flow of *Chi* in the very first challenge to the novice. The element of desperation enters the process when they realize that one can earn his food only when they cross the moat of water with two sets of bound logs in the middle of the moat that serve as transit options. Unless the novice lands on the other side without getting himself wet, there is no reward of food. The failure to earn his food sharpens San Te's body and mind to the demands of the task. The secret is to achieve the perfect harmony of speed, balance and weight. While it appears a physical challenge, its mastery requires an equal complement of the mind and spirit. SanTe remembers the words of his master which he must live through praxis: "Balance your movements…keep your foot light…that way you succeed. Now, bear that in mind, it is important".

The other stages of San Te's conscious development of competence involve the lifting of a pail of water in each hand that must be emptied into a tank. When the hands bend or slacken from the weight of the pails, the knives attached to his arms cut into the sides causing injury. So, the second challenge is not truly about lifting and balancing of water but requires strength of arms. San Te's determination to succeed wins the admiration of his master who is surprised to see that "the boy would develop so quickly".

Yet another stage in San Te's acquiring conscious competence is the training he receives to develop a quick eye. It not only makes one keener at sighting a threat but also draws the body into responding with sharp reflexes. The novice has to put his face between two smoldering logs that restrain any movement of the face. The consciousness of the face getting scorched with even a slight movement of the head makes one

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[19] Ibid, 200.
[20] www. bologi.com/index.cfm?md=

move the eyes in tune with the rocking of the lighted candle. The faculties are sharpened not only to respond to physical threats that can be seen, but also to be alert to the shadows that forewarn of threats that must be sensed accurately.

The head- butting challenge is yet another telling routine. It requires the warrior to butt and dislodge a room full of heavy sandbags that are suspended from the ceiling. The first impulse is to give up at a seemingly impossible taste. When San Te is reminded that "without passing, you are not going any higher," he puts his mind over matter and achieves his goal. It is not to be seen as merely a conquest but interpreted as a movement of body and mind through three distinct stages as differentiated in the *Yoga Sūtras*:[21]

III.13.   *etenabhŭtendriyeṣu dharmalakṣaṇa avasthāparināmāḥvyākhyātāḥ*(LOY 194)

San Te progresses through three phases of the mind: the first is a state;the second is a condition and the third is a stage. The first is a state of *dharma* where the consciousness recognizes and accepts the potential for perfection and order that is perennial and ever present. One is always, through mindful action, seeking to attain that perfect order. However, one must mentally mature in order to grasp the demands of such an attainment. The cognitive faculties must expand in order to comprehend accurately the specific details of that condition; each detail must be meticulously attended to reach higher refinement of purposive action. The disciple is awake and mindful of every minute detail that even as there is progress towards perfected action, there is an expanded awareness of arriving at such an elevated state of body consciousness and mindfulness.

Shusterman alludes to these stages relating to the expanding consciousness with the phrase: "the aesthetics of bodily feelings" (BC 112). He is convinced that it is as philosophical a project as any in philosophy as it conjoins the epistemological goals "of self

improvement and of self knowledge" (BC 113)[22]. Any votary of philosophy as a way of life would recognize in this project the uplifting and transcendent purpose where the ardent initiate sheds the inertia of inaction and complacency to climb the rungs of self-improvement and self- knowledge.Such a humanistic perspective rescues the humanities from being excessive rationalization or mindless Spartanization towards a transcendent stage of cultured somaesthetic transformation. At this stage, the individual develops a greater compassion which enables a humanistic vision that extends his personality beyond the individual towards the empathic recognition of larger purposes like the need for social action. At this stage of expanded consciousness the individual turns into an engine of influence that is equipped with the communicative power to lead by example. The somaesthetically transcendent individual, as an agent of social change, thus attains to what Shusterman calls "the truest and most potent form of transcendence- political action in [the] public world" (BC 91).[23]

The film captures the stages that lead to the stage of transcendence attained by San Te through the critical stage of Unconscious Incompetence, when he realizes that he is powerless in an oppressive military regime through Conscious Incompetence, when he reaches the gates of the Shaolin Temple, through Conscious Competence when he empowers himself, body and mind by re-engineering it, till his elevated spirit reminds him of the larger purpose beyond the individual; beyond the use of Kung Fu to defend oneself. The stage of transcendence is indicated by his realization that the qualities of courage, calmness, sound judgement, fluidity of movements and mental freshness can be applied to make life more rewarding and meaningful to ourselves and for other people. He recognizes that beyond the *yin-yang* balance that is achieved by the practice of *Chi*-flow which clears energy blockage, especially at the cellular

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[21] Iyengar, LOY, 194.

[22] Shusterman, BC, 113.
[23] Ibid, 91.

and sub-atomic levels, there is a need to address the energy blockage of society whose *yin-yang* balance needs to be restored. San Te, resolved to address the imbalance in the social order identifies himself as that cellular unit that must re-energize society; he enters the final stage of Unconscious Competence.

One wanders at the remarkable speed with which San Te progresses through the 35 Chambers in Shaolin. It can be explained as the degree of single-minded devotion with which he attends to his life in the Temple. He combines mindful repetition *(abhyās)* and austere self – discipline *(anuṣṭhāna)* to transcend the limitations of the body and mind. Barry Alen calls the "striking beauty" of Kung Fu as "Spiritualized Combat Arts" where one does not learn ten thousand techniques but "one technique practiced ten thousand times that makes a formidable fighter(SB 151)[24]. Shusterman too attests to the attainment of spiritual transcendence when he qualifies the somaesthetic transformation as "a quest purchased by learning and mastering one's soma and refining it into a vessel of experienced beauty so that one can attain still greater powers and joys potentially within us—a higher self, perhaps even a divine spirit or oversoul"(BC 44)[25].

San Te, in his final encounter with his master, fights with a weapon he invents. The chief abbot tells the others it is "some fiery weapon he made himself". It must be seen as a prelude to San Te himself becoming a weapon, like the one he invented to fight his master, which society can use to free itself of the clutches of suppression. After overcoming his master, San Te asks of the Abbot the permission to start the 36th Chamber of Shaolin. Such a chamber never existed because it is not to be found in the Shaolin Temple. On the contrary it is the field outside the Temple walls, the society at large which is the 36th Chamber. By reaching out to the helpless citizens and empowering them through his mastery of Kung Fu, San Te goes beyond the needs of the individual.

Shusterman has configured a state where everyone is somaesthetically empowered; exactly the way San Ta envisions the 36th Chamber. He tells the monks, "Shaolin skills I can find here, and in my view, that's a great pity. I think Shaolin techniques should be available for all. So that's my idea for a new chamber to teach the martial arts". The monks are eventually persuaded to see San Te's higher purpose and permit him to take Shaolin's knowledge beyond the Temple walls in order to rescue his brethren.

Shusterman can be seen in alignment with San Te's purpose when he says "full liberation cannot be achieved merely by the means of isolated individuals engaging in somatic cultivation (BC 89)[26]. By going beyond the walls, beyond himself as an individual and dedicating his life for the re-engineering of society, San Te transforms himself from a homosacer to a yogi. He attains to a stage of Unconscious Competence where he becomes the medium and the message; not merely the vessel that holds the soma but the epitome of soma itself by being the most credible example of the living, sentient, purposive body.

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[24] Alan, SB, 151.
[25] Shusterman, BC, 44.

[26] Ibid, 89.

THE ROLE OF OTHERS TO BECOME ETHICAL IN HEIDEGGERIAN SENSE AND ITS RELATION TO PRAGMATISM

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ABSTRACT: The title of my paper, *The Role of Others to Become Ethical in Heideggerian Sense*, refers to the three basic pillars of my writing. In what follows, I would like to explain why I suppose the Heideggerian ethics' existence at all, I also would like to highlight what exactly the role of Others is in the Heideggerian ethical sense, and finally I would like to show that this ethics is worth looking into, being different from any mainstream or traditional ethical thinking. I also would like to connect my findings to Pragmatism in two aspects: Heidegger and the pragmatists both find important the readiness of the surrounding world and the company of others.[1]

It may seem controversial to argue for Heideggerian ethics after the appearance of the Schwarze Hefte.[2] Since these volumes appeared, the tone of the ethical questioning regarding Heidegger has changed. The critiques now eagerly analyse Heidegger as a person, whether he was anti-Semite, or even racist, and they want to find evidence of his involvement in National Socialism; while earlier many researchers tried to find hidden signs of the mentioned biases. In my paper, I only refer to these tendencies because I would like to focus on his writings and on what they contain. It is because I think, time is still needed to find the necessary distance to judge his activity.

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[1] In this respect, the mutual ground is the fact that Heidegger rejects Descartes's scepticism (in which he primarily supposes the ego cogito and then he deduces the world from it). This argument was also challenged by Charles. S Peirce, who did not accept Descartes's *introspective reconstruction of philosophy* by saying 'It is certainly important to know how to make our ideas clear, but they may be ever so clear without being true.' (Peirce, 1878, 17.) and added another epistemological notion Belief to the scientific investigation. Further he said: 'But the reality of that which is real does depend on the real fact that investigation is destined to lead, at last, if continued long enough, to a belief in it.' (Peirce, 1878, 16.) According to him, the reality of the world is supported by scientific research. This finding is somehow similar to Heidegger's viewpoint on the non-existence of eternal truths and can also be connected with his structure of Sciences which he only accepted if Ontology was involved.

[2] The Diaries (Band 94, 95, 96, 97) appeared in 2014—2015 and were edited by Peter Trawny. They contain the private notes of the Philosopher himself from 1931-1948 and may be suspicious of being biased. Many researchers tried to clarify the state of Heidegger after facing the volumes (e. g. Schwendtner, *Heidegger and the National Socialism*).

The way of approaching the questions above will be through analysing the problem of Heideggerian ethics. To reach these aims, it is necessary to foretell that I survey only Heidegger's *early period*, which is between 1919-1929.[3] I rely from this period on especially *Being and Time (1926-27)*, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life (1920-21)*, and the *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz (1928).* I also use extensively the *Letter on Humanism (1946)* volume, all of them with the purpose that they give answers to my questions.

Keywords: ethics, being, pragmatism, fragmentation of Philosophy, phenomenology of life, hermeneutical situation

The existence of Ethics in Heidegger's early writings

The twentieth century continental philosophy was many sided and so was the philosophy of Martin Heidegger.[4] However, he was against disciplines, he was against ethics, and he was against prescriptive norms. Consequently, there are at least the above mentioned three barriers against Ethics in his thoughts. I believe, though, that these barriers are not real ones but are so rich points that should be analysed as they hide answers for my previous questions. To visualise it, these points resemble of icebergs that show their very tops and hide their huge bodies under the water.

As a consequence, I find necessary to explain the three barriers in details. At first, if we have a close look at his early writings, we can see strong arguments against the disciplinary division of Philosophy into

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[3] Heidegger's writing period can be divided into many phases, however, I accept the approach of Theodore Kisiel with the addition that until the whole Heideggerian corpus has not been worked through, changes may occur. According to Kisiel, until 1919 we can talk about the *young*, between 1919-1929 the e*arly*, between 1929-1950 the *late* and from the 1950s the *old* Heidegger. Kisiel, 1993.

[4] One focal point of his analysis was for example everyday life that can also be connected with Pragmatism. For Rorty, or for his follower Mark Okrent, Heidegger's viewpoint and Pragmatism have even stronger roots as for them they "belong together". Richard Rorty, Essays on Heidegger and Others, Philosophical Papers II, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1991, 11. From my viewpoint, the social practice of our everyday life is relevant to my ethical inquiry.

Physics, Ethics, and Logic.[5] According to him, the division eliminated the purpose of Philosophy itself. However, it did not mean that he denied the importance or rather the existence of any of the above mentioned fields. What he denied was the *division*, the *fragmentation* of the great scientific field he dealt with and that had the longest written past and heritage of European culture. He also denied the questions that remained the same within the subjects and helped to cover answers for centuries.[6] Should we not include ontological questioning into Philosophy? Would or should we abandon logic in the field of ethics or physics? Could we leave out the principle of excluded middle when making up a physical theory, or applying ethics? That would be hardly possible, desirable and the least according to Heidegger.[7]

The next barrier involved in his works was that he rejected Ethics as a scientific field. However, if I am right and he did not deny the existence of Ethics but only the division of Philosophy, and the inherited and not expandable circle of questions of its 'subjects', then what he surely did not accept in Ethics was its ontical nature. In the early period of his critique of science and later on as well he wrote about his doubts: if a science does not connect itself with being in general and its own

being in particular then that is not a science.[8] Consequently, if it is possible to connect Ethics with being and/or its own structure, then it can reach the 'level' of an ontological science.

Finally, I would like to mention the third barrier. It means that his approach in Philosophy was descriptively phenomenological and explanatorily (meaning-givingly) hermeneutical. With this in mind, it is highly unlikely to understand how we should apply norms, which have imperative force. Consequently, norms should be refused. The reasons why it is so: if this field (Philosophy) itself equals with its method (phenomenology), then imperatively formed ethical norms are expelled from this realm. It also meant that if ethics was a possible part of philosophy, then it should not have had prescriptions either. On the other hand, if we can 'read our lives' phenomenologically, and can make an effort 'to understand' its whys and hows hermeneutically, then we make ethics possible in our every days' each and every *situation*[9] in Heideggerian sense.

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[5] He rejects the division and the inherited questioning of these subjects in 1929/30 ('In this way there ensue three disciplines of philosophy scholastically conceived: logic, physics, ethics. This process of the scholastic development and thereby of the decline of philosophizing proper begins already in the era of Plato, in his own school academy.', Heidegger, 1995, 35-37.) He also mentions many years later, in 1946: 'Even such names as "logic," "ethics," and "physics" begin to flourish only when originary thinking comes to an end. During the time of their greatness the Greeks thought without such headings.', Heidegger, 1998, 241.

[6] If we think of his argument for getting back to the beginning of any philosophical questioning in this period, we can understand his constant aim for the origin. This delicate problem was finally modelled in *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* with the scheme of the Phenomenological investigation (Reduktion, Konstruktion, Destruktion – reduction, construction, and destruction of a given question. (Heidegger, 1975, 31.)

[7] I believe, neither would be imaginable: life without being ethical with ourselves and towards others as well.

[8] 'Dasein's ways of behaviour, its capacities, powers, possibilities, and vicissitudes, have been studied with varying extent in philosophical psychology, in anthropology, ethics, and 'political science', in poetry, biography, and the writing of history, each in a different fashion. But the question remains whether these interpretations of Dasein have been carried through with a primordial existentiality comparable to whatever existentiell primordiality they may have possessed', Heidegger, 1962, 37.

[9] The uniqueness of his Ethics lays right here: we can understand our life events and if something (re)occurs we can act according to our experience (one example is from the correspondence of Kant and Benjamin Constant in *Über ein vermeintes Recht aus Menschenliebe zu lügen.* Here Kant denies the right for lying due to goodwill or mercy, so we must let the future killer of our friend know his state. While applying Heidegger's situational Ethics, we can alter from the rigid norms and imperatives and we can understand and apply our common sense and still remain Ethical. I find strong resemblance between the aforementioned and Dewey. He says: "A situation to which we respond capriciously or by routine has only a minimum of conscious significance; we get nothing mentally from it. But wherever knowledge comes into play in determining a new experience there is mental reward; even if we fail practically in getting the needed control we have the satisfaction of experiencing a meaning instead of merely

From the above mentioned inherent barriers, I believe my point has become visible: they hide but also slowly give some answers to my questions. So far, I have been able to show that Heidegger did not accept the division of Philosophy but neither denied the existence of Logic, Physics, and Ethics; he did not accept the existence of an ontical Ethics that does not question its origin and being itself; and finally he did not accept ethical normativity and imperatives due to his own philosophical method.

After coming closer to the 'barriers', let me explain why I suppose Ethics in the early writings of Heidegger. It is because he says in *Being and Time* so. While analysing conscience in between 54-60. § he says 'When Dasein is resolute, it can become the »conscience« of Others'.[10] I believe without any Ethical dimensions of life, being, and Dasein this sentence could not have been said. Therefore, I think Heidegger had his own idea about what Ethics was like but he did not want to deal with this question (the question of people) openly. He had his own idea about this question, otherwise, how could we find the traces of ethics in his works?[11] The most important of the early period from this respect is the work dedicated to Leibniz that even appoints the place of Ethics in the architecture of the Dasein's existence.

A latent ethics

At this point, I must mention that the supposed ethics can only be connected to the authentic Dasein. Authenticity is analysed throughout *Being and Time*, therefore, we are able to see how one can become

authentic. Heidegger uses three life experiences to show the authentic-inauthentic nature of Dasein. These are anxiety (Angst), death (Tod), and conscience (Gewissen). These phenomena emphasise different characters of the authentic person: the first makes Dasein understand the lonely nature of life, the second makes Dasein understand the limitis of life, while conscience is the one that lets the Others in the life of Dasein (the latter one is very important in the field of Ethics. It is the base of mutual responsibility and the connection with Pragmatism itself).

From those, who tried to detect Ethics in Heidegger, I would like to mention the work of Frederick A. Olafson at first. His volume, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics* with the subtitle *A Study of Mitsein* raises interesting questions. The author places emphasis on the state of Mitsein as the basis of any Ethics in our world. I think, Olafson's viewpoint is right in many cases, however, I do not believe that the Mitsein is the base of the authentic communities. When Heidegger deals with the community of people (Mitsein) in the 26§ he does not think of the authentic community people, what he conveys is the sole description of being-together-with-others, from which the authentic person should depart at first. It is true that there must be an authentic community, but the community of people (Mitsein) is not authentic yet. It can become authentic if members of a community go through the stages of solitude, being-towards-death and awakening conscience and then choose each other.

Another perspective on the Heideggerian Ethics is given by Angus Brook. In his book the author insists on the individual Ethos of people as the source of a person's moral behaviour but he rejects that this behaviour would be able to cumulate and so would create a community. In my opinion, Heidegger knew and accepted the ethical dimensions of life but he did not deal with it because he did not want to loose track of his essential question, being. He clearly stated the existence of Ethics in his work analysing Leibniz (Metaethics, Heidegger, 1978 (GA, 26), 199), while another reference

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reacting physically.", Dewey, 1916, 237. This quote points to the conscious character of a person in a situation – which is quite like the way the authentic Dasein is. (Additionally, the flexibility of Ethics is one aspect, which Heidegger did not open when avoided the question and so avoided the blame of relativity.)

[10] Heidegger, 1962, 344. „Das entschlossene Dasein kann zum »Gewissen« der Anderen werden." (SZ 295)

[11] These works are e. g. the one dedicated to Leibniz, Heidegger, 1978 (GA, 26), 199. Another reference can be found in the Letter on Humanism, and in the Zollikon Seminars.

can be found in the *Letter on Humanism*, and in the Zollikon Seminars (Heidegger, 1987, 273).

The reasons why I suppose Ethics in Heidegger have been shown. Now I would like to explain how this ethics exists. Here the analysis of conscience in *Being and Time* is the key. Needless to say that Heidegger's concept is very different from any other conscience-concepts.[12] From 54-60 § Heidegger mentions how the Dasein can reach its own connection with its ontological base, how it can become itself through the call of Care, and how it can understand the call and its own guilt. They all start with understanding the silent call of conscience, as it calls itself to capture its utmost possibility to be itself.[13] We should listen to this silent call, as due to the thrownness and concealment of factical life, we live life as others say so. To become ourselves we must stop listening to others and start listening to the message, 'Be yourself' sent by our concealed selves. This warning, however, seems to be quite individual, since to be ourselves we need to depart from the Others with the help of the three life experiences. It is just not that obvious what can make us turn to them again.[14]

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[12] He emphasises that conscience belongs to the existentiell structure of Dasein, therefore other concepts that do not target this domain cannot meet the requirements. However, he involves into his analysis other vulgar conscience concepts, as they conceal and show *something* from the phenomenon. Like icebergs, which show only the top and hide the bottom of themselves.

[13] „'Nothing' gets called to [*zu*-gerufen] this Self, but it has been summoned [*aufgerufen*] to itself-that is, to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. The tendency of the call is not such as to put up for 'trial' the Self to which the appeal is made; but it calls Dasein forth (and 'forward') into its ownmost possibilities, as a summons to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self.", Heidegger, *Being…* Op. cit., 318.

[14] A connection between the unauthentic self and other thinkers can be shown, as Heidegger himself refers to Leo Tolstoy and his work *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. Further connections with the Pragmatist Dewey could also be detected concerning the inability of the self. He says: „We rarely recognize the extent in which our conscious estimates of what is worth while and what is not, are due to standards of which we are not conscious at all. But in general it may be said that the things which we take for granted without inquiry or reflection are just

The importance and role of Others in Heideggerian ethics

The most important question now is what makes the authentic person turn back towards others, after departing from them through quite frightening but also enlightening life experiences. The question could be answered from different angles, e. g. the reality of the world,[15] or from the perspective of Mitsein (being with others) as we saw it in Olafson.[16] The most immediate answer, due to the nature of our lives, could be that we live in one and the same world. Additionally, Heidegger does not deny the existence of Others, consequently we have to deal with them. But how? I am trying to highlight here two further interrelated optional answers to the question. One option brings us back to the explicit sentence: 'When Dasein is resolute, it can become the »conscience« of Others'.[17] While the other aspect is the question of intentionality which gives the answer to the way people live together with each other (intersubjectivity).

I am trying to explain how the latter happens with the help of formale Anzeige, or formal indication. (The term was used by Heidegger throughout his early period, and was explained in *Einleitung in die Phänomenologie der Religion: Phänomenologie des Religiösen Lebens* (*The Phenomenology of Religious Life*)**,** in 1920-21**).** At first, the question should be solved: how can the resolute Dasein become the conscience of others. The extended quote has the solution here: 'Dasein's resoluteness

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the things which determine our conscious thinking and decide our conclusions. And these habitudes which lie below the level of reflection are just those which have been formed in the constant give and take of relationship with others.", Dewey, 1916, 16.

[15] From 14-24. §. Heidegger deals with the question of the world and its existence.

[16] Heidegger writes about the question in the 26. §. *The Dasein-with of Others and Everyday Being-with*. However, the emphasis here is 'Thus as Being-with, Dasein 'is' essentially for the sake of Others', Heidegger, *Being…*, Op. cit., 160. This is the starting point of Frederick A. Olafson's *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1998.

[17] Heidegger, 1962, 344. „Das entschlossene Dasein kann zum »Gewissen« der Anderen werden." (SZ 295)

towards itself is what first makes it possible to let the Others who are with it 'be' in their ownmost potentiality-for-Being, and to co-disclose this potentiality in the solicitude which leaps forth and liberates.'[18] For me it means that the resolute person tells and helps the others to be themselves and to be responsible. Furthermore, here the difference between the two ways of *solicitude* is important: one mode is to *leap in* instead of the other, while the other mode is to *leap ahead/forth* and to hold the other's care and give it back to the person later.[19] What is more, if we continue reading the previous lines, we can acquire another important aspect of the Heideggerian Ethics. 'Only by authentically Being-their-Selves in resoluteness can people authentically be with one another - not by ambiguous and jealous stipulations and talkative fraternizing in the "they" and in what "they" want to undertake.'[20] We cannot have doubts this attitude gives answers how to create *the community of the authentic selves.* This is another important point, which refers to the application of Ethics amongst people.

The other question is how people can fulfil their mutual living by each other, apart from the fact that they live in one and the same world by each other. To explain this, I need to mention the explicational method of the *Religious lectures*.[21] According to these lectures, each and every phenomenon/life experience can be asked about its what-content, its how relatedness, and how-executability. After gaining answers from these questions, the sense-full-ness of these comprehensions can be explained by phenomenology. Furthermore, to avoid any misinterpretation, the formale Anzeige is applied. Formal indication is part of the phenomenological explication method and it has a twofold nature. On one side, it prevents the one-sided 'reading' of situations (while answering the how-what-how questions), while on the other side it is like a warning and attention-drawing indicator before application. To fulfil these aims, at first formale Anzeige deals with the relatedness of a situation to prevent the content being overwhelming, biased or one-sided. Heidegger himself applies this method to analyse the life situation of Paul the Apostle.

However, the method can be applied to different phenomenon, as Heidegger himself applies it till the end of his early period, even in *Being and Time*. As part of the phenomenological explication, I would like to apply it to the phenomenon of conscience. The authentic Dasein's conscience is related to itself and its message is told at the call before any deeds. However, if a Dasein is the conscience of others it relates to them as well, and tells them to be alike and be themselves and then calls upon the act. It is a very important point here, because without others and being resolutely conscious the Dasein cannot leave the states of lonely anxiety, and being-towards-death. Consequently, the phenomenological reading of formale Anzeige reinforces the applicability of conscience towards others. That is the base of Heideggerian ethics, in our factical, real life situations. With the help of the applied formale Anzeige we can see how one can read one's life itself (how-what-how) which is a help of understanding our standpoint and the background of our deeds.

What is the Heideggerean ethics like?

After the previous textual analysis, it might be good to sum it up and talk about the nature of the Heideggerian ethics and the connections with Pragmatism. Starting with the latter, the connections have been shown: the similarity of rejecting the Cartesian scepticism of the world (Peirce: Belief, Reality), the importance of Other people (Dewey) and the differences between

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[18] The quote follows as: 'When Dasein is resolute, it can become the 'conscience' of Others. Only by authentically Being-their-Selves in resoluteness can people authentically be with one another - not by ambiguous and jealous stipulations and talkative fraternizing in the "they" and in what "they" want to undertake.', Heidegger, *Being…*, Op. cit., 344-345.

[19] Heidegger, *Being…*, Op. cit., 26§, 158-159. I believe these two modes of taking care of the others are the textual proofs that Ethics exists in *Being and Time*.

[20] Heidegger, *Being…*, Op. cit., 344-345.

[21] Heidegger, 1920-21.

conscious/authentic and routinous/inauthentic (Dewey) way of living. From a close look of what has been said by the philosopher many doubts can be blown away. To explain this, we should see what is said by contemporary sources about ethics. According to them, it has three main parts: normative ethics, metaethics, and applied ethics.[22] From these ethical branches, the normative deals with three sub-divisions: virtue ethics, deontological ethics, and consequentialism/utilitarism.[23] If we take *Being and Time* as the first and foremost source of my inquiry, then we cannot forget what Heidegger said about some of these ethical divisions. He straightly rejected Kant and his deontological viewpoint, and also utilitarism.[24] Ha only agreed with Aristotle in some of his practical thoughts, however, did not identify with him in every aspects. The connection between phronesis and conscience/Gewissen was pointed out by Heidegger himself in his early lectures and was remembered by his students (Gadamer). However, Heidegger's notion is different from the Aristotelian phronesis, as it for example does not contain happiness and well-being as an aim. In his phenomenon we can find guilt (debt), self-loss, and care which are all inside sources of one's behaviour. Therefore, we can simply conclude that the ethics of Heidegger is different from others': it is not normative, it is not deontological, not utilitarian and it is not virtue ethics either. It is not

metaethics and it is not a rootless applied ethics. After the negations, some positive characteristics can also be said to be applied in our every day, pragmatic lives. I think, the Heideggerian ethics is universal as it is the ontological possibility of everyone who is willing to listen to the call of its own conscience; it is situational as it is applied in situations but without prescriptive maxims or norms – so it is flexible, it relies on previous experience, and also on our understanding, reading and applicability of the situation.

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[22] See James Fieser, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy http://www.iep.utm.edu/ethics/ (accessed: 21. 06. 2017.), or Peter Singer names two branches of ethics: normative and applied in, *Ethics: Encyclopedica Britannica*, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/194023/ethics, (accessed: 21. 06. 2017.).

[23] Michael SLOTE,*Virtue Ethics: The Routledge Companion to Ethics*, Routledge, 2010, 478-489. https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203850701.ch40. (accessed: 21. 06. 2017.)

[24] With the maxims which one might be led to expect-maxims which could be reckoned up unequivocally-the conscience would deny to existence nothing less than the very possibility of taking action.', Heidegger, Being…, 339-340. Here he refers to the maxims of Kant and previously to utilitarism, both of them blamed to overlook the purpose of conscience, the ontology of Dasein and existence.

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III. SOMA, ART, TECHNOLOGY

WHOSE BODY?

THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF SOMATIC GROUPDYNAMICS

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ABSTRACT: This paper interprets existential and intersubjective aspects of the body as common issues of somaesthetic (Shusterman 2008) and phenomenological thinking (Merleau-Ponty 1962); it also integrates philosophical theory with the pragmatic approach of psychodynamic movement and dance therapy. The article compares several tendencies of the so-called "corporeal turn" of contemporary culture and differentiates their attitudes (Sheets-Johnstone 2009), trying to distinguish the existential interpretation of the body from the instrumentalization of consumer culture. After giving the phenomenological description of the body's primordial expressive capacity and the so-called "double sensation" (Husserl 1960, Merleau-Ponty 1962), the author disputes Shusterman's Merleau-Ponty interpretation (Shusterman 2008, 73): she argues that a double sensation of the body does not imply the impossibility of self-observation, but the spatial, temporal and intersubjective aspects of corporeity. Such phenomena of intercorporeity were thoroughly analyzed by the psychoanalyst Daniel Stern (1985) who showed the importance of vitality effects in the processes of self-development. The second, pragmatic part of the paper differentiates several types of somatic techniques regarding their individual or intersubjective focus. At the end of the article, psychodynamic movement and dance therapy (PMDT) – a Hungarian psychotherapeutic method – will be presented (Merenyi 2004). PMDT is a psychoanalytically-oriented group-therapeutic method where the main therapeutic force is the phenomenological and pragmatic work of intercorporeal processes (Vermes – Incze 2012).

Keywords: Merleay-Ponty, Shusterman, somaesthetics, phenomenology, dance therapy

1. Introduction

Somaesthetics and the phenomenology of the body share common leading ideas: *we do not have our body*, but we live the meaningful life of our body: *we are our body*. If we would like to have a better life – which is the purpose of pragmatism – we have to recognize our body as an existential modality and cultivate our body consciousness in practice. Although phenomenological philosophy is less pragmatic, it helps us to understand how much primordial experience of the lived body affects all higher levels of human subjectivity. In the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the living, moving, perceiving, understanding body presents itself first of all as an existential modality and as an original form of aesthetics. As in the case of the arts, in the case of the body, the expressed content is inseparable from the special mode of expression; and what is more, the expression is inseparable from the person who is being expressed (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 150). However, the special existential style in which we sense and move our body is not enclosed to individual self-senses, but is deeply affected and situated by other subjects. The self is constituted by intersubjective processes (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 346-367) or, using the terminology of pragmatism – transactional processes (Shusterman 2008, 214). The existential style of our living body emerges from an intercorporeal background (Merleau-Ponty 1968): it responds to the intersubjective dynamics of our family, our personal relationships, and the society we are embedded in.

The present paper investigates the existential and intersubjective aspects of the body, integrating two viewpoints: the first is the *philosophical approach*; the second is the *pragmatic approach of movement and dance therapy*. For the main questions in the present work we consider: How can we describe the body's primordial expressivity? How much of our bodily self-senses and our body-consciousness is exposed to intersubjective, intercorporeal relations? How can we change the existential style of our own bodily self-senses if they are so greatly influenced byintercorporeal relations? What kinds of pragmatic somatic methods can facilitate such changes? The second, pragmatic part of the paper will differentiate several types of somatic techniques regarding their individual or intersubjective focus. At the end of our article, we will present psychodynamic movement and dance therapy (PMDT), a Hungarian psychotherapeutic method, where both phenomenological attention and a pragmatic working through of intercorporeal processes have vital importance (Merenyi 2004, Vermes – Incze 2012).[1]

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[1] The author is a group leader and trainer at the

Phenomenological openness teaches us to notice the constitutive importance of bodily perceptions and movements, to realize the intersubjective character of bodily experiences, and to describe the multiple processes of intercorporeity which create human relations implicitly. A *somaesthetical* approach is more pragmatic: it focuses primarily on the possibilities of change. "Disciplines of somaesthetic awareness are usually aimed not simply at *knowing* our bodily condition and habits but at *changing* them" (Shusterman 2008, 65). *Psychodynamic movement and dance therapy* (PMDT) as a practical therapeutic discipline, mostly applied in psychotherapeutic groups (Vermes - Incze 2012), relies on both phenomenological and pragmatic attitudes. In a movement and dance therapy group situation, both the fine perception of intercorporeal relations and the pragmatic determination of changing them are needed. Intercorporeal processes in a group situation are extremely multifaceted: the perception and movement of our body is never isolated from others; it is deeply affected by our actual relationships and our past attachments. If people want to change their own individual bodily habits or modify their bodily self-senses, they often first need to perceive and understand the complex intercorporeal dynamics in which they are embedded, and they need to perceive the implicit interchanges which they display with others. The cultivation of body consciousness can lead us both to a better life and to a higher level of reflectivity. I agree with Shusterman that higher philosophical insights about the body are not possible without somatic reflectivity, even though the most important philosophers of

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corporeity, like Maurice Merleau-Ponty, did not realize it. (Shusterman 2008, ix) However, I would like to emphasize that the present success of somatic methods in contemporary culture also requires some philosophical reflection. It is a part of a larger, ambiguous cultural dynamics of "corporeal turn" we have to reflect on: somatic culture is deeply embedded into the precarious cultural dynamics of consumer culture.

2. Corporeal turn of everyday culture

In postmodern consumer culture, the body has gained an extraordinary, yet precarious significance: a "corporeal turn" is taking place (Sheets-Johnstone 2009, 17). The body offers a new form of identity in an age in which traditional and communal forms of identities have collapsed. A preoccupation with fitness and wellness, piercings and tattoos, the Paleolithic diet, and yoga, among other things, are symptoms of this special cultural dynamics. Excessive care of the body's well-being and fitness signals a narcissistic obsession with corporeity instead of being a new form of consciousness and responsibility (Lasch 1991). For Feather stone the strength of consumer culture resides in its capacity to express corporeal desires as had not been expressed before the appearance of consumerism, but at the same time it puts bodily desires into such an instrumentalised, commercialized form that it makes their realization impossible (Featherstone, 1982). The alienated and excessive performance principle and consumer principle go hand in hand: neither of them supersedes the Cartesian split, and neither of them realize the existential importance of bodily expression. Both of them use the body as a mere tool and compensation, and fail to realize the existential significance of corporeity. We see how sportsmen in competitive sports use their own and others' bodies as bare tools of extreme performances: under the pressure of the performance principle, they cannot afford the luxury of being their own body. But we philosophers writing about

the body are usually in a similar situation: we have the tendency to become estranged from our own somatic experiences, sitting long days at computers and suffering from the pressure to publish. We recognize our body theoretically, but give it up as an existential modality in practice: we use it as a mere tool of the performance principle also. We learned from Kant that we should "treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means" (Kant 1785/1996, 429).[2] If we take our body as our own existential modality, we have to respect our own and others' bodily experiences as a vital core of our humanity. That is, we must not exploit it for the sake of physical or intellectual performances.

However, there are competing practices and theories which define the authentic treatment of the body differently. We must not encourage simple answers if we would like to escape "philosophical fallacy" (the oversimplification of experiences by philosophical theory), while also not wanting to commit "pragmatic fallacy" (the oversimplification of experiences through practical viewpoints).

3. Corporeal turn of humanities

Over the course of the 20th century in the humanities, two fundamental conceptual shifts occurred (Sheets-Johnstone 2009, 2): a linguistic turn based on the theory of Saussure, followed by a corporeal turn in the humanities. The latter is present now in several disciplines: phenomenological theories (Husserl 1960, Merleau-Ponty1962), post-structuralism (Foucault 1975), feminism (Beauvoir 2009, Butler), trendy theories of "embodied mind" (Varela, Thompson, Rosch 1993), and pragmatic somaesthetics (Shusterman 2008). These

philosophical theories of corporeal turn have different ontological and epistemological frameworks, their representatives hardly reflect on each other. However, most theorists of corporeal turn would probably agree on some points. That is, somatic experiences have vital importance in forming human identity; we have to take them more seriously in personal self-reflection, in social relations, and in theoretical work. Our body has an original responsive character: it takes shape as a response to others – to our parents, to our ancestors, to the past and current dynamics of our family and society, and to the environment we are embedded in. They would also agree that the task of theoretical work is to turn our spontaneous, un-reflected somatic responses into practical and theoretical responsivity and responsibility for ourselves and for others.

Somaesthetics has its roots in several philosophical and aesthetical fields, but it is most outstanding of all these disciplines because of its somatic, practical background (Feldenkrais method and other somatic practices). The pragmatism Shusterman advocated "puts experience at the heart of philosophy and celebrates the living, sentient body as the organizing core of experience" (Shusterman 2008, xii). It has a special integrative quality connecting distant worlds: the practice of somatic consciousness and philosophical, aesthetical reflection could meet here with hidden hopes of people wishing for a better life. The recent development of somaesthetics provides an inspiring example for phenomenologists – including the author – on how to make this connection more pragmatic and more popular. The author of the present paper made some – perhaps less pragmatic –efforts in Hungary to integrate theoretical and practical somatic disciplines: the phenomenological and psychoanalytic theories of the body with the practice of psychodynamic movement and dance therapy (Vermes 2006, 2011, 2012). This presentation will tour these interconnections in the following way: we begin with the phenomenology of bodily expression and its intersubjective dynamics (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 1968), continue with a

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[2]"So, act that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means." Immanuel Kant: Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, in Immanuel Kant: *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary Gregor (Kant, 1996, 429). However, Kant did not rank bodily experiences very high.

psychological description of bodily self-senses and vitality affects (Daniel Stern 1985), then we will arrive to the practical world of contemporary somatic and dance techniques, and, in the end we describe how intercorporeal relations manifest themselves in psychodynamic movement and dance therapy groups (Merenyi 2004, Vermes-Incze 2012).

4. Body as a primordial source of expression

In the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the moving, perceiving, understanding body presents itself as an existential modality. We do not have our body; we are our body. We live the meaningful life of our body. It is an original field of creativity, a primordial source of all higher expression (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, 150). Corporeal expression is similar to the expressivity of the arts. As in the case of the arts, the content of corporeal expression is inseparable from the expression itself; and what is more, the expression is inseparable from the person who is being expressed. "The body is to be compared, not to a physical object, but rather to a work of art." (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 150) We are not able to explain the essence of a Cezanne picture to someone who has never seen it, to express a Beethoven symphony to someone who has never heard it. "In a picture or a piece of music, the idea is incommunicable by means other than the display of colors and sounds." (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 150) A novel, poem, picture or musical works are individuals, that is, beings in which the expression is indistinguishable from the thing expressed, their meaning accessible only through direct contact…" (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 151) Similarly, the expression of a face or a moving body bears a certain style, an implicit meaning, which we are not able to translate to other languages. Moreover, in the case of bodily expression, not only is expression and expressed content the same, *but the individual who is expressed coincides with the expression itself.* While the works of arts as a poem or a sculpture express the artist symbolically and indirectly, bodily movement expresses the person not only symbolically, but also immediately

and directly. There is a certain style of seeing and touching, walking and laughing which makes possible the original intersensory integration of body experiences and makes possible personal identity as well. This fact gives a special strength to corporeal expression. That is why human body and movement carry an original expressive character (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 146).

Let me give a personal example: I had a classmate when I was about ten years old. Then he moved out of town, and we did not see each other for twenty years. Later, I saw him in a metro station. I was not sure whether it was him or someone else, but then he moved his shoulder a little bit – and in that moment I realized: yes, it is him! What helped me to recognize my old classmate? It was the unique quality, the special style of his movement, revealing the existential way he related to himself and to the world. For Merleau-Ponty the body interprets and synchronizes itself by movement: the movement is a kind of self-perception, self-identification. It is a primordial, bodily self-expression, which involves a special rhythm, creates its special time and space, which expresses the subject implicitly (Vermes 2011, Marratto 2012).

5. Double-sensation, explicit and implicit body-senses

Of course bodily expression is not always immediate and integrated. We perceive the world through our body, but at the same time we perceive our own body as an object in the world. The "double-sensation" of the **body has been a** central topic in phenomenology since Husserl's Cartesian Meditation (Husserl 1960). We feel our body in two different ways: on the one hand it is a primordial subjective style of our movements and perceptions, on the other hand we can perceive it as an object for others and for ourselves; we can use our body as a tool, as an instrument of expression. Bodily expression has presymbolic and symbolic strata. We are able to feel the implicit senses of our body, but we are also able to bracket our body-senses for a while; we are able to suppress or conceal them. Shaking hands, turning our

back to someone, or clapping at political gatherings – these intentional gestures are *explicit*, mostly *symbolic*, or conventional. We are able to express or hide ourselves with them, and we can use them as portable instruments of expression. But even in these cases, an *implicit*, *presymbolic* level is at work throughout the process of bodily self-expression: we are the ones who use ourselves like this; we are the ones who make gestures like this. In the background of these symbolic acts, we feel our own movements, we feel our own body somehow, as a non-symbolized sense-horizon of all our movements and perceptions. Our symbolic acts always have a non-symbolic, existential background of our body as an existential modality, which we can never utterly leave behind. The original style of our movement and perception always remains with us: it is the vital source of any acts of symbolization.

Practical somatic methods are able to attend to both symbolic and presymbolic forms of bodily expression, but they usually focus more on the presymbolic levels: they reflect principally on the implicit existential style as we live our life. The existential style of our body is not a strange mystery: we can feel very well our own presymbolic bodily self-senses, and we can change them to some extent by somatic self-reflection. But there is something we are not able to do: we cannot get to a total transparency of our own body-senses, we are not able to be totally synchronized with ourselves. Shusterman summarized Merleau-Ponty's thought like this: "There will always be some dimensions of our bodily feelings that will be actively structuring the focus of our efforts of reflective somatic awareness and thus will not be themselves the object of that awareness or the focus of consciousness" (Shusterman 2008, 73).

Nevertheless, Shusterman criticized Merleau-Ponty's sharp distinction between the perceiving "I" and the perceived "me", interpreting it as Merleau-Ponty's denial of a self-observation (Shusterman 2008, 73). In the *Phenomenology of Perception* Merleau-Ponty declared, indeed, that in touching our left hand with our right hand there was always some insoluble distinction

between the senses of touching and being touched (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 315). However, in my opinion, Shusterman did not understand thoroughly the phenomenological meaning of double sensation in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. It is true that Merleau-Ponty overemphasized the difference between the subjective and objective body, but he did not deny the possibility of bodily self-observation, as Shusterman stated, relying on uprooted fragments of texts; instead, he connected bodily self-observation to movement and the temporality of corporeity.

> "When one of my hands touches the other the hand that moves functions as subject and the other as object. There are tactile phenomena, alleged tactile qualities, like roughness or smoothness, which disappear completely if the exploratory movement is eliminated. Movement and time are not only an objective condition of knowing touch, but a phenomenal component of the tactile data." (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 315)

The distinction between the touching and the touched hands in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy does not mean an inaccessibility of the body for itself. I can change in any moment the focus of touching and being touched, I can shift my attention from one body-part to another. I can also equate the subjective and objective roles of my contacting hands. But I cannot eliminate the space and time dimensionality of my own body, or as Marratto explains, "there is no self-contact, or even self-anticipation, that would not presuppose movement, and thus an exteriorization and temporalization. Touching oneself takes time and 'real' space" (Marratto 2012, 137). In the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, self-touch does not mean a total transparency for ourselves, it means much more a form of expressive movement. Bodily self-perception does not happen out of time and space. On the contrary, it takes its time and space. To be more exact: bodily self-perception is a kind of movement creating its time and space. Somatic techniques of body consciousness (like Feldenkrais, Skinner release, Laban movement observation, or contact improvisation) teach us so much about these primordial experiences: every

little movement and perception of the body involves special space and time qualities; bodily self-perception is not possible without special time and space senses.

I agree with Shusterman's remark: "To treat the lived body as a subject does not require treating it as transcendental subject that cannot also be observed as an empirical one" (Shusterman 2008, 72). But, I am sure, Merleau-Ponty himself also would have agreed with this sentence, since Merleau-Ponty in whole his life struggled against the transcendental idealism of Husserl. His denying of total self-perception and his concept of double-sensation refer not to the higher transcendental ego; these thoughts refer to the deeper existential structure of corporeal experience (Dodd 1997). That is, our body is not self-contained: it exposes us to the time and to the space, and, at the same time, it exposes us to other subjects. Having a body means that we are not totally synchronized with ourselves and that our individual life responds to other lives; it is preceded by our parents, grounded by other generations– it relies on the "time before time" of other people. Our conscious acts have their roots in the "double sensation" of our body; they are preceded by the anonymous intercorporeity of intersubjective relatedness from which they emerge. Consequently, body consciousness means not a simple coincidence with ourselves; it means much more a sensitive and reflective relation to our body-felt senses. Somatic consciousness opens us to feel our own space and time; it opens us to perceive our own body while being amongst other people.

6. Intersubjectivity - Intercorporeity

The "double sensation" of being a body refers to other subjects: the distinction of being a body for myself and the body for others. The experience of being a body has never been a private affair: the style we live our body, the way we feel our body is always contextualized, formed and deformed in relational situations, mediated by continual interactions with other human and nonhuman bodies. As bodies we are "mediations": our own body integrates special qualities of responsivity. The special existential style in which we sense and move our body is not enclosed to individual self-senses, but is deeply affected and situated by other subjects. In the famous chapter of *Phenomenology of Perception* ("Other selves and the human world," Merleau-Ponty 1962, 346-367), our experience with otherness precedes the formation of identity, of the subject referred to as an "I". The individual self is constituted by intersubjective dynamics or, using the terminology of pragmatism – transactional/interactional processes (Shusterman 2008, 214). The self is always relational; even self-consciousness, or thinking (cogito) does not denote a coincidence with ourselves. In his late writing, *Visible and Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty wrote the following words:

> "We must accustom ourselves to understand that "thought" (cogitatio) is not an invisible contact of self with self, that it lives outside of this intimacy with oneself, in front of us, not in us, always eccentric. Just as we rediscover the field of the sensible world as interior-exterior (cf. at the start: as global adhesion to the infinity of motor indexes and motivations, as my belongingness to this Welt), so also it is necessary to rediscover as the reality of the inter-human world and of history a surface of separation between me and the other which is also the place of our union, the unique Erfüllung of his life and my life. It is to this surface of separation and of union that the existentials of my personal history proceed, it is the geometrical locus of the projections and introjections, it is the invisible hinge upon which my life and the life of the others turn to rock into one another, the inner framework of intersubjectivity." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 234)

Our life responds to the intercorporeal dynamics of our family, of our actual personal relationships, and the society we are embedded in. This primordial intertwining of people produces, on the one hand, their implicit senses of togetherness and joy, and on the other hand, the deepest forms of defenselessness, somatic discomfort, unbearable shame and invisible oppression. In the cited text Merleau-Ponty referred to the psychoanalytic concepts of *projections and introjections*. In the world of psychoanalysis, projection is a form of

defense mechanism in which rejected feelings are displaced onto another people, but they appear as a threat from the external world. Introjection means the reverse side: it involves internalizing some aspect of one's environment's behavior, without knowing it.[3] Merleau-Ponty's philosophy made important steps towards the extension of the meaning of psychoanalytic concepts from a narrower, emotional meaning to a wider, both emotional and somatic meaning. He suggested that our lives are interconnected by projections and introjections not only on the level of symbolic, explicit acts, but they are intertwined on the level of primordial movements and implicit senses, too. Phenomena of psychoanalytic transference are not confined to symbolic, emotional acts, but they emerge from the vital ground of intercorporeal processes, that is, from the living flesh of the world (Merleau-Ponty 1964).

7. Daniel Stern

If we want to get closer to the intercorporeal dynamics displayed in human relationships, we have to read the exceptional phenomenological descriptions of Daniel Stern[4] (1934-2012). He was an American psychiatrist and psychoanalytic, whose brilliant theory about self-development created a bridge between psychoanalysis and research-based developmental models. He was an integrative thinker: he built connections between psychological and phenomenological thinking, also.[5]

According to Daniel Stern, the sense of the self is not confined to symbolic representations. We have multiple self-senses, and some of them have a preverbal origin; they 'do exist long prior to selfawareness and language' (Stern 1985, 6). He differentiates the following strata: sense of an emergent self (birth–2 months of age); sense of core self (2–6 months); sense of subjective self (7–15 months); sense of a verbal self (15 months on). The first three are connected mostly to bodily and presymbolic experiences; however, they coexist with symbolisable and verbal ones throughout a lifetime. Preverbal senses are formed in vital interactions with the mother (or caregiver), which create the first forms of so-called implicit relational knowing. This is a bodily sense of the self, which had never been symbolized, so it could not have been repressed, like contents of dynamic unconsciousness (Stern 2004, 116). It determines, however, our personal relations as long as we live, as it affects the ways we are attuned or non-attuned with others (Vermes 2012). Although preverbal implicit patterns derive from our past, we can feel them only in the present moment, as they are neither explicit nor symbolised; we live them in "the domain of knowledge and representation that is nonverbal, nonsymbolic, unnarrated and nonconscious" (Stern, 2004, 242). Multiple patterns of implicit self-senses take shape mostly not as words, but as bodily experiences named by Stern as 'vitality affects' (Stern, 2004, 36).

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[3] Example for projection: "A man is intensely hostile to authority. Consequently, when he sees a policeman he believes the latter wants to harm him." By Renée Grinnell: Projection Example for introjection: "A boy is berated and beaten by his father. Within a few days, this formerly cheerful child kicks the dog and calls his sister a "stupid, stupid brat!" By Renée Grinnell: Introjection. In: Encyclopedia of Psychology - Psych Central. Last reviewed: By John M. Grohol, Psy.D. on 17 Jul 2016, Published on PsychCentral.com
https://psychcentral.com/encyclopedia/projection/
https://psychcentral.com/encyclopedia/introjection/

[4] Regarding Stern's theory of selfdevelopment, see the author's more detailed analysis here: Vermes, Katalin – Incze, Adrienne (2012): Psychodynamic Movement and Dance Therapy (PMDT) in Hungary. *Body, Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy*; An International Journal for Theory, Research and Practice, 7: 101-114.

[5] See more about these connections in *The Interpersonal World of the Infant* 1985, and *The Present Moment in Psychotherapy and Everyday Life* 2004.

8. Vitality affects [6]

Stern introduced the concept of 'vitality affects', in opposition to so-called 'categorical affects' (Stern 1985, 53–61). What is the difference between the two? Usually we think of affective experiences in terms of traditional categories of Darwinian affects: happiness, sadness, fear, anger, disgust, surprise, interest, and perhaps shame. But there are many more nuances of feelings which we cannot describe with these distinct categories. We have a continual, intersensory affect of our moving and perceiving body, interconnected with its surroundings and with other living creatures. We are never without vitality affects (whether we are conscious of them or not), while regular effects come and go. We always feel them, just as we feel we are alive. These include that special rhythm and disposition as we walk on the street, as we close a door, the special atmosphere as we look at others, as we laugh or cry (Vermes 2011, 35-37). This peculiar quality of our vitality affects connects our motions and different sensory modalities, displaying that special style by which our own body can interpret itself. It is similar to Merleau-Ponty's notion of style: 'What unites ''tactile sensations'' in the hand and links them to visual perceptions of the same hand, and to perceptions of other bodily areas, is a certain style informing my manual gestures and implying in turn a certain style of finger movements, and contributing, in the last resort, to a certain bodily bearing' (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 150).There is a certain affective style, and reflective quality of seeing and touching, walking and laughing which makes possible the original intersensory integration of body experiences and makes possible personal identity as well. Vitality affects, which connect our senses, are the first and most basic forms of interpersonal communication. They 'can be expressed in a multitude of parental acts: how the mother picks up baby, folds the diapers, grooms her hair or the baby's hair, reaches for a bottle, unbuttons her blouse. The infant is immersed in these feelings of vitality'. (Stern, 1985, 54) These feelings form the first, presymbolic patterns of interpersonal relatedness. The mother bends to her baby, the baby raises its head, the mother caresses the head, the baby uses its voice, and the mother responds saying something in the same rhythm. There is an unconscious interpersonal attunement of motions and perceptions, forming a common tissue of their lives. The baby feels the mother's movements, which fit to its own movements, and this joining forms the baby's self-perception. The care-giver continually mirrors, reflects and validates the baby's emerging self-senses; this vital fitting is very close in the first months, but later reduces in intensity. This intermodal–interpersonal fitting, and at the same time a differing interplay of vitality affects, forms the grounding for self-development in the course of which the child assumes the sense of being an entity distinct from other objects in its environment (Stern, 1985, 72–92). The perpetual movement of vitality affects creates the 'core self'; the fundamental moods of our personality for the whole of our lives from beginning to end. If the child does not get adequate responses from the caregiver, her/his implicit relational knowing with the vital "core" of the self gets damaged.

9. Intercorpreity in contemporary somatic and dance techniques

For Stern "abstract dance and music are examples par excellence of the expressiveness of vitality affects"; they express "a way of feeling", rather than a specific content of feeling (Stern, 1985, 56). They refer to the form and quality, rather than to the object of the experience. They do not express "something," they express an existential quality of being present, being attuned. The main characteristic of contemporary somatic and dance techniques is their

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[6] See a more detailed illustration of vitality affects here: Vermes Katalin (2011): Intersensory and intersubjective attunement: Philosophical approach to a central element of dance movement psychotherapy, *Body, Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy, An International Journal for Theory, Research and Practice.*6(01), pp. 31 - 42.

ambition to activate and reflect this intercorporeal tissue of vitality affects.

In the last decades somatic methods evolved everywhere in the world, even in Hungary. Several modern techniques of body-consciousness, contemporary ways of dance, and multiple schools of dance and movement therapies came to life, which interpret body as existential modality, and not as bare instrument of higher performances. [7] They pay more or less attention to the intercorporeal character of movement. Here I would like to differentiate somatic methods regarding the individual or intersubjective focus they assume.

1. Classical methods of body consciousness – like the Alexander technique, Feldenkrais method, Yoga, or Tai Chi – focus first of all on people's *individual* self-inquiry and self-improvement; they are very good at fine somatic self-perception, but do not attend to the intercorporeal dynamics displayed in a group. However, representatives of these methods would agree that refined consciousness of the body helps people to perceive the world and other people better; improved somatic awareness reduces individuals' social defenselessness, makes them more self-confident, more empathetic and connected.

2. Other practical somatic methods – like contact improvisation – are more *relational*; they directly develop body consciousness and resonance amid the changing, moving group situation. Contact dance is a relational improvisative technique, which takes shape mainly in duets and groups evolving a refined process of intercorporeal attunement. However, contact dance also

generates individual somatic self-awareness: participants can be attuned to others only if they are self-reliant, if they are sensible enough to the rhythm and special vitality of their own body.

3. The technique of *psychodynamic movement and dance therapy* (PMDT) embraces *both individual and relational* body-mind practices (Vermes-Incze 2012) and tries to integrate them.

10. Psychodynamic movement and dance therapy (PMDT)

Psychodynamic movement and dance therapy came to life in Hungary at the beginning of the 1980s, first developed by the psychiatrist and psychotherapist Márta Merényi (2004). It is a psychoanalytically-oriented psychotherapeutic method, based on the therapeutic efficiency of somatic work, movement improvisation and a psychodynamic working through of movement experiences and relations in the group. PMDT is considered to be effective especially in cases with preverbal problems of the sense of self and neurotic problems; it is also applied as a creative way of improving self-awareness and personal development (Vermes - Incze 2012).

PMDT is a special group method which focuses on never-ending dynamics, as individual body self-senses and movements emerge and change in a group situation, and a group is formed by moving, sensing individuals. Through individual and relational somatic and improvisational exercises, it develops parallel capacities of somatic autonomy and intercorporeal attunement. During the improvisational movement an essential question continuously arises: what happens with my body – my muscles, my breath, the sense of my weight, my somatic rhythm, my use of space and time – when I move alone, and when I meet others? How can I keep or refine my own somatic self-senses, my autonomy, when I am connected to someone else? How do we affect and how are we affected by each other before a word is

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[7] The author of this paper is lucky enough, and have acquired experience in Budapest in several methods: She is a psychodynamic movement and dance therapist and has lead groups for 20 years, and she has tried Contact Improvisation, Skinner Release technique, Body Mind Centering, Feldenkrais method, Ideokinesis, Image Laboratory, and some older methods such as yoga and or Tai Chi.

said? Consciousness and differentiation of individual and group related body-senses and an understanding of the ways somatic group dynamics proceed in personal and social situations are the capacities we need more than ever in recent times.

Both somatic consciousness and vital attunement deeply inspire the courses of movement improvisation, and serve as a central therapeutic factor in PMDT. Well-prepared movement improvisation activates and expresses many levels of the self. It can be a symbolic or metaphoric expression in which repressed unconscious contents are brought to light. On the other hand, however, it mobilizes a previous stratum of development, the primordial patterns of the self-core, including implicit relational knowing. It is implicit material, in contrast with the psychoanalytic 'dynamic unconscious', which has never been symbolized or repressed (Stern, 2004, 116–117). Much of this implicit knowing is bodily experience, not transposable into words; however, it can be worked through in the course of movement and nonverbal attunement. Nevertheless, a part of implicit material can enter into the process of symbolization and verbalization. Thus, owing to the mobilization of vitality affects, therapeutic change is possible in PMDT even in those cases when the process of symbolisation is stuck. A lot of people in contemporary society have serious deficits and injuries on the level of preverbal, implicit self-senses. PMDT can become a highly effective therapeutic method for them, even in those cases when verbal therapeutic forms are not effective.

In the end of my paper let me illustrate my thoughts by presenting a case. A few years ago there was a young man in my PMDT group who came to therapy with serious psychosomatic and relational problems. He had a normal body setup, but somehow he could not realize his own body senses; he felt as if his body had not tree-dimensional extension. He said that his body felt like a sheet of paper. After a year of PMDT group therapy, he could remember that during his childhood his mother looked at him as if he was not present. The mother regarded him as if he was without a body; at the same time he was overwhelmed by the high expectations and inadequate emotions of his parents. He had to somehow save his integrity, so he developed special somatic forms of defense. As a child and as an adult man, he had to be always on the "surface", on the "front" of intersubjective situations: in doing this he left behind his real body-senses. He bracketed the existential expression of his body, and tried to replace it with a symbol of a two-dimensional "sheet of paper". For him it seemed to be the only way to control other people whose attention he felt overwhelming, or who looked at him as if he was nothing. However, he became extremely exhausted from this defending mechanism, and from repressing his own deeper somatic self-perceptions, he became ill. When he came to a PMDT group, he suffered from many serious psychosomatic symptoms, and complained about his excessive fear of relationships. Over the course of the PMDT group process, in the first period he was not able to attend to his own body; he lacked the capacity of individual body-work. He also feared the attention of other people, but, at the same time, he could not go without it. He painfully needed the reflection of other selves, the continual vital attunement of other group members, but feared them at the same time. After a long period of PMDT work, he began to perceive his body's "volume", and he began to regain his own senses. He developed a capacity of individual somatic work and movement improvisation, and he gained a relational capacity to be together with others, to be attuned to others without annihilating his own bodily self-senses.

11. Summary

In my article I interpreted the existential modality of the body as a common issue of somaesthetic (Shusterman 2008) and phenomenological thinking (Merleau-Ponty 1962). I compared several tendencies of the so called "corporeal turn" and differentiated their attitudes (Sheets-Johnstone 2009), and tried to distinguish the existential interpretation of the body from the instrumentalization of consumer culture.

After giving a phenomenological description of body's primordial expressive capacity and the so-called "double sensation" (Husserl 1960, Merleau-Ponty 1962), I disputed Shusterman's Merleau-Ponty interpretation (Shusterman 2008, 73), arguing that double sensation of the body does not imply the impossibility of self-observation, but the spatial, temporal and intersubjective aspects of corporeity. Then, following the thoughts of psychoanalyst Daniel Stern (1985), I delineated the phenomenon of vitality affects, which play a central role in the intercorporeal processes of self-development, but are also essential for the understanding of contemporary somatic and dance techniques. In the more pragmatic part of my paper, I tried to differentiate several kinds of somatic techniques regarding their individual or intersubjective focus. At the end of my work I showed how damaged preverbal self-senses can emerge and become repaired in the group process of psychodynamic movement and dance therapy with the help of somatic attention, intersubjective attunement and movement (Merényi 2004, Vermes-Incze 2012).

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As close as possible to the ungraspable – Somaesthetical and Deleuzian investigations on the choreographical work of Pál Frenák

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ABSTRACT: According to Shusterman with the notion of somaesthetics he wants to remind the contemporary readers that "philosophy could and should be practiced with one's body rather than being confined to "the life of the mind" (Shusterman 2012, 141.)" Consequently a philosophy can be expressible by one's body especially by a dancer's body or by a choreographer's work. I consider it to be a problem that a performance is not only the artwork of a creator but also the embodiment of the choreographer's philosophy. Not every dance choreographer has his own philosophy but those who have a characteristic "universe" and a peculiar style. I am going to reveal Pál Frenák's dance philosophy of somatic style while searching for that "existential weight" behind his works that is a crucial element in his artistic universe. How is it possible to approach a philosophy emotionally? Where is the limit between sense and sensibility in the reception of a dance performance? Instead of the analysis of concrete meanings of movements in one piece of art, dance philosophy should examine those processes that lead to a certain set of emotions and associations. I feel that conversation on contemporary dance would be a relevant topic in relation to somaesthetics. In my paper, I would like to attune somaesthetics and the Deleuzian sign theory to show the spiritual richness of the oeuvre of Pál Frenák.[1]

Keywords: dance philosophy, Pál Frenák, Richard Shusterman, Gilles Deleuze

"[…] principal writers on dance such as Marcia Siegel expressed skepticism over whether aesthetics had any relevance at all for understanding or writing about dance.[2] Their argument was that the aim of writing about dance should be focused on describing the dance movement, which presumably did not require any intervention from philosophical aesthetics" – says Curtis L. Carter in his writing on aesthetics in contemporary art (Carter 2012, 98). My aim with this article is to prove the relevance of philosophical aesthetics in relation to contemporary dance, especially in relation to certain performer's oeuvre. I am going to focus on the art of Pál Frenák; moreover, I consider the role of Richard Shusterman's somaesthetics in the analysis of Frenák's artistic world. Analytic Somaesthetics deals with the theory of the aesthetic way of life, especially through the works of Plato and Foucault. This theory includes the examination of the aesthetic existence. My focus will be on a case when an artist integrates every weight of his life into works of art, thus his works of art become the essence of his life and thoughts.

"Identity of sign as style and of a meaning as essence: such is the character of the work of art" (Deleuze 2000, 50) – this Deleuzian quotation inspired me to deal with the philosophical issue that was earlier only a strong emotion in me for a long period of time. The philosophy of signs of Gilles Deleuze and the somaesthetics of Shusterman will help me in the philosophical investigation to reveal something about dance choreographer's unique form of expression.

Richard Shusterman evinces the somaesthetical significance of dance (Shusterman 2012, 8.), but in his books, he doesn't discuss the relevance of a somaesthetical dance philosophy. In my opinion, it is impossible to approach choreographer's artistic work only by using the classical categories of aesthetics (beauty, harmony, etc.). We can use these notions to describe movements in a dance performance but they do not cover the meaning of a project entirely. According to Shusterman, a philosophical language cannot properly express the emotional background of artistic experience. He experiments with different artistic projects hoping that he can reach the pure aesthetic experience. He offers practical, somatic answers to the questions of contemporary dance theory and dance therapy. Dance philosophy seems useless beside the accentuation of the somatic practices' experiential character. However, I am sure that aesthetics has to deal

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[1] In the summer of 2016 Richard Shusterman gave a great lecture on contemporary art at the Széchenyi István University of Győr (Hungary). As a result of a long preparation, Shusterman could meet with the choreographer Pál Frenák. I see a close relation between Shusterman's somaesthetics and Frenák's art of dance because of the crucial role of corporeality in their works and in their lives.

[2] Carter refers to Marcia Siegel's book: *At the Vanishing Point: A Critic's Look at Dance* (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1972, Dutton, 1985).

with contemporary dance's philosophy. We need to give up dance philosophy if we cannot turn from the outward appearances of movements to the essential core of certain choreographers' style.

Dance is art and choreographing is also an art. To reveal the choreographer's style and language, this is the task of aesthetics. Dance can be realized only through the bodies of dancers, thus they have to feel the choreographer's unique style and his aims. According to the opinion of Frenák, it is impossible to communicate prior emotions in words with his dancers. Corporeality is the only way to show the real contents. This challenge would not be possible without the intuitive grasp of some essence. Moreover, the spectators should feel the same essence of the work of art. In my paper, I would like to attune somaesthetics to the Deleuzian sign theory to show the spiritual richness of the oeuvre of Pál Frenák. At the same time in relation to dance performances, I am going to discuss the problems of interpretation.

1. Introduction to the somatic style of Pál Frenák

Pál Frenák is one of the most exciting dance choreographers of our time.[3] He works with an international dance company in Hungary. Sign language was his mother language since he learned to read and understand her deaf mother's signs and gestures. Such nonverbal codes became subconscious and developed in unusual ways. For Frenák, this had a determining effect on his life. Bodily communication and corporeality have been more important for him than verbal communication. Frenák reached a refined level in somatic perception. He spent seven years in an orphanage where body experimentations meant the only escape from reality. His visual aesthetics developed

in a special way: experiences were materialized in the body, by the realm of physicality (Péter 2009, 21.). These experiences made him an incredibly sensitive creator: he worked with deaf-mute people in Lille where he did rehabilitative performances for bedridden patients in the corridors of the Amiens university hospital. Frenák learned from different masters from France to Japan: Kazuo Ohno's wordless teaching was his real lesson. The most important elements of his aesthetic existence are the body, self-expression through the body, and the experience of the own body through body-experimentations. His choreographies are fantastic results of an instinctive creative process. In my estimation, Frenák creates a unique art determined by the sign language and inspired by the writings of Gilles Deleuze. Frenák usually uses quotations from Deleuze to introduce certain dance performances on the website of his company.[4]

In the case of Pál Frenák, the somaesthetical way of life is a reality: his works are filled with crucial philosophical questions; he thinks instinctively through his own body and most importantly he builds up the refined art of somatic self-revelation. Frenák's active artistic practice requires a proper theory to reveal its real nature. Dance is a transient art. Without critical works, performances would disappear forever. However, I think the criticism is not enough to preserve something for the future regarding the artist's peculiarities. Somaesthetic investigations can display the background of the universe of Frenák. When I say universe I mean "l'universe d'un artist" – as the French say that is more than an oeuvre, this is the real and imagined world of someone who expresses himself always in the same manner in his choreographies. How can someone have a world, a universe? This question is a source of inspiration to some of Frenák's choreographies and this question was also the starting point for me to consider the possibility of an aesthetic examination on an artist's

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[3] See the trailer for Pal Frenak Documentary Movie („Who Cares About Pal Frenak?"):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cKfq0697H4 [18.07.2017]

[4] http://frenak.hu/?en [03.12.2017]

oeuvre. Self-knowledge is the crucial feature of Frenák's own 'philosophy of dance' as well as the feature of Shusterman's philosophy of the art of living.

Richard Shusterman is a philosopher who wants to feel the aesthetic experience through his own artistic experimentations. Frenák is an artist whose works express very particular aesthetic existence. I would not go so far to say, that his works communicate a personal ethics but the most important element of an aesthetic existence is authenticity. That's why we should examine his whole life-work, his creative somatic style as a whole and not only certain works.

According to Andrea Olsen, "gesture is instinctive, deeply sourced in your life history, and highly specific. The body knows what you want to say if you listen to its cues" (Olsen 2014, 83). Because of his deaf parents, Frenák was brought up in a sign-oriented milieu. Certain nonverbal codes became subconscious for him and determined his instinctive gestures. His somatic style (formed by the sign-language) determines his somatic relation to other people. He appropriated experiences in different cultures. Japanese culture has made a great impact on his works and thoughts. As he says in an interview:

> I think that Kazuo Ohno and other Japanese people I met must have sensed the deaf-mute world of communication in my body language. […] It happened more than once that I would sit down next to someone, and then soon they would be trying to talk me, as if they couldn't restrain themselves. […] When a strong impulse hits me then I feel the urge to make contact. I have met some of my dancers that way. (Péter 2009, 29, 33)

"One's personality is [...] expressed in somatic style" – this is the brickstone principle of Shusterman's somaesthetics (Shusterman 2012, 318.). The somatic style of Frenák determines his choreographies because he can merely initiate his dancers to the imagined mood of a piece on the level of corporeality. To be a memorable artist one should have a distinctive personal style that is good to be the successful artist's signature style – says Shusterman (Shusterman 2012, 322). Frenák develops his signature style growing together with the developing process of his self-knowledge. The tortures of self-expression in his childhood also affected his later experimentations with his body and these practices permeated to his somatic style. That is why Shusterman's opinion can be relevant in the analysis of an artist's somatic style. He rejects the theories on the duality of form and content and he says:

> [I]f somatic style, through our body schemata, extends into the deepest habits of feeling, perception and action that constitute the self, then it should be seen as an integral dimension of the individual, the expression of her particular spirit. Spirit indeed seems fundamental to the notion of style. (Shusterman 2012, 333-334.)

Frenák's culture of movement evolved from his somatic style. He sublimated the determinative spiritual effects to his own body-language and this language united with his somatic style. Frenák expressed many times his astonishment at people's rejection towards corporeality. As he says:

> I don't quite understand how tendencies to reject the body and disassociate body from mind can thrive alongside of the cult of sensuality. How can these two things be separated, how is it decided which one takes priority over the other? I nurture my body through my mind and the intellect gives the body its physical characteristics, its posture. (Péter 2009, 41.)

This harmony between his body and his spirit creates his homogeneous choreographing style. In the next chapter, I would like to reveal the specialties of Frenák's creative work in relation to the classical meanings of dramatization.

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2. Choreographing and dramatization

"Choreographic work is an artistic experience in which a choreographer creates a point of view concerning elements of life. […] In line with Dewey's aesthetics, creating a point of view is an embodied process of handling materialistic-physical features as rhythms and energies in relation to spatiality, timing, bodily effort, shapes, and possible variations between all these elements. The sensualities of the choreographer, and of the dancers, take part in this process. For that reason, the act of dancing defines the expressivity of dance, no less than the choreography" – says Einav Katan in his book entitled *Embodied Philosophy in Dance* (Katan 2016, 16.) Frenák as a choreographer mirrors an idea through the body of his dancers. Body is a material for him that makes the idea visible through the choreography. His dancers are the mediums, as he says: "I project something on them – something I am already immersed in." (Péter 2009, 27.)

The best way to explore the 'dance-philosophy' of Frenák is an examination through the appreciation of his aesthetic existence. Frenák brings some philosophical ideas together with art. He has a special style, a unique mode of expression that appears also when he makes choreography to a very known classical topic, e. g. in the Opera of Budapest in 2017.[5] Frenák's individual works are fragmented parts of the whole, and the parts are composed of elements that are of the same kind. His choreographies are his sons and daughters; the system of the associations in his works are natural for him, but Frenák doesn't like to speak about them:

> It takes a great amount of energy to stay calm and concentrate on the things that are really important. This is the reason why I have trouble answering questions about my pieces. When I am forced to talk it feels like torture; like my child is being taken away from me. People want

to understand things that cannot be understood in one lifetime. (Péter, 2009, 39)

That's why he generally rejects the utility of writing on his individual works. How can we understand the "l'universe de" Frenák? I think, it is possible only without reason, and only with intuition. According to Frenák, the rational formulation has to be decomposed. Associative thinking is needed in the process of creation and also in the process of watching his works. As he concludes in an interview:

> If I worked with a rational mind, and used measured, logical steps to choreograph, then my pieces would probably be polite and kind, my dancers would present themselves on stage according to certain social conventions, and the audience would fall asleep snoring. […]
> Artists are like animals, ears twitching, listening all-the-time, always turning, ready for the impulse to go after something. Yet, this deeply instinctive layer is needed, and one needs to let go, when the finest micro vibrations come to life…I am like this. But how things are decided, like what will finally go where, I can't tell you exactly. (Péter 2009, 16, 19)

Without an individual philosophy, he cannot create a homogeneous oeuvre. He does not create the script of the series of movements only, but his works open up a world. The visible connects to the invisible, behind the physical there is the spiritual background. The most characteristic feature of Frenák's works is sensuality. We can observe the most refined use of sensibility in his works. Deleuze writes in relation to Bacon: "If painting has nothing to narrate and no story to tell, something is happening all the same, something which defines the functioning of the painting" (Deleuze 2004, 12.) One can translate it to dance choreographies: if dance choreography has no story to tell, something is happening all the same, something which defines the functioning of the work of art. I am interested in this "something". In the case of Frenák, this something can be sensibility, instinct, eroticism, sensuality, or signs – and all of these notions have rich aesthetic significance.

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[5] Bartók: *The Wooden Prince*:
https://opera.jegy.hu/program/a-fabol-faragott-kiralyfi-67798?lang=en [03.12.2017]

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I feel a very strong authenticity in Frenák's works. It can be possible only because of the fact that there is something common in his performances. He says that "I feel that my work should have either a specific experience or some existential weight behind it" (Péter 2009, 14). His somatic memories and thoughts are transformed into some special creative energy. His personal experiences come from his childhood but also from his everyday experience. He puts this existential weight and all of his experiences into form. Andrea Olsen in her book entitled *The Place of Dance. A Somatic Guide to Dancing and Dance Making* reveals the process of her choreographing work. Olsen's method perfectly describes the tensed process of a creative work. As a result of such an intense work a choreographer can create his or her own system:

> Choreographers create their own systems; there is no pre-known script. The process spans time, engaging memory and imagination. Framing, shaping, and finding the arc of the piece from initial impulse to the completed dance requires tenacity — a kind of courage. Form and content are reciprocal. Communicating complex ideas in a complicated world involves decision making. Every choice closes one pathway and focuses on another. Translated through the medium of the body moving in space, the choreographic process makes the invisible visible. Identifying your impulses and images is like tracking a wild animal. (Olsen 2014, 83.)

The works of Frenák do not follow the classical dramatic construction. The audience gets an incredibly strong impulse in the first minute of the performance and the spectacle can keep the spectators' intensified emotive state. Because of the permanent intensity, there is no catharsis. There are no dramatized stories in Frenák's choreographies but complex contents reveal themselves. It is impossible to trace these contents back to their original causes. In my opinion, there are no storylines in Frenák's works. Watching the performances, the spectators do not have to wait for a whole tale. The set of impressions and sensual qualities can take the spectators closer to the discoverable realm. Frenák

doesn't want to give literary proofs for the choreographies. He feels the expectation, especially in France for his work to have some kind of point of a reference. According to Frenák, he usually works "with the material in such a way that the audience is able to associate it to whatever source." Moreover, he has always preferred the freedom of not being tied to any concept:

> This is probably too self-indulgent way because people like to link images to concepts. They seek allusions and context, and when they can't find them they get frustrated. […] I always feel that I have given a concrete message, perhaps even something too explicit. (Péter, 2009, 35.)

Shusterman defines art as dramatization. With this new approach, he wants to highlight "two crucial aspects of art – intensity of presence and formal framing" (Shusterman 2012, 139.). According to Shusterman, in the contemporary English and German 'to dramatize' means to "put something on stage", to put it in the frame of a theatrical performance thus the stage sets the work apart from ordinary stream. In the choreographies of Frenák, the stage or rather the space has an important meaning. He extends the classical frames of ballet with maximization of using the space on the stage. The dancers of Frenák usually have been suspended over the stage, they perform acrobatic movements with extreme talent. This type of space using transgresses the traditional constructional methods in dance. The choreographer frames something essential to his system but with the new mode of spatial limit-transgression; he liberates his dancers from the law of gravitation. "Besides the idea of staging and framing, "dramatize" also has another main meaning, which suggests intensity […] To make a scene, in colloquial speech, is not simply to do something in a particular place but to display or provoke an excessive display of emotion or active disturbance" – says Shusterman (Shusterman 2001, 368.). This second definition is completely applicable to contemporary dance performances. For the first sight with the union of the two meanings of dramatization,

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dance-theory gets a new theoretical approach. However, according to Shusterman's reasoning on dramatization, too many things win the right to call themselves art. Without existential weight behind itself, the dance choreography has no philosophy at all. It is impossible to describe it in the terms of dance philosophy. Movements become dance through stylization and choreography. In one respect choreography is the art of formal organization but in another respect, this organization has to be formed by an aesthetic idea or by some philosophical thought.

How does an artist manage to communicate the essence of his or her work of art, and how can a spectator live the reception of that essence? In my opinion, the philosophy of Frenák's dance can be grasped by the Deleuzian notion of essence based on a sign theory. To comprehend this particular issue, Deleuze's writings on Proust can be used as meaningful sources. I do not want to force the connection of the Deleuzian conception to Frenák's works because there are no direct relations to it. However, I would like to offer one possible way to approach Frenák's "universe".

3. An aesthetic approach to Frenák's oeuvre through the Deleuzian "dematerialized signs"

Dance is underrepresented in philosophical aesthetics. Mark Franko points out that "contemporary thought on dance is frequently split between the concept of dance-as-writing and the concept of dance as beyond the grasp of the language, especially the written language."[6] Semiotic theories of expression in dance are usually focused on artistic dance expression as a form of communication that functions in a way that is similar to language, through "utterance", or through signs, symbols, and gestures.[7] We can mention Goodman, Langer or Margolis in this respect.

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[6] https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dance/ [19.06.2017]
[7] Ibid.

The opening and exploring of signs would be an alternative key to understanding the choreographies of Frenák. Deleuze writes in his book on Proust, that "learning is essentially concerned with signs. […] To learn is first of all to consider a substance, an object, a being as if it emitted signs to be deciphered, interpreted" (Deleuze 2000, 4.). According to Deleuze, people in the same system of signs do not think and do not act, but they make signs (Deleuze 2000, 5.).

Frenák's sign-language-oriented utterance gives a special surplus to his somatic style but there is another level of signs in his performances. Beyond the strong presence of a refined sign-language-oriented culture in his works, I feel that the real signs of the art of Frenák are the Deleuzian "dematerialized signs" (Deleuze 2000, 13.). The analysis of the "universe" of Frenák (through the Proustian-Deleuzian notion of essence) can show the way as a particular life-philosophy hidden in artist's work. In my opinion, the integration of one's life-philosophy into a dance-choreography should be a theme of dance philosophy.

The theory of the spiritualization of the substance in art is one of the most important parts of Deleuze's sign theory in his book on Proust:

> In art, substances are spiritualized, media dematerialized. The work of art is therefore a world of signs, but they are immaterial and no longer have anything opaque about them, at least to the artist's eye, the artist's ear. In the second place, the meaning of these signs is an essence, an essence affirmed in all its power. In the third place, sign and meaning, essence and transmuted substance, are identified or united in a perfect adequation. Identity of sign as style and of a meaning as essence: such is the character of the work of art. And doubtless art itself has been the object of an apprenticeship. (Deleuze 2000, 50.)

According to Deleuze in art, the meaning of dematerialized signs shows the essence. Essences are "alogical or supralogical" (Deleuze 2000, 37.), they do not refer back to concrete, material things. The revealed world of art spiritualizes the creators own memories and

experiences and they color them with an aesthetic meaning. Dematerialized signs can enlighten the obscured realities. Real connections become visible through the works of art:

> It is the essence that constitutes sign in as it is irreducible to the object emitting is the essence that constitutes the meaning insofar as irreducible to the subject apprehending it. (Deleuze 2000, 38.)

There is no reason to quest for concrete occurrences in a choreography or in any work of art. Deleuze admits that "if reminiscences are integrated into art as constitutive elements, it is rather to the degree that they are conducting elements that lead […] the artist to the conception of his task…" (Deleuze 2000, 55.). A melody or a movement can reveal essences or ideas. Art's spiritual nature makes art superior to life. According to Deleuze, "all the signs we meet in life are still material signs, and their meaning, because it is always in something else, is not altogether spiritual" (Deleuze 2000, 41). For Frenák, the act of transformation is an extremely important part of the creative work. He poetically describes the metamorphoses of feeling of energetic motivations:

> For a long time this incomprehensible thing is just there, then suddenly it moves, metamorphoses, gushes forth, radiating in every direction. It acts like a channel of information – a way of communication – though nothing concrete can be understood […]. (Péter 2009, 29.)

In each of his interviews, Frenák mentions that his works are not about his problems but about problems in general, and that he doesn't flaunt with his dancer's bodies but he points at certain things with bodies. Art cannot be the simple and fixed reflection of reality but the experience of potential interrelations. Deleuze in one of his earlier papers observes that

> [t]he artist in general must treat the world like a symptom, and build his work not like a therapeutic, but in every case like a clinic. The artist is not outside the symptoms, but makes a

work of art from them, which sometimes serve to precipitate them, and sometimes to transform them. (Ramey 2012, 135.)

"[W]hat is enveloped in the sign is more profound than all the explicit significations" – says Deleuze. The non-fixed quality of the meaning gives the liberty of art and interpretation. Perhaps that is the reason why he believes that "a work of art is worth more than a philosophical work" (Deleuze 2000, 30.).

4. The problems of interpretation

According to Deleuze's opinion mentioned above, because of the artwork's irrelevance, its objectified meaning cannot be the question of any artistic investigation. On the contrary from the point of view of philosophy, the problem of interpretation has been always the crucial one.

Richard Shusterman in his *Pragmatist Aesthetics* analyses some rival theories on interpretation "in the light of more general pragmatist principles" (Shusterman 2000, 84.) He confronts Knapp and Michaels author-centered intentionalist perspective and Richard Rorty's theory on the reading, which is – in Rorty's opinion – independent from the author. Shusterman displays also the theses of Stanley Fish. Shusterman refuses the theories of Knapp and Michaels but he does not compel us to accept an extended and homogeneous theory of interpretation:

> "Knapp and Michaels simply assume that intention will ground the meaning and the identity of a text in something fixed and transparent which itself neither needs interpretation nor allows divergent ones. But we have no reason to believe that such a transparent, language-neutral, self-interpreting and unambiguous idiolect of intentionality does or even could exist". (Shusterman 2000, 98.)

If one assigns a conscious philosophy or a conscious somatic style to a creator expressed in his or her works then one should also accept that there is an explicit

meaning, which is able to express the creator's intention. However, if one accepts that the creator would not be able to formulate precisely the logic leading to the realization of his or her work of art then it is useless to postulate an explicit meaning. Frenák says that he works instinctively. As I mentioned earlier, in his choreographies "finest micro vibrations come to life". Penelope Hanstein has also rejected the notion of intention in her book entitled *On the Nature of Art Making in Dance: An Artistic Process Skills Model.* According to Larry Lavender

> For many dance artists, particularly for those who use improvisational or chance procedures, the creative process, as Penelope Hanstein (1986) writes, "... is in no way a sequential ordering of creative activities or the realization of a known solution. The actions of the choreographer are most often circuitous in nature and characterized by a qualitative negotiation with the medium which involves the exploration, discovery, and investigation of new ways of selecting and ordering artistic material. (p. 137)" Seen in this light, the creative process is a revisions process, not a one-time act – or utterance – reducible to a pre-determined linguistic meaning. This is not to say that artists proceed in their work with no ideas or purposes in mind." (Lavender 1995, 27.)

As a conclusion one could say that the interpretation of a dance-choreography cannot allow searching for a pre-determined linguistic meaning, thus the dance performance is incomparable with a text. According to Shusterman

> "[S]ince we do seem able to discuss a given work, it is argued that there must be some common intentional object which we are discussing, whether we identify it with the author's intention (Hirsch) or with the objective meaning of the text itself (Beardsley)". (Shusterman 2000, 93.)

Despite of the reasons that Shusterman suggests we should not posit a fixed independent meaning of the work "in order to guarantee identity of reference for its critical discussion" but we can assure the referential identification by accepting a certain minimum of

identifying descriptions (Shusterman 2000, 93). Unfortunately, we do not receive any explanation of how this act would be realized in the cases of certain works of art. Pragmatist attitude is essentially pluralist and opened, thus it does not stand against to the claim of Deleuze who tried to find an appropriate method to analyze opened works. Deleuze was fascinated with the gesture of destroying the illusion of organic totality in the work of art. The fragmented nature of the modern work of art inspired Deleuze to find a new method (Ramey 2012, 134). In my opinion, the Deleuzian essence-oriented sign-theory is not incompatible with pragmatist thinking.

According to EinavKatan, "watching the dance and translating it into words is an interpretative act" (Katan 2016, 5.) but after specifying earlier conclusions above, I am sure that it is impossible to translate the dance into words. It is useless to try to give explicit verbal narration to dances. Because of the interpretation of certain scenes, one would be incapable to concentrate to the whole piece. The interpretation of certain movements cannot transfer the essence that is under the surface. Emotional answers are the best answers. As Kazuo Ohno, the role model of Frenák, once said:

> "The best thing someone can say to me is that while watching my performance they began to cry. It is not important to understand what I am doing; perhaps it is better if they don't understand, but just respond to the dance." (Childs 2010)

Certain images can be etched in one's memory and certain images can arouse special associations. The reception of the dance performance depends on the spectators' feelings, memories, and associations. Words are useless when spectators resonate with the feelings of the choreographer. The caught emotional impulses determine the audience's sympathy or antipathy toward the performance. A work of art fundamentally need to induce feelings, it has to be upsetting. Some aesthetic experience is needed for the further rational

considerations. Without an emotional link, rationality would not get the spectator closer to the universe of the choreographer. According to Deleuze

> But precisely how is essence incarnated in the work of art? Or, what comes down to the same thing, how does an artist-subject manage to "communicate" the essence that individualizes him and makes him eternal? It is incarnated in substances. […] [S]ubstances that are expressed equally well through words, sounds, and colors. […] The real theme of a work is therefore not the subject the words designate, but the unconscious themes, the involuntary archetypes in which the words, but also the colors and the sounds, assume their meaning and their life. Art is a veritable transmutation of substance. (Deleuze 2000, 13.)

Frenák's works claim active spectators. The spectator gets into contact with the spectacle dreamed by the choreographer through the physicality and bodily textures of the dancers. The dancer's movements can evoke those associations that go beyond the bodies' physical realm. The spectators need to catch the vibration of the choreographer's soul through the dancer's corporeality.

5. Theoretical and practical limit transgression

According to Shusterman, "The play of limit transgression is a central feature of the field of aesthetics in the West, a key aspects of its history, and structure" (Shusterman, 2012, 128.). I was always curious about what limit transgression means in philosophy. It is clear that Shusterman generally speaks about conceptual limits but in the philosophy of Foucault Shusterman analyses the case of the transgression of experiential limits. In aesthetics, the transgression of conceptual limits can extend the frames of philosophical aesthetics. This change would also be useful in advocating a new field in dance philosophy. In pragmatist philosophy as also in every current philosophy, experimenting has to be the most important tool for making and thinking things differently.

Shusterman has a very clear attitude to limit-transgression. In *Thinking Through the Body* he declares that for Michel Foucault and for George Bataille, limit-experience is described "as an experience of violent intensity typically involving some violent form of somatic transgression that is also typically a transgression of moral as well as somatic norms" (Shusterman, 2012, 143.). In relation to these limit-experiences of Foucault and Bataille, Shusterman concludes that "somaesthetics is committed to studying the use of such forms of limit-experiences, but that does not imply a commitment to advocating them as the best way to enlarge our somaesthetic capacities and to achieve wider transformational improvements of ourselves and our self-knowledge" (Shusterman, 2012, 143.). Radical somatic experiences are important complements to philosophy's study of self-knowledge but according to Shusterman, they can be also dangerous exemplifications.

Limit-transgression deals with many sorts of issues. One of the crucial features of contemporary dance is the transgression of movement conventions but one would mention the lack of storyline that liberates interpretation. Questioning the social norms and using a refined form of nudity on the stage are also limit-transgression in some way. These limit-transgressions can induce positive changes – both artistically and socially.

The exclusion was always a painful experience for Frenák, thus limit-transgression became one of his crucial traits. "As a child I was always on the periphery, full of uncertainty and emotion, constantly looking for something to hold on to" – says Frenák (Péter 2009, 19.). As a child he felt that the society rejected his mother because of her disability: "With the sign language she was totally isolated. It hurt me to see my mother as an outcast, to see how ignorant and insensitive people are – so early on, this feeling became ingrained in my character" (Péter 2009, 14.). He always felt as an outsider. In the orphanage, through a barred window

Frenák was observing the Lake Balaton for seven years. His new creation entitled *Birdie* is about the walls, the physical and emotional boundaries within ourselves and about the way in which our imagination creates a completely new reality to survive. Isolation and loneliness determined his life because of the suffering in his childhood.

Frenák as a child experienced that "physical pain alleviates spiritual agony" (Péter 2009, 19.). Physical pain in the orphanage gave him the feeling of liberation. He danced before the mirror and experimented with his own body. Later, through his experiences, Frenák learned the manner of psychosomatic curing. He made the same ritual subconsciously that later, Deleuze wrote about the figure on the painting of Bacon: his body attempted to escape from itself, and the mute scream – that is so common in Frenák's choreographies – was "the operation through which the entire body escapes through the mouth" (Deleuze 2004, 28.).

In the philosophy of Foucault and Deleuze, the body is a social object filled with signs of the institutionalized power. Frenák in his works tries to question the social norms and expectations. *The Hidden Men*[8] for example "holds a special mirror in front of us, in which we can see the „Macho", the „Narcissus" and also „Hercules", and we can closely examine the archetypes of man. Frenák alternately calls up male chauvinist violence, stupid pretentiousness, the balance of power that structures our exchanges with others."[9] Frenák offers us a radical vision; he probes male sexuality through its different aspects.

According to *Thinking Through the Body*

[s]ocial norms and ethical values can sustain their power without any need to make them explicit and enforced by laws; they are implicitly observed and enforced through our bodily habits, including habits of feeling (which have bodily roots) […] Any successful challenge of oppression should thus involve somaesthetic diagnosis of the bodily habits and feelings that express that domination so that they, along with the oppressive social conditions that generate them, can be overcome. (Shusterman 2012, 31-32.)

When Frenák or his dancers put on an animal's habits and typical characters of birds, they transgress the limit between a man and an animal. For example, in his works entitled *Un*, a faun-like figure (somewhere between the human and the animal world), the focus is being put on the first solo. And Frenák turns to Deleuze again: Gilles Deleuze wrote in one of his essays, that "if I try to sum up what I find so remarkable about animals, the first thing might be that each animal has its own universe. This is so interesting or bizarre, because so many humans do not have their own universes and they live a life just like anybody else. Or rather, any life, for anyone."[10] How does our life become really authentic, our own? According to Deleuze, the key is heightened sensitivity and immediate action.

"Dance may be the most paradigmatic of somatic arts" – says Shusterman in *Thinking Through the Body* (Shusterman 2012, 8.). But instead of interpreting it, Shusterman turns to the practice of movements. In my opinion, philosophy has to deal with artists' oeuvre if those life-works are authentic and homogeneous because of their special universe, and especially because of their special philosophy. Frenák would be the exemplification of the artistic aesthetic existence that is analyzable through analytic somaesthetics. Rich aesthetic existence must be uttered by words. We would know nothing about certain artists and philosopher's works or lives without descriptions. I think somaesthetics shouldn´t exclude the possibility of the interpretation of a dancer's life-work. The fundamental theoretical bases are founded in somaesthetics.

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[8] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vN1lIe4DvLk
[2017.12.03] Trailer of The HiddenMen
[9] http://frenak.hu/production.php?idx=50 [20.07.2017.]

[10] http://frenak.hu/production.php?idx=180
[20.07.2017.]

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As close as possible to the ungraspable – Somaesthetical
and Deleuzian investigations on the choreographical work of Pál Frenák
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DEMOCRATIZING SINGING: SOMAESTHETIC REFLECTIONS ON VOCALITY, DEAF VOICES, AND LISTENING

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ABSTRACT: One of our basic needs as human beings is to be connected with each other. We want to be heard and understood. Our bodies are capable of producing a great variety of different vocal sounds for our communication. However, we have countless unspoken norms in our culture about who can use their voices, in what kind of situations, and in what ways. These norms are usually based on the skills and abilities of a "normal body". They are maintained by the conventions of listening that focus on the vocal sounds and skills. This is especially the case what comes to singing. The nonnormative voices and bodies are easily left outside the realm of aesthetic expression. In this article, I discuss these issues from the somaesthetic and pragmatist point of view using a deaf popular music singer as my example.

Keywords: singing, voice, listening, somaesthetics, body, skill, deafness, democratization

Introduction

Every now and then I come across a singing performance that really moves me. These performances not only seem to touch me, but they also seem to change me in some way. I found this kind of performance by change, when I ended up watching the video "Deaf Girl Singing *Someone Like You*" on the YouTube. In this video, a deaf teenage girl sings the 2011 hit song "Someone Like You" of the British pop-singer Adele. The video was uploaded to the YouTube in 2012, and by the spring 2017 it had received over 600 000 views and 3700 comments.[1]

It seemed that the performance of this singer had moved not only me, but many others as well. The video had raised a lot of heated conversation and comments with attitudes varying from admiring to abusive. They were the negative comments that really made me think about the norms of singing and listening in our culture — the ways we perceive and understand different voices and how strongly these voices affect us. It felt almost inconceivable, how much hatred and disgust this

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[1] https://youtu.be/Gb0SX9bYyTc
(published 17.3.2012, cited 14.2.2017)

performance had raised in some of the listeners, especially when my own listening experience had been so elevating. Fortunately, most of the comments were positive. But even with many of these well-meant comments I was wondering, if there was any aesthetic appreciation behind them.

Nevertheless, one of the comments differed notably from the other ones. It caught my attention, as it seemed that the listener had found something deeply meaningful in the performance. He had been able to sense the performance from an aesthetic point of view — even if the singing did not meet the traditional aesthetic criteria of western pop-singing (e.g. singing in tune, clear articulation). Evidently, the listener had understood the expression of the singer on a deeper level:

> "There's something captured here in your performance that is so beautiful that most people won't understand it. Outside of the tangible concepts of music like melody, harmony, and rhythm, there lies the things that are often forgotten, for they take a keen ear and an open heart to be realized. The color, texture, soul, emotion, the reason that the music was ever brought into existence: this is what makes it beautiful. You have opened my eyes to this intangible concept in it's purest form and I thank you." […] (YouTube comment of a listener)

1. Vocal needs

As human beings we have a need to express our emotions and thoughts vocally. This need has many dimensions from the affective bodily impulses to the need of conceptual communication. We want to be heard and understood by others in order to become valid members of our social groups. We also want to connect with our surroundings with our voices — inhabit our acoustic environments vocally. We use our voices to release the affective and emotional pressures from our bodies: we cry, scream, roar, laugh, babble, and mumble. We also use our voices to create developed and nuanced utterances of speech and singing.

There is still, however, one important reason why we are so eager to use our voices: the pure enjoyment of it. This aspect is, however, often forgotten when we talk

about the vocal behaviour of our species. The bodily sensations and pleasures are particularly constitutive in singing, as it is an aesthetic realm of vocalizing. The vibrations of the tissues and cavities of one's body, the inner body movements of breathing and vocalizing, and the changing affective intensities inside the body are at the center of somaesthetic vocal experience.

In spite of all this, it should be remembered that not all of us feel comfortable using their voices, let alone enjoy it. Not all of us find vocalizing natural or necessary for them. There are people who cannot vocalize due to physical or mental conditions. There are also people who would like to use their voices but who find it difficult due to the undesirable characteristics of their voices and the common attitudes on how the voice should sound like. This last group is the one I am particularly interested in, as many of us have had some kind of difficulties to adjust their voices to the social demands and aesthetic ideals of our culture.

As vocally cultivated adults we usually monitor our voices and vocal expressions at some extent. Our vocalizations are rarely sheer outbursts of bodily impulses. Klaus R. Scherer (1994), professor of psychology, has introduced the theory of push and pull effects – the raw emotional vocalizations and the restraining effect of culture on them. Even though this kind of dichotomy may be too simplistic, it can still work as a starting point in the examination of how we culturally control our voices and how our vocal expressions come into being at the intersection of body and culture.

John Dewey (1934/2005, 65) points out that it is, indeed, the blending of the natural and the cultivated that turns the social intercourse to the works of art. He diffentiates the "acts of expression" from the "mere acts of discharge". According to him, excitement is elemental for expression, but there is more to expression:

> "Yet an inner agitation that is discharged at once in a laugh or cry, passes away with its utterance. To discharge is to get rid of, to dismiss; to express is to stay by, to carry forward in

development, to work out to completion. A gush of tears may bring relief, a spasm of destruction may give outlet to inward rage. But where there is no administration of objective conditions, no shaping of materials in the interest of embodying the excitement, there is no expression." (Ibid., 64)

Dewey writes about the original native tendencies of the body. The tendency of the vocal apparatus to make sounds is one of them. These tendencies don't require practicing or perfecting. Instead, they are the spontaneous ways in which the organism responds to the changes in its environment as well as makes changes itself. These tendencies are in line with the needs of the organism. For example, we impulsively withdraw our hand from the hot object in order not to burn our hand. There is no intellectual consideration needed in this act. (Ibid., 63.)

As much as we would like to control our bodily impulses and the sounds ejecting from our bodies, there will always be sounds and vocalizations that are left outside the realm of organization. There are, for example, moments of surprise and slackening when the body may release noises that are beyond our direct control. Someone spooks me in the dark and I find myself making a sharp shriek before I even notice. Or eating a delicious meal I may find myself making "mmm"-sound almost unconsciously. The sounds of grunting, groaning, giggling, screaming, crying, hiccupping, and coughing seem to be produced *by* the body rather than being produced *with* the body. They are manifestations of the "native tendencies" of our bodies.

Singing, in spite of being highly structured and skill-bound activity, still contains elements of surprise that are out of one's reach. One may have physiological difficulties with her vocal organs and therefore her voice may act unexpectedly. The voice may, for example, break down or change its pitch abruptly. But it is not only in the vocal difficulties that the body may lead the singing. It is in the best flow experiences of singing, indeed, that the voice feels to be produced by the body

itself, without constant control and manipulation of the vocal organs. It may be surprising, how easily the sound issues from the body in the experiences like this. In singing, the movements of diaphragm, intercostal muscles, vocal cords, tongue, oral cavity, and so on are the objects of cultivation, practicing, and control. But skillful singing is not only about the bodily control. It is also about letting go of the control.

When sensing singing in a somaesthetic manner — with the body consciousness — it feels that the divide to "natural" and "cultural" is faded out. It is hard to say, what aspects of the singing are based on the natural tendencies of the body and what are based on the learned movements of the vocal apparatus. The bodily impulses and the habitual body movements learned through countless repetitions melt into one in the experience. This is not always the case in singing. The body/mind-divide we are accustomed to in our culture, creates experiences, where the body appears to be an instrument that is controlled by the mind. Here the divide to "natural" and "cultural" may appear quite dominant in one's experience.

It is not only in the somaesthetic experiences but also in the somaesthetic theory that the culture and body are fundamentally intertwined. Richard Shusterman (2012, 4, 27, 31) has pointed out that culture does not only shape our bodily appearance and behaviour but the ways we experience our bodies as well. The embodied actions, in turn, keep the culture animated and alive.

When we say that some action is "cultivated" or "organized", it does not mean that there are no impulsive bodily dimensions at play — likewise, when we say that some action is "bodily" or "natural" does not mean that it lacks organization. The philosopher David Michael Levin (Kleinberg-Levin) (1989, 98–100) has argued that the lived body has needs and potentials it strives to fulfill and organize outside the domain of language and representational thinking. Levin argues that body "in itself" is not a body of primitive drives, that is totally disorganized, chaotic and without structures and meaning. He writes:

"The tired body-self orders sleep: that is to say, it structures, needs, demands, and organizes itself for, the coming of sleep. Similarly, the hungry body-self orders food […] These are examples of very basic, organismically organized structures, needs, and demands. But the […] a body-self, has […] many other kinds of needs, and many needs whose realization, recognition, or satisfaction directly bear on social and political policy." (Ibid., 100)

I argue here, that body has a potential and need to express its affects, feelings, and sensations vocally – as well as to enjoy the proprioceptive and interoceptive experience of vocalizing.[2]

2. Vocal norms

As human beings we have a great vocal potential as we are capable of producing a huge variety of different vocal sounds. Why is it then that we use only a small part of this potential in our everyday lives? Why is our everyday vocality so restricted? The complex rules of speaking (language) and singing (music) may easily overrule the bodily-vocal needs. Konstantinos Thomaidis and Ben Macpherson (2015), researchers of the voice studies, have argued that the "tyrannies of understanding" dominate the human voice in our culture by restraining the voice to the fields of language and music.

In order to be communicative and stable, language has to have certain rules. Musical styles have also the rules of their own, so that they can remain comparatively unstable. Douglas Dempster (1998 in Mithen 2005, 20-21), a philosopher of music, portray those rules as "enormous aesthetic pressures". I think that these pressures of language and music have a significant impact on the singer's body. For example, the clear articulation requires controlled and highly-skilled movements of tongue, lips, jaw, and other muscles of mouth and face. For some bodies, the execution of these rules comes easily, while others have major difficulties

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[2] With the proprioceptive and interoceptive senses one can feel the inner sensations of the body.

executing them. Some bodies are not able to fulfill these demands at all — and are usually expected to remain silent.

The singer's role in the western music is to follow the orders of a composer, to reproduce the song in an intended way. Singer is there to produce certain kinds of vocal sounds in certain order. She is there for the sake of sound — not vice versa. Nina Sun Eidsheim (2015, 698), a researcher of singing, has criticized this tradition. She argues that in this tradition singer's task is to replicate the ideal sound, and therefore she is forced to mould her body according to those sounds.

Could it be, however, that songs have originally evolved from the need to enjoy one's own voice and elevate one's feelings with voice? Could it be that song as an aesthetic object originally arose from the repetitions of the most pleasurable movements of the muscles of the vocal apparatus? If the song-form is originally rooted in the rhythms and movements of the body, it seems quite peculiar, that singer should perform a song correctly no matter how much struggle and pain it may cause to her. And if songs are made for bodies to enjoy, why is it that the bodies incapable of reproducing songs in a correct manner are told they are better when quiet?

Helen Phelan (2017, 63), a researcher of ritual singing, has articulated that we should consider changing our focus from the song to the singer. This way we could move from the inspection of the repertoire to the potentials of human body. Phelan writes: "[…] we might ask what kind of singing suits a child's voice? An elderly person's voice? What kind of singing is good for our bodies?" (Ibid.)

In Dewey's aesthetics, the elements of form are rooted in the rhythms of nature and body (Dewey 1934/2005, 153, see also Shusterman 2000, 7). Dewey seems to emphasize, however, the rhythms of the environment (nature) and doing (work) over the rhythms of the body itself. He reminds that focusing solely to the rhythms of the living body when explaining the interest in rhythm in arts is to separate the organism from its environment. The blood circulation, movements of breathing, or movements of the legs and arms cannot be the only explanations to why we enjoy different rhythms in the arts. Dewey (1934/2005, 156-157) points out, that human being was connected to her environment long before she gave any thought or interest to her own mental states.

It may well be that modern human is more aware of her bodily and mental states than ever before. Therefore this is a perfect time to reconsider the aesthetic experience from the bodily point of view as well. Dewey alerts us not to separate the organism from its environment, but we shouldn't separate the environment from the organism either. From the somaesthetic point of view, isn't it that the rhythms of the environment and work are also the rhythms of the body, and they have an impact to our mental states as well?

When I sing, there are usually some rhythms in my environment to which I adjust my singing. They may be, for example, the rhythms of instruments, other singers, or the acoustic properties of a room. They affect the rhythms of my body, like the breathing cycle, or the speed of my articulatory movements. Therefore the rhythms of my environment become the rhythms of my body to the greatest extent. In addition, I understand these rhythms with my body. Something is "too fast" when it is hard for my articulation to keep up with it, or it is too slow when I cannot, for example, prolong my breathing according to it.

Bodily experience may well not be the only explanation to why our songs and vocal behaviour have developed the way they have, but I think it could be an important one. Maybe the roots of singing are more connected to the inhabitation of the environment and on communicating with others than they are to the sensations of the singers' bodies. But somehow I believe that the experiences of pleasure and ease — as well as the joy of conquering the bodily-vocal challenges — have guided the ways we use our voices. I think it would be justified to argue that our vocal behaviour have formed,

at least partly, according to what feels suitable and pleasurable for the human body.

Shusterman (2008, 26, 80) has articulated that different bodily techniques and manners in our culture are based on different somaesthetics. There are representational, performative, and experiential somaesthetics to be found in the bodily practices of our culture, like sports, yoga, dancing, and singing. The representational somaesthetics refers to the techniques and manners that concentrate on the body's external appearance. The performative somaesthetics is focused on building bodily power and performance, as well as developing skills. The experiential somaesthetics is focused on the somatic experience itself. (Ibid.)

The somaesthetics of representation dominates our culture. In the social sciences it has been argued, likewise, that we are living in a culture of appearances (Liimakka 2013). The culture of appearances affects our vocal behaviour as well. We have adopted performance- and appearance-oriented attitudes. We reach for the vocal ideals established by pedagogies and vocal role models (singers, actors, and so on). The main focus is often on producing a "good", "beautiful", and "clear" voice that can tolerate long-term strain. We have a tendency to focus on vocal sounds as heard – consequently, the bodily experience and the pleasure of vocalizing as such are far too often disregarded. This kind of sound-centered approach is characteristic to the western music traditions (cf Eisheim 2015, McKerrell 2012).

Vocal norms do not only stand for the articulate communication and aesthetically pleasing sounds. They also embody the broader cultural conceptions of health and normality. When using voice, we do not only communicate the conceptual meanings and musical forms — we also communicate the state of our bodies. Medicalization of voice differentiates the "healthy" and "hygienic" voices from the "disordered" ones. The definitions of organization and disorganization of the voice are vehicles of power relations as well.

As a vocal pedagogue myself, I don't intend to diminish the benefits that the vocal pedagogies and therapies offer us. Instead, I want to raise some thoughts on the fact that the objectives of these trades are not only determined from the wellbeing of the body, but there are also implicit cultural power relations that are reflected to these practices — for example, the need to control and organize the body in certain ways, and emphasize the normalcy of the body.

What we hear in our everyday lives, are mainly normative voices — voices that we are used to hear, voices that stand for health and normality, voices that carry the communicative messages and aesthetic contents in an efficient way. Luckily, the vocal norms are not set in stone. They change in our cultural and bodily practices all the time. The ways we vocally inhabit our world — what kind of vocal sounds we make in our daily lives — is not insignificant. With our vocal utterances we can maintain, challenge, or even change the vocal norms of our culture. With the nonnormative vocal sounds we can keep our vocal culture "animated and alive".

Speaking with a creaky voice was not a norm until recently, when it has become fashionable among young women (Yuasa 2010). These voices irritated many of us at the beginning, but now we seem to be more or less adapted to them. The thing in getting used to hear only certain kind of voices is that we easily cringe when we hear voices that don't fit the norms. From these bodily sensations of abrupt unexpectedness it is easy to fall into judgmental attitudes towards their cause.

The journalist Charlie Swinbourne writes in his Guardian-magazine article about deaf voices in our culture. According to him, the hearing people rarely hear deaf voices in their everyday lives, and therefore those voices feel alien to them. This "alienness" does not mean that the deaf voices were somehow less natural — they are just as natural as the voices of the hearing. Swinbourne himself is used to deaf voices since his mother is deaf — therefore the fact that other hearing find these voices alien seems quite odd from his perspective.

In the Deaf culture, vocality is a two-sided question. On the one hand, for many Deaf the Sign Language is the native language, and there is no need for vocality. On the other hand, in order to use their voices, Deaf are expected to adjust to the vocal norms of the hearing culture. The hearing aids are strongly imposed in order to make their listening more auditive, and speech therapy is provided in order to mould their voices to meet the communicative demands of the hearing culture.

I was quite shocked when one of the informants of my ongoing research, a Deaf woman, told me how the deaf are forbid to use their voices. From the early stages of their lives, all the vocal and bodily sounds are restrained. When I first met her, she told me that "she never uses her voice". Later on she recalled a memory from 10 years ago, when she attended a drama class where everyone were supposed to shout out loud. She found it extremely hard, almost impossible to do.

The cultural and social norms are inscribed deep into our bodies. In many nonnormative vocal situations the mere willpower is not enough to get over the fear and anxiety that these situations may cause. Shusterman (2012, 32) gives an example of a secretary who tries to raise her voice to her superior, and she ends up crying. As we can see, the cultivation of the voice — as necessary as it is — has its challenges. I think there should be more open discussion on the vocal norms and how they affect our bodily-vocal wellbeing, as well as the freedom to express ourselves.

3. Listening

In many of the YouTube comments on the deaf girl's singing, there were evaluations made whether she is a "good" or a "bad" singer. People seemed to be so hasty making this judgement that they probably missed the singer's performance more or less entirely. Some of the people were plain furious, because the performance did not meet their conceptions of singing at all.

Normative listening strives to evaluate and categorize first, and only after that it aims to understand another human being on a deeper level. In this kind of listening the will to understand evolves only if the vocal performance has fulfilled the criteria of "normal voice" or "good singing". With normative listening, we try to evaluate whether the singer is worth listening to. Most of us are not willing to make the effort to listen to a person who cannot deliver the singing in a "proper" way.

In the disability studies it has been brought forth that people tend to look at or stare at the people with disabilities in certain ways. These modes of staring consist of pity, amazement, horror, and awe. (Howe et al. 2016, 7, see also Garland-Thomson 2009) I think these modes could be applicable to listening as well. These kinds of attitudes of listening can be found in the YouTube comments of my research material. Here are some examples:

> Pity: "she would be really good if she wasn't deaf I can hear it. I feel bad"
> Amazement: "How did you learn how to sing to tune?? O: This is absolutely amazing. And no people, even though she doesn't sing like Adele doesn't mean it isn't amazing how she can carry a tune and know how it goes. That is remarkable...."
> Horror: "MY LUNGS ITS LITERALLY SO HORRIBLE"
> Awe: "She's an inspiration. I admire her she [is] great[.]"
> (YouTube comments of the listeners)

Dewey (1934/2005, 54-55) differentiates perception from recognition. He writes: "The difference between the two is immense. Recognition is perception arrested before it has a change to develop freely." (Ibid. 54) In recognition, we use stereotypes, previously formed schemes, and bare identification. It cannot "arouse vivid consciousness". In perception, instead, "consciousness becomes fresh and alive". (Ibid. 54-55)

People may look at, recognize, and name the works of art, but if they don't continuously interact with the objects, they cannot perceive them aesthetically. In other words, listener has to create her own experience, recreate the object in her own experience. Dewey makes

a good statement here: "The one who is too lazy, idle, or indurated in convention to perform this work will not see or hear." He continues that even if there were admiration in this kind of act, it would be bound by the norms of conventionality. (Ibid. 56)

It seems to me that many of the YouTube comments are conventional by their nature. It feels like the phrases of "amazing", "wonderful", or "awful" was repeated almost mechanically. There are no signs of continuous interaction with the singer's performance, or any nuanced aesthetic appreciation.

Maybe the listeners felt disappointed, even angry, that they were not able to get an aesthetic experience out of what they were listening to. Here we can ask, however: should they be disappointed for the singer, who was not able to offer them the proper elements for the experience or should they be disappointed for themselves, as they were not able to recreate the aesthetic experience out of the elements offered to them?

Shusterman (Shusterman 2000, 16-17) has pointed out that Dewey's argument against classificatory distinctions is valuable, as it shows us how those classifications affect our thinking and perception. They become fixed, standardized, and limited thus diminishing the richness and creativity of our experiences. Dewey (1934/2005, 235) writes: "There are obstructions enough in any case in the way of genuine expression. The rules that attend classification add one more handicap."

In the context of this article, the Dewey's choice of word "handicap" is quite apt, as I am trying to articulate that the normative listening itself can be considered as being "disabled" in its own way. If the normative listening is something that prevents us from hearing another human being — I mean really to hear her — then this kind of listening can be considered as being "limited" or "disabled".

In our interaction with other people, instead of labelling the other being "disabled", "inept", or "bad", should we, instead, try to consider our own limitations first? What are the things in me that prevent me from hearing and understanding that other person? And could I get over them?

Levin (1989) has written about *hearkening* or preconceptual listening. It is a listening without preoccupations, normalizations, or an instrumental, or manipulative relationship to things. It is a listening that involves the whole body, "listening attuned through feeling". (Ibid. 21-22, 25, 48) When we give up the need to understand another person on the conceptual level, we can find a deeper understanding. Just like in the YouTube comment earlier, where the listener had understood the singer's expression by listening it "with an open heart".

Phelan (2017, 9) has articulated that communication and belonging in singing is not necessarily happening on the cognitive or rational level. She writes: "The communicative power of singing is strongest at a physiological and emotive level. The ability to communicate beneath cognitive and rational structures is proposed as one of the key ways in which song facilitates belonging." (Ibid) From this point of view, listening to singing through the judgmental and rational categorizations not only seems to ignore another human being, but is also an inadequate way of listening to singing from the point of view of communication and belonging.

McKerrell (2012, 88) reminds us that in the field of ethnomusicology, the bodily and holistic ways of approaching musical sounds go far back in the history. He writes that "a pragmatic somaesthetic approach to musical aesthetics is a good starting point for understanding the rich meanings constructed in hearing music." (Ibid) He states that understanding musical sounds is not referential but proprioceptive. Sounds embody the somatically understood aesthetic categories of a culture. This way the sounds can create bonds between the listeners and the performers — and these bonds go beyond the sonic. McKerrell points out that in this kind of approach the body's focus is turned from the meanings and power relations to the perception of the other. (Ibid) The somaesthetic approach in listening can really lead us to encounter others.

4. Belonging

As human beings, it is important for us to become heard, understood, and accepted the way we are. Our vocality is deeply connected with our basic need for communion. It is an essential part of belonging to the humankind. It is not only important for us to experience our emotions, but also to show them to others with our bodies and vocal expressions (Frank 1988 in Mithen 2005, 88).

The aesthetic experiences help us to maintain the aliveness and fullness of our lives. It makes the life more meaningful and tolerable. (Dewey 1934/2005, 138, 199; Shusterman 2000, 10) Being so, doesn't it seem only fair that all of us had the opportunity to express ourselves in an aesthetic manner? It should not be a privilege of only a certain kind of bodies.

Shusterman (2000, 10) has pointed out, that the aesthetic experiences are not only limited to the aesthetic acts themselves, but they also have an impact to the life more extensively. He writes about the work-songs: "The work-song sung in the harvest fields not only provides the harvesters with a satisfying aesthetic experience, but its zest carries over into their work, invigorating and enhancing it and instilling a spirit of solidarity that lingers long after the song and work are finished." (Ibid

In our culture, however, there are no work-singing anymore. The singing, like other tasks in our lives as well, are quite differentiated from each other — we have separate times for working and singing. It is also characteristic for our culture, that our bodies are specialized to conduct only certain actions. While most of us don't sing in our everyday lives, we do have the professional singers who sing "for us" — sometimes to the point that they wear out their vocal organs and lose their voices. At the same time many of us work long hours behind the office desks and ruin our backs with all the sitting.

The specializing of the bodies makes our lives more repetitive and monotonous, and narrows our experiences as well. We can ask, is this really the price

we want to pay in order to get the most highly skilled bodies to perform the tasks for us that we feel not competent enough to do ourselves? Why do we separate the singing bodies (singers) from the listening bodies (audiences) in our culture? This obviously has something to do with the market economy: there have to be producers as well as consumers. Songs and singing voices have become commodities. No record company would make any profit, if everyone would just sing for each other in their everyday lives, fulfilling their vocal-aesthetic needs by singing, not by buying records.

The somaesthetics criticizes the bodily practices that fragment, measure, alienate, commodify, and reduce the body to an object or instrument. It resists the normative standards of beauty. Instead, it understands "the body's subject-role as the living locus of beautiful, personal experience". (Shusterman 2000, 274) From this point of view, vocal somaesthetics[3] should resist the vocal ideologies and practices that, for example, commodify singing, instrumentalize the body, and seek to maintain the conventional norms of beauty of the singing voice. Instead, it emphasizes the value of diverse voices as well as the value of body as the locus of diverse vocal experiences.

It is often heard that people who "cannot sing" are advised "to sing only in the shower", by themselves. One may ask, why everyone should be allowed to sing in public, is it not enough to enjoy one's own voice in privacy? Phelan's accounts on *belonging* should answer this question.

Phelan (2017) approaches singing as cultural and ritual activity. She writes a "theory of sung belonging" that includes resonance, somatics, performance, temporality, and tacitness as the key elements that connect us to each other when we sing. Through performance, human voice does not only have a special

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[3] Vocal somaesthetics is an approach I have been developing lately on the basis on somaesthetics, ethnomusicology, and voice studies. It is focused on the somaesthetics of our vocal behaviour: vocalizing and listening to other peoples' vocalizations. (Tarvainen 2016; 2018, upcoming)

relationship to physiological body but also to social body. All kind of sonic communication is more or less performative, but in singing this performativity is at the heart of it. This creates shared experiences as well as a sense of togetherness and belonging. (Ibid. 9)

Phelan makes an excellent point when stating that body is not only a passive representor of the cultural values. Instead, it is active agent in generating them. One of the values that body can produce with its vocality and kinesthesia is the value of belonging. (Ibid. 79) These arguments support the fact that with different voices and diverse public vocal performances we can, in fact, have an impact on the vocal norms of our culture.

Phelan (2017, 14) points out that there are different kinds of belongings that can be created through singing. Some of them are based on hatred, elitism, and exclusion. Others are based on openness, inclusivity, and belonging. Needless to say, that the latter ones further the democracy in singing, while the former ones may well prevent it from happening.

In Dewey's thinking, there is also an emphasis on the social dimension of the aesthetic experiences. Heightened experiences are memorable usually because they are shared. (Shusterman 2000, 28) There is a strong emphasis on togetherness in Dewey's conception of democracy as well. He sees democracy, not only as a form of government, but most of all a way of living together and communicate experience. It is to share the interests and to take into account other people's actions in one's own actions. It is a way of communication that breaks the barriers of race, class, and national territories. (Dewey 1916/1997, 87)

It is a common conception that the YouTube and other channels of social media advance democracy in our culture. They do, indeed, make it possible for a huge number of people to share their performances and opinions in public. But do they solely enhance democracy between individuals?

When I think about the video on the YouTube, the deaf girl's performance itself really questions the vocal norms of our culture and therefore creates new experiences that can, for their part, revise the vocal values of our culture. Thanks to this performance, 600 000 people, who otherwise may not have heard deaf singing, heard it. Some of the listeners may have even learned to listen to a deaf voice in an appreciative manner. In the comments there were, however, a lot of undemocratizing elements as well. Some of the comments replicated the modes of watching and listening that are common when people encounter disabilities. And of course, the plain hatred expressed in some of the comments tells us a lot about how much there is still to be done before people can communicate in a democratic way.

Dewey (1939/1998, 341) emphasizes that democracy is not an external ideology or a given way of thinking. It is a way of life, and the responsibility of democracy is on the individuals. Our attitudes towards other people in our everyday lives define how well the democracy comes true. Getting over our prejudices is a key factor here. (Ibid) It is also a crucial part of democracy that every one of us has a change to develop in their skills.

According to Dewey, intolerance, suspicion, abuse, fear, hatred, and calling of names because of differences destroy the democratic way of life even more effectively than open coercion and totalitarianism. (Ibid. 342) This kind of behaviour sets up communication barriers and divides us from each other. For Dewey "the task of democracy is forever that of creation of a freer and more humane experience in which all share and to which all contribute." (Ibid.,343)

5. Encountering different bodies

In the disability studies, Tobin Siebers (2010) has discussed the body's essential role in the aesthetic experience. He refers to the thinking of Alexander Baumgarten when he writes: "Aesthetics tracks the sensations that some bodies feel in the presence of other bodies" (Ibid. 1). Human body's affective relation to other bodies — the ability to transform emotions, and the ability to express human vitality — is at the center

here. Siebers reminds us that not all bodies are alike or equal in respect to aesthetic experiences. Some bodies may feel more pleasing to us than others. He writes: "Taste and disgust are volatile reactions that reveal the ease or disease with which one body might incorporate another." (Ibid) According to him, the bodily reactions create the basis for the aesthetic effects — for example, what can be felt as beautiful and what cannot. (Ibid)

Shusterman (2012, 29) has pointed out that bodies unite us, we all have a human body that ties us to the human kind. At the same time, bodies divide us through their physical differences and according to how those differences are socio-culturally interpreted. We are divided, for instance, into different genders, races, and ethnicities. (Ibid)

Shusterman (2012, 29-30) argues that the prejudices we have towards others are rooted deep into our somatic experience. He writes: "Most ethnic and racial hostility is the product not of rational thought but of deep prejudices that are somatically marked in terms of vague uncomfortable feelings aroused by alien bodies, feelings that are experienced implicitly and thus engrained beneath the level of explicit consciousness." (Ibid) (Shusterman 2012, 29-30) This is why the arguments for tolerance made in the rational level do not usually have an impact. In addition, we are often in denial, what comes to recognizing and admitting these kinds of feelings. This "deep visceral quality" of intolerance is also connected to the concepts of integrity and purity of the body in a given culture. (Shusterman 2008, 127-128; 2012, 30; 2014, 9-10) (Shusterman 2012, 30; Shusterman 2014, 9-10; Shusterman 2008, 127-128.)

Siebers (2010, 2) has articulated that the feelings of pleasure and disgust are intertwined with the political feelings of acceptance and rejection. Therefore, I think that it is not indifferent what kind of bodily attitudes of watching and listening we maintain in our lives. The bodily attitudes and reactions have an influence on how tolerant our culture is in its essence.

Shusterman (2012, 29) suggests that the prejudices could be overcome by developing the somatic awareness. By becoming aware of our uncomfortable bodily feelings towards other bodies it could be possible to free one-self from those feelings. (Ibid) Shusterman (2014, 10) argues that these feelings are not innate. They are the products of learning and habit, and therefore they also can be reformed by learning.

The ideals of purity and uniformity of the body are often behind these judgmental feelings and reactions. By facing the impurity and mixed nature of one's own body it will be possible to overcome the confused feelings towards other bodies. (Shusterman 2008, 131-132; see also Dobrowolski 2014, 129-131). Maybe facing the disabilities and imperfections in other people may help us to face and accept them in ourselves as well — after all, we all have unique bodies that are never completely "perfect" or "pure". Our bodies are always vulnerable, prone to sickness and injuries.

Robin Dobrowolski, is on the same page with Shusterman here. He writes about encountering the Other from the somaesthetic point of view. He deliberates the bodily challenges at the encounters between different bodies — and how the somaesthetics could answer to these challenges.

Dobrowolski (2014, 129) argues that it is not enough to understand the Other at the level of language. It may even require concrete touching to develop aesthetic sympathy towards the Other. He writes: "The meaning of declarations, even those made in good faith, may take very long to really sink in and nestle in our innards, or may even fail to do so at all. Empty words always miss physical fulfillment." (Ibid)

When we communicate through our voices, it is usually not the words that disturb us, but rather "the unique, sensual, material way in which they are uttered." (Ibid.) (Dobrowolski 2014, 129) The comments on the YouTube video that I have discussed here, is a great example of this. It is not the song or the lyrics that were attacked to, but the unique way they were vocalized.

Siebers (2010) has developed a concept of *disability aesthetics*. He argues that disabled bodies and minds

have had an important role in the modern aesthetics, and this is what he wants to highlight. The influence of disability to modern art has been so obvious that it has stayed almost unnoticed. Disability aesthetics does not only deal with disabled artists or certain themes in art, in addition, it is more extensive view on the aesthetic values of art. Siebers writes: "Disability aesthetics refuses to recognize the representation of the healthy body — and its definition of harmony, integrity, and beauty — as the sole determination of the aesthetic. Rather, disability aesthetics embraces beauty that seems by traditional standards to be broken, and yet it is not less beautiful, but more so, as a result." (Ibid. 2-3) (Siebers 2010, 2-3.)

Human variation and differences are at the core of the disability aesthetics. This kind of aesthetics broadens our view of art as well as humanity. (Ibid. 3) (Siebers 2010, 3) It questions our traditional aesthetic values and presuppositions. It is a critical way of exploring how "some bodies make other bodies feel." (Ibid. 20) (Siebers, 2010, 20) In the disability aesthetics the diversity and variety of bodies is seen as an asset.

Dewey (1916/1997, 87) has pointed out that participating in activities with different people makes these encounters more varied. There is "a greater diversity of stimuli to which an individual has to respond" and this makes our own actions more varied as well. (Ibid) In other words, encountering different bodies adds variety to our lives and therefore enriches our being.

Surbaugh (2009, 421) has brought out the concern, that lack of varied stimulations from the environment may be a real somatic thread to the people with disabilities. I think this thread is undeniably acute to the people with disabilities, especially if they are excluded from the aesthetic practices of our culture. But I think this is also a thread to all of us, if our daily encounters happen only with the familiar normative bodies and normative actions. This may actually monotonize the movements and vocal sounds of our bodies — and the whole way we are in the contact with our environment

and with other people. When our communication is one-sidedly concentrated on the conceptual contents and correct forms of our utterances we may lose the vitality, empathy and the ability of being present in our encounters.

For Dewey (1934/2005, 26), aesthetic experiences are something that enriches and broadens our lives. I think we all need aesthetic experiences that are not highly controlled, repetitive, mechanical, technical, similar, orthodox, or "good" in a traditional sense. Encountering different kinds of bodies and varied bodily expressions in the aesthetic realm is probably one of the best ways to expand our experience — to learn to watch and listen with open eyes and ears without conventional categorizations and judgements.

The aesthetic potential of the body and voice is culturally constructed on the basis of spontaneously learned bodily reactions as well as more conscious somaesthetic cultivation. What kind of bodies and voices can be understood as being aesthetic is based on cultural values carved deep in the reactions and manners of our bodies.

6. Skill

Shusterman (2012, 32) writes that the concepts of freedom and unfreedom are essentially linked to the body. Our ability or inability to move our bodies the way we want to, is the basis for the more abstract understandings of freedom and unfreedom. In this light, learning new bodily skills may be seen as an attempt to gain more freedom — more possibilities to move the way we want to. Shusterman reminds us, however, that body also constraints us — it fails and limits our actions. (Ibid.)

Bodily skills are a medium of power. Body is shaped by power, and with the body we maintain power. Norms of health, beauty, and skill reflect the social forces. (Shusterman 2000, 272) These norms are put into practice in our bodies — in the movements and vocal utterances we make. To use one's body skillfully is to

gain power. Therefore it is important to use one's voice skillfully, because with skillful vocalizing we get more positive attention, and people are more willing to listen to us.

Some of us gain power and admiration by perfecting one individual skill to its extreme. Some of us develop their own personal and more varied skillsets. For most of us, learning a new skill is to enrich one's life and gain more feelings of freedom in our actions. Therefore, I want to emphasize that I am not against developing new skills per se. Instead, I would like us to re-evaluate the concept of skill. When skill becomes something that differentiates, judges, and excludes, we should check our conceptions.

Surbaugh (2009, 417) illuminates, how learning is linked with pleasure. According to him, pleasure is as important in learning as is the effort. The surrounding world is more open to us when our actions are enjoyable and our senses are receptive. He points out, that people with disabilities face more often obstacles of pleasure in their environments, and this appears to be a significant educational question.

In my opinion, one of the major obstacles for one's pleasure is the exclusion from the aesthetic realm of one's culture. If one is not allowed to participate in the aesthetic expressions of her culture, she will miss a lot. The essential question to ask here is: what kind of obstacles we have in our culture that prevents some of the people from enjoying the aesthetic pleasure of their own voices?

Among the other YouTube comments, there is a comment from the deaf singer herself. I want to share it here, as the ideal of skill — ability and inability — is so central in her writing:

> "To many of you who discriminated me as a person who could not sing or my speech or my disabilities. Yes, it is very harsh when people discriminate someone's abilities. Yes, I am deaf but it does not mean that I thought that was a "Good Singer" then. I was expressing the words and facing the reality that people would judge. Deaf just define me who I am. I love and listen to

music all my life knowing that people will not accept who I am and always correcting my words. […] Please choose your words wisely. People who have tough life or struggle with their any kind of disabilities are not always open and express their feelings because we all feel in denial. During that time I was going through hard time and getting out of my comfort zone. I was doing it for myself. […] I am very proud of myself that I put it out for the world to see that I am nowhere near perfect. If I had a stutter speech I would have sing anyways. To the people who generously support me with positive statements, I want to say thank you so much. You gave the light in my heart. So many goose bumps from head to toe. I am so touched. Please don't Judge others. Encourage them to make their lives better. <3" (YouTube comment of the singer)

She phrases it well, when she writes about the hardship that people with disabilities meet when trying to express their feelings. The judgmental attitudes and exclusion are, indeed, the kind of obstacles that are on the way of the aesthetic enjoyment of disabled. The aesthetic pressures and rigid vocal norms may well be an obstacle for one to enjoy her own voice aesthetically and share her voicings with others.

The old myth of creativity as a feature of an individual genius is still quite common. Inspiration, autonomy and technique are at the core of this myth. (Siebers 2010, 19) An individual, in order to be worth of our aesthetic attention, should possess notable skills — or at least she should be somehow "extraordinary".

In the popular music singing, the ideal bodies offering the aesthetic experiences for us should be young, thin, beautiful, and talented — and preferably they should possess something unique in their voice. If some of these attributes are lacking in a high profile singer, it will not stay unnoticed. For example, just look at all the column space that Adele's body (weight) and her vocal problems ("lack of technique") have received.

If the aesthetically performing body is disabled, it should have somehow got over the disability thus reclaiming his/her value. A good example of this is the America's Got Talent -singer Mandy Harvey, whose deafness is not hearable in her voice by any means. It is no doubt admirable, how she has recovered her voice

after losing her hearing. She has really deserved all the success and recognition she is enjoying now. From the point of view of a hearing, there is nothing wrong with this kind of success story. From the point of view of a deaf, the state of affairs may be different.

Ocean, a Deaf American blogger, has written about the mixed feelings that Harvey's success has raised in her. On the one hand, she is genuinely happy for her, on the other hand, she wonders, if this is the only way for a deaf person to succeed — to overcome her deafness and fulfill the expectations of the hearing world. She writes:

> "Actually, that becomes the question – just what kind of message does this story send out?
> "Deaf is okay, but being hearing is better" ???
> That if you have a hearing loss – whether mild or profound, you should make every effort to "normalize" yourself to the extent possible: to speak, to lipread…
> …to sing?
> That the more you are able to "overcome your disability" and do these extraordinary things that one wouldn't normally expect from an individual with a hearing loss, the more successful you will be? The more you will be applauded?
> I have a problem with that."
>
> (Ocean 2017, blog post[4])

When we think of a body, we usually think of a normative and abled body. Bowman et al. (2007, 13-14) remind us that bodies are, however, always specific and situated. Bodies differ from each other, for example, in their genders, races, and ages. Bodies are also variously abled. (Ibid.)

There is also not only one kind of deaf body, but as many kinds as there are deaf people. There are varied states of deafness from stone deaf to partially deaf. There are also different ways that the deaf relate to using one's voice: one feel no need to vocalize at all and other, instead, wants to speak and sing. There is also not only one kind of "deaf voice" just like there is not only one kind of "hearing voice".

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[4] https://deafpagancrossroads.com/2017/06/08/mandy-harvey-tried-and-succeeded-and-yet/ (posted 8.6.2017, viewed 29.10.2017)

The philosopher Adriana Cavarero (2005, 11) has stated, that in the history of philosophy the voice has been understood as the "voice of everyone" — as an ideal voice which ends up being the "voice of no one". Voices, like bodies, are always specific. If we write about voice without seeing the diversities and the connections of voice with the body and the power relations of our culture, we may end up writing something that is irrelevant or even incorrect in the case of the real life voices.

Vocal skills are usually defined from the point of view of a "normal" voice and body. The proper technical skill in singing is something that comes naturally enough for the normal body, but at the same time requires certain trained features, so that the body could be said to be a singer's body in difference from the non-singers.

But as our bodies are different in their physical and habitual features, how can we ever define skill as being something similar for all the bodies? And as our bodies are variously abled, how can we judge the skills of another body without knowing how much work those skills have required from that specific body?

Can I ever, as this kind of body, entirely understand another person's bodily experience and her skills? What does a singing skill mean, for example, for a deaf singer? Should I judge her skill by comparing the vocal sounds she makes to the vocal sounds the hearing bodies make? Or should I, instead, appreciate her performance as a skillful and emotionally expressive vocalization of her unique body at this given moment?

7. Aesthetic experience of singing and listening

Dewey (1934/2005, 45-52, 53-58) underlines that in aesthetic experience the balance between doing and undergoing is essential. In singing, just like in any other aesthetic activity, the connection between doing (producing vocal sounds) and undergoing (the awareness of one's own body and voice) is important. Different pitches and timbres not only sound different, but they also feel different in the body. The bodily sensations vary

when producing different sounds, and learning to recognize this connection is important in singing.

When we think about the singer's aesthetic experience, it is not only the auditive aspects of her performance that counts, the proprioceptive and interoceptive sensations are essential as well. Phelan (2017, 9) has articulated that to act as an agent of belonging through singing requires relationship between sound and body, as well as between "involuntary motor-sensory activity and conscious, cognitive manipulation".

Almost every singer has had to face the fact that the inner experience of one's own voice and the voice as heard from the outside may differ from each other significantly. The voice may sound different what the singer intended, or the singer may find that the feelings he/she went through while singing have not been transmitted to the voice. This is most obviously when one hears her own voice on recording.

No matter how hard we try to control our voices, there is always some kind of gap between the inner and the outer. We can never perceive ourselves the way others perceive us. In deaf singing this fact is even more prominent. Without any auditive feedback of one's own voice, one has to rely more on the inner body sensations of singing.

I want to ask, is this some kind of thread in our culture of appearances? As our culture prefers the external impressions, the fact that one can never entirely control those impressions may be frustrating. Listening to a deaf voice may be a painful reminder for this. It may also remind us of our fear of being left alone in our own inner world with no contact to others. I think this is probably how hearing people perceive deafness, even if this is probably quite far from the experiences of the deaf.

What kind of experiences of singing and listening are considered as aesthetic may vary from culture to another. Vocal norms not only determine how we should use our voices, but also what kind of vocal experiences we should have.

In Dewey's aesthetics, the aesthetic experience has been portrayed in many characterizations. It is memorable, satisfying, fulfilling, integrated, intensified, heightened, active, dynamic, and immediate. There are qualities of harmony, unity, cumulation, tension, conservation, anticipation, development, and completion in the aesthetic experiences. Aesthetic experience is "shaped through obstacles and resistance" (Shusterman 2000, 55). In the aesthetic experience the "means and ends, subject and object, doing and undergoing, are integrated into a unity" (Ibid. 55-56), and the qualities of the experience are appreciated "for their own sake" (Ibid. 27). (Dewey 1934/2005, 41-42, 48, 64; Ryder 2014, 69; Shusterman 2000, 27, 55-56.)

A non-aesthetic experience may be, for its part, for example drifting, yielding, compromising, slack, discursive, rigid, tight, dissipated, humdrum, loose ended, coerced, and incoherent. It has no particular beginning or end, no initiations or conclusions, and it is not unified. Its parts are connected to each other only mechanically, and it "lacks elements of balance and proportion" (Dewey 1934/2005, 51). (Ibid. 41-42, 48, 64; Ryder 2014, 69; Shusterman 2000, 27, 55-56.)

It seems quite obvious that many of the YouTube comments reflect the fact that listeners were not able to reach the scope of aesthetic experience while listening to the deaf girl singing. Reflecting the YouTube comment on the introduction, as well as my own experience, I believe, however, that there is an evident aesthetic potential in the singer's performance. This potential may lay outside of the "melody, harmony, and rhythm", like the commentator describes it. He locates the aesthetic potential to the "color, texture, soul, emotion" instead. I am pretty much on the same page with him.

I think there are aspects in her singing that courage the listener to undergo the feelings of, for example, anticipation, intensification, tension, satisfaction, and fulfilment. The experience is definitely memorable. The experience is also emotional, but not in the discharging way. The emotion is, instead, prolonged, intensified, and varied through the performance. I think that here is the

secret of her singing: there is a strong and skillful emotional and expressive charge in her performance. And she carries this emotional intensity from the beginning to the end with her voice and her whole appearance.

In the western popular music singing, the genre-normative execution of songs (doing) as well as "being present" (undergoing) are valued. But it is the former that overrules when it comes to judgements made on singers' performances. If you fail to carry out the song in a correct manner, no matter how present you are, you will not be listened to. Even worse, if you sing "poorly" and still express heightened presence in your performance and emotions, you are an easy target for mocking and humiliation — a concept so well presented in the television song contests like Idols.

From the point of view of Dewey's aesthetics this all makes kind of sense — in order to produce an aesthetic experience, the ability to consciously live through the experience as well as the bodily skills are required. But when I return to thinking about the deaf girl's YouTube performance, I cannot help but feeling confused. Is this performance then aesthetic at all, as it lacks some of the basic skills traditionally required from a singer (like singing in tune)? And if the performance is not aesthetic, how come my experience felt to be an aesthetic experience in its greatest extent? These kinds of aesthetic experiences that don't fit the conventional frames can help us to challenge the conventional aesthetic values.

If different bodies have different skills in their aesthetic actions, so do bodies differ in the way they experience aesthetically. Dewey gives us quite specific coordinates to aesthetic experience. However, all the bodies are not capable of producing experiences that are, for example, "unified" or "harmonious". Does this mean that some of us are just not capable of aesthetic experiences? I think this cannot be true. Maybe we should see the diversity of experiences and bodies here as well. Maybe we should broaden the understanding of what the aesthetic experience could be, and see all the

various ways human body can produce aesthetic experiences.

The disability aesthetic could guide us here by offering insights into diversities. There would be no need to estimate the experience according to the experiences of "normal body". Joseph N. Straus (2011), a music theorist in the field of disability studies, has written that there are different "ways in which people with disabilities listen to music […]" He is interested in "the ways in which the experience of inhabiting an extraordinary body can inflect the perception and cognition of music" (Ibid., 158). Straus discusses the autistic hearing, blind hearing, mobility--inflected, and deaf hearing — in this way he seeks more nuanced understanding of what it means to hear (music). (See also McKay 2013, 124)

Many of the features that Dewey counts as being part of the aesthetic experience, like memorable, satisfying, or heightened, seem to be the kind of properties that are within reach for almost all of us. Some of the features, like harmony and unity, in turn, may be out of reach for some of us.

Shusterman (2014, 15) has considered the value of harmony more deeply. He writes that harmony in itself is a good political, ethical, and aesthetic value. However, he raises the concern that if harmony is raised to be an overdriving value, it may suppress and neutralize differences. Shusterman writes: "Sometimes a dose of dissonance can usefully add a tonic note of freedom, openness, and change that is both aesthetically and politically positive and promising." (Ibid)

Shusterman (2014, 16) is also critical to Dewey's celebration of unity, which he sees being "too one-sided and not sufficiently nuanced". Shusterman concludes: "Amidst our aesthetic appreciation of social and political harmonies, we should always be sensitive to discordant voices that are being muffled or excluded from expression." (Ibid)

8. Democratizing singing

How could we democratize singing so that it would be a potential form of aesthetics expression for all kinds of bodies and voices — not only for those who "can sing", who are "good singers", or who are "talented"?

(1) I think that developing our ways of listening is a good place to start. We should become more aware of what we are focused on when we listen to another person. No doubt, there are situations when it is adequate to listen to the faults of another person's voice. But most of the times we should, instead, concentrate appreciating his/her expression. We should also understand that different bodies listen to differently. Listening is also always "disabled" in some extent — one can never listen universally. This means that one can never capture all the potential sensory dimensions of listening. Instead of trying to judge what is correct listening and what is not, we all could gain a lot from the new understandings of what listening can potentially be — what are the diverse ways in which human bodies are capable of sensing voice. Encountering different bodies consciously with our own bodies could be at the heart of our new modes of somaesthetic listening.

(2) We can also start democratizing singing by valuing the belonging, expanding, and diversity over the skill, rigid aesthetic judgements, and conventional vocal norms. In the aesthetic interaction we should not only be concerned of our own belonging — that *we* become heard, understood, and accepted. Instead, we should seek to further the belonging of others as well. The critical and judgmental atmosphere serves no one, as it only makes everyone worried of their own vocal performances. Instead, more gentle attitudes could open us to the communication that is not focused on accomplishments, but rather on encountering the other human beings. Dewey has described the characteristics of ideal communication aptly:

"For communication is not announcing things, even if they are said with the emphasis of great sonority. Communication is the process of creating participation, of making common what had been isolated and singular; and part of the miracle it achieves is that, in being communicated, the conveyance of meaning gives body and definiteness to the experience of the one who utters as well as to that of those who listen." (Dewey 1934/2005, 253)

(3) Appreciating the somaesthetic experience of singing and listening has also an important role in democratizing singing. The proprioceptive, interoceptive and kinesthetic dimensions of vocalizing and listening should be understood as containing as much aesthetic potential as the organized sounds. The singing may have a great proprioceptive and aesthetic value for the singer him/herself, regardless of the vocal skills or musicality in the traditional sense.

The pragmatist aesthetics and somaesthetics provide an interesting theoretical framework for the examination of singing as aesthetic activity. They help us to change the focus from singing as producing sound, executing songs, and performing skill to singing as bodily-aesthetic experience.

As a researcher of singing, what can I do to democratize singing? I can, for example: (1) Recognize and understand the value of singing from its own starting points. (2) Re-define the value of singing without comparing it to the conventional vocal norms (good singing, healthy voice etc.). (3) Avoid discussing singing only as disabled, unable, or problematic. (4) Avoid discussing singing only in the frameworks of teaching, healing, or rehabilitation. These aspects are, without doubt, important to consider, but it is also important to study vocality without them — without the need to change the singing to something different or "better" than what it is. (5) Try not to bring forth only the ways in which singing is marginalized and suppressed but also to show the potentials and values of the singing. (6) Analyze the singing performances by showing the value of singing, for example, by asking: where lies the aesthetic meaning of this singing, to whom it is meaningful and in what ways?

What comes to singing and belonging, one may ask: What are the factors that open up the shared social space between the singer and the listener? How the cultural meanings and aesthetic experiences become shared in this encounter? What are, then, the elements that may prevent this encounter? What kind of obstacles there are in the way of shared aesthetic experiences and social meanings?

Let's go back to Straus's idea of different modes of disabled listening and "inhabiting an extraordinary body". This idea lead us to question and reconsider the traditional presumptions of listening, like: What it means to listen? What is listening? What could be considered as listening? Is there listening without hearing? In the same way we can ask: what it means to sing? What is singing? What could be considered as singing? Is there singing without melody? Is there singing without sound?*[5] Instead of evaluating what is good singing and what is not — it could be considered in what ways singing is manifested in this body? What kind of singing this unique body produces?

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[5] Obviously, there is singing without sound as it is possible to sign songs with the Sign Language.

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A SOMAESTHETIC APPROACH TO ROCK MUSIC: SOME OBSERVATIONS AND REMARKS*

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To Valeria:
for all the live concerts that we have enjoyed together,
for all the love that we have shared.

I think that your body
Is something I understand.
ANI DI FRANCO. *Swan Dive*

ABSTRACT: In this article I sketch some ideas and observations for a philosophical theory of popular music, with a particular focus on the subgenre of rock music. While acknowledging the fundamental importance still today of the contributions of Frankfurt critical theory to this topic, I also try to broaden the conceptual horizon by referring to pragmatist aesthetics and in particular to its recent development into somaesthetics. I consider the latter of great philosophical importance especially to evaluate in an adequate way the fact that understanding and appreciating rock music naturally and necessarily implies a relevant somatic component, i.e. is always bodily-rooted, while not denying for this reason also the presence of an intellectual component in this kind of aesthetic experience. In my article I exemplify some of my theses by referring to recordings and live performances of Lou Reed, Pearl Jam, Radiohead, and other rock musicians.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Popular music, Critical theory, Pragmatism, Somaesthetics, Theodor W. Adorno, Richard Shusterman

1.

As has been noted elsewhere, "until recently, the interdisciplinary field of aesthetics […] was either silent about, or hostile to, popular culture" in general, and popular music in particular, on the basis of the predominant idea that the latter "is aesthetically impoverished"[1]. For this reason, although the study of popular music represents by now an established academic field, most investigations have been developed within frameworks, like sociology or cultural studies, that "value music as a social practice" (or better: understand it as "*only* social practice"), that demand "evaluative neutrality" in approaching this subject, and that "explicitly dismiss the importance of the music's aesthetic dimension"[2] (where "aesthetic" may be well understood in a broad sense that includes both the artistic value of a certain work and the perceptual or, say, experiential dimension of our encounter with it). Contrary to these basic assumptions that have been quite predominant, I would recommend a general "broadening [of] the field of aesthetic experience" that may lead us to see how popular music not only "has no essential conflict with philosophical aesthetics"[3] but should rather be an object of special interest for aesthetics – like other kinds of "industrial fine arts" that are typical of the present age[4].

As a matter of fact, popular art (and, in this context, especially popular music) "deserves serious aesthetic attention"[5]: it should be understood as a central phenomenon for contemporary aesthetics to deal with, due to its leading role and great influence in shaping our *sensus communis aestheticus*[6], and also due to its role in compelling us to broaden and rethink a part of the vocabulary and conceptuality of aesthetics as such (for instance, with regard to such notions as beauty, inspiration, imagination, disinterested contemplation vs.

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[1] Gracyk 2007, p. 6.
[2] Gracyk 2007, p. 1.
[3] Gracyk 2007, p. 1.
[4] See Vitta 2012, in particular chapters 1-2.
[5] Shusterman 2000, p. 177.
[6] See Matteucci 2016a and 2016b.

interested participation and active consumption, individual vs. collective creativity, etc.). As has been noted, "contemporary aesthetics [is] characterized by a number of leading themes" that have "broken out of the confinement of fine art" that had been predominant from the eighteenth century onwards, among which "the aesthetics of everyday life and the aesthetics of popular art"[7]. In this context, it can be argued that "popular art not only can satisfy the most important standards of our aesthetic tradition, but also has the power to enrich and refashion our traditional concept of the aesthetic"[8].

In a certain sense, what has been observed by Lars Svendsen apropos of fashion also applies to popular music, namely that it has been "virtually ignored by philosophers" for quite a long time, "possibly because it was thought that this, the most superficial of all phenomena, could hardly be a worthy object of study for so 'profound' a discipline as philosophy". However, "if philosophy is to be a discipline that contributes to our self-understanding", then popular music (like fashion, in Svendsen's example) "ought to be taken seriously as an object of philosophical investigation", since it affects "the attitude of most people towards both themselves and others, […] and as such it is a phenomenon that ought to be central to our attempts to understand ourselves in our historical situation"[9]. Beside this – still insisting on this comparison between the philosophy of fashion and the aesthetics of popular music – it must be said that "sooner or later everything comes to interest philosophy". If, on the one hand, "there is a view of the field according to which philosophy once encompassed every inquiry and went on to lose parts of itself one by one as each field saw how to be scientific", on the other hand there is also a view of the field according to which "philosophy's curiosity continues to seize on more of what is said and done and not yet brought into philosophy's consciousness": if it was "relativity a century ago",

perhaps "it's brain science and film today" (and also fashion and popular music, I would add)[10].

This may lead us to ask the question as to whether or not there is a philosophical approach that would be more promising and adequate than others for the purpose of developing an aesthetics of popular music. It is important today to find an adequate approach to this subject of inquiry. In fact, as has been noted, if it is "no exaggeration to say that crafting a theory to fit avant-garde artworks […] has been the major preoccupation of art theorists in the twentieth century", it is also no exaggeration to say that "attempting to accommodate mass-art forms" (which surely include popular music as well) "may be the next major preoccupation of theories of art"[11]. In particular, "the attention to popular music that is now emerging offers new perspectives on the philosophy of music and more generally on the philosophy of art"[12], and it is thus important for philosophers who work in the field of aesthetics not to ignore it.

I will argue in this paper that pragmatist aesthetics, and in particular one of its developments specifically centered on the living body[13], namely somaesthetics, may be a promising philosophical approach when it comes to grasping some essential features of our aesthetic experiences with popular music. To be sure, it is obviously not my aim to completely cover this wide and complex subject in the limited space of a single article, eventually developing a full-blown interpretation of it. Rather, as the

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[7] Shusterman 2012, pp. 105, 110.
[8] Shusterman 2000, p. 173.
[9] Svendsen 2006, pp. 6-7.

[10] Pappas 2016, p. 73.
[11] Fisher 2005, p. 539.
[12] Fisher 2011, p. 405.
[13] The role of embodiment is central in the pragmatist tradition, although obviously in various ways and degrees according to different authors, etc. "The Deweyan pragmatism I favor", as Shusterman explains, "understands human intelligence and reason as grounded in our natural equipment for survival and improvement […]. Reason is a product of evolution, and it can evolve and change further. Classical pragmatism has an essentially embodied view of human nature. It rejects the radical dualism of body/mind. […] That classical pragmatism emphasized the embodied nature of human experience and cognition has been very helpful to me in developing my project of somaesthetics" (Shusterman 2010a, p. 61). On this topic, see also Shusterman 2008, chap. 6.

subtitle of my article already suggests, I assume it as a sufficient task for now to present some preliminary observations and provisional results of an inquiry into the aesthetics of popular music that I intend to develop in a more systematic way in the future, and to profitably intersect different approaches (among which, precisely, pragmatism and somaesthetics)[14].

2.

Somaesthetics – defined as "the critical, meliorative study of the experience and use of one's body as a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation (*aisthesis*) and creative self-fashioning"[15] – can be conceived of as "a systematic framework"[16] that has three fundamental branches: analytic, pragmatic and practical somaesthetics[17]. From this point of view, somaesthetics may be understood as a somewhat general philosophical approach that can be applied, so to speak, to a great variety of problems and phenomena, and is both comparable to and compatible with other relevant and general approaches (such as, for example, dialectical aesthetics, phenomenological aesthetics, hermeneutical aesthetics, analytic aesthetics,

etc.)[18]. For example, somaesthetics has been successfully applied to the understanding of such activities and practices as the so-called "practical arts of living, such as cooking, fashion, cosmetics, home decoration, environmental design", and in addition, "besides these more specific aesthetic practices, […] the general art of living and stylization of self"[19].

In this article, I would like to emphasize some of the potentialities of this philosophical approach in the field of popular music[20]. In my view, with its focus on the need to "put experience at the heart of philosophy and celebrate the living, sentient body as the organizing core of experience"[21], somaesthetics makes it possible: (1) to arrive at an understanding of the particular kind of experience derived from popular music, primarily understood here, for both methodological reasons and personal knowledge, skills and taste, as rock music (although rock surely does not cover the entire field of what is usually defined as popular music)[22]; and (2) to understand certain important connections between the purely aesthetic dimension, on one hand, and the ethical-political dimension, on the other, that are often involved with, or implied in, our experiences of popular music[23] (a question, the latter, that I will not pursue here).

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[14] To be precise, I have already started to develop this kind of inquiry in the past few years, but previously only adopting the methodology of a critical confrontation with the dialectical philosophy of Horkheimer, Adorno and to some extent also Marcuse (see Marino 2014; Marino 2017a; Marino 2017b). From this point of view, opening to the approach of pragmatism, in general, and somaesthetics, in particular, might represent the beginning of a new orientation of this research.

[15] Shusterman 2000, p. 267. For this definition of somaesthetics as a new philosophical discipline, see also Shusterman 2008 (p. 19), Shusterman 2012 (p. 116), and, of course, the presentation of the international "Journal of Somaesthetics" (official website: https://journals.aau.dk/index.php/JOS/index).

[16] Shusterman 2008, p. 19.

[17] See Shusterman 2000, pp. 271-276. Recently Shusterman has also explained that, "along with the three branches of somaesthetics there are also three dimensions", depending on "whether their major orientation is toward external appearance or inner experience": representational, experiential and performative somaesthetics" (Shusterman 2016, pp. 102-105).

[18] "[M]y aesthetic research", as Shusterman explains, "began to look beyond the analytic aesthetics paradigm (valuable as it is) to incorporate ideas from pragmatism, phenomenology, hermeneutics, post-structuralism, and East-Asian thought. I was striving for some kind of new philosophical synthesis, a new remix (in rap terminology)": "aesthetics can be more usefully pluralistic" than it has usually been, both with regard to a plurality of complementary approaches and to a plurality of objects of inquiry, for example neither excluding "the most elevated fine arts" nor devaluating "the most commonday everyday aesthetic practices and popular artistic forms" (Shusterman 2012, pp. 105, 112).

[19] Shusterman 2012, p. 115.

[20] On this topic, see for instance Shusterman 2010b.

[21] Shusterman 2008, p. XII.

[22] See Middleton (1990, chap. 1) on the complex question of defining the concept itself of popular music.

[23] The question concerning "the practical import of aesthetics", also (although not only) in terms of "contemporary aesthetics' potent mix of aesthetics and politics" (Shusterman 2012, p. 115), has always been important in the general project of pragmatist aesthetics and then somaesthetics.

As can be easily observed, in these last sentences I have laid emphasis on the aspect of experiencing music and thus on the concept of experience – which, of course, is a concept of decisive importance in Dewey's pragmatist aesthetics (not by chance developed in a book called *Art as Experience*) and then in Shusterman's subsequent development of it[24]. Among the many aspects of popular music (or, in this specific case, rock music) that surely deserve consideration from a philosophical point of view, i.e. from the point of view of philosophical aesthetics, I will mostly focus here on the aspect that concerns our way of experiencing it, of having an experience with this kind of music, or better of being in an experience with it. More precisely, I will focus on our experience as listeners of rock songs and participants in rock events, rather than our experience as music players and performers[25]. As we will see, far from denying that appreciating and/or evaluating popular music[26] also involve to some extent our intellectual or, let's say, cognitive capacities, and without reducing at the same time this activity to a mere pattern of recognition and acceptance[27], it is my thesis that we actually miss a lot of what listening to this kind of music can mean for us (that is, how it basically functions and how it can improve and enrich our experience in general, or sometimes even change our lives)[28] if we do not take

adequately into account the decisive role played by the somatic dimension in it.

One should definitely avoid confusing "all legitimate activity with serious thinking" or with art that favors, so to speak, the development of "effortful 'independent thinking'": there are indeed more intellectual and, as it were, "more somatic forms of effort, resistance, and satisfaction"[29] in our experience with the different varieties and manifestations of the aesthetic and/or of art. Somaesthetics may provide a decisive contribution to gaining a deeper insight into this fact. Indeed, according to Shusterman "popular arts like rock […]

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[24] As he explains, "*experience* [rather than collecting or criticism] is ultimately what art is about"; "art [is] the purposeful production of aesthetic experience" (Shusterman 2000, p. 57).

[25] I would like to thank my colleague Anne Tarvainen for drawing my attention on the need to make fully explicit this distinction in my approach to the subject, and also for suggesting me the interesting work of McKerrell 2012 on somaesthetic hearing in traditional music.

[26] On this distinction, see Gracyk 2007, pp. 103-133.

[27] See Adorno 2002b, p. 452 ff. More precisely, Adorno's theory of the experience of recognition in listening to popular music divides this experience into different components, thus sketching the following scheme: "a. Vague remembrance; b. Actual identification; c. Subsumption by label; d. Self-reflection on the act of recognition; e. Psychological transfer of recognition-authority to the object" (Adorno 2002b, pp. 453-454).

[28] "My life was saved by rock 'n' roll", as famously claimed by Wim Wenders (quoted, for instance, in Cook

& Gemünden 1997, p. 219n). "The next thing that arrived was rock 'n' roll when I was around 10 or 12 years old. I had not been interested in music so much before because the German songs my mother listened to on the radio didn't interest me at all. But when rock 'n' roll arrived I realized that this was the best music in the world. […] I bought all these records, but because my parents hated this rock 'n' roll I had to keep my records at a friend's place. But if you have to defend something that you like, it makes you to like it even more. And what I like most is that all these interests were really mine. My parents hated the comic strips, they hated rock 'n' roll, and when they found out what movies I was going to they also were against that. So everything I loved I had to defend" (Wenders 2014: http://the-talks.com/interview/wim-wenders). Compare this quotation to the famous songs by Lou Reed & The Velvet Underground precisely entitled *Rock 'n' Roll* (from their album *Loaded*, 1970): "Jenny said when she was just five years old, / You know there's nothin' happenin' at all. / Every time she put on the radio, / There was nothin' goin' down at all, not at all. / One fine morning, she puts on a New York station, / And she couldn't believe what she heard at all. / She started dancing to that fine fine fine fine music, whew! / Her life was saved by rock & roll. / Hey baby, rock 'n' roll. / Despite all the amputations, / We could dance to a rock 'n' roll station". This is probably an experience that most rock music aficionados, especially during their teens, have made. If I may be allowed to insert here a short autobiographical excerpt, for me it was first U2 and Bruce Springsteen, and then especially the new wave of rock bands of the early and mid 1990s (Nirvana, Soundgarden, Alice in Chains, Smashing Pumpkins, Kyuss, and above all Pearl Jam), that more or less "saved my life".

[29] Shusterman 2000, pp. 183-184. It is important to always bear in mind this difference, when dealing with pragmatist aesthetics, in general, and somaesthetics, in particular. As Shusterman claims, "aesthetic experience (with its sensory appreciative perception of aesthetic qualities) constitutes a far wider realm than the experience of art" (Shusterman 2012, p. 109).

suggest a radically revised aesthetic with a joyous return of the somatic dimension which philosophy has long repressed"[30]. Fully recognizing this aspect, in turn, may lead us to meditate better and more accurately than we are probably used to on the decisive role played by the body in the constitution of the human world-experience as such, inasmuch as the latter is not to be considered as "one object among others" but rather as "a constitutive or transcendental principle, precisely because it is involved in the very possibility of experience"[31]. In fact, the body

> is deeply implicated in our relation to the world, in our relation to others, and in our self-relation, and its analysis consequently proves crucial for our understanding of the mind-world relation, for our understanding of the relation between self and other, and for our understanding of the mind-body relation. […] The lived body is neither spirit nor nature, neither soul nor body, neither inner nor outer, neither subject nor object. All of these contraposed categories are derivations of something more basic. […] The body is not a screen between me and the world; rather, it shapes our primary way of being-in-the-world. […] Moreover, all of [the] aspects of embodiment shape the way I perceive the world. […] Since this is the lived body with which I perceive and act, it is in constant connection with the world. And this connection is not a mere surface-to-surface contact, as a corpse might lie on the surface of a table; rather, my body is integrated with the world. To be situated in the world means not simply to be located someplace in a physical environment, but to be in rapport with circumstances that are bodily meaningful[32].

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[30] Shusterman 2000, p. 184.
[31] Gallagher & Zahavi 2008**,** p. 135.
[32] Gallagher & Zahavi 2008**,** pp. 135, 137.

3.

I would like now to briefly (and critically) examine a different philosophical approach to popular music, namely that developed by the famous Frankfurt philosopher and social theorist Theodor W. Adorno[33]. Despite its length and rigorous structure, Adorno's 1941 seminal essay *On Popular Music* can be summarized in the idea that *all* popular music (which, for him, also included jazz music) consists of standardization, pseudo-individualization and plugging, and functions as a sort of "social cement"[34]. For this reason, popular music for Adorno is always undeniably false, i.e. it never contains what Adorno in his late, unfinished *Aesthetic Theory* calls the "truth content" of a work of art. According to Adorno, "all 'light' and pleasant art [is] illusory and mendacious"[35].

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[33] Adorno, by the way, also represents an important point of reference for *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, although criticized for his "austere, gloomy, and haughtily elitist Marxism" and opposed to "Dewey's more earthy, upbeat, and democratic pragmatism" (Shusterman 2000, p. XVII).

[34] Adorno's main writings on this subject are the essays *On Popular Music*, *On Jazz* and *Farewell to Jazz* (Adorno 2002b, respectively pp. 437-469, 470-495, 496-500), and *Perennial Fashion – Jazz* (Adorno 1997, pp. 119-131).

[35] Adorno 2002b, p. 291. It is important to bear in mind that it is *not* my aim with this paper to oppose an uncritical plea for *all* popular music to what I consider Adorno's aprioristic critique of *all* popular music, despite its great variety, the different values, significance and contents that it conveys, etc. A correct approach, in my view, is that "located between the poles of condemnatory pessimism […] and celebratory optimism […]. If the former pole denounces popular art in near paranoid terror as maniacal manipulation devoid of redeeming aesthetic or social merit, the latter embraces it with ingenuous optimism". An intermediary position rather admits that "the products of popular art are often aesthetically wretched and lamentably unappealing, just as […] their social effects can be very noxious, particularly when they are consumed in a passive, all-accepting way" (which logically implies that popular art is *not always* consumed in such a passive way, contrary to what Adorno and other critics assume). What must be contested are "the philosophical arguments that popular art is always and necessarily an aesthetic failure, inferior and inadequate by its intrinsic constitution", without for this reason denying that "much popular art may indeed conform to Horkheimer's and Adorno's analysis"

This – given the intrinsic relationship established by Adorno between the aesthetic level, strictly speaking, and the sociopolitical dimension of art, and given the particular way in which he understands the concept of commitment in art – also implies that popular music, like all other products of the culture industry (that, for him, amount to nothing more than mere commodities)[36], is somehow doomed from the start to always being a sort of "social cement". That is, a form of pseudo-art that is unable to express critical contents and lead people to develop a critical consciousness and attitude towards society. On the specific level of our aesthetic experience with this kind of music, this means that, for Adorno, "good serious music" like that of Beethoven, Mahler or Schönberg requires what he calls the structural mode of listening, corresponding to his ideal of an adequate fruition of a work of art, which is to say the best kind of "concentrated listening"; and vice-versa, popular music requires and indeed promotes an inadequate and distracted mode of perception (named "commodity listening", "deconcentration" or "regressive listening"[37]) which fully corresponds to its being mere entertainment, mere amusement. "Recommending jazz and rock-and-roll instead of Beethoven", for Adorno,

> does not demolish the affirmative lie of culture but rather furnishes barbarism and the profit interest of the culture industry with a subterfuge. The allegedly vital and uncorrupted nature of such products is synthetically processed by precisely those powers that are supposedly the target of the Great Refusal. These products are the truly corrupt[38].

According to Richard Middleton, "Adorno's general position opened up new ground, in ways which often remain of value"; at the same time, however, "his specific treatment of the social situation of popular music, by proceeding, in his usual way, 'through the extremes', does have the negative virtue of exaggerating real trends. Anyone wanting to argue the importance of studying popular music" has the responsibility "to absorb Adorno in order to go beyond him"[39]. So, for example, with regard to the important question concerning the hopelessly standardized character of "the musical material" that, for Adorno, *all* popular music is made of, it might be objected that his conception ultimately rests upon the questionable idea of a "historical necessity" in the development of "the compositional material" that "contract[s] and expand[s] in the course of history", and is characterized by precise "laws of movement"[40]. But this conception sometimes gives the impression of being a sort of top-down schema, a pre-planned framework imposed from above on actual musical phenomena that ultimately leads to exclude many other forms of musical expression from those considered by Adorno as legitimate ones for the contemporary age, simply because they still make use of traditional musical means like major/minor chords, etc. As a consequence, Adorno is not even open to the opportunity of a non-standardized use of standardized artistic materials[41], which is something that quite often occurs in the field of popular music and also of jazz.

What is not conceivable from an Adornian perspective, in my view is quite common in the field of what I would define as "good popular music"[42]

(Shusterman 2000, pp. 176-177, 183). The obvious reference here is to the famous chapter of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* on the culture industry (see Horkheimer & Adorno 2002, pp. 94-136).
[36] For example, according to Adorno "jazz is a commodity in the strict sense" (Adorno 2002b, p. 473).
[37] Adorno 2002b, pp. 293, 305.
[38] Adorno 2002a, pp. 319-320. In *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno even dares to speak of a veritable "antithesis of Beethoven and jazz, a contrast to which many musicians' ears are already beginning to be deaf. Beethoven is, in modified yet determinable fashion, the full experience of external life returning inwardly, just as time – the medium of music – is the inward sense; *popular music*, in

all of its many varieties" (which confirms Adorno's incorrigible, hopeless tendency to generalize about it) "does not undergo this sublimation and is, as such, a somatic stimulant and therefore regressive *vis-a-vis* aesthetic autonomy" (Adorno 2002a, p. 116).
[39] Middleton 1990, p. 35.
[40] Adorno 2007, p. 31.
[41] Mecacci 2011, p. 98.
[42] "[B]ecause we can distinguish better from worse instances of popular music, an aesthetic of popular listening does not imply that all such music is equally

(reversing his definition of "good serious music"): namely, rock songs that are actually commodities but, as also happens with good films, can transcend their own status of mere commodities by means of their formal and expressive qualities – self-transcending commodities, as it were[43]. In fact, much popular music "claims to be creative" and, contrary to what Adorno would have ever admitted, "insists that originality can be manifested [also] in the revisionary appropriation of the old"[44]. This, in turn, may apply to: (1) the melodic and harmonic dimension of music, for example by claiming that popular music does *not* make use of so-called tonal music's syntax in the same way in which classical music does, so that in the ultimate analysis they appear as incommensurable or at least not exactly comparable[45]; (2) the equally important aspect of lyrics, inasmuch as sometimes "rich semantic complexity and polysemy are deeply enfolded into [rock music's] seemingly artless, simple language"[46]; (3) its fundamental rhythmic dimension, for example by arguing that in rock music there are surely common rhythms (to be differentiated from meters, by the way) but that they are not constraining, not entirely standardized, and rather allow various degrees of freedom. As has been noted,

> rock bears constant witness to the distinction between meter and rhythm [and] once we differentiate meter and rhythm, we see that there is no *one* rhythm or meter which is characteristic of rock. [...] What is typical, if anything is, is the way rock characteristically displaces accents. [...] The lesson, then, is that rock's beat is not just a rhythm that is played

along with the music. Rock's beat, particularly as highlighted by the drummer, is a matter of strategically accenting and interacting with the beats present in the rest of the music. There is nothing mechanical about it. [...] [R]ock music is normally polyrhythmic [...]. "[T]he beat" of rock is not any one thing, nor is it the only thing that matters in rock's rhythmic pleasures. It is neither primitive nor simple, nor primordial nor mechanical[47].

Alongside this, and focusing more specifically on the aspect of the experience of listening rather than on the dimension of musical composition (which is central for Adorno), it might be argued that, when compared to an approach like Adorno's, pragmatist aesthetics in general (for example, with "Dewey's somatic standpoint", "advocating a fully embodied aesthetic"[48]), and somaesthetics in particular, may provide a valuable contribution by amending some prejudices and thus arriving at a better understanding of the specific kind of aesthetic experience that popular music involves. In fact, still developing a comparison between the philosophy of fashion and the aesthetics of popular music, it might be argued that what lies at the heart of "the philosophic fear of fashion" is probably a kind of squeamishness about the body as an object worthy of intellectual attention[49]. The same thing probably applies to the way in which philosophers have usually disregarded the experience of listening to popular music, because of "the traditional intellectualist bias which motivates" most aesthetic theories: "critics of popular culture are loath to recognize that there are humanly worthy and aesthetically rewarding activities other than intellectual exertion"[50].

A significant remark from Walter Benjamin's 1932 short writing *Hashish in Marseilles* (and indeed a quite surprising remark, given that he was not an aprioristic critic of popular arts as such in the age of their mechanical reproduction) masterfully exemplifies this concept. In a self-critical report of a night in Marseilles

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good" (Gracyk 2007, p. 133).

[43] From this point of view, I agree that "we should be very selective in adopting Adorno's *Kulturkritik* as it applies to popular music. What is identified as a static essence is a caricature, so there is little reason to deny that popular music can challenge a broad range of social conventions. Its commodity character does not exhaust its appeal. [...] Rather than explain its appeal, the 'culture industry' may generate barriers to hearing rock and jazz, just as Adorno thinks it has for serious music" (Gracyk 1996, p. 173).

[44] Shusterman 2000, p. 231.

[45] See Tagg 2016.

[46] Shusterman 2000, p. 218.

[47] Gracyk 1996, pp. 134-136, 143, 147.

[48] Shusterman 2000, p. 10.

[49] Hanson 1993. I owe this insight to Pappas 2016, p. 87n.

[50] Shusterman 2000, pp. 176, 183.

when he went listening to jazz music, he admits with perplexity and discomfort that he suddenly found himself rhythmically and unconsciously tapping his feet on the floor. "The music, which meanwhile kept rising and falling, I called the 'rush switches of jazz'. I have forgotten on what grounds I *permitted* myself to mark the beat with my foot. This is *against my education*, and it did not happen without *inner disputation*"[51]. This, for Benjamin, was contrary to his habits and rules, but for every aficionado of jazz, soul, pop or rock music it is the *Ur*-reaction (so to speak) to the typical beat or pulse that is quintessential to this music: the primal, most original and, what matters the most, not socially alienated or psychologically regressive aesthetic response to it. In my view, interpreting the spontaneous, almost irresistible and unstoppable impulse to mark the beat with one's foot when experiencing certain kinds of music as the mere symptom of, for example, a "rhythmically obedient" personality (as Adorno sarcastically suggests[52]), should not be understood as the possession of a superior or more precise form of knowledge about music or, say, of a more profound and more adequate way of experiencing it. Rather, preventing oneself from this kind of satisfying and aesthetically enriching experience[53] may be interpreted as the symptom of a "distorted" relationship to music and, at the same time, to one's own body[54].

If I have just defined (in a very emphatic or even dramatic way, I admit) a certain and indeed quite usual way of understanding our most common experiences with popular music as "distorted", it is because: (1) this behaviour and, in general, this attitude or mentality are symptomatic of an alienated or estranged relationship with one's own body and some of its spontaneous, even joyous forms of expression; and (2) it implies a harsh misunderstanding of the kind of reaction or enjoyment that a certain kind of music necessarily requires, so to speak. The problem is that, due to what Shusterman critically defines as "the anti-somatic animus" present in the arguments of many critics of popular art[55], it is impossible for a thinker like Adorno − notwithstanding his genuine interest in many questions concerning the body, also in aesthetics − to conceive of a way of "disappearing into the artwork"[56] that is not compatible with, i.e. is essentially different from, his ideal of the structural mode of listening. In other words, it is impossible for him to conceive of different kinds of

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[51] Benjamin 2005, p. 678 [my emphasis]. The passage is so relevant that it deserves being quoted also in the original German version: "Die Musik, die inzwischen immer wieder aufklang und abnahm, nannte ich die strohernen Ruten des Jazz. Ich habe vergessen, mit welcher Begründung ich mir gestattete, ihren Takt mit dem Fuß zu marniere. Das geht gegen meine Erziehung, und es geschah nicht ohne eine inwendige Auseinandersetzung".

[52] Adorno 2002b, p. 460.

[53] As clearly explained by Gracyk (2007, pp. 1, 133), against "the elitism of traditional aesthetics" it must be claimed that "popular music aesthetically enriches lives": "our choice of music involves knowledgeable participation in a particular form of life", and popular music surely "provides a vibrant musical culture that speaks to the lived needs of its participants".

[54] Needless to say, I am focusing here only on some aspects of Adorno's aesthetic theory and philosophy of

music, which, if studied in their entirety, are surely much more complex, articulated and often illuminating than it may seem from this short and basically critical presentation. From this point of view, the present exposition of Adorno's aesthetics cannot do justice to its great value and, on many aspects, its persistent relevance and actuality. However, notwithstanding these limits and notwithstanding Adorno's well-known (and conscious, deliberate) tendency to sometimes make use of exaggerations, hyperboles and provocative formulations that must be always taken into consideration, I consider the present exposition of some aspects of his aesthetics as basically accurate and correct.

[55] Shusterman 2000, p. 185.

[56] It is Adorno's fundamental opinion that aesthetic experience as such requires a genuine being-open to the otherness of the work of art and being-willing to respond in a proper way to what the object itself of the aesthetic experience demands from the subject that is experiencing it. In fact, as he writes in *Aesthetic Theory*: "The relation to art [is] not that of its physical devouring; on the contrary, the beholder" must disappear "into the material". "For him who has a genuine relation to art, in which he himself vanishes, art is not an object. […] The false relation to art is akin to anxiety over possession. […] Whoever disappears into the artwork thereby gains dispensation from the impoverishment of a life that is always too little" (Adorno 2002a, pp. 13-14).

music, equally legitimate from an aesthetic point of view, that require, because of their very nature, different kinds of aesthetic response and enjoyment. In my view, this can only result from the prejudices that, also in the case of great thinkers like Adorno, often represent our criteria of orientation far more than our conscious or reflective judgments[57]. As has been correctly noted,

> applying the skills of analytical listening to a simple popular song can result in sheer boredom, for some music is just not designed for that mode of listening. […] One of the complications of contemporary musical life is that different musics and different listening situations call for distinct levels of concentration on what is taking place in the music. The challenge is to adopt an adequate mode of listening, which involves adjusting one's listening to the demands of the context and type of music. […] Choosing music, we select a style that fits the level and kind of attention that we'll give to the music. […] The admission that different musics reward different modes of attention does not prove that one mode is superior to another – unless, perhaps, one independently believes that exclusive attention is a superior activity[58].

4.

Now, rock music "creates meaning primarily in the emotional sphere. […] In discussions of its emotional sphere, rock is supremely cast as a music of the body"[59]. And still:

> rock music is judged more by its effects on the listener's body than by a "disinterested" appreciation of its formal properties. […] Rhythm is perhaps the most obvious and frequently remarked upon aspect of rock music. […] [I]n dance the connection between the music and the listener's body is felt and enacted, rather than merely contemplated. A good rock song is one that makes the listener's body want to move […]. Good rock musicians enter into a dialogue with the dancers, adjusting their performance

according to the dancers' responses, which is something that requires a great deal of practice and training, but not the sort of thing that could be captured in a score or some other set of formalized instructions. For the musician as well as the dancers, the body and its feelings reveal whether or not the performance is successful. […] The listener's response and the musician's performance are both mediated by a history of practices, forms, and conventions. But when the music rings true, it is the body that tells us so. This is something that has to be experienced to be understood[60].

If this is true, it means that applying to popular music the same criteria that we usually adopt to describe and assess the kind of aesthetic experience that is typical with "good serious music", like Adorno actually does, is simply wrong. It is comparable, in a sense, to attempting to understand our experience with contemporary body art by adopting the same criteria that we usually use to evaluate Dutch Golden Age painting[61]. In fact, "popular music involves physically engaged responses (it is common for listeners to physically move, dance, and even sing along to the music)", and this implies that "the model of appreciation at the heart of traditional aesthetic theory […] faces a serious challenge"[62].

So, what we need for an aesthetics of rock music is first of all an approach capable of emphasizing the body's role in aesthetic experience, eventually arriving at an argument that we should "sharpen our appreciation of art through more attention to the somaesthetic feelings involved in perceiving art instead of narrowly identifying artistic feelings with the familiar kind of emotions […] that often make art appreciation degenerate into a gushy, vague romanticism"[63]. While for most "so-called mass culture critics […] com[ing] from both left and right"[64] rock music "is 'regressive' and

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[57] As Gadamer explains, "the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his being" (Gadamer 2002, p. 278).
[58] Gracyk 2007, pp. 142-143.
[59] Moore 2011, pp. 421-422.

[60] Baugh 1998, pp. 170-171, 173.
[61] Analogous remarks can be found in Gracyk 2007 (p. 143), with regard to the different approaches required by novels and short stories, films and stage plays, impressionist paintings and pop art canvases, and then, of course, classical music and popular music.
[62] Fisher 2011, p. 406.
[63] Shusterman 2008, p. 125.
[64] Olick 1998, p. 46. In fact, "the denigration of popular

aesthetically invalid" also, if not above all, "because it 'is a somatic stimulus'"[65], somaesthetics, on the contrary, puts the living body, the soma, at the center of aesthetic experience as such, and in particular at the center of our experience with such arts as popular music. We should not "ignore the body's subject-role as the living focus of beautiful, felt experience":

> somaesthetics, in its experiential dimension, clearly refuses to exteriorize the body as an alienated thing distinct from the active spirit of human experience. […] More than guitars or violins or pianos or even drums, our bodies are the primary instrument for the making of music[66] [and also for its appreciation and evaluation in listening].

Of course, the attention paid to this immediate somatic dimension must not be confused with a denial of the fact that the audience of a rock concert "can take a critical and complex attitude" to the forms and contents "there presented"[67] and can achieve high levels of understanding (besides genuine and intense aesthetic enjoyment, of course). In fact, rock music can have "complex levels of meaning" that are "somatic as well as discursive"[68]. In other words, it should be clear that the undeniable importance of the former dimension (the somatic) is not necessarily at odds with the latter (the discursive or, say, cognitive, intellectual dimension). There are kinds of aesthetic experience (understood here in the more limited sense of the experience we have with certain forms of art) that are high-stimulating for our cognitive faculties and capacities but low-stimulating from a somatic point of view. There are other kinds of aesthetic experience that, vice-versa, are cognitively low-stimulating but very powerful in arousing our bodily perception and activity. Finally, there are

probably still other kinds of aesthetic experience that can combine the two dimensions in unique ways, thus allowing us to have a well-balanced and integrated experience (namely, an intensive experience of being-part-of-the-event with both one's body and mind).

In this regard, let us think about the quite typical sensation experienced after an impressive rock concert (in particular, as happens when one is a great fan of the artist or the band and so, for example, has spent several hours standing outside the gates of the stadium waiting for them to open, and then several hours standing in the middle of the crowd in order to find a place right in front of the stage, at a few meters distance from it): one feels both physically exhausted, emotionally enriched, and to some extent also intellectually delighted. An experience, the latter, that, if described this way, can clearly remind one of the sensations, feelings and thoughts experienced in sexual intercourse. Of course, not all our experiences as listeners of popular music and, in particular, as part of the audience at a rock concert, can reach such impressive levels of somatic (and, at the same time, emotional and mental) intensity and strength. However, this is absolutely normal and understandable: as happens with sex (to strengthen this association that may come easily to our mind) and, *mutatis mutandis*, with all kinds of human activities and aesthetic experiences, there are sometimes merely enjoyable episodes and there are at other times extraordinary episodes due to their intensity, meaning, etc.[69].

5.

It is a cliché and a commonplace in the field of criticism of popular culture, in general, and popular music, in particular, to associate our experiences with rock, pop, soul, funk, rap etc. to sex, an important somatic dimension of our life that has been constantly, extensively and intensively, denigrated in Western culture. This has often happened as a result of focusing

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art or mass culture […] is widely endorsed by intellectuals of violently different socio-political views and agendas" (Shusterman 2000, p. 169).
[65] Shusterman 2000, p. 184.
[66] Shusterman 2008, pp. 28, 126.
[67] I adapt here to my investigation of rock music an example that Shusterman originally introduces about the audience of television drama.
[68] Shusterman 2000, pp. 186, 188.

[69] I borrow this idea from Shusterman (2012, p. 112).

on such practices as masturbation (understood as "mere discharge of tension rather than real satisfaction") and "undeferred and deviant sexual pleasure"[70], and by comparing the enjoyment of popular music to them[71]; or even by reducing rock music as such to "one appeal only, a barbaric appeal, to sexual desire": "rock has the beat of sexual intercourse"[72].

While writing the final draft of this paper, to be presented as a lecture at the conference on somaesthetics in Szeged, I had the opportunity to listen to many songs from The Afghan Whigs, Radiohead, Eddie Vedder/Pearl Jam and Arcade Fire, whose live concerts I could luckily attend (or better: I could aesthetically experience in person) in Italy in June-July 2017[73]. These live music experiences were not only delightful, passionate, emotionally and also cognitively enriching,

and often deeply moving for me, but even interesting for my philosophical purposes, because they strongly reinforced my conviction that a somaesthetic approach may be useful to grasp some quintessential features of the particular kind of aesthetic experience involved in rock music. Namely, a kind of experience that is surely rooted in the somatic but, as I said, does not exclude for this reason the dimensions of deep emotional enrichment and also mental effort and intellectual gratification. Referring again to the music that I was listening to while preparing my lecture for the Somaesthetics Conference in Szeged, quite unsurprisingly (but also revealingly for the purposes of my paper) I discovered among the users' comments to a YouTube version of Radiohead's classic song *Jigsaw Falling Into Place* the following remarks[74]: "The last 40 seconds of this song is pure orgasm. Don't even try to deny it"; "I was going to deny it… but then I orgasmed. Embarrassing"; "All the song is pure orgasm"; and so on – clearly using these words in a metaphorical way, as often happens with the terminology of philosophical aesthetics[75].

The connection "rock = sex" has usually been introduced by highbrow-oriented theorists in order to criticize popular music, thus assuming a priori that such similarities imply the latter's aesthetic irrelevance and also socio-psychological dangerousness. But even some theorists who have meritoriously attempted to rescue rock music from several prejudices have apparently followed the same logic. Namely, they have tried to aesthetically legitimate it by denying any conceptual and/or experiential relationship between rock and sex, thus automatically accepting the premise according to which an aesthetic experience that is to some degree comparable to sex is not valuable and is insignificant from an aesthetic point of view. On the contrary, I would

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[70] Shusterman 2000, p. 182. Shusterman critically refers here, respectively, to Ernest van den Haag's and Allan Bloom's critical opinions.

[71] Worthy of notice, in this context, is also Adorno's (quite unintelligible, in my view…) comparison of jazz music as such to a sexual intercourse and especially of the use of syncopation in jazz rhythms to "a 'coming-too-early'", to an "anxiety [that] leads to premature orgasm", to the "impotence [that] expresses itself through premature and incomplete orgasm" (Adorno 2002b, pp. 486-490).

[72] Gracyk 1996, pp. 128, 130. The words put in inverted commas, quoted and then critically commented on by Gracyk in his book, are actually taken from Bloom's 1987 influential book *The Closing of the American Mind*. In short, Gracyk convincingly shows that while the rhythm of rock music can often be "extremely sensual", there is no evidence that it has intrinsically a "special 'sexual' aspect" and, furthermore, that for this reason rock's "so-called 'big beat' is harmful" or has "a corrupting influence" (Gracyk 1996, pp. 130-131, 133).

[73] It may seem strange to the reader that at this point of my article I suddenly introduce such explicit references to my recent personal experiences with rock concerts. However, I do not consider this as inappropriate in the present context because profitably intersecting one's philosophical thoughts (also derived from, or influenced by, selected readings) with one's own life experience is something that corresponds to a typical pragmatist attitude. In particular, I was encouraged to do so by a few remarks of Richard Shusterman on how "most of [his] ideas in philosophy derive more from personal experience than from the reading of theoretical texts" (2016, p. 91) and Theodore Gracyk on his being a great fan of popular music (2007, p. 163 ff.).

[74] The video of this performance is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoLJJRIWCLU

[75] This may remind us, for example, of the double use (literal or metaphorical) of the concept of taste in order to grasp and describe aesthetic experience, as masterfully explained by Carolyn Korsmeyer (1999, chap. 1).

not recommend to share the same premise and then draw different conclusions from it, but rather to criticize and refuse the premise itself and arrive at the conclusion that an aesthetic experience (here: rock music) that is to some extent comparable to sexual intercourse (for example, with regard to its effects during and after the performance) is not diminished or deprived of its aesthetic significance and value because of this. A philosophical approach like somaesthetics, specifically aimed at emphasizing and redeeming "the body's great reason" (freely quoting here Nietzsche's famous words) from all the prejudices that it has fallen prey to for centuries, may be of great help for this purpose.

How does this reflect on the general discourse that I have developed so far and, in particular, what are the consequences of this last aspect (rock music and sex) on the comparison between Adorno's aesthetic theory and pragmatist aesthetics? To be precise, Adorno cannot be considered by any means a thinker who despised instincts and impulses, but rather as someone who criticized the repressive combination of capitalist alienation and reification and "mutilated sexuality"[76], and advocated a truly free comportment of the subject towards the body (also including instincts and natural drives, of course). A truly free comportment and attitude that, however, for him were not even conceivable, let alone feasible or achievable, in the false world in which "life does not live" anymore (as the opening quotation of *Minima Moralia* famously reads).

This – together with many other aspects that it is not possible to take extensively into account here – has important consequences on Adorno's critical view of aesthetic pleasure and what we may call the modern ideology of aesthetic enjoyment, as wonderfully summarized in the very first paragraphs of his *Aesthetic Theory*. For example, he writes:

> In the false world all *hedoné* is false. For the sake of happiness, happiness is renounced. It is thus that desire survives in art. […] What popular

consciousness and a complaisant aesthetics regard as the taking pleasure in art, modeled on real enjoyment, probably does not exist. […] Whoever concretely enjoys artworks is a philistine; he is convicted by expressions like "a feast for the ears". […] Ask a musician if the music is a pleasure, the reply is likely to be – as in the American joke of the grimacing cellist under Toscanini – "*I just hate music*"[77].

First of all, however, the basic idea that we live in a completely "false world", dominated by a kind of Enlightenment that has always been and still is "totalitarian"[78], in which film, radio, popular music and magazines merely represent "the aesthetic equivalent of power"[79], is highly questionable. This also implies that the idea that a correct, adequate relation to music should be summarized by the sentence: "I just hate music!", is no less questionable and problematic. Even Adorno's famous motto: "The bourgeois want art voluptuous and life ascetic; the reverse would be better"[80], although surely fascinating like many of his striking aphorisms of this kind, is not entirely convincing. In fact, by simply adopting a logical principle of inclusion (i.e. a "both/and" in which the acceptance of one of the options does not entail a rejection of the others) instead of Adorno's logic of disjunction and mutual exclusion (i.e. "either/or" or sometimes even "neither/nor", as is quite typical of his negative dialectics), it is clearly

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[76] Adorno 2002a, p. 161.

[77] Adorno 2002a, p. 13. "That artworks are not being but a process of becoming can be grasped technologically. Their continuity is demanded teleologically by the particular elements. They are in need of continuity and capable of it by virtue of their incompleteness and, often, by their insignificance. It is as a result of their own constitution that they go over into their other, find continuance in it, want to be extinguished in it, and in their demise determine what follows them. This immanent dynamic is, in a sense, a higher-order element of what artworks are. If anywhere, then it is here that aesthetic experience resembles sexual experience, indeed its culmination. The way the beloved image is transformed in this experience, the way rigidification is unified with what is most intensely alive, effectively makes the experience the incarnate prototype of aesthetic experience" (Adorno 2002a, p. 176).

[78] Horkheimer & Adorno 2002, p. 4.

[79] Horkheimer & Adorno 2002, p. 103.

[80] Adorno 2002a, p. 13.

possible to want both art and life "voluptuous". That is, there seems to be no reason why the former's "voluptuousness" should exclude in principle the latter's (although there are surely moments in one's life in which "ascetic" habits and practices, and even "ascetic art", can be what one is really in need of). It is obviously true that, as Adorno claims, sometimes "the force of sexuality and the sensuality related to it becomes even more palpable through its concealment"[81] in art and aesthetics. But there is no plausible reason to generalize and infer from this that *all* art dealing with sexuality in an explicit way (as much rock music from the 1960s onwards has done), rather than in an implicit or concealing way, is aesthetically impoverished and thus illegitimate. Nor it is acceptable to reduce on this basis *all* popular music to a mere experience of fun[82] (which, by the way, is not something disagreeable or miserable in itself, although it surely does not represent the highest value or pleasure in life).

A passage from *Pragmatist Aesthetics* can provide elements useful to the gaining of a clearer and more adequate perspective. As Shusterman explains, "rock songs are typically enjoyed through moving, dancing, and singing along with the music, often with such vigorous efforts that we break a sweat and eventually exhaust ourselves"; rock music evokes an "energetic and

kinesthetic response"[83]. This, as I said, may clearly remind us (and, in my view, in a positive, *not* in a negative way) of other activities similarly involving vigorous efforts and sweating, exhausting oneself, and finally providing great satisfaction and pleasure at the end of the experience. Namely, activities like those theoretically inquired into, and also practically explored by, some branches of somaesthetics (yoga, massage, aerobics, forms of dance and martial arts, modern psychosomatic therapies, etc.), and then, of course, like sex.

It is thus not by accident, I think, that Shusterman explains that "there are aesthetic experiences of […] everyday activities" (for example, let us think of listening to one's favorite music with an Mp3-Device or a Smartphone while walking, having a bicycle ride, etc.) that are "markedly different from the ordinary experience of them" because of "a special quality of the object or event being experienced that can be classified as ordinary in a general sense of belonging to the real world of normal life rather than the artworld but also be extraordinary in terms of its quality"[84]. And, in order to strengthen this explanation, the following example of aesthetically enriching experiences (already mentioned a few paragraphs before) is significantly added: "Compare […] an enjoyable episode of lovemaking versus one that stands out as extraordinary because of its creativity, intensity, or meaning"[85].

6.

"Rock 'n' Roll music gets right through to you without having to go through your brain" is a presumed sentence of John Lennon critically used by Mark Miller against rock music and, in turn, critically used by Shusterman against Miller himself[86]. The usual and commonsensical idea, in short, is that "sensuous immediacy" is *the* typical feature of popular music and that this logically implies

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[81] Adorno 2002a, p. 276.

[82] "The ridiculous in art, which philistines recognize better than do those who are naively at home in art, and the folly of a rationality made absolute indict one other reciprocally; incidentally , when viewed from the perspective of the praxis of self-preservation, happiness – sex – is equally ridiculous, as can be spitefully pointed out by anyone who is not driven by it. Ridiculousness is the residue of the mimetic in art, the price of its self-enclosure. In his condemnation of this element, the philistine always has an ignominious measure of justification. The ridiculous, as a barbaric residuum of something alien to form, misfires in art if art fails to reflect and shape it. If it remains on the level of the childish and is taken for such, it merges with the calculated fun of the culture industry. By its very concept, art implies kitsch, just as by the obligation it imposes of sublimating the ridiculous it presupposes educational privilege and class structure; *fun* is art's punishment for this" (Adorno 2002a, p. 119).

[83] Shusterman 2000, p. 184.

[84] Shusterman 2012, p. 112.

[85] Shusterman 2012, p. 112.

[86] See Shusterman 2000, p. 184.

that "rock can be enjoyed without intellectual 'interpretation' [and] is therefore not sufficiently 'cerebral' to be aesthetically legitimate"[87]. This, however, not only confirms the abovementioned "anti-somatic animus" animating most critics of popular music, but on a more general level is simply wrong. In fact, if it is still a matter of controversy on a general epistemological level whether human perception is independent or not from any intellectual component (i.e. whether there is or is not a degree of immediacy in experience that is not permeated by rationality and conceptuality, that is completely non-conceptual or non-intellectual), it is not a matter for discussion on a specifically aesthetic level that our experiences with arts of all kinds never consist of merely pre-intellectual "sensuous immediacy" devoid of any degree of "intellectual 'interpretation'". Without committing myself for this reason to radical forms of conceptualism in epistemology and/or cognitivism in aesthetics, my point is simply that aesthetic experience always implies what we may call a free play of the faculties of our mind (freely adapting here Kant's terminology to the specific purposes of this article).

In a sense, all music (thus including popular music as well) is "itself an inherently intellectual pleasure"[88], although it is obviously true that the pleasure brought by a twelve-tone esoteric composition of Anton Webern or a minimalist/avant-garde jazz piece of Tim Berne's group "Snakeoil" is definitely a more intellectual one than the pleasure that is brought by listening to (and simultaneously dancing, singing along, etc.) *Rocks* by Primal Scream, *Go With the Flow* by Queens of the Stone Age, *Give It Away* by Red Hot Chili Peppers, *Bullet in the Head* by Rage Against the Machine, etc. Anyway, in all cases aesthetic experience always depends on the interaction and mutual coordination between the different faculties of our mind. From this point of view, it

always consists of a complex and mediated experience (although on various levels and in different ways, related as it is to very different kinds of art), and not merely an immediate and sensuous one, as many critics of rock music have argued. However, today we should be ready to acknowledge that our intellectual faculties, in turn, must be understood as basically embodied (as pragmatism's typical non-reductive naturalism urges us to do[89]), which clearly compels us to rethink "the aesthetic" as not separated or distanced from "the somatic" as traditional aesthetics seemed to imply. Of course, this must not prevent us from using the concept of immediacy as such: a concept that, if properly used, can even prove to be useful to describe certain features and effects of rock music[90]. The problem, so to speak, is rather with some incorrect and ideological consequences deriving from a misleading use of the concept of immediacy when applied to rock music or other similar artistic practices[91].

This is closely connected, in turn, to the common objection (discoverable in such authors as Adorno, Greenberg, Rosenberg, van den Haag, Bloom, MacDonald and others) "that 'the gratifications offered by popular culture are spurious'". According to Shusterman, "the most straightforward interpretation and justification of the charge of spuriousness is that popular art's alleged gratifications are not real because they are never deeply felt, that they are spurious because they are merely 'washed-out', 'faked sensations'". However, as he observes, the experience of rock music

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[87] Shusterman 2000, pp. 184-185.
[88] Gracyk 1996, p. 128. For a more general perspective on music as such, and not only popular music, see Gracyk's recent book *On Music* (2013).

[89] Shusterman 2010a, pp. 61-62.
[90] A good example is represented by an interview with the Italian trumpet player and composer Giovanni Falzone on his CD *Led Zeppelin Suite*, consisting of a sophisticated suite in four parts based on jazz arrangements for big band of songs by the legendary rock band Led Zeppelin. In fact, in discussing and commenting on his CD with the interviewer Falzone explains the general meaning of his musical project and, in this context, correctly talks about the extraordinary significance that the *immediacy* of rock music, even of a simple "power chord", can have.
[91] See, for example, Adorno's typical way of using the term "immediacy", *Unmittelbarkeit*, in a very critical sense in his strong critique of jazz music.

can be so intensely absorbing and powerful that it is likened to spiritual possession, [and] surely gives the lie to such a charge. Even rock's severest critics recognize the passionately real potency and intoxicating satisfactions of its experience […]. Obviously and threateningly real in their intensity and appeal, the gratifications of popular art are sometimes scorned as spurious in another sense, that of ephemerality. They are not real because they are fleeting. […] Such an argument, however, will not withstand analysis [because] it is simply false to conclude the unreality of something from its ephemerality. This *non sequitur* may seem convincing […] because it has a grand philosophical pedigree extending back to Parmenides […]. But despite this support from such powerful and longstanding prejudices, the inference is clearly wrong. Something which exists only for a time nonetheless really exists, and a temporary gratification is a gratification all the same. […] To reject the value of the ephemeral has been a rather permanent prejudice of our intellectual culture, […] a prejudice which blights and blunts our pleasures. […] Rock songs are typically enjoyed through moving, dancing, and singing along with the music, often with such vigorous efforts that we break a sweat and eventually exhaust ourselves. […] Clearly, on the somatic level, there is much more effortful activity in the appreciation of rock than in that of high-brow music, whose concerts compel us to sit in a motionless silence which often induces not mere torpid passivity but snoring sleep. […] The much more energetic and kinesthetic response evoked by rock exposes the fundamental passivity of the traditional aesthetic attitude of disinterested, distanced contemplation – a contemplative attitude that has its roots in the quest for philosophical and theological knowledge rather than pleasure[92].

From this point of view, it might be argued (a little bit provocatively but also realistically) that, just as aesthetic experience in its most classical formulation was to be

understood as an "intensification of the *Lebensgefühl* (life feeling) through the harmonious correspondence of imagination and understanding"[93], so a kind of aesthetic experience like the one that we have at a rock concert can be understood as an intensified or, say, "heightened perceptual experience"[94]. Benjamin and Adorno are probably right in claiming that industrialized, mechanically-reproducible mass art is suitable for a kind of "reception in distraction"[95] (although only partially in distraction, in my opinion)[96]. However, it is also correct to connect this aspect of the aesthetic experience that we usually have with popular music to its effect of "transfiguring intensity of awareness, perception, and feeling (and the enriching, more meaningful living this brings)" from a specifically somatic point of view[97]. This implies a kind of aesthetic experience that can

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[92] Shusterman 2000, pp. 178-179, 181, 184. Shusterman's emphasis on the dimension of pleasure probably makes it possible to compare his aesthetic perspective, developed from within a basic pragmatist paradigm, to Hans-Robert Jauss' famous rehabilitation of aesthetic experience (in the context of the hermeneutic tradition) as based on the dimension of pleasure and on the three Aristotelian dimensions of *poiesis*, *aisthesis*, *katharsis*. Quite interestingly, in some of his works Jauss precisely starts from a critique of Adorno's aesthetic theory as radically unsympathetic to the aspect of pleasure in art (see, for instance, Jauss 1972).

[93] Gadamer 1994, p. 100.
[94] Shusterman 2012, p. 110.
[95] Benjamin 2006, p. 269.
[96] In Benjamin's own words: "The masses are a matrix from which all customary behavior toward works of art is today emerging newborn. Quantity has been transformed into quality: *the greatly increased mass of participants has produced a different kind of participation*. […] Distraction and concentration (*Zerstreuung und Sammlung*) form an antithesis, which may be formulated as follows. A person who concentrates before a work of art is absorbed by it; he enters into the work […]. By contrast, the distracted masses absorb the work of art into themselves. […] *Reception in distraction – the sort of reception which is increasingly noticeable in all areas of art and is a symptom of profound changes in apperception – finds in film its true training ground*. Film, by virtue of its shock effects, is predisposed to this form of reception. It makes cult value recede into the background, not only because it encourages an evaluating attitude in the audience but also because, at the movies, the evaluating attitude requires no attention. The audience is an examiner, but a distracted one" (Benjamin 2006, pp. 267-269). Adorno, for his part, writes in *On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening*: "Deconcentration is the perceptual activity which prepares the way for the forgetting and sudden recognition of mass music"; the listeners "are in any case no longer capable of concentrated listening. […] Benjamin's reference to the apperception of the cinema in a condition of distraction is just as valid for light music. […] But if the film as a whole seems to be apprehended in a distracted manner, deconcentrated listening makes the perception of a whole impossible" (Adorno 2002b, p. 305).
[97] Shusterman 2012, p. 111.

spontaneously lead to a certain degree of distraction[98] on the intellectual level (at least if compared to the abovementioned model of the structural mode of listening) and, at the same time, to a great amount of awareness and intensification on the somatic level. Once again, there is no necessary "either/or" dichotomy between these aspects but rather an inclusive "both/and" relationship.

From this point of view, popular music can even be seen as providing "some alternative cultural base from which to argue and nourish [the] critique" of the traditional aesthetic ideology of high art that has grown into "an oppressive obstacle to socio-cultural emancipation", preventing "art's liberation and reintegration into the praxis of ordinary life". Hence popular music can prove to be "a promising force for transforming our concept and institutions of art towards greater freedom and closer integration into the praxis of life"[99], rather than a mere aesthetic equivalent of power (as Adorno argued). Far from leading to a devaluation and condemnation of the particular kind of aesthetic experience required by a rock performance, the latter's strong somatic component might be rather understood in terms of "power relations […] encoded and sustained in our bodies" which, however, "can be challenged by alternative somatic practices" that can always be "developed to produce experiences of great power and exaltation"[100].

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[98] It is important to specify "a certain degree of" because simply speaking of "reception in distraction" in general, without further observations, subtle differentiations between different kinds of experiences within the same field etc., can prove to be misleading: that is, it can suggest the idea that certain kinds of art, like film, popular music and so on, are usually experienced in a condition of complete distraction and deconcentration, which is clearly false.

[99] Shusterman 2000, p. 145.

[100] Shusterman 2008, pp. 22, 37.

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BODILY TECHNIQUES OF THE DIGITAL:
REMARKS ON THE SPOOF OF IMMATERIALITY
AND THE REVOLT OF SOMATIC GESTURES

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ABSTRACT: Regarding current trends in the philosophy of technology, and particularly in the philosophy of media, one can pursue their research in two major directions. It comes down to either focusing on the media-inherent processes of the hardware (e.g., their idiosyncratic temporalities, the relations between digital states and analog continua, etc.),[1] or appropriating technology purely as its effect on society (i.e., as a reception of a new medium at its advent and later on, when it becomes commercial success).[2] The study of cultural techniques, however, for better or for worse conquers the middle-ground between these two approaches. While it tends to retrace popular media ("popular" in this case refers to the most eminent objects we use daily, such as doors, notebooks, lamps, ladders, etc.) from its everyday users to their various rudimental utilizations, it also refutes its hardware-obsessed counterpart with conceptualizing media not in itself, but as an assemblage that is made up from technological devices on the one hand, and those processes, attitudes and practices that are adopted for engaging with them on the other.[3]

In order to evaluate the bodily techniques of the digital as an autonomous branch of cultural techniques, firstly, I provide a summary of studying cultural techniques in general, and bodily techniques in particular – highlighting those points only that are relevant to my task. Secondly, I will argue that if there are so-called elementary cultural techniques, conventionally sorted out as drawing, reading, and counting,[4] there must exist certain "elementary" bodily techniques then; such as ducking, stroking, and running,[5] which are actually end-products of self-technologizing processes. Yet, this does not mean that the set of bodily techniques could not be extended parallel to the emergence of new technological apparatuses. I will then propose, thirdly, that this set can be refined, and we experience such cultivation day after day (just for the sake of employing a cliché) "in our digital age," hence in an era whose immaterial nature is generally taken for granted by theoreticians of new media. Therefore, I intend to counter the melancholy over the disappearance of somatic experience and the body in general as a consequence of virtuality triumphing over materiality, which ultimately reveals that bodily techniques are in fact a constant reminder of the failure for excommunicating the soma from interactions with technological media. Fourthly, I explain the concepts of "medial anesthesiology" and "somatic self-conditioning" by pointing out their importance regarding the relation between the body and state-of-the art technology. Fifthly and finally, I conclude my essay with mapping out the main points of somapolitics for the digital age, while emphasizing the political stakes and interests that lurk behind the maintenance of the anesthesiological discourse concerning the body.[6]

Keywords: body and algorithms, cultural techniques, medial anesthesiology, somatic self-conditioning, virtual gestures

(1)

According to Sybille Krämer, "[f]or a long time, perhaps for too long, culture was seen only as text."[7] This statement could be written as a call to arms on the banner for a group of leading scholars doing research on

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[1] This type of investigation is characteristic to the trend called "media archaeology," whose leading researcher is Wolfgang Ernst at the Humboldt University of Berlin. (However, it was Siegfried Zielinski who came up with the term "media archaeology" at the Berlin University of Arts.) A collection of Ernst's essays was published a few years back, highlighting the main points of the propaedeutic and aims of such media theoretical disposition: Wolfgang Ernst, *Digital Memory and the Archive* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

[2] This approach is customarily applied by media historiography, whose modern day father figure came to be the Canadian philosopher of media and prominent scholar of the so-called Toronto School of communication theory Marshall McLuhan.

[3] Of course, to a certain degree, this idea has already been present in works like Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1995), and Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005).

[4] See Sybille Krämer, "Technik als Kulturtechnik: Kleines Plädoyer für eine kulturanthropologische Erweiterung des Technikkonzeptes," in *Technik – System – Verantwortung*, ed. Klaus Kornwachs (Münster: Lit, 2004), 160f.

[5] See Marcel Mauss, "Techniques of the Body," in Id., *Techniques, Technology and Civilisation* (Oxford, New York: Berghahn, Durkheim Press, 2006), 90f.

[6] It seems inevitable to state which topics with an evident connection to my investigation I have not included in my paper. I do not discuss the subject matter of virtual or augmented reality, and the media that provide access to them while raising somatic awareness. For the latter piece, however, see Ted Bratkowski, "Investigating the Relevance of Shusterman's Somaesthetics to Motion-Controlled Gaming," *Pragmatism Today* 3, no. 2 (2012), 50-6.

[7] Sybille Krämer, Horst Bredekamp, "Culture, Technology, Cultural Techniques: Moving Beyond Text," *Theory, Culture & Society* 30, no. 6 (2013), 20.

cultural techniques… if they had a banner at all, of course. The consequences of Krämer's observation are far-reaching and should not be underemphasized though, by taking it halfheartedly as another trendy cultural turn in the humanities. All the more so, since it has culminated in the birth of a theoretical disposition that executes the following steps in the study of culture:

- *the dismissal of semiotic models/structures* The study of cultural techniques investigates artifacts, trends, and routines without textualizing these cultural phenomena, which would in this way result in an analysis that purely relies on the toolbox of narratology. From this perspective, and unlike e.g. Roland Barthes's distinctive and dominant conceptualization in this matter, writing is taken as an actual scene of operations made up from eyes, hands, and paper, or other writing tools, rather than a semiotic process from which the narrative/narrated subject comes to life.[8]

- *the discrediting of causal or retrospective narratives* It is quite ironic that while the majority of scholars of cultural techniques accept the arguments by well-established theoreticians like Jean-François Lyotard[9] that question the seemingly self-evident type of relevance of historical experience in everyday life, at the end of the day, essays on cultural techniques almost always end up as historical case studies. A way out of such an inconsistency is, however, found in the application of a demonstrative argumentative technique, which is associated with the method of discourse analysis on the one hand, and also in the incessant and obsessive refusal of following any type of chronological order, when investigating the origin

or prehistory of a particular technique, on the other. Yet, more often than not, a linear time axis can still clearly be reconstructed from culture technical case studies.[10]

- *the justification for acts preceding theory* While the study of cultural techniques has been an eminently German affair for the most part, this theme is not an allusion to Goethe's *Faust*, and its famous Bible-translation scene. It owes more to the general practice of reverse engineering, a process that retraces the chain of operations involved in any implementation of an exercise or routine, which ordinarily aims at the handling of tools, devices, and things. This idea is plainly hinted at in Cornelia Vismann's essay on sovereignty, when she claims that even the most idiosyncratic practice is somehow always already relegated to other practices. She conceives it as the algorithmic or scripted aspect of actions,[11] with which she does not intend to question our belief in free will; rather, she aims to enlighten an operational network that is present in those media assemblages which partake in the act. A certain posthumanist agenda is hard to mistake here: cultural techniques as anthropotechnics does not relate to the techniques man makes use of, but encompass those clusters of techniques that make up what we call the human being.

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[8] See Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 54.

[9] See Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991), 25.

[10] See for instance Bernhard Siegert, "(Not) in Place: The Grid, or, Cultural Techniques of Ruling Spaces," in Id., *Cultural Techniques: Grids, Filters, Doors, and Other Articulations of the Real* (New York: Fordham UP, 2015), 97-120, which drafts the genealogy of technologies of the grid from parcels to cells, from Roman times through America's Critical Period to the Bauhaus era in Germany.

[11] Cornelia Vismann, "Cultural Techniques and Sovereignty," *Theory, Culture & Society* 30, no. 6 (2013), 87.

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Bodily Techniques of the Digital: Remarks on the Spoof of Immateriality
and the Revolt of Somatic Gestures
Robert Smid

- *the promoting of factuality in place of facticity*
  Instead of asking from a standpoint that is given to someone as its present situation, studies of cultural techniques focus on how historical scenes are constructed (like a cross-section or section-plan), and how a two-way connection can be established between the discussed practices and the practices of theoretical reflection. This is the reason why in place of media, Joseph Vogl proposes the concept of "becoming-media:" this umbrella term embodies both the events that make up a case or a situation as well as the processes required for their mediation *in operandi*.[12] It paves the way for an apparent, nevertheless productive ambiguity: Whose agency does the research of cultural techniques truly concern; ours, or the technologies' we engage with daily?

Overall, due to this new wave of research, culture has been dislocated from its position of being an entity embedded in static monuments (texts and representations) to a network of practices, implementations, rituals, and routines. It is easy to see that when a trend concentrates so much on defining culture as a chain of certain operations, and focuses on man's interaction with the materiality of things, then the materiality of the primary user of artifacts, namely and prominently, the body cannot be excluded as a result.

(2)

Having noticed this theoretical market gap, Erhard Schüttpelz has proposed the idea of bodily techniques as an eminent form of cultural techniques. In his formulation, more than self-evidently, bodily techniques are techniques that are executed by the body, and thus handle the body *both* as the primary object and the primary tool of executing operations.[13] Reading the anthropologist Marcel Mauss's essay *Techniques of the Body*, from which he borrowed the very term *Körpertechniken* (in French, « techniques du corps »), Schüttpelz points out a certain quirkiness in Mauss. He never once mentioned the works of his French contemporaries, Étienne-Jules Marey and Henri Regnault, the two pioneers of cinematography with a heavy ethnographical bias. As a matter of fact, Mauss turned to the example of a military marching band instead. He tells the story of an outlandish event that one of the Anglo-Franco regiments encountered during the First World War; six months after their victory at the battle of Aisne, the Worcester regiment made a formal request to the king so they could march to French rhythm. The result was – as one could expect it – disastrous: when the soldiers tried to keep up with the music, they had to give up their English marching style, and when the regiment submitted to the movements they had been conditioned to follow as part of their military training, the soldiers failed to adapt to the somatically unfamiliar rhythm.[14] A similar story occurred to Mauss's contemporary, however, the poet Paul Valéry, who recounts it in his essay *Poetry and Abstract Thought*: while trying to get away from his overwhelming duties, Valéry went for a walk, but his body was suddenly taken over by two confronting tunes, neither of which he could make anything out in his mind.[15] Valéry writes that he is no musician to interpret them, so he had somehow acted out the melody with his limbs instead, which resulted in bizarre and preposterous motion. Valéry describes this experience as a transfer from muscular stimulation to the stimulation of aesthetic judgement as an aftereffect.[16]

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[12] Joseph Vogl, "Becoming-Media: Galileo's Telescope," *Grey Room*, no. 29 (2007), 16.

[13] Erhard Schüttpelz, "Körpertechniken," *Zeitschrift für Medien- und Kulturforschung*, no. 1 (2010), 108.
[14] Cf. Mauss, "Techniques of the Body," 79.
[15] Paul Valéry, "Poetry and Abstract Thought," *The American Poetry Review* 36, no. 2 (2007), 62.
[16] Ibid.

I suggest that these two seemingly accidental anecdotes can be treated as being interrelated, and thus might just answer Schüttpelz's question: why did Mauss as an anthropologist ignore the idea of ethnology working with recorded human motion (viz., rudimentary ethno-cinema)?[17] Supposing that there is no way Mauss could have overlooked the ties between body and technology, I suggest that he actually amplified their relations by omitting the dichotomies of the natural and the artificial, and consequently of 'the savage' and 'the civilized,' which were so typical of ethnographers of his era – and characteristic to Marey and Regnault too. On the one hand, there is the mentioned cooperation of the latter, recording movements of tribal people, which was actually driven by the desire to economize the stamina of European armies: soldiers had to readjust their style of walking artificially in order to be in synch with the so-called natural movements of African peoples – Regnault argued that they practiced a less exhausting way of moving forward.[18] On the other hand, there is Mauss, who suggests that what may strike us as something natural in bodily motion, has in fact nothing to do with biology or race, but has always already been the byproduct of self-technologizing, routines for creating bodily consciousness, which at some degree can be intensified into a cultural trait. In other words, the natural is not only mediated by technological means (the 'natural' way of walking is to be learned with the help of the new technology, which is film according to Marey's and Regnault's project), but has already been created artificially – through self-conditioning which only later becomes institutionalized, and it makes no difference if it happens in a tribe or in a regiment.

The importance of this historic clash cannot be overemphasized: it clearly yields to the fact that certain movements, instead of being one-sidedly physical or cultural traits, are in fact inherently technical and learned through self-technologizing instances. Schüttpelz

argues that there is nevertheless a cinematic undercurrent to Mauss's conception, consisting of classic vaudeville, slapstick, and circus, genres in which the interconnection of mediation, physiological processes, and social imperatives might as well be divergent to the same degree as they can be convergent.[19] The process of self-conditioning in order to achieve the capability to execute certain chains of motions is, however, neither development, nor evolution, not even progressive accumulation to be precise. Schüttpelz states that "[t]here is no evolutionary increase in the skills of bodily techniques,"[20] and supposing he is correct, elementary bodily techniques can thus be combined synchronically to produce chains never before exercised. So how come we can still examine the advent of new techniques against all odds, and adapt to cutting-edge apparatuses at the same time? This is where my investigation actually takes off.

(3)

Many of the key texts of media cultural studies reach a consensus regarding the relationship between somatic experience and the current state of digital technology. In a parallel fashion, their vectors tend to point towards the same direction without any dissent or second-guessing about the body being immaterialized or virtualized by the gadgets that surround us while we go about our everyday lives.

For instance, N. Katherine Hayles in her *How We Became Posthuman*, which is considered to be one of the cornerstones of contemporary philosophical discourse on technological media, makes an upfront identification between what it means to be posthuman and how somatic experience is irreversibly lost in bits and pixels: according to her, an inevitable and distinctive

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[17] Cf. Schüttpelz, "Körpertechniken," 103.
[18] Ibid., 102.

[19] Ibid., 107. Also see Thomas Macho, "Zoologiken: Tierpark, Zirkus und Freakshow," in *Anthropometrie: Zur Vorgeschichte des Menschen nach Maß*, ed. Gert Theile (München: Fink, 2005), 155-77.
[20] Schüttpelz, "Körpertechniken," 115.

form of disembodiment is brought along by state of the art technology.[21] Likewise, leading researcher of cultural techniques Krämer proposes the question of the body's disappearance from technology, and traces its origins back to the father of cybernetics, Norbert Wiener. Wiener made an eloquent distinction between material energy and immaterial, transmissible information,[22] and while Krämer identifies the skyrocketing interest in the soma as a counter-intuition to the dematerialization of culture due to new media, she still follows in the footsteps of Wiener when making an effort to resolve the problem of corporeality contra digital technology. Krämer argues that instead of the disappearance of the body, one should consider its reduplication, cleavage or splitting into a physical and a semiotic one.[23] According to her essay *Does the Body Disappear?*, the sublime transformation of the body results in a flesh body and a sign body. Consequently, she defines virtuality – being a preeminent aspect of the digital – on the basis of an illusory placing of real entities, which means the displacement of the flesh body into the symbolic world of signs.[24] Therefore, corporeality via virtualization undoubtedly gains the possibility of interaction with symbolic structures, yet it also becomes evident where Krämer's idea still falls short. Due to her strict insistence on the very dichotomy, which considers the interaction of the somatic and the virtual only as an additive aspect, the interaction between the flesh body and the sign body comes only after they have been successfully separated from each other.

Regarding the Krämeresque idea of reduplication, my suggestion would be in synch with the arguments made by Richard Shusterman in his essay that does not shy away from investigating the cyberpunk genre that is well known for thematizing virtual bodies. His compelling examples against the immateriality of the digital include William Gibson's *Neuromancer* and the Wachowskis' *Matrix*, both of which portray the suffering body upon leaving cyberspace: having endured the effects of virtual reality, the physically drained soma is the actual trace of the material reality of media effects.[25] Shusterman, however, starts his genealogy on the ties between body and media with *Phaedo*, stating that Plato's critique is the ur-formula of today's media theoretical dispositions which either mourn the loss of somatic presence, or intend to do away with the body as a whole; at the end of the day, they both view the body as an obstacle, when deriding it as a productive medium.[26] In other words, the body is either an entity that needs to be reclaimed vis-à-vis technological media, or the very barrier which despite (or, in fact, all the more because of its) being a "multimedia conglomerate" stands in the way of "the indivisible soul which seeks truth,"[27] in this case: the hegemony of subtle digitalization. Shusterman also sheds light on the fact that the body can never be expelled from interactions with new technologies even if the result is exactly the body's immaterialization (e.g., holograms, voice control instead of typing, etc.).[28]

Besides Hayles, another example concerning the almost apocalyptic tone that longs for more corporeality in technology, can be associated with Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's ideas. The way Gumbrecht looks at political protests is exceptionally relevant today considering recent events in Brazil, Romania or even Hungary. He argues that waves of protest sweeping through first-

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[21] Cf. N. Katherine Hayles*, How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 192-222.
[22] Sybille Krämer, "Does the Body Disappear? A Comment on Computer Generated Spaces," in *Paradoxes of Interactivity: Perspectives for Media Theory, Human-Computer Interaction, and Artistic Investigations*, eds. Uwe Seifert, Jin Hyun Kim, Anthony Moore (Transcript: Bielefeld, 2008), 26.
[23] Ibid., 31.
[24] Ibid., 32.

[25] Richard Shusterman, "Somaesthetics and the Body/Media Issue," in Id., *Performing Live: Aesthetic Alternatives for the End of Art* (London: Cornell UP, 2000), 152.
[26] Cf. Ibid., 146.
[27] Ibid.,, 147.
[28] Ibid., 152. Also see Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 13.

world countries have one particular thing in common: to some extent, they are intensified by the urge of getting together instead of spending any more time in the digital world.[29] Of course, this has become almost too evident to us, Hungarians during the past year due to the ongoing protests for preserving the Central European University in its present form. Whichever reports you read, every one of them can confirm that these protests were different from any political gatherings that had happened since 1989. When watching the interviews with the protesters, it suddenly struck me that none of them had failed to mention that one of the reasons why they would go to every protest was the great feeling of being together with their peers. Certainly for Gumbrecht, such an occurrence is the true form of Foucauldian "power," which is characterized by bodies piling upon each other, in this fashion, constructing a monolith that blocks the way.[30] A monolith which someone bumps into, either metaphorically or literally – a protest simply means bodies to reckon with. (It was precisely Professor Shusterman's point when referring to the movement 'Occupy Wall Street' in his keynote lecture). Gumbrecht regards such material presence as a preeminent and exclusively authentic form of somatic experience. (This type of lived experience predominantly appears in sports according to Gumbrecht's theory, an issue that I addressed three years ago in an essay that was also kindly published by the journal *Pragmatism Today*). He nevertheless acts as if the operations leading up to any protest nowadays were not executed through bodily techniques, as if the event of immediacy was not dependent on medial interactions at all.[31]

After all, creating, promoting, and circulating an event, and the sending out of virtual invitations all come together to constitute a chain of operations, which rehabilitates the sense of *techné* as understood in Antiquity. Hence, *techné* is considered here as the useful execution of following and practicing protocols, which, on the one hand, dismisses both the idea of technology being an extension of man (as Ernst Kapp[32] or Marshall McLuhan[33] put it), and the concept that technological processes are carried out inherently on their own (i.e., in the machine) without any need for somatic interference from the users' part. Such a definition of *techné*, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of interaction between motions like swiping, tapping, and clicking and the device on which these operations are executed. Together they make up what can be called a medium. Therefore, bodily techniques now more than ever, in the age of touchscreens and touchpads can be situated as *transductive constituents*. This term had been introduced by French philosopher of technology Gilbert Simondon – and was later made popular by another, Bernard Stiegler[34] –, and it refers to those practices that bind together the differences of the agent, the act, and its tool (i.e., body, motion, and gadgets), which disrupts the linear vectors of intentionality, and triggers an osmosis or a ricochet, instead. In other words, the act that is executed *on the device with the body* can at one and the same time has the repercussion of executing an act *on the body with the device*. For instance, while our techniques of archiving events[35] still follow patterns of

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[29] Conversation with Gumbrecht on 12th September 2013.
[30] Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *The Powers of Philology* (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 5.
[31] Also see Id., "Infinite Availability: About Hypercommunication (and Old Age)," in Id., *Our Broad Present: Time and Contemporary Culture* (New York: Columbia UP, 2014), 61-71.

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[32] See Ernst Kapp, *Grundlinien einer Philosophie der Technik* (Braunschweig: George Westermann, 1877), 29-39.
[33] See Marshall McLuhan, Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (Berkeley: Gingko Press, 2001), 26-41.
[34] Bernard Stiegler, "Temps et individuations technique, psychique et collective dans l'œuvre de Simondon," *Intellectica*, no. 26-27 (1998), 247.
[35] I use these two terms, "archiving" and "event", which carry the immersive weight of philosophical and media theoretical conceptual history, in a deliberately broad sense here. The former also includes stages of archiving, like museums, archives, databases, etc., as well as the theoretical discourse on archiving, while by the latter I refer to – so as to stick with my example – both the

cataloguing and segregating the mentioned factors, labelling one the subject, another the object, and the third one the act of archiving, each operation of mediatization, material technicization, and ritual preparation for the body – as Schüttpelz rightly puts it – in fact coincides with another in most cases, whenever a chain of operations is carried out.[36] This means that agents and actions only become separated on an already institutionalized level – which nevertheless originates from exactly the same dynamic –, once they have been processed (examined), stored (analyzed), and transmitted (published).

This has at least two disciplinary consequences, and two partial conclusions for my investigation:

1. If instead of 'Bildung' (educating), *conditioning* takes the place value of a buzzword as far as bodily techniques are conceived as processes that stem from self-technologizing to the level that they become a cultural phenomenon, then whenever the study of cultural techniques do try to stick with the proposed rudimentary meaning of *techné* – that is following a script/protocol and acting it out in return –, it becomes all the more obvious that bodily techniques actually make up the larger set, and cultural techniques constitute their subset.

2. If anything, bodily techniques can call for an anesthetic, rather than an aesthetic; the reason why we are so good at overlooking them, and even excluding them in our medial events *en total*, is that each successful mediation executed through them liquidates the indispensable ordeal that is strung out between institutionalization, technology, and the body.

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taking place of a protest and the operations that are necessary to make it happen.
[36] Schüttpelz, "Körpertechniken," 116.

(4)

I discuss my second point in detail now. While we tend to pay attention solely to the results (e.g., a device, an event, etc.), or to separate agents partaking in an act, the chain of operations is initially composed from acts and agencies linked together, and as such, they can demonstrate the *techné* of the body as a form of expertise or practical skill. Schüttpelz argues that media and medialization are no way arbitrary or complementary to bodily techniques, but they are originated from interactions with other techniques and symbolic acts.[37] If such processes of formation and effect are so obviously disguised, or hidden from their recipients, it is high time the anesthesiological potential in bodily techniques was pursued further. For this end, I refer to Vogl's comments on the nature of interacting with optical media.

Investigating the not so self-evident effects of microscopes and telescopes on human sight in an historical manner, Vogl regards the technological relationship and its development as a *par excellence* execution of denaturalization and anesthesiology.[38] What could Vogl mean by that? As for denaturalization; even basic operations executed with the body are already results of self-technologization, and their mediated nature resurfaces whenever they are brought into interaction with devices. Not only does denaturalization deconstruct the supposed viscerality of motions while at the same time demonstrate their inherently technical aspects, but it also opens up a field for generating new bodily techniques, accordingly. As for medial anesthesiology; what the body truly achieves in its interaction with technology is constructing the mentioned field as an anesthesiological one. In this case, what could be called mediation, does not primarily encompass the event when things are made sensible, audible, visible, etc., by technology. Rather, the very

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[37] Ibid., 111.
[38] Cf. Vogl, "Becoming-Media," 17f. and 20f.

difference or niche is mediated between what is made sensible and what is disguised as common or "natural" to/in mediation. This latter component is also brought to light as a specific form of practical knowledge and exercised routine when we focus on bodily techniques. Consequently, it is not the effect of technology that comes under consideration but the lack or omission of an effect that is nevertheless constitutive to medial experience: in other words, the somatic factor here is technological expertise and not the experience of technology. I suggest that bodily techniques resulting in tactile and tangible experience in fact promote the very aspect of experience that is out of reach, yet no less tactile in itself. This is where, why, and how their anesthesiological potential is exploited.

A telling example of how being regulated by apparatuses requires prior adaptation from our part is inherent to the concept of today's navigation systems. We are no longer the ones who are given instructions in the traditional way of being pointed to a direction; instead, we are the ones waving our hands to the apparatus. While we are performing the very movements that were directed at us for ages, our bodies are, nonetheless, governed by motion sensors and algorithms in following the machine's protocol for issuing orders in order to reach our destination with the help of navigation systems. An eminent, yet in a way still self-concealing coupling of rhythm and algorithm pops up here, whose sonic aspect has already been investigated by the media archeologist Shintaro Miyazaki: "'Algorhythms' let us hear that our digital culture is not immaterial, but lively, rhythmical, performative, tactile and physical, and, most importantly, that 'algorhythms'' are not just normal rhythms. Their transmissions and storages can nowadays be quick enough to deceive our senses, and also their manipulative power—namely their speed and quality of calculations—became in the last decades faster than our human senses."[39]

Such an anesthesiology becomes conspicuously intense in tactile interactions, however: Jean-Luc Nancy to whom Jacques Derrida dedicated his work *On Touching*, identifies somatic interventions at the very moment when language fails to incorporate a proper and intact narrative. Whether it is searching for words or the lack of knowledge of an object, deixis suddenly and seemingly unintentionally comes to the person's help: we point at something, when for various reasons we cannot say its name.[40] (A chain remains notwithstanding; instead of words, it is composed of gestures.) Likewise, philosopher of media Vilém Flusser in his posthumous collection of essays entitled *Gestures* aims for a definition that also does away with the concept of motions expressing intention. In Flusser's view, gestures are movements of the body for which no satisfactory causal explanation exists. They are intermediaries in a way that they come at an interval, just as Nancy suggests when there is a pause or a lack; nonetheless, gestures are institutionalized and practiced acts. Flusser's definition, however, also implies that not only do gestures come to the fore when language breaks down, but they cannot be integrated into a narrative either; it is only aspectual why someone did something, the important thing is the chain that is induced or indicated by gestures. "We 'read' gesture, from the slightest movement of facial muscles to the most powerful movements of masses of bodies called 'revolutions',"[41] comments Flusser, and while he stresses the interactive nature of gestures, he still resorts to the symbolic dimension (e.g. gently pushing someone to make way for oneself). Consequently, reading in his theory is not the deciphering of a cause, but of whatever the gesture represents or expresses.

[39] Shintaro Miyazaki, "AlgoRHYTHMS Everywhere: A Heuristic Approach to Everyday Technologies," *Thamyris/Intersecting*, no. 26 (2013), 135.

[40] Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Birth to Presence* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1993), 175.

[41] Vilém Flusser, *Gestures* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 2.

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Robert Smid

As far as bodily techniques are concerned however, even Flusser, an eminent thinker of the digital failed to notice that we might already have implemented and operationalized the deixis in our interactions with touchpads and touchscreens. Do we not start most of our conversations with a touch nowadays, tapping on an app, be it Viber, Hangouts or WhatsApp? Or, take the case of swiping left or right as a means of voting in reality or talent shows, or of finding the love of our lives on Tinder: it induced a modification to practices, such as the European index finger's support in reading, which now goes both ways. Furthermore, there is also the remediation of the role of the emperor's thumb in a battle of life and death by icons and avatars of a hand with thumbs pointing up or down; we have come a long way to rediscover our thumb thanks to technological apparatuses, and we are somatically reminded of it each time we take a selfie and use our thumb for pressing the button.[42] We also experience daily that verbal communication has become the matter of bodily techniques.[43] Yet the mutual exclusiveness between linguistic utterances and gestures, which was pointed out by Nancy, is clear to see even today whenever we walk past hip cafés with signs like "No Wi-Fi, talk to each other" – which could be translated as: instead of bodily expertise, resort to verbal acts. But are the scripts, cookies or chains of codes we generate via motions like tapping and swiping not the actual language that most precisely describes us today?

(5)

Schüttpelz concludes his essay on bodily techniques with issuing two warnings. Firstly, bodily techniques are simultaneously connected to life-cycles as well as daily routines.[44] It yields to the intermingling of time's cycle, so actions that are practiced once or twice a day, a week or a month, and time's arrow, so rituals that one overtakes in a lifetime from the cradle to the grave while passing them on to their children. Consequently, not only do bodily techniques come together to give out a person's rhythm of life with respect to social and institutional scansion, but they make up his or her individuality by doing so in the first place.[45] Secondly, reducing bodily techniques to the body can be alien to different eras or cultures.[46] Therefore, the idea of bodily techniques cannot be confined to exercises, but in fact refers to ways and means that are characteristic to the body when it interacts with media – language included. Even if theoretical trends try to somatize a certain discourse,[47] which simultaneously yields to purifying the body and reducing every components of the discourse to it, there still remains the bottleneck between the techniques that carry out such somatizing and their relationship to the body.

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[42] I owe an extensive thanks to Thomas Telios for drawing my attention to this subject. Also, the thrill of taking selfies as made possible by the evolutionary trait of the opposable thumb is just another stage in our practices for exciting the body. André Leroi-Gourhan, a disciple of Mauss pointed out that the anthropological difference of the thumb had already brought along a series of bodily techniques in this regard. See Anrdé Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), 287.

[43] The prediction of the medievalist Paul Zumthor seems to have been fulfilled: the return of the Middle Ages is caught red handed in the body's performative aspects complementing the voice, which makes every act of communication more than sheer verbal utterance. Cf. Paul Zumthor, "Body and Performance," in *Materialities of Communication*, eds. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, K. Ludwig Pfeiffer (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1994), 224f.

[44] Schüttpelz, "Körpertechniken," 112.

[45] This equals no less than stating that bodily techniques are the primary guarantee of our social being, and thus stabilize our status in institutional contexts. Whenever we want to develop or reinvent ourselves, the first thing we change is our routines, and as Professor Shusterman remarked in the discussion of my paper, our smart apparatuses can become eminent partners in this enterprise, with soma maps and breathing lamps providing new possibilities of body-media interactions.

[46] Ibid., 118.

[47] This obstacle of reductionism becomes especially evident in the works of the early and late Michel Foucault, in his *The Birth of the Clinic* and *The History of Sexuality* – I am not completely sure that my essay has successfully dodged this bullet either.

This bottleneck is remarkably demonstrated in cases of exciting the body. Paradoxically, seeking somatic excitement is a perfect example for constructing an anesthesiological field in which self-conditioning is executed via technological means. A late essay by the father of structuralist anthropology Claude Lévi-Strauss argues that bodily excitement serves as a middle-ground for primitive and civilized peoples; in the former, it is institutionalized as a (hunting) ritual, while in the latter, it is reserved mainly for (extreme) sports.[48] In the essay entitled *Le 'Sentiment de la nature': un besoin fondamental* ("The sense of nature: a fundamental need"), Lévi-Strauss observes the common practices that can be associated with one another respectively. For example, preparation for either a hunt or parachuting consists of taking tokens (a favorite pair of socks, a pendant, etc.), using self-suggestion (listening to music), etc.[49] This makes Lévi-Strauss question the fundamental difference between cultures as far as bodily practices go. Another example of bodily excitement can be proposed on the basis of algorithmic manipulation that was discussed earlier. While there is a palpable "temptation to claim that human rhythms are more lively, groovy, and emotional, but ultra-fast computers and digital technology in general are nowadays able to simulate up to a certain extent human errors: artifacts and processes, which are generally perceived as being human or being analog in contrast to the monotonous

and cold logic of digital machines."[50] As a matter of fact, musical genres like techno can decenter the hearing and dancing subject with computerized microrhythms and the iteration of samples. For instance, in hip-hop a sample can always be recognized in its source, whereas techno neutralizes the sound bit or dissimulates its source. This lack calls for a gesture, which is no other than dancing.

So what if, as I suggested earlier (esp. see fn. 41), the thrill has already been integrated in the act of preparation for an event, as it is all the more conspicuous now, when instead of living in a McLuhanian global village,[51] we have a campfire made up from several individual torches of flickering bright screens, each with its respective agencies and actions. The discourse of addiction regarding smartphones is dull and repetitive after a certain point, but it does shed light on at least one important phenomenon: the thrill or hunger for excitement may be motivated by being up to date with the latest news and memes as soon as they come out, but its satisfaction – now more than ever – is in turn dependent on techniques that the body executes. Additionally, more and more digital processes manipulated and controlled by algorithms happen in real time nowadays. And in the age of fake news, clickbaits, cookies, trackers, and WannaCry viruses, these virtual entities can take a smart apparatus hostage (i.e., deprive one of the satisfaction that somatic acts carry in themselves) exactly because the user clicks or taps on them.

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[48] Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Le « sentiment de la nature » : un besoin fondamental," *Ethnies*, no. 17 (2003), 89.

[49] Ibid., 91. This short essay's importance could also manifest in today's culture theoretical debates, since it considers the act of exciting another's body in the same context. In an episode of the sadly unappreciated TV series *Scream Queens*, one of the protagonists (all of them are deliberately high school stereotypes) breaks the fourth wall by making a self-reflexive statement: he says that he is an upper-middle class straight white male who can only perform techniques that may reflect homosexual urges during football practices. This enlightens the fact that rituals, whether in a tribe or in college, simultaneously allow and prohibit certain bodily techniques, which concerns almost all parts of our identity that are at the crosshair of heated debates between scholars of cultural studies.

[50] Miyazaki, "AlgoRHYTHMS Everywhere," 137.

[51] McLuhan's conception – which emanates optimism and pessimism at the same time – refers to the abolition of spatial isolation with the help of new communication technologies, which culminates in an electronic telepresence regardless of one's location and bodily functions. His idea of a new tribal society (see Marshall McLuhan, Quentin Fiore, *War and Peace in the Global Village* [Berkeley: Gingko Press, 2001], 46., and Marshall McLuhan, "Playboy Interview," in *Essential McLuhan*, eds. Eric McLuhan, Frank Zingrone [London: Routledge, 2005], 253.), however, falls short from the perspective of bodily techniques, especially when brought into dialogue with Mauss's and Lévi-Strauss's quoted works.

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Robert Smid

The common association of a bunch of zombies staring at their phones in the subway has inherently been hypostasized in zombie networks or botnets, of which we can easily become another node through executing operations with our bodies (i.e., clicking on the wrong link). This whole situation reappropriates those operations for epidemic treatment in societies which Michel Foucault already investigated in his lecture series *Security, Territory, Population* at the College de France as early as 1977. According to him, three main models shaped epidemic management throughout history. Firstly, the leprosy model's main feature is the act of exclusion, which via rituals and juridical combinations of laws and regulations brought along the technique of binary division between "us and them," between healthy citizens and lepers in this case. Secondly, the plague model no longer divided people, but partitioned time and space, imposing regulations that closed off areas and rescheduled the daily routines of people with curfew intervals. Thirdly, in case of the smallpox model discipline is not a fundamental factor anymore, and thus segregation and quarantine become obsolete techniques to stop the epidemic: campaigns are launched instead, in order to halt endemic phenomena.[52] Instead of leprosy, pestilence, and smallpox however, we have digital contagions in which case physical confinement is a futile effort to put an end to their spread through direct contact, by touch. Disciplining can no longer make use of the same practices as did in the Classical Age that Foucault was so keen on examining. Foucault's idea of governmentality (i.e., techniques of governing and ruling) notwithstanding, when epidemic management takes an eminent digital twist, two aspects of power with regard to the relationship between body and digital technology become plain to see.

Actually, being governed by apparatuses (even if they are simple everyday objects like a navigation system), induces new exercises for self-technologizing in the form of self-imposed adaptation of man to new ways of interaction. Putting it bluntly, in order to make use of innovations of the digital, we have to able to communicate with them, and so far it seems that this type of communication goes against the grain of all immaterializing claims of virtuality, and still relies heavily on somatic performance. Codes as language is produced by gestures that come together into chains of operations that iterate those of the very machine (i.e., its algorithms) to which we intend to issue orders. Contrary to Gumbrecht, power's authentic manifestation does no longer happen exclusively in bodies piling up, and the power of the digital is not of confining nature either, but rather a productive one that forces us to act rhythmically in linking one motion to another – nevertheless, in synch with machinistic algorithms. This may enlighten with a theoretical feedback to Foucault's conjectures on power that with every ruling and conditioning act executed in the way I suggested earlier, such that acts and agents remain intertwined, mediation by digital means in fact helps us rediscover parts and exercises of the body that have been obliterated from our daily routines before.

Moreover, besides power being productive, it is not innovative in itself. To say the least, it is practiced via iterations after conditioning has been incorporated by its subjects. If *par excellence* power is still articulated or demonstrated via practices of handling bodies, then each and every act of opposition to this power is turned back onto itself. The now institutionalized self-conditioning which is required to organize a protest with the help of digital apparatuses is exploited through repeating it on the very side against which it intends to go. Take the example of hacking; it was originally directed against the ruling restriction, and thus transgressed limitations and boundaries, but with hackers employed by the state, it now contributes to the aims of the very power that has brought it to life in the first place as a countermovement; state hackers secretly spy on our personal information parallel with the confinements of confidentiality. With every move,

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[52] Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 24f.

people generate hordes of information about themselves, while they are led to believe that no footprint, silhouettes of their bodies or material traces of their actions are left to be found after them in the immaterial digital world made up from zeros and ones. Yet, the one who rules the techniques of the digital can institutionalize (in every aspect of the word) the body exactly by maintaining the self-concealing discourse of immateriality (another purification practice, one which expels the body *en masse*): nowadays, power no longer manifests exemplarily in bodies piling up, but in knowing the techniques that make them tap and click – tick.

IV. ON PRAGMATISM

Ruth Anna Putnam:
A Pragmatic Thinker for our Time

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ABSTRACT: Ruth Anna Putnam is one the most imaginative and vital pragmatic thinkers of our time. Unfortunately, her philosophical work has been overshadowed by her much more famous husband, Hilary Putnam. For many philosophers Ruth Anna's primary claim to fame is that she is responsible for getting Hilary to take pragmatism seriously—something that he has acknowledged on many occasions. But viewing her in this limited way does a great injustice to her own originality. The aim of this paper, the first scholarly study of Ruth Anna Putnam's work, is to challenge that view.

Ever since I wrote my dissertation on John Dewey's metaphysics of experience (1957), I have always taken "pragmatism seriously"—to use Ruth Anna Putnam's expression, but I have never focused on the outstanding contributions to the pragmatic tradition by women thinkers. "'Pragmatism',", as Richard Rorty wrote in his 1979 presidential address, "is a vague, ambiguous, and overworked word. Nevertheless, it names the chief glory of our country's intellectual tradition. No other American writers offered so radical a suggestion for making our future different from our past, as have James and Dewey" (Rorty 1982: 160). There is a traditional *narrow* sense of pragmatism where it is taken to be primary a "theory" of meaning and truth. If we think of pragmatism in this way, then we do a vast injustice to the richness and diversity of issues and problems treated by these pragmatic thinkers, which range from cosmological speculations to specific aesthetic, moral, social, and political questions. Furthermore, restricting the label "pragmatism" to this famous triad of thinkers neglects the important pragmatic contributions by black thinkers such as W.E B. Dubois and Alain Locke—both of whom studied at Harvard when William James, George Santayana, and Josiah Royce were on the philosophy faculty. The emphasis—indeed overemphasis on Peirce, James and Dewey (and sometimes Mead)—also relegates to the dark shadows the role of women thinkers who shaped the pragmatic movement. We tend to forget that Jane Addams had an enormous influence on John Dewey. And except for a few Peirce scholars, most philosophers are unaware of the brilliant correspondence between Peirce and Lady Victoria Welby where we find some of Peirce's most illuminating discussions of his theory of signs and how it is related to his version of pragmatism. Their exchanges are a model of philosophical dialogue. Even if we focus on the renaissance of pragmatism in the latter part of the twentieth century and the early decades of the twenty-first century, philosophers interested in the varieties of pragmatism normally direct our attention to such thinkers as Richard Rorty, Hilary Putnam, and Robert Brandom. We neglect the many women philosophers who have developed pragmatic themes in their philosophical work. When I speak of "we" in this context, I include myself.[1]

Consequently, I want to dedicate this essay to a study of Ruth Anna Putnam's work. She is one of the most imaginative and vital pragmatic thinkers of our time. Unfortunately, the philosophical work of Ruth Anna Putnam has been overshadowed by her much more famous husband, Hilary Putnam. For many philosophers Ruth Anna's primary claim to fame is that she is responsible for getting Hilary to take pragmatism seriously—something that he has acknowledged on many occasions. But viewing her in this limited way does a great injustice to her own originality. David Macarthur has recently edited a splendid volume of essays by Ruth Anna and Hilary Putnam. *Pragmatism as a Way of Life: The Lasting Legacy of William James and John Dewey* consists of twenty-seven essays made up of those written separately as well as two co-written essays. This is the first time that most of Ruth Anna's essays on pragmatic themes have been collected in one place, although the purpose of this anthology is to display the mutual and interrelated interest in pragmatism by Ruth Anna and Hilary Putnam I plan, however, to concentrate

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[1] For a comprehensive discussion of pragmatism, women, and feminist philosophy see Seigfried 1996.

almost exclusively on Ruth Anna's essays. I am interested in Ruth Anna's work because she is such an excellent philosopher, *not* because she is a "woman" philosopher. But the sad truth is that like so many women philosophers, past and present, her work has been frequently ignored or underrated precisely because she is a woman.

In his essay "Pragmatism and Moral Objectivity" Hilary Putnam indicates what he finds attractive about American pragmatism.

> What I find attractive in pragmatism is not a systematic theory in the usual sense at all. It is rather a certain group of theses, *which can be and indeed were argued very differently by different philosophers with different concerns* [my italics--RJB], and which became the basis of the philosophes of Peirce, and above all James and Dewey. Cursorily summarized, those theses are (1) antiskepticism; pragmatists hold that doubt requires justification just as much as belief (recall Peirce's famous distinction between "real" and "philosophical" doubt; (2) fallibilism; pragmatists hold that there is never a metaphysical guarantee to be had that such-and-such a belief will never need revision (that one can be both fallibilistic and antiskeptical is perhaps the unique insight of American pragmatism; (3) the thesis that there is no fundamental dichotomy between "facts" and "values"; and (4) the thesis that, in a certain sense, practice is primary in philosophy (Putnam: 1994: 152).

Ruth Anna certainly agrees with all these theses at a general level. What I hope to show that she interprets and argues for these theses in a very *distinctive* manner that reflect her primary concerns.

The initial striking impression in reading Ruth Anna's essays is their lucidity, freshness and grace. Like James and Dewey, she is concerned to show that philosophers do not have to focus exclusively on the problems of philosophy but can deal in an illuminating fashion with the problems of human beings. "So what does it mean to turn away from the problems of philosophers? It means to me—and here I am using a phrase from David Hume rather than the pragmatists—that I seek a philosophy that I do not have to leave behind in the study" (p.15).[2] She uses a minimum of technical jargon and only occasionally refers to academic articles in specialized philosophical journals. What makes her prose so vivid is that she frequently gives concrete examples from "real life" problems to illustrate her key points. Any intelligent reader, regardless of background, can read and learn from her. In this respect, she follows in the best tradition of James and Dewey—especially when they were addressing general readers. She manages to do this without a loss of precision or subtlety. She is in genuine dialogue with James and Dewey but clearly indicates when she agrees or disagrees with them—and why. In reading her essays, one has the experience of participating in a lively open-ended engaging conversation.

Let me illustrate her down to earth approach with reference to one of the most discussed issues in Anglophone philosophy during the past one hundred years: the issue of realism versus anti-realism, and the closely related issue of realism versus relativism. (Not all anti-realists are relativists.) Of course, one of the things that keep these debates going is specifying the precise meaning of these contested concepts. Take, for example, the work of Hilary Putnam. He has moved from a version of metaphysical realism to internal realism (realism with a small "r") to refining this to a form of pragmatic or common sense realism. Hilary Putnam staunchly defends realism with a small "r" because he believes that the alternatives—metaphysical realism or relativism—are self-defeating and ultimately incoherent. Hilary Putnam frequently characterizes Rorty as the chief contemporary advocate of anti-realist relativism. Rorty's responds that he is not a relativist and claims that the "relativist menace" is an invention of Hilary Putnam. There are good reasons why so much energy has gone into the debates about realism and anti-realism. On the one hand many philosophers (including Rorty and Hilary Putnam) reject metaphysical realism and have taken the linguistic

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[2] Unless otherwise noted, all page references are to essays by Ruth Anna Putnam collected in *Pragmatism as a Way of Life* edited by D. Macarthur (2017).

turn. Both Rorty and Hilary Putnam are skeptical of the very idea that we can escape from language and from the descriptive functions of language. Both believe that we cannot make a sharp fixed distinction between descriptive language and nonlinguistic fact. They both reject the idea that we can somehow directly compare our ideas, concepts, thoughts, judgments or sentences with an independent reality to see whether or not they "correspond." Both Rorty and Putnam are among those philosophers who think that it is incoherent to assume that we can take a "God's-eye" point of view where we stand "outside" of language and reality in order to compare them with each other. Rorty thinks that the ineluctable conclusion of accepting these claims is that all we can do is play off competing descriptive vocabularies against each other. There is no world—consisting of a set of determinate facts— that is metaphysically independent of us language users. From Hilary Putnam's perspective, Rorty's denial that there is a world independent of us leads straight to "bad" relativism—despite Rorty's protests and disclaimers. Since both Rorty and Hilary Putnam think of themselves in the pragmatic tradition, we may ask where the "classical" pragmatists stand on this issue of realism versus anti-realism. This question is not nearly as straightforward as it may seem. Initially, the best candidate to support the realist pole is Peirce because he asserts the reality of universals and asserts that there is an independent objective reality that we can come to know (although we can never claim it know it with absolute certainty). Given James' nominalist proclivities and his striking claim that "the trail of the human serpent is thus over everything" it is much easier to fit him into the anti-realist camp. In both thinkers—as well as in the writings of John Dewey—there are passages (taken out of context) that support more realist and more anti-realist readings.

What is Ruth Anna stance on the realism-antirealism debate? The first point to emphasize is that she never rehashes the extensive and sometimes boring disputes that have filled academic journals. What she actually does is recognize the basic insights or "intuitions" of the opposing positions and shows how from her pragmatic perspective they are compatible. We may say that the basic intuition behind realism is the necessity to recognize that there is a common objective world that constrains our warranted beliefs. On the other hand, the insight behind many forms of anti-realism is that, as finite human beings we are limited in knowing the world by our linguistic descriptions. We have no cognitive access to a world that is independent of our descriptions of this world. It is an illusion to think that we can—using Wilfrid Sellars' expression—"break out of discourse to an *arché* beyond discourse" (Sellars 1997: 117).There is plenty of evidence that all the classical pragmatists hold that there is a world that is both independent of us and constrains what we can legitimately believe, know and do. This doesn't mean that the world "speaks" to us—but it does mean that in carrying out inquiries we must be responsive to the stubborn bruteness of the world that we encounter. Ruth Anna also insists that there is a common world that constrains what be we may know and do. Ruth Anna, who disagrees with Rorty on many issues, nevertheless defends him against the criticism that he "denies the existence of anything causally independent of human beings." She notes how Rorty responds to such criticism.

> [Rorty] responds "To say that the world is out there, that it is not our creation, is to say, with common sense, that most things in space and time are the effects of causes which do not include human mental events" [Rorty 1989: 5]. So when the critics say that "There are mountains in Jordan" is true "in virtue of the way things are," Rorty agrees, provided that "in virtue of the way things are" is understood as "in virtue of the way our current descriptions of things are used and the causal interaction we have with these things"; he disagrees if it means "*simply* in virtue of the way things are, quite apart from how we describe them" [Rorty 1998: 86]. He rejects the latter because there is no way things are independently of describing them. No way to distinguish the role played by our language and the role played by the rest of the universe "in accounting for the truth of our true beliefs" [Rorty 1998: 87] (pp. 90-91.)

Ruth Anna—from her pragmatic perspective—defuses or deflates the ostensible issue that separates non-metaphysical realists like Hilary Putnam and Rorty's "ethnological" stance. She affirms, as realists insist, that there is a world out there that is independent of us. But at the same time we have no way of knowing this world except by the current descriptive languages that we now use (although these descriptions may well change in light of future inquiry). One reason why Ruth Anna can evade some of the epistemological and metaphysical issues that dominant discussions of realism and anti-realism is because she is committed the pragmatic thesis that gives primacy (but not exclusivity) to the agent rather than the spectator.[3]

> So to take pragmatism seriously is to take one living in a world that one shares with others, others with whom one cooperates in inquiry, others with whom one may compete for scarce resources or with whom one may cooperate in seeking to achieve common goals. It is to see oneself not as a spectator of but an agent in the world. And that means that one often confronts the question "What is to be done?" (p.17)

Like other pragmatists, Ruth Anna challenges the fact/value dichotomy. But here again her approach is distinctive, although compatible with other pragmatic critiques of this dichotomy. She certainly does not want to deny that in many contexts we want (and need) to distinguish the "facts" of the case from our value judgments—although what count as facts will also vary in different contexts. This is just as true in legal contexts as it is in scientific contexts. What is being challenged is that there is some sort of deep semantic, epistemological or metaphysical dichotomy to be drawn in what she calls the "seamless web" of facts and values. The thesis that she defends is that "nonmoral facts and moral facts are so intimately interwoven," that such traditional distinctions as fact/value, science/morality,

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[3] In using the word "evade" I am alluding to Ruth Anna's reference to Cornel West's *The American Evasion of Philosophy*, "by which he means the evasion by American philosophers of the problems of Cartesian skepticism" (p.15).

description/ prescription " will bear hardly any philosophical weight at all; in particular, they will not support moral skepticism" (pp.71-72). She maintains that there are objective moral values, genuine moral knowledge and consequently there are moral facts. In short, she critiques the varieties of moral skepticism. Moral skepticism can take many different forms, both popular and more stringent philosophical forms. Some ordinary people claim to believe that all values are simply a matter of different people's fluctuating opinions. Old-fashioned logical positivists deny that there are any such entities as "moral facts." It is an empty set or class. Although, Wittgenstein, during his *Tractarian* period, was certainly not a moral skeptic, he did not think there were any *moral* facts. How does Ruth Anna understand the meaning of "facts" and "values? And what are moral facts? Facts, she tells us, are not just there in the "outside world" to be discovered by us. She argues, drawing on Nelson Goodman's *Ways of Worldmaking,* that facts are made-by-us. This does not mean that they are arbitrary or "merely" subjective. The ways in which we describe and individuate facts are dependent on us. '[F]acts are how we organize 'the blooming, buzzing confusion" of sensory inputs, of sensory of 'surface irritations'. Clearly, then, some facts will be quotidian, others will be esoteric, and most will lie in between, but even the most solid has been made by some human being" (p.393). One might grant her point that what we count as facts can vary in different contexts and situations but still wonder whether there "really" are *moral* facts. Moral skeptics, who insist on a sharp contrast between science and morality, emphasize that nature presents us with facts and but not with moral values. And from this they conclude there are really no such things as moral values or moral facts.

> But we need moral values and moral rules to provide us with certain kinds of reasons—moral reasons—for choosing and acting, although there are other kinds of reasons and causes and motives as well. We need to appeal to moral rules as excuses when our moral actions have untoward consequences. We need to cite moral

values when we want to exhort others to act in accordance with moral laws. More importantly, we need values to provide a foundation for the complicated moral-legal-political structure without which human society would be impossible: being both gregarious and political animals, we need human society both to live and flourish. (p.72)

What then is the source of these moral values, reasons, and laws? Ruth Anna agrees with moral skeptics when they claim that "unaided nature does not provide us with moral values." Moral values like facts are *made* or *created* by us.[4] They are not given to us by "unaided nature." Of course, we human beings are also natural beings—but when Roth Anna speaks of "unaided nature" she is using this expression to refer to the natural world that doesn't include human beings. We should not interpret this as meaning that we deliberately decide to create moral values. Most of the time we are thoroughly socialized to accept existing moral traditions—even when there are tensions and conflicts within these traditions. But it does mean that moral values are relative to us. They are not "revealed by God or implanted by Nature or discovered by a pure practical Reason"; they are made by us just as facts are made by us. Skeptics may want to claim that if you grant (indeed insist) that moral values are made by us, then that shows that they are "merely" arbitrary. Or as Ruth Anna phrases it: "There is a persistent nagging conviction that after all anything *we* make is, just because we *make* it, arbitrary" (p.394). But this is an unwarranted inference. There are many things that we create or make because we need them, but that doesn't mean they are arbitrary, subjective or unreal. We make knives because we need to cut things, but they are certainly real and not arbitrary. And there are all kinds of objective factual and

evaluative claims we make about knives, for example this particular knife is a good knife for carving meat. When I make such a claim I am making an *objective* claim about the quality of the knife—a claim that I asset is *true*. Granted that moral values are not physical entities like knives, still we make objective judgments about better and worse values and decisions—taking into consideration their genesis and consequences. Ruth Anna gives the example of committed pacifists in the Second World War who had to decide what to do – whether to go to prison who to volunteer for non-combatant service. This, of course, presented itself as a difficult moral choice. There is no algorithm for making such a decision, but in justifying one's moral decision, both actors and third parties can evaluate objectively better or worse reasons for making a specific decision—depending on the person involved, Reasonable persons can come to different decisions, but it certainly doesn't follow that such decisions are arbitrary or "merely" subjective in the sense in which one's preference for vanilla rather than chocolate ice cream express a merely subjective preference.

> We make moral values because we need moral values, just as we make other things which we need and which unaided nature fails to provide. We make tools we design and build machines, we cultivate plants and domesticate animals. The characteristic of these things are not arbitrary. On the contrary, our needs generate the constraints within which these things are made and the standards by which these things are evaluated (p. 73).[5]

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[4] Ruth Anna appears to agree with Rorty who also wants to insist that there is a sense in which all facts and values are created by us—by human beings. But Ruth Anna draws a conclusion which is the very opposite of Rorty's. For her to insist that facts and values are made by us does not impugn the objectivity of moral facts and moral values but rather indicates that what is made by us (as distinguished from what is made-up by us) is objective.

[5] Earlier I indicated that Ruth Anna agrees with Rorty that we make facts just as we make moral values. This does not mean or entail that we arbitrarily always *make-up* facts and values. And when someone does arbitrarily *make-up* facts and/or values there are procedures for showing that they are *made-up.* But she strongly disagrees with Rorty when he claims that the only constraints about what we can justify are conversational constraints. There are all kinds of constraints on the facts and moral values that we create or make—just as there are all kinds of constraints on making a good knife for carving meat or chopping vegetables.

Still one may wonder in what sense we can claim that there are *objective* moral values, especially if we *make* these moral values. Certainly, if one limits one's conception to what metaphysical realists take to be "objective"—what exists "out there" that is *completely* independent of what human beings do or make, then there are *no* objective moral values. But if we restrict the meaning of "objective" in this way, then we would also be forced to conclude there are no objective nonmoral facts. For we also make or create facts. Ruth Anna's thesis is "that even if there are not objective moral values in the sense explained (i.e. even if states of affairs are not morally good or bad, nor actions morally obligatory, permitted, or forbidden, independently of some human willing), there are sufficient constraints on human willing to produce values that are objective enough to take the place of the values we have 'lost'" (p. 389). Her positive thesis is that we need stable moral-legal-political structures in order to survive and flourish. In short, we need moral values. It is the stability of the facts and values that we create that is the source of their objectivity. In effect, Ruth Anna is challenging a limited and ultimately inadequate sense of "objective" for a more realistic and adequate sense of "objectivity."[6] It is more realistic in the sense of being more adequate to the way in which we *actually* live our lives. She hopes to allay the anxieties of those who worry that if we give up on a *narrow* sense of "objectivity," we are giving up on objectivity. "Just as fact-making and theory-making turn out to be intimately woven, but facts are nevertheless solid enough to allow us to navigate a perilous world, so basic values and detailed moral structures are intimately interwoven and solid enough to enable us to navigate the perils of human relationships" (pp. 402-403). "What makes for objectivity is the willingness to revise one's judgments in the face of discordant experience—that is fallibilism" (p. 429). And given the seamless web between facts and values, one can be (should be) a

fallibilist about value judgments, including moral judgments.

I have mentioned some of the ways in which Ruth Anna agrees and disagrees with Rorty. Her essay "Rorty's Vision: Philosophical Courage and Social Hope" is one of the best critical and sympathetic essays written about Rorty. She praises Rorty for his imagination and courage in trying to put an end to the endless debates between skeptics and their realist opponents. She also admires Rorty for imaginatively proposing "an active, reformist, social democratic, liberal left in place of the quietist academic left that fills our universities" (p.87). But at the same time she sharply criticizes Rorty for abandoning the pragmatic appeal to experience. For Ruth Anna, pragmatism does not make any sense without an appeal to experience. She doesn't think of experience in the way many traditional empiricists have conceived of it—as consisting of discrete sensory data. Nor is experience what Sellars calls "the myth of the given." Like Dewey (and Merleau-Ponty) she thinks that an epistemological concern with experience that has dominated so much of modern philosophy have distorted our lived experience. She agrees with Dewey that experience is not simply a "knowledge affair." Experience is an *interaction* between an organism and its environment. Lived experience has both a spatial and temporal dimension. It can be funded with emotion and meaning. It is not something limited to being "inside" our mental lives. For her, one of the main contributions of pragmatism is its wide conception of experience. She notes that for Rorty, the key words are "conversation" and "solidarity" whereas the key words for Dewey (and for Ruth Anna's version of pragmatism) are "interaction" and "inquiry." "Not that Dewey would not approve of conversation and solidarity—both are essential for inquiry—but he would insist that what prompts inquiry and what must be its ultimate upshot is *experience,* that is, interactions between a human organism and its environment" (p.13), This conception of experience and inquiry is fundamental for Ruth Anna's pragmatic orientation.

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[6] For a similar critique of the narrow limited sense of "objectivity," see Crary 2016.

Ruth Anna's critique of the fact/value dichotomy, her thesis about the seamless web of facts and moral values, and her understanding of experience as an interaction between a human organism and its environment opens the way for a more direct approach to morality. Taking seriously the agent's perspective, the primary question when confronted with moral conflicts, dilemmas and hard choices is: *what is to be done?* Her approach to moral (as well as social and political issues) is very much in the spirit of James' meliorism and Dewey's advocacy of radical social reform. Like James, she is concerned with the individual choices that we need to make, and like Dewey she thinks that our moral values are shaped by and shape our social interactions. We draw on principles and traditions that have shaped us, but every time we make a moral choice we are also reshaping these traditions. To illustrate her point, she discusses the conflict (and options) that Brutus faced before the Ides of March. "Brutus must choose between his friendship for Caesar and his hatred of tyranny, between loyalty to a person and patriotism." Not only does Brutus confront a hard choice –a source of real anguish—he actually *creates* "a ranking of values . . . and he could have created a different ranking" (p. 401). Frequently there is a need for new values when old values clash. Sometimes we can reconcile moral conflicts and sometimes we cannot and have to live with tragic consequences of our forced choices.

Pragmatism, for Ruth Anna, is not just a philosophical orientation; it is a way of life that involves moral deliberation, choice and action. For all the "newness" of pragmatism with it is emphasis on fallibilism and experimental scientific inquiry, it is also a "return" to a very old conception of philosophy exemplified by Socrates.—a concern with how we live our lives in daily practices with others. Ruth Anna speaks of the "moral impulse" of philosophers—"the passionate desire to find a philosophy that makes sense of our moral lives, that would enable us to lead one life, to be consistent as is humanly possible in all our beliefs (p. 359). This is what motivates Ruth Anna just as it

motivated James and Dewey. And this is what she seeks to achieve in her own version of pragmatism.

> To make sense of our moral lives, our choosings, our praisings and self-congratulations, as well as blamings and regrettings . . . we must believe that we are, indeed, choosing, that our choices make a difference, and that there are standards by which we judge and are judged, standards that are themselves of human making and subject to human critique. Implicit in these beliefs is another, the belief held by each of us, that one is not alone in the world, that one lives in a peopled world. (pp.354-55)

But this is not only what we *must* believe, but we are *justified* in believing it. Even more important, we can also succeed in having our choices make a difference—a difference for a better world. But as fallible human beings, we must also be prepared to reexamine the consequences (intended and unintended) of the choices that we make. "Fallibilism in any social arena demands that all relevant voices be heard" (p.433) If we take this seriously then we must also learn to listen—to really listen—to what others are saying, to properly evaluate other views, especially when they conflict with our own, and to have the courage to modify our opinions and beliefs when necessary. We should not fool ourselves about the difficulty of this task. This is why education, especially the education of the young is so vital for a pragmatic orientation. In an article written jointly with Hilary Putnam, Ruth Anna endorses Dewey's famous claim: "If we are willing to conceive education as the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, philosophy may be defined as *the general theory of education"* (Putnam 1994: *223).* They also endorse Dewey's conception of the aim of education,

> That the aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their education is an ideal which often fails to be realized. All education instills habits. Although we often think of habits as mere routine responses to stimuli, in Dewey's use of the term there are habits of judging and reasoning and experimentation, as well as using instruments for carrying out familiar activities.

Nevertheless, there is a constant danger that habits will become routine, and it is only by constructing a learning environment which teaches *the use of intelligence in forming habits* that this tendency can be counteracted. (Putnam 1994: 226)

The expression "pragmatism as a way of life" is an allusion to Dewey's characterization of democracy as a way life—an expression that he uses several times in his essay "Creative Democracy—The Task before Us." In a typical passage, Dewey asserts:

Democracy is a way of life controlled by a working faith in the possibilities of human nature. Belief in the Common Man is a familiar article of the democratic creed. The belief is without significance save as it means faith in the possibilities of human nature is exhibited in every human being irrespective of race, color, sex, birth and family, of material or cultural wealth. This faith may be enacted in statutes, but it is only on paper unless it is put in force in attitudes which human beings display to one another in all the incidents and relations of daily life. (Dewey *LW* 14:226)

When Dewey adds that democracy is a *personal* way of life, he wants to emphasize the core of democracy is exhibited in our daily lives, the ways is actually treat people in our everyday practices. Democratic institutions, procedures, and government structures can become hollow and meaningless unless they are informed by a democratic ethos. Quoting Dewey, Ruth Anna declares: "'The participation of every mature human being in formation of the values that regulate the living of men together' –this is what democracy is all about, and its justification rests precisely on this, that it 'is necessary from the standpoint of both general welfare and the full development of human beings as individuals'" (p.440). Ruth Anna agrees with Dewey that individual development and general welfare are not two goals but a *single* goal. What is so appealing about Ruth Anna's distinctive version of pragmatism is the way in which she blends both Jamesian and Deweyan insights and seeks to show their relevance for us today. Of course Peircean themes are also always in the background: fallibilism, the importance of experimental inquiry and the appeal to the relevant community of inquirers in testing and evaluating our hypotheses and theories.

I began this essay by citing Richard Rorty who speaks of pragmatism as the "chief glory" of the American intellectual tradition and declares: "No other American writers have offered so radical a suggestion for making our future different from our past, as James and Dewey." Ruth Anna's personal and intellectual journey has been a fascinating one. She was born in Berlin in 1927 with a Christian father and Jewish mother. Both her parents were secular active anti-Nazis. At the age of five, Ruth Anna was sent to live with her Christian grandparents and managed to survive living in Germany during the Second World War as a "half-Jew." She was reunited with her parents in the United States in 1948. She was an undergraduate at UCLA and majored in chemistry. She received her philosophy PHD at the same institution. At the time, UCLA was the center for the philosophy of science in the United States. Both Hans Reichenbach and Rudolf Carnap were members of the philosophy faculty. Ruth Ann first taught at the University of Oregon and then joined the faculty at Wellesley College in 1963 where she taught until she became a Professor Emerita in 1998. Initially, Ruth Anna's graduate philosophical training had little to do the classical American pragmatism, but, on her own, she discovered the richness of writings of James and Dewey. This was a philosophic orientation that spoke deeply to her and significantly influenced the shape of her philosophic career—a philosophy that reached beyond the academy and was relevant to the concerns and problems of ordinary people. In a fresh and creative way she has developed the moral and social themes in pragmatism. She passionately believes that "the pragmatic attitude is so fruitful, both in philosophy and life, that it will continue to have its enthusiastic proponents" (p. 109). Ruth Anna's own enthusiasm and insight are evident in everything that she has written. She shows concretely and lucidly how a pragmatic

orientation can guide us in living our lives—how the practice of pragmatism is a way of life. She is an exemplar what is best and most glorious in the American pragmatic tradition.

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Life is No Argument:
Nietzsche, Pragmatism, and Rorty

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ABSTRACT: This paper considers whether Nietzsche's views can be given a pragmatist interpretation without undermining their philosophical interest and force. It prepares the ground by discussing the historical reception of Nietzsche's work, and then moves on to assess the merits of Richard Rorty's appropriation of that work.

Keywords: moral-theoretical skeptics, personal identity, pragmatism, self-creation, virtue ethics

I am no man, I am dynamite.
                    Nietzsche

Despite apparent anomalies, Nietzsche is now routinely associated with pragmatism. Kathleen Wheeler, for example, claims that much of *The Will to Power* reads like an early pragmatist text. [1] And, Richard Rorty not only sees a close connection between Nietzsche and early pragmatism, but believes that useful links can also be forged between his writings and what can perhaps best be described as the New Pragmatism[2] – this being the kind of pragmatism that he believes has broken free from the shackles of empiricist assumptions which prevented James and Dewey from surmounting the epistemological tradition running down from Plato through Descartes, and on up to Locke, Hume, Kant and beyond.

To what extent are these and other such pragmatist interpretations of Nietzsche historically accurate? Are they opportunistic? Do they add anything useful to our understanding of Nietzsche or pragmatism (or both)? In responding to such questions, it is probably best to begin by tackling them within the context of the wider historical reception of Nietzsche's work.

Nietzsche regarded himself, or certainly his writings, as dangerous.[3] And, he was right to do so. His views on a wide range of important topics, including such philosophical staples as truth, knowledge, religion, and morality, challenged traditional preconceptions, turning some completely on their heads, and radically undercutting others. But, the greatest threat that these challenges posed, as Nietzsche conceived things, depended entirely on their being fully understood on his own suitably elevated, even world-historical, terms. This is a fate that seems to have eluded them so far.[4]

Of course, there were dangers, other dangers, attending their very misconstrual, especially under the recklessly premature belief that they *had* been fully understood in what turned out to be certain warped ways. The Nazis' obscenely misguided appropriations attest to that. However, the views in question also suffered a less obvious indignity, one that Nietzsche himself would no doubt have considered to be the most dangerous outcome of all:[5] they were

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[1] *Romanticism, Pragmatism and Deconstruction*, Kathleen Wheeler, Wiley-Blackwell: Oxford, 1993.

[2] *The New Pragmatism*, Alan Malachowski, Mcgill-Queen's University Press: Montreal, 2010. For Rorty, as will later become clear, the difference between 'old' and 'new' pragmatism collapses to the extent that he only wants to extract from James *et.al.* views that are compatible with, or inspire, the New Pragmatism.

[3] This term requires some initial clarification to head off the impression that this article endorses the idea that philosophy should somehow be in the business of handing out 007 licences. It is in the sense of having the potential to undermine conventional thinking regardless of the immediate social consequences that the main text questions whether Nietzsche's thought has been too often prematurely defused. Whether Nietzsche is dangerous in the further sense of being the potential cause of great, longer term, social catastrophes is not discussed..

[4] Heidegger, of course, disagrees, but the Heideggerian reading of Nietzsche's diagnosis of nihilism, interesting though it is in many ways, is beyond the scope of this discussion – however, we do briefly mention Heidegger's general approach to Nietzsche. For more on this topic, see 'Life in the frame: Meaning on loan from nihilism', Alan Malachowski; in *Journal of the Philosophy of Life* (forthcoming, 2017).

[5] Most dangerous because Nietzsche desperately did not want them tamed so their explosive potential would be thwarted. Gass gets this just right: "When he compares his book to bombs, he neither wishes them to explode harmlessly like handfuls of tossed confetti, nor merely to alter, suddenly, the placid state of someone's mind. He bloody well wants a boom!" 'The Polemical Philosopher', William H.Gass, *New York Review of Books*, Vol.35, No.1, Feb.4th, 1988.

domesticated after a lengthy period in relatively quiet exile.

Nietzsche's vexatious views were initially kept safely at bay in a large sector of the philosophical world by a refusal, and presumably not just an inability, to take him seriously. Bertrand Russell's well known derisory treatment of Nietzsche set the tone here for many years, at least for the analytic tradition, the predominant tradition in modern Western philosophy. But, things were not much better, certainly not at first, in the continental tradition where one might expect Nietzsche's writings to receive a more considered and knowledgeable reception, if only on account of the likelihood that greater sensitivity would be shown to their *historical* credentials. However, as Gary Gutting rightly points out: "before the 1960s, French interest in Nietzsche was more literary than philosophical".[6] This adds the spice of detail to Heidegger's well-known, earlier, and more general, assessment: "For a long time Nietzsche has been either celebrated and imitated or reviled and exploited. Nietzsche's thought and speech are still too contemporary for us."[7]

Sweeping evaluations aside, the 'continental' story is currently a complex and interesting one. For when Nietzsche's thought *was* engaged with greater philosophical seriousness, an array of influential texts emerged, ranging from Heidegger's own monumental *Nietzsche*,[8] through Foucault's 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History'[9] and Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy*[10]

to Derrida's *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*.[11] Although, Heidegger unwittingly removed the sting from some of Nietzsche's rhetoric by somewhat successfully branding him as the 'last metaphysician', the urge to tame Nietzsche's thought does not surface often, or with much effect, in these texts.

Some thinkers who happily spanned the invidious analytic/continental divide, still unfortunately displayed in philosophy, and sported a keen nose for both intellectual and historical danger, were drawn to Nietzsche precisely because they recognized his potential for cultural disturbance. Leo Strauss and Lionel Trilling were notable, in this respect, though for quite different reasons. Strauss was sensitized enough to the perilous nature of Nietzsche's work to begin reading him furtively, and though he remained ambiguous in his estimation of Nietzsche's views (probably deliberately and perhaps even cunningly) he never doubted their importance and power. Trilling regarded Nietzsche and Freud as the two great harbingers of the grave dangers that modern civilization faces and yet also generates in its blind suppression of creative energy and individuality. Never one to shy away from the dark side of a writer, Trilling nevertheless contrived to put a positive spin on Nietzsche: ultimately, his provocations had been made in the cause of preserving civilization rather than disrupting or destroying it.[12]

Within non-continental philosophy, the reception to Nietzsche's thought has undergone a dramatic transformation – dismissive hostility is, for the most part, long gone.[13] Walter Kaufmann's wealth of translations and his *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*[14] partly paved the way here, though at the

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[6] *French Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, Gary Gutting, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p.254.

[7] *Nietzsche*, Vol. One, Heidegger, (David Farrell Krell, trans.), Harper: New York, 1991, p.4.

[8] *Nietzsche*, Vols One and Two, Heidegger (David Farrell Krell, trans.), Harper: New York, 1991 and *Nietzsche*, Vols Three and Four, Heidegger (David Farrell Krell, trans.), Harper: New York, 1991.

[9] 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', Michel Foucault; in *Michel Foucault Aesthetics: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume 2*, James D.Faubion (ed.), Penguin: London, 1994, pp.369-391.

[10] *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Gilles Deleuze, Continuum: London, 1986.

[11] *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, Jacques Derrida, University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London, 1981.

[12] For an insightful discussion of Trilling's interpretation of Nietzsche, see *Lionel Trilling and the Fate of Cultural Criticism*, Mark Krupnick, Northwestern University Press: Illinois, 1986.

[13] I believe there are still some myopic analytic philosophers who believe that Nietzsche was not a philosopher.

[14] *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, Walter

price, especially in the latter case, of smoothing over rather too many difficulties and disturbances. This kind of 'smoothing over' reached its apotheosis in 1983 in Richard Schacht's *Nietzsche*,[15] a comprehensive and thoroughly workmanlike text that revealed a Nietzsche who not only had many sensible things to say, but voiced them on many of the topics that interest analytic philosophers. From being a potentially threatening outsider, Nietzsche became, too suddenly perhaps, someone who could sit at the high table of analytic philosophy forging distinctions and negotiating over the nature of truth, knowledge, and moral values. The notion this might be anomalous, that Nietzsche would be uncomfortable in such a situation, that he might in fact dread mummification and other stultifying tortures at the hands of the various "Egyptians", "epistemologists caught in the coils of grammar,"[16] alongside the "morbid cobweb- spinners" seated around him,[17] was now glossed over to the extent that when Brian Leiter wrote his influential and otherwise insightful *Nietzsche on Morality*,[18] he could unveil, without any apparent sense of irony or philosophical unease, a thorough-going, rather self-congratulatory, analytic approach, one that "enables Nietzsche *to speak to us*" without ruffling too many conceptual feathers, and purports to embody "*ideal* scholarly virtues, virtues that any commentary must exhibit".[19]

The upshot of all this is that the philosopher of "myth-dissolving lucidity" and "pitiless consciousness",[20] who mistrusted "all systematisers"[21] and urged the revaluation of *all* values, is now commonly brought into line with the epistemologically obsessed, reason orientated approach of the analytic movement. This inevitably requires some strenuous procrustean moves, the irony of which appears to be lost on those performing them. And in the meantime, Bernard Williams' astute and timely warning seems to have been ignored or brushed aside:

> [Nietzsche's writing] is booby-trapped not only against recovering theory from it, but in many cases, against any systematic exegesis that assimilates it to theory. His writing achieves this partly by its choice of subject matter, partly by its manner and the attitudes it expresses. These features stand against a mere exegesis of Nietzsche, or the incorporation of Nietzsche into the history of philosophy as a source of theories.[22]

In sympathetic response to this warning, a warning that has yet to be properly addressed by those who perhaps most need to hear it, Mark Jenkins concludes that "Nietzsche's writing severely underdetermines theory".[23] This is true as far as it goes. But, it still sells Williams' insight short. He is surely drawing attention to Nietzsche's immense propensity for *destruction* when it comes to the main aims of theorizing. We should be talking of irrevocable damage, not just loose or untidy fit.

In parallel with the smoothing over process just sketched, a number of moral philosophers began to express a serious interest in Nietzsche, sometimes taking advantage of, or inspiration from, this very process,

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Kaufmann, Princeton University Press: Princeton NJ, 2013.

[15] *Nietzsche*, Richard Schacht, Routledge: London, 1985.

[16] *The Gay* Science, Friederich Nietzsche, 354, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2001 (hereafter GS).

[17] "You ask me about the idiosyncrasies of philosophers? … There is their lack of historical sense, their hatred of even the idea of becoming, their Eqyptianism. They think they are doing a thing *honour* when they dehistoricize it, *sub specie aeterni* – when they make a mummy of it", *Twilight of the Idols/The Anti-Christ*, Friederich Nietzsche, Penguin: London, 1990 , 1, p.45 (henceforth: TI). For reference to the "cobweb-spinners", see TI, 4, p.47.

[18] *Nietzsche on Morality*, Brian Leiter, Routledge: London, 2002.

[19] Leiter, *op.cit.* p.xiii.

[20] *'The Figure of Socrates'*, Pierre Hadot; in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, Pierre Hadot,,Blackwell :Oxford, 1995, p.169.

[21] "I mistrust all systematisers and avoid them. The will to a system is a lack of integrity", TI**,** 26, p.35.

[22] 'Nietzsche;s Minimalist Psychology', Bernard Williams, p.4; in *European Journal of Philosophy, 1993,pp.4-14.*

[23] *Williams*, Mark P.Jenkins, Acumen:Chesham, 2006, p81.

sometimes not. But, their Nietzschean turn appears to have been necessitated in the first instance by a deep-seated dissatisfaction with philosophy's lack of progress in their own sphere of interest. This dissatisfaction had a number of sources – the stale nature of the longstanding and all-pervasive debate between Kantians and Utilitarians, diminishing returns from standard moral theories of all persuasions, and so on. But, an important catalyst for change was Elizabeth's Anscombe's argument, first published in 1958,[24] that the dominant approaches to morality were at heart *legalistic* and hence doomed in their search for foundations absent a viable conception of a divine lawgiver. According to Anscombe, the situation was exacerbated by the lack of a clear philosophical understanding of psychology, an understanding that would necessarily involve adequate analyses of notions such as pleasure, intention, and action. Two things happened.

At Anscombe's prompting,[25] some philosophers returned to Aristotle's virtue ethics so that they could figure out how better to tackle morality from the point of view of character rather than action. Then the salient questions soon became much broader: "What sort of person should I strive to be?" and "What kind of life should I live?" replaced the narrower, legalistic, principle-seeking "What should I do?" and "How should I act?" Others, although there was some overlap here, focused their attention on perceived defects of a theoretical approach to morality as such. And, in this second case, Nietzsche was closely, and at times gratefully, vetted as a possible ally.

Moral-theoretical sceptics who claim Nietzsche is *their* ally, are less inclined to soft-pedal interpretations of his work than the philosophers we described earlier – those who are now busy trying to shape him into a

theorist after their own kind, when they do not find him wanting in that respect. Bernard Williams, in particular, as we might anticipate, takes a good deal of care to draw from and elucidate Nietzsche's writings without automatically draining off the provocative energy.[26] Even so, the main danger the moral-theoretical sceptics countenance in their presumed ally's thought is one that poses a threat only to *theory*. And, they are not inclined to dwell on the wider practical consequences of that – not even on whether there are any.

To one side of these ventures – making the analytic most of Nietzsche, as it were, and enlisting his help in exposing the inadequacies of moral theory – stands the rather different project of valorizing his perceived pragmatic tendencies. Rene Berhelot was, to my knowledge, the first serious commentator to actually call Nietzsche out as a pragmatist when, in 1911, he highlighted what he regarded as striking affinities with the views of William James and John Dewey.[27] But, Arthur Danto's later, much more forthright, attribution of a pragmatist approach to truth in the early 1960s seems to have been the first attempt to associate Nietzsche with pragmatism itself which attracted widespread attention.[28]

However, it is one thing to identify pragmatist tendencies in Nietzsche's thinking, it is another to both praise and try to make good use of those tendencies. History had to wait on Richard Rorty for that.

In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*,[29] Rorty assumes, without explicitly appealing to any detailed pragmatist considerations, that Nietzsche is firmly on his side when he launches his broad-based attack on the

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[24] 'Modern Moral Philosophy,', G.E.M. Anscombe, *Philosophy* 33, 1958, pp.1-19.

[25] Though Roger Crisp is surely right to suggest that this prompting was not altogether obvious, that it takes "considerable benefit of hindsight" to recognise it"; *Virtue Ethics*, Roger Crisp and Michael Slote (eds),) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p.3.

[26] Though to my, pragmatist taste, he sometimes overexerts himself in trying to make Nietzsche's views on truth analytically respectable. See *Truth and Truthfulness* pp.xx-xxv.

[27] This is noted by Rorty in 'Pragmatism as romantic polytheism', p.27; in *Philosophy as Cultural Politics*, Richard Rorty, Cambridge university Press: Cambridge, 2007, pp.27-41.

[28] *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, Arthur C.Danto, Columbia University Press: New York, 2005.

[29] *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Richard Rorty, Princeton University Press: Princeton NJ, 1979.

presuppositions and concerns of analytic philosophy. In other writings, he refers, with equal confidence to 'Nietzsche's pragmatism', though his conception of what this most importantly involves changes somewhat. In the first instance, Nietzsche is usually viewed as someone who both shares the anti-epistemological views of James and Dewey while also helping to make the world safer for those views. This is the Nietzsche who undermines the propensity to elevate theory over practice:

> *Theory and practice* - Fateful distinction, as if there were an actual *drive for knowledge* that, without regard to questions of usefulness and harm, went blindly for the truth.[30]

and obligingly pours scorn on philosophy's obsession with theories of knowledge:

> Philosophy reduced to 'theory of knowledge', actually no more than a timid epochism and abstinence of doctrine; philosophy that does not even get over the threshold and painfully *denies* its right of entry – that is philosophy at its last gasp, an end, an agony, something that arouses pity. How could such a philosophy rule?[31]

In the other cases, especially in *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*,[32] Rorty shifts the emphasis, placing it instead on the idea of Nietzsche as a proponent of a pragmatist approach to questions of personal identity, one that hinges on a robust notion of self-creation. Here Nietzsche is cast as a strong poet of personhood.

Rorty's pragmatist appropriation of Nietzsche raises a host of issues. But, we will focus on just three of them: "In what sense, if any, is Rorty right in making close connections between Nietzsche and the two classic pragmatists, James and Dewey?", "Is Rorty entitled to pin his own brand of pragmatism – the New Pragmatism – on Nietzsche?", and finally "Can Rorty's pragmatist

approach to Nietzsche preserve the potency of his views or does it involve its own form of domestification, insidious or otherwise?" Clearly, while Rorty's interpretations are the starting point here, these three issues spill over into general concerns as to whether Nietzsche can be credibly classed as a pragmatist in *any* sense.

Was Nietzsche just a prescient forerunner of classic pragmatism? Or does he actually belong squarely in the pragmatist camp? Nietzsche's philosophical reality principle, his commanding preference for *this* world rather than some other world, one conjured up in metaphysical hope or promised by religion, appears to bring him very close to the great pragmatists' way of thinking. By prioritizing life over knowledge, he seems to be anticipate Peirce in acknowledging the paramount importance of 'practice': "Where life and knowledge seem to come into contradiction there is never any serious contest; doubt and denial here count as madness".[33]

And, as Hilary Putnam, an astute occasional commentator on James and Dewey, has stressed, 'the primacy of practice' is one of the central tenets of classic pragmatism.[34] For many admirers, it is also the main attraction. However, there are some obvious tensions in assimilating Nietzsche's views to those of Peirce or James and Dewey.[35] These are most evident in the case of James' much criticized account of truth. On the one hand, there are occasions when Nietzsche appears to share the view that the notion of truth is best cashed out in terms of utility: "We do not even have any organ for *knowing*, for 'truth'; we 'know' … just as much as may be *useful* in the interest of the human herd".[36] On the other hand, there is conflicting textual evidence. Nietzsche points out, for instance, that false beliefs can be useful,

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[30] *Nietzsche's Last Notebooks, 1898*, p.75, Daniel Fidel Ferrer, Open Source.

[31] *Beyond Good and* Evil, Friederich Nietzsche, 204; reprinted in *A Nietzsche Reader*, p.42, R.J.Hollingdale (ed.), Penguin: London, 1977 (henceforth: NR).

[32] *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*, Richard Rorty, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1989.

[33] GS, 110.

[34] See *Pragmatism: An Open Question*, Hilary Putnam, Blackwell: Oxford, 1995.

[35] Pierce is in fact rarely, if ever, linked to Nietzsche. And, when Rorty attributes pragmatism to Nietzsche, whether classic or new, he keeps Pierce out of the picture.

[36] GS, 354.

and that beliefs regarded as true are typically riddled with errors, but no less advantageous for that: "Truth is the kind of error without which a certain species could not live."[37] For James, the usefulness of falsehoods has to be a rather unusual, and coincidental, exception. But for Nietzsche, it almost appears to be the rule. The overall impression to be gained here is that he is *not* enamored of anything like the classical pragmatist view that beliefs are true only in so far as they have beneficial effects. This impression appears to be succinctly vindicated in the famous remark that prompted our title: "Life is no argument; among the conditions of life could be error".[38]

Rorty is presumably well aware of the various tensions here,[39] but he circumnavigates them in any case by operating on what he would presumably see as the best side of a distinction between two opposing approaches to Nietzsche. This is the distinction between (1) those who interpret Nietzsche as someone who, whether he knows it or not, endeavors to make a positive contribution, however oblique or confused at times, to the solution of perennial philosophical problems, and (2) those who regard Nietzsche as the arch debunker of the presuppositions that generate such problems. Of course, Rorty comes out on the side of (2): Nietzsche the debunker. Bernd Magnus has instructively clarified this kind of distinction by dissolving the idea that it is primarily a distinction between 'positive' and 'negative' conceptions of Nietzsche's philosophical work. Moreover, he shows that the positive interpreters have a strong tendency to misconstrue the negative thrust of Nietzsche's ideas. They fail to recognize that he also has *his own* positive goal, albeit one that is antithetical to their own.

In a brief, but informative, exploration of standard approaches to Nietzsche, Magnus first observes that commentators generally appear to be more comfortable, sure-footed, and unified in their handling of the negative or "deconstructive" component of Nietzsche's writings than they are in approaching the "positive, reconstructive side".[40] In short, they are clear, or at least think they are, about what Nietzsche is against, but tend to be confused as to what he is for. Now, we have already raised doubts as to whether, in the case of analytic philosophers, the kind of confidence Magnus refers to is well-founded. And, we have intimated that it may stem from a failure to appreciate the potency of Nietzsche's dark side. Indeed, in this case, the overconfidence masks Nietzsche's disruptive aims, enabling him to be depicted as one more contributor to some of the very debates he wished to put an end to. In that sense, these analytic philosophers are also confused about what Nietzsche is in favor of, though without apparently even being aware that they might be.

Magnus develops some further thoughts that help clarify what is going on here. He moves the discussion beyond prevailing differences in dealing with Nietzsche's positive and negative aspects. But, he does this by drawing attention to another distinction, one buried beneath these particular differences, one he claims is "an unarticulated difference, scarcely recognized among Nietzsche scholars, not to say philosophers in general".[41] This is the difference between (a) "those who believe that one is paying him a compliment by reading Nietzsche as a 'philosopher' who gives Kantian-style answers to textbook questions", and (b) "those who view that characterization as depreciating his more broadly 'therapeutic' achievement."[42] Both these approaches appeal to a 'positive' conception of

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[37] *The Will to Power* Friederich Nietzsche, (Walter Kaufmann trans.) 493, p.272, Vintage: New York, 1968.

[38] GS, 121; quoted in NR, p.202

[39] Though sometimes he writes as if he is not: in 'Pragmatism as romantic polytheism', *op.cit.,* for example, Rorty claims that Nietzsche believed "beliefs should be judged solely by their utility" in meeting the varied needs of "the clever animals" called "human beings", that "Neitzsche and James did for the word 'truth', what Mill had done for the word 'right'", p.28.

[40] 'Postmodernist Pragmatism: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, and Rorty', Bernd Magnus, p.262, in *Pragmatism: From Progressivism to Postmodernism*, Robert Hollinger and David Depew (eds), Praeger Publishers: Westport, 1995, pp.256-283.

[41] Magnus, *op.cit.*p263.

[42] Magnus, *op.cit.* p.262.

Nietzsche's philosophizing. However, the first prematurely diverts Nietzsche's destructive impetus by interpreting his criticisms as *reconstructive* moves that are, beneath the bravado, of a rather traditional kind. These moves were designed to replace the theories concerned (i.e. the target theories) with better, Nietzschean, versions, and hence put philosophy itself back onto a secure footing in roughly the same place. Such, at least, seems to be the tacit agenda of many of the analytic Nietzsche whisperers we referred to earlier: "Yes, Nietzsche appears to put great pressure on the appearance/reality distinction and related notions such as that of 'mind-independence', but the result of him doing so leaves us with a more robust theoretical conception of reality and philosophy's relation to it" - similarly for 'truth', 'morality' and so forth.

The second positive approach invokes no such diversionary measures. It enables Nietzsche's negative philosophical agenda to be played out in full. For it recognizes that this is necessary, that for therapeutic reasons the bombs *should* be allowed to explode, so to speak, rather than be defused. Nietzsche is depicted "as attempting to liberate us from precisely the felt need to provide theories of knowledge, or moral theories, or ontologies."[43] This Nietzsche is, even at his most dangerous, and arguably most especially then, "already *constructive* in the therapeutic manner of the later Wittgenstein, late Heidegger, Derrida, Rorty, and Foucault."[44] And, it is this side of the buried distinction that maps neatly onto Rorty's pragmatist approach to Nietzsche.

When Rorty stares into the mirror of Nietzsche's writings, he apparently sees a rough and ready reflection of himself: someone who wants to break free from much of the philosophical tradition and has overcome any residual need to rebuild anything even remotely similar in its place. The mapping in question avoids the tensions involved in making a quasi-classic

pragmatist out of Nietzsche because Rorty treats James and Dewey in precisely the same way, regarding them as therapeutic rather than standardly reconstructive thinkers. In 'Pragmatism, Relativism, and Irrationalism'[45], for example, he deplores the tendency to try to convert James and Dewey into contributors to 'neo-Kantian, epistemologically-centred philosophy' by taking them to be "suggesting various holistic corrections to the atomistic doctrines of the early logical empiricists."[46] James and Dewey should instead be viewed "as breaking with the Kantian epistemological tradition altogether."[47] For it is only by viewing them in this way that we can appreciate how radical they are:

> As long as we see James or Dewey as having 'theories of truth' or 'theories of knowledge' or 'theories of morality' we shall get them wrong. We shall ignore their criticisms of the assumption that there ought to *be* theories about such matters. We shall not see how radical their thought was – how deep was their criticism of the attempt, common to Kant, Husserl, Russell and C.I.Lewis, to make philosophy into a foundational discipline.[48]

These considerations help us to grasp why Rorty is keen to align Nietzsche with James and Dewey. What these three philosophers share, in his eyes, is not a penchant for certain pragmatist doctrines or theoretical preoccupations, but rather the intense desire to drop a lot of burdensome and unnecessary philosophical baggage that has no practical value, and blocks the path to human progress. All regard themselves as thereby clearing the way for some fresh, and more interesting, developments. Just as we should read Dewey's criticisms of 'spectator' accounts of knowledge as criticisms that obviate the very need for a theory of knowledge, we should recognize that, as Magnus, in true Rortian spirit, puts it, "A theory of

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43 *Ibid.*
44 *Ibid*.

45 In *Consequences of Pragmatism*, Richard Rorty, Harvester Press" Sussex, 1982, pp.160-175.
46 *Op.Cit.,* p160.
47 *Ibid.*
48 *Ibid*.

knowledge is not something Nietzsche has; the yearning for its possession is what his tropes parody".[49]

So much for Rorty roping Nietzsche and classic pragmatism together, what about his treatment of Nietzsche on New Pragmatist, terms? In this case, as we said, Rorty turns to Nietzsche mainly to help flesh out his views on how to deal with what he calls "the contingency of identity". But before we discuss that, it is worth looking at an additional suggestion from Magnus, one that sheds more light on the general pragmatist spin that Rorty tries to put Nietzsche's work.

Those who want to treat Nietzsche as just another contributor to the 'Kantian epistemological tradition'[50] presumably do so because they cannot imagine any other way of enabling him to play a substantial role in philosophy. The underlying assumption here is that if a thinker is not making moves that can be recognized within this tradition, then, whatever else is going on, the thinker is not playing the philosophy game. But, there is another factor. They do not know how to interpret Nietzsche's writings in a positive light unless they cajole him into playing *this* game and then try to conjure up some theoretical benefits from his critiques. For they cannot cross over to an intellectual space from where it might look as if the challenge to *abandon* that game is itself a *positive* philosophical phenomenon. And, they cannot do this because they believe there is no such space: in their eyes, the putative challenge is paradoxical. But, they only force themselves into such a corner by holding that a challenge of this kind still has to be part of the same game. And, within *that* game it seems to undercut itself. Or, more precisely, either it stands completely outside philosophy, in which case it has no philosophical significance, or it is supposed to be inside but implodes because it is self-refuting. They cannot accept the possibility that "perhaps Nietzsche's

critiques just *are* the new game"[51] because they cannot make coherent sense of those critiques from *within* the old one. Consider Nietzche's supposed denial of 'truth'.[52] What is the status of that denial? If it is true, then technically speaking it grinds to an incoherent halt while attempting to assert something that, if true, would topple its own truth. Magnus claims that there is another way of construing the kind of claims Nietzsche is making when he challenges the philosophical tradition in this seemingly anomalous way. These are not, themselves, *theoretical* claims. The terms they introduce, terms such as "perspective" and "error", are neither meta-theoretical (they do not usher in a theoretical commentary on the status of 'truth', 'knowledge', and so on – hence they are not vulnerable to the charge of self-refutation) nor the proposed basis for an additional theoretical account. They are rather new names for philosophically slippery phenomena such as facts, names that enable the development of a fresh vocabulary, one which enables talk about the world to be engaged in outside the net of traditional theoretical considerations attached to the old names, and within which such phenomena seemed to have a natural, though problematic, philosophical home. Furthermore:

> Nietzsche's tropes concerning "truth" and "error", "fact" and "interpretation" are best understood as rhetorical devices to help the reader understand and confront the widely shared intuition that there must be something like a final truth about reality as such, which it is the goal of philosophy to disclose. The reader's own penchant for the God's-eye-view is surfaced and called into question.[53]

All this links up quite suggestively with Rorty's emphasis on metaphor creation and vocabulary shifts as the prime motors of intellectual and cultural change and, indeed,

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[49] Magnus, *Op.Cit.* p.263

[50] We assume, as Rorty does, and for the reasons he gives in *Philosophy and the Mirror of* Nature, that most analytic philosophers are still working within that tradition broadly construed,

[51] Magnus, *Op.cit.*, p.266.

[52] Bernard William's launches a vigorous defence of Nietzsche as someone intensely attracted to truth in his *Truth and Truthfulness*, Princeton University Press: Princeton NJ. 2002, pp.12-19.

[53] Magnus, *Op.Cit*, p.263

progress.[54] The poet of personhood is now but one small step away.

Nietzsche plays an important role in *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*, the book in which Rorty makes his first, and most concerted, effort to spell out what a pragmatist-inspired, 'post-metaphysical culture' might look like and how philosophy might still raise and deal with important issues after the lessons of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* have been heeded. Under influence from Alexander Nehamas's *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*[55] and to a lesser extent Sartre, Rorty shows, for example, how the traditional issue of personal identity can be linguistically modulated so that the vocabulary in which it is discussed concerns matters of self-creation rather than an attempted ontology of the self and/or its features. Then the age-old epistemological and metaphysical questions associated with the latter drop out of the picture. Here, the main contributors to the discussion are icons of culture in general, such as Nietzsche, Freud, and Proust, rather than those mainstream philosophers, running from Descartes and Locke through to Parfit, thinkers who brought the epistemological and metaphysical questions to the fore, all the while making it seem as if this was their rightful location.

In the place of traditional essentialist questions regarding what it *is* that distinguishes one person from another or persons from other kinds of things and epistemological questions concerning how we *know* this person is the same person today that she was yesterday (the hard case supposedly being where "this" is first-personally indexical), Rorty suggests pursuing questions about what can be *created* rather than discovered. These are questions such as: "What can I do to become the kind of person I would prefer to be?" or "How can I create a *unique* self, one that differs in useful ways from other run-of-the-mill selves?" And, they are *pragmatist* questions because they acknowledge that, on its own, so to speak, the world cannot answer questions of personal identity for us. This follows the practical adage, made much of by James in particular, that useful specifications of reality need to cater for the human contribution.[56] And, they are Nietzschean because Nietzsche was probably the first philosopher to cut off all human-transcendent sources of personal identity at the roots, making *everything* depend on the will to self-creation. But, for Rorty, although it is inspiring, Nietzsche's own account of self creation cannot be taken on wholesale by pragmatists. It is inadequate in two important respects.

In one sense, the account does not go far enough. And in another, it goes too far. The account falls short because it does not extend to *everyone*, to ordinary people. Nietzsche's self-creators are a very select breed. Rorty, with his highly developed democratic instincts, balks at this. But, it is not clear that he fully understands, or, more charitably, is prepared to accept, what Nietzsche is angling for.

A Nietzschean self-creator is rather like one of those characters in the movies who turn out to be the last person left alive after everyone else has been destroyed. Such a 'last person standing' stands on only the rubble of past civilizations, and has to start doing everything for themselves. By analogy, an evolved Nietzschean looks around to witness only the debris of destroyed values, metaphysical systems, and religious beliefs; indeed, of everything that might provide intellectual sustenance for an *other-dictated*, or *impersonal*, conception of personal identity. This last remaining self just *has to* start its future self from scratch. But here, there seems to be a need for something magical, something that, in the midst of the utter destruction of the socio-historical

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[54] Though we should note that for Rorty progress is often defined in circular terms of the kind of social freedom that both allows and encourages creative vocabulary changes.

[55] Nietzsche: *Life as Literature*, Alexander Nehamas, Harvard University Press: Cambridge Massachusetts, 1987.

[56] For further discussion of this see 'The human contribution: James and modernity in *Pragmatism* and *The Meaning of Truth*', Alan Malachowski; in *Understanding James, Understanding Modernity,* David Evans (ed.), Bloomsbury: London, 2017 (forthcoming)

props for human identity, somehow pumps up the internal means of creating a prop-free person. Only someone very special, *der Ubermensch*, can step up to the task.

Rorty, by contrast, wants to sell a conception of self-creation that can be put into practice by just about all of us. Then the question arises as to whether, in aiming for this, he has to become yet another bomb disposal expert, someone who cannot let Nietzsche's dangerous side be let loose because at the end of the subsequent trail of destruction will stand only those radical individualists who have neither the time nor the inclination for normal politics, progressive public policy, reform, and 'solidarity'. Such beings have no truck with the kind of picture of social hope that pragmatists like Rorty normally want to paint.

However, Rorty can contend that his second reservation about Nietzsche's account of self-creation gets him out of trouble here. For he argues that the account also goes too far by incorporating an unobtainable ideal, that of complete and perfect self-creation – what he calls, nodding towards Heidegger, 'Nietzsche's inverted Platonism'. There is no point in letting Nietzsche's destructive demons roam free because the account that supposedly justifies the ensuing philosophical mayhem fails on its own terms. Even the would-be Nietzschean elite will not be able to work the magic necessary for conjuring up a self out of *nothing*. Some people may feel special enough to step up to the task, but they will never be able to complete it.

There is ambiguity, equivocation perhaps, in Nietzsche's own writings on this score. At times, he seems to advocate a sort of all-enveloping cosmic holism, in which everyone is part of the greater whole and, since no one is 'responsible' for anything on an individual basis, the very possibility of self-creation goes out the window. Then there appears to be no wiggle room for building one's *very own* sense of self:

> What alone can *our* teaching be? – That no one *gives* a human being his qualities: not God, not society, not his parents or ancestors, not *he himself* … *No one* is accountable for existing at all, or for being constituted as he is, or for living in the circumstances and surroundings in which he lives. The fatality of his nature cannot be disentangled from the fatality of all that which has been and will be.[57]

However, Nietzsche also writes of the possibility of a 'great liberation', as if this 'holistic fatality' story is just another one that any person with sufficient insight, courage, and will power can still break out of.[58] Those who manage to do that will then start creating a self out of resources *they have chosen*. But, what Nietzsche seems to lack is a clear explanation as to how all this is possible, how choice makes sense in a human wasteland.

Rorty is very happy to take up Nietzsche's idea that a self that plays little or no part in the forging of the materials out of which it is constituted is somehow inauthentic, but he drops the magical implication that self-creation can only occur when the individual concerned has been able to leap beyond the realm of the ordinary and then fabricate a self out of socio-historical thin air. Moreover, with the help of Freud, Rorty shows no such leap is necessary, that unique and fascinating selves can be, and are, made from the most mundane materials, that everyday life provides an adequate stage-setting for authentic, self-fueled, existence. Rorty does this by developing Lionel Trilling's interpretation of Freud, one in which he claims:

> The great contribution [Freud] has made to our understanding of literature does not arise from what he says about literature itself but from what he says about the nature of the human mind: he showed that poetry is indigenous to the very constitution of the mind; he saw the mind as being, in the greater part of its tendency, exactly a poetry-making faculty.[59]

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[57] TI, 8, p.65.

[58] There is a sort of conditional necessity about all this In Neitzsche's writings: there *has to be* such a leap and those with the capacity to make it *have* to do so (if they are to attain their potential).

[59] 'Freud: Within and Beyond Culture'; in *Beyond Culture: Essays on Literature and Learning*, Lionel Trilling,

This Freud speaks to both Rorty's deep-seated, democratic instincts and his romanticism. For he holds that the mind does not simply wax poetic in the dark, in its creative handling of dream imagery, but also in its daylight dealings with the nitty-gritty of normal life, details of which, when modulated by unconscious fantasy, are woven into complex and intriguing 'life-poems'. Freud's trick was to show that when we dig beneath the seemingly banal nature of the surface features, *everyone's* life breaks out into a work of art:

> For Freud, nobody is dull through and through, for there is no such thing as a dull unconscious. What makes Freud more useful and more plausible than Nietzsche is that he does not relegate the vast majority of humanity to the status of dying animals. For Freud's account of unconscious fantasy shows us how every human life is a poem – or, more exactly, every human life not so racked by pain as to be unable to learn a language nor so immersed in toil as to have no leisure in which to create a self-description.[60]

However, Rorty's socio-pragmatic account of self-creation preserves a bit more of Nietzsche's individualistic, anti-social approach than might at first seem apparent. Nietzschean self-fashioners rise high above the shackles of culture and society. However, social hope then evaporates and the air is too rarefied to sustain existence outside the covers of Nietzsche's books. By contrast, the down-to-earth, Rortian versions put to use what these self-fashioners would only wish to rise above. This is the raw material with which they weave their identity. But, their social hopes are also thinned out in the process. Without a Supreme Being, Grand Theory, or a Reality-based surrogate at hand, there seems to be no basis for creating overarching life poems, the sort of epics into which all other poems can fit and with which they can creatively interact, gaining self-expanding sustenance in the process. These 'clever animals' know that they can hope for no more than the minimal social conditions of Millian-style freedom:

conditions that allow more and more of them to get on with composing the quirky, private poems of their own lives without harming the lives of others. It may well be a distinctive characteristic of Rorty's New Pragmatist account of self-creation, that it necessitates the reduction of social hope in this way.

Does it do justice, in the end, to Nietzsche's dangerous streak? It certainly allows Nietzsche to have a fair crack at bringing down the ivory towers protecting a moribund philosophical tradition. And, it need not consider itself as having actually prevented the emergence of the sort of self-creators that were supposed to rise up from the rubble. For it regards these to be merely mythical creatures in any case. They are flimsy, idealized counterparts of the previous diaphanous inventions of the great metaphysicians. Its own social hopes are banal and subdued by comparison. But, it consoles itself with a vision of ordinary people left standing, composing their life poems, day in and day out, without the distractions of other worlds and related philosophical extravagances. In helping remove such distractions, Nietzsche undoubtedly made a very important contribution to pragmatism's most recent revival.

Penguin: Middlesex, 1966, p.89.
[60] *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity, Op.Cit.*, pp.35-6.

Is John Dewey's thinking about social inquiry a historic failure?

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ABSTRACT: This paper critically examines the explanation of the failure of John Dewey's thinking about social inquiry presented by the Deleuze-inspired Belgian philosopher of science Isabelle Stengers in her 2006 book *The Virgin and the Neutrino* (*La Vierge et le Neutrino).* Despite the fact that Dewey's thinking about social inquiry has inspired several prominent contemporary social thinkers such as Axel Honneth and Bruno Latour, it has also been documented by Peter Manicas that Dewey's thinking about social inquiry historically has been a pragmatic failure in the sense that it has been unable to change the direction of mainstream social science. Hence the relevance of Stengers' attempt to explain the failure of his thinking about social inquiry. The first part of the paper explicates Stengers' explanation of Dewey's failure. First it describes how she takes Dewey's thinking about social inquiry to be based on the thought that social inquiry should be practiced in a scientific-experimental way as well as guided by a political-democratic telos that transcends this experimental method. Then it explains how Stengers takes even well-intentioned social scientists to have been forced to reject this conception of social inquiry because they are so worried about their public status as real scientists that it is practically impossible for them to accept a conception of social inquiry which, like Dewey's, give it an explicitly political-democratic goal that breaks with the dominant, public image of science as politically neutral. Finally, the first part also describes how Stengers, at bottom, takes the failure of Dewey's conception of social inquiry to be rooted in a transcendent conception of philosophy according to which it is the job of philosophy to create public peace and order by transcendent means. With Stengers' explanation of Dewey's failure in place, the second part of the paper then moves on to evaluate this explanation. Here it is critically pointed out that while it is true that Dewey thought social inquiry should be practiced in an experimental way as well as guided by a democratic telos, he did not take this telos to be one that transcends the experimental method. Instead, he thought of it as immanent within experimental practice. At the same time, it is also pointed out that Stengers' attribution of a transcendent conception of philosophy to Dewey is based on a misunderstanding. In this way, the paper comes to the conclusion that Stengers' explanation of the failure of Dewey's conception of social inquiry should, itself, be seen as a failure, and ends by pointing out that this is a real shame, since it means that her own positive thoughts about how to think about social inquiry does not really confront the important questions that a real engagement with Dewey's actual thinking about social inquiry would have raised.

Despite the fact that the American philosopher John Dewey's thoughts about social inquiry *historically* have had a significant influence on George Herbert Mead (1934) and the so-called Chicago School of sociology (Schubert 2010; Joas 1992) as well as on a figure like C. Wright Mills (1966), and *recently* have inspired contemporary social theorists like Bruno Latour (2004), Axel Honneth (2017), and, to a lesser extent, Laurent Thevenot (2011), it has been claimed that Dewey's thoughts about social inquiry historically have had virtually no influence on mainstream social science. Thus, as the foremost expert on Dewey's place in the development of American social science, Peter T. Manicas, has put it, even though Dewey's thoughts about social inquiry represented "self-conscious efforts to provide an alternative" to "the 'scientism' of the dominating view of science", they "utterly failed" since they had virtually no "influence on the development of American social science" (2011; 2008; 1987). The big question, however, is why this is so. In his own writings, Manicas seems to suggest that it is due, partly, to strong institutional forces and, partly, to Dewey's impenetrable way of writing (Manicas 2011, p. 2). In this paper, however, I will look at another possible explanation, presented by the Deleuze- and James-inspired Belgian philosopher of science Isabelle Stengers in her 2006 book *La Vierge et le Neutrino*, according to which the failure of Dewey's thinking about social inquiry is due just as much to an internal "weakness" (Stengers 2006, 128) in his thinking as to recalcitrant external circumstances. In section one I present Stengers' understanding of Dewey's conception of social inquiry. In section two I then explain why she thinks this conception accounts for his failure, while section three describes her explanation of why Dewey was led to create that conception in the first place. Finally, in sections four and five, I critically discuss Stengers' interpretation in the light of Dewey's writings. My conclusion here will be that her explanation does not

seem to work, because it is based upon a skewed understanding of what Dewey actually thought about social inquiry.

An experimental method and a democratic purpose

The background for Stengers' engagement with Dewey's thinking about the social sciences is the fact that she takes her own thinking about these sciences to be motivated by the same problem as Dewey's, namely, a desire to offer resistance to the dominant, positivistic form of social science. At the same time, however, she is also deeply worried by the fact that Dewey's non-positivistic conception of social science historically has been a "failure" (Stengers 2006, p.120) in the sense that it has been rejected by the majority of sociologists as an alternative to the positivistic "image of "Science"" which she takes to have "dominated the professionalization of sociology" (Stengers 2006, p. 128). What worries Stengers, however, is not so much this rejection in itself as the fact that Dewey, as she points out, "had nothing of marginal about him, of the visionary sitting in his corner inventing what sociology could be" (Stengers 2006, p. 128), when he developed his ideas about social science, but was "at the pinnacle of his American fame" (Stengers 2006, p. 125). So despite the fact that Dewey was a very influential figure in American intellectual life at the beginning of the 20th century, his thoughts about social science was not able to prevent "the professionalization" (Stengers 2006, p. 125) of a positivistic form of social science, and it is this that worries Stengers and motivates her engagement with Dewey's thinking. As she herself describes it, the main motivation behind this engagement is thus to "try to learn from […] Dewey's failure" (Stengers 2006, pp. 120-1) in order that her own attempt to offer resistance to the dominant, positivistic forms of social science will not suffer the same, sad fate as Dewey's . In order to be able to learn something from Dewey's failure, however, Stengers cannot just attribute this failure to recalcitrant external circumstances, but has to operate with some

kind of failure in Dewey's thinking in relation to these circumstances. Even though she does admit that the failure of Dewey's thinking "certainly has […] good and weighty reasons – institutional, historical and political" she thus insists on treating it "as if there is a weakness in it" too (Stengers 2006, p. 128).

As Stengers sees it, there are two major components in Dewey's thinking about the social sciences, the peculiar combination of which she takes to constitute its weakness. The first element is the idea that the social sciences should be practiced in an experimental way just like the natural sciences. As Stengers explains, this is an integral part of Dewey's thinking in the sense that he developed "a 'scientific' definition of the sociologist's profession" that proposes "to the specialists of the social sciences to inscribe themselves in a renewed continuity with the experimental sciences by adopting what he calls an 'experimental logic'" (Stengers 2006, p. 126). According to Stengers, however, it is important to note that Dewey's understanding of the experimental sciences is non-positivistic. As she points out it is thus a basic part of Dewey's so-called "experimental logic" that "experimentation is inseparable from an 'inquiry'….prompted by a difficulty, a trouble, which the inquirer turns into an obstacle to be overcome or a problem to be solved" (Stengers 2006, p. 126). So instead of a positivistic method laying bare pre-given facts, Dewey's conception of an "experimental logic" makes all the results of experimentation relative to a felt difficulty or problem.

Besides suggesting that the social sciences should be practiced in an experimental way, Stengers also believes that Dewey thought the social sciences should help promote the realization of his own idea of democracy. As she describes it, Dewey thus thought that the "primordial finality" (Stengers 2006, p 131) or "primary goal" of the social sciences should be to be "in the service of a living democracy" (Stengers 2006, p. 126). In order to understand what she means by this, it is worth taking a closer look at her understanding of Dewey's conception of democracy. According to Stengers, the key

element in Dewey's conception of "a true democracy" (Stengers 2006, p. 123) is the idea that such a democracy should take the form of a "Great Community" (Stengers 2006, p. 124). As she also points out, however, Dewey thought that the only way in which such a community could come about was through the existence of "an organized and articulated Public" (Stengers 2006, p. 124). For Stengers, Dewey's idea of an organized public thus becomes crucial for understanding his conception of a true democracy and, as she sees it, the essence of this idea is that:

"[…] a public emerges, comes into existence, when the indirect consequences of the activities of one part of a population are perceived as harmful to the interests of another part of this population. The latter part then makes a 'public affair' out of that which until then had been 'private', produced by a human association pursuing its own interests. It 'makes count' what did not count, organizes itself in order to demand that the consequences which, until then, did not make anyone think, are taken into account" (Stengers 2006, p. 122)

As Stengers points out, the whole discussion surrounding man-made global warming serves as a perfect illustration of Dewey's idea of a public (Stengers 2006, p. 123). In this case there is a part of the population (fossil fuel companies etc.) which pursues its own interests through the activity of extracting and selling fossil fuels. This initially 'private' activity has, however, a number of indirect consequences – air pollution, global warming etc. – which are harmful to another part of the population, and in an ideal Deweyan democracy the members of this (other) part of the population would perceive the link between these indirect consequences and the 'private' activity of extracting fossil fuels in such an intense way that they would be led to organize themselves with a view to turning the whole thing into "a public affair". However, as the case of global warming also illustrates, the real world often does work in accordance with Dewey's ideal of "a true democracy". Often publics simply do not organize themselves even though they seem to be

harmed by the indirect consequences of social activities, and it is here that Stengers sees a link between Dewey's thinking about democracy and his thoughts about social science. As she describes it, Dewey had two crucial beliefs about modern democracies. On the one hand he believed that "the modern state which presents itself as democratic" (Stengers 2006, p. 123) does not "represent the truth of democracy" (Stengers 2006, p. 122), because it is characterized by "the rarefaction of the dynamics responsible for the emergence of publics" (Stengers 2006, p. 123), which he took to be constitutive of a well-functioning democracy. At the same time, however, he also thought that the main cause of this "eclipse of the public" was the fact that "the indirect consequences of the technological and industrial development are entangled" in such an "impenetrable network" (Stengers 2006, p. 123) in modern states that it has become virtually impossible for the members of the public to realize the relation between specific social activities and their harmful, indirect consequences. In the case of global warming, for example, the relation between the extraction of oil in the US and the submergence of the Maldives is thus so indirect and mediated by so many social activities that it is extremely difficult for a public to perceive the relation between these activities in such an intense way that it is led to organize itself as a public and turn the whole thing into "a public affair". And, according to Stengers, it is precisely this fact that led Dewey to put the social sciences "in the service of a living democracy" and suggest that their, "primordial finality" (Stengers 2006, p. 131) or "primary goal" should be "to contribute to the emergence of a group having become capable of identifying itself and explaining its interests in a way which eventually turns them into a "public affair"" (Stengers 2006, p. 126). So, as Stengers sees it, the way in which Dewey made the social sciences subservient to his idea of "a living democracy" was by positing that the primary goal of the social sciences should be to describe the intricate links between social activities and their harmful, indirect consequences in such a way that it

would make it possible for the otherwise passive and unorganized members of the public to organize themselves and turn these things into "public affairs". In the case of global warming, for example, the primary goal of a Deweyan social scientist, as Stengers understands it, would thus be to describe the many detailed links between the burning of fossil fuels and the harmful consequences of global warming in as precise and moving a way as possible.

So, according to Stengers, there are two central ideas that make up Dewey's thinking about the social sciences. On the one hand, the idea that the social sciences should be practiced in a non-positivistic experimental-scientific way, and, on the other hand, the idea that they should serve a democratic-political goal, namely, the emergence of the public from its eclipse. The next section will explain how she takes this peculiar combination of an experimental method and a democratic goal to account for the historic failure of Dewey's thinking about the social sciences

Status anxiety and the image of science

As Stengers sees it, the big weakness in Dewey's thinking about the social sciences – the one that accounts for its rejection by the majority of social scientists – is the fact that the democratic goal which he wants the social sciences to serve is one that "transcends the experimental logic" (Stengers 2006, p. 129) which he also wants them to follow. In *La Vierge et le Neutrino* Stengers does not explicitly state what she means by 'transcendence', but she seems to suggest that the democratic goal is one that has just been tacked on to the experimental method by Dewey in an external way. This is at least what seems to be implied by her explanation of the exact way in which this element of transcendence accounts for the failure of Dewey's thinking about social science. This explanation is based upon two empirical presuppositions. First, the idea that society is dominated by an "image of 'science'" which emphasizes its "neutrality towards political

engagement" (Stengers 2006, p. 128). Secondly, the idea that what worries social scientists the most is whether or not their activity is recognized socially as a "real science" (Stengers 2006, p. 125). Given these two presuppositions, the explanation of Dewey's failure is straightforward. If the most important thing for social scientists is social recognition as real scientists and if society is dominated by an image of science according to which real science is characterized by "neutrality towards political engagement", then it seems obvious that the majority of social scientists would have to reject a conception of social science like Dewey's, which, according to Stengers' interpretation, gives the social sciences an explicitly democratic goal. And this is in fact also how Stengers explains the failure of Dewey's conception of social science. The problem with this conception, as she sees it, is thus that it, by invoking "an ethical-political norm which transcends the experimental logic and puts the sociologist in the service of a living democracy", becomes "synonymous with the jeopardizing of the social identity of the sociologists as scientists" since it makes them vulnerable to "the accusation that they, instead of doing science, are politically engaged" in so far as they do not "limit themselves to describing facts" like real scientist do "but also try to organize unruly minorities"(Stengers 2006, p. 129). So, according to Stengers, the internal weakness in Dewey's thinking about the social sciences which accounts for its historic failure is the fact that the democratic goal which he suggested that the social sciences should serve is one that transcends his experimental logic. In this way his conception made the social scientists vulnerable to the accusation that they were not real scientists, for if they are primarily "in the service of a living democracy", how would they then, as Stengers rhetorically asks, be able to defend their status as real scientists against someone who points out that "physicists and chemists" - the paragons of scientificity – do not serve democracy but "only serve science"? (2006: 129). The short answer, Stengers suggests, is that they would not be able to defend that status and that, as she

sees it, also why even the most well-intentioned social scientists historically have rejected Dewey's conception of social science.

Besides the fact that Dewey's conception of social science has been rejected by the majority of social scientists, Stengers is also worried about what the consequences would have been if it in fact had been *accepted* by the majority of social scientists or gained the kind of influence that several contemporary theorists have suggested that it in fact deserves (Bogusz 2013; Midtgarden 2012; Manicas 2011; Zask 2005; Bohman 1999). Again it is the idea that the social sciences should be "in the service of a living democracy" that worries her. More specifically, she is deeply worried that this will turn the social scientist into "a 'social reformer' working for the good, the emancipation of all human beings, the progressive amelioration of the public order" with nothing to protect her against "a good general will that makes it possible to assimilate what it does to what everyone should do" (Stengers 2006, p. 133). What she means by this can most easily be grasped by looking at how she imagines a Deweyan social scientist would react if she encounters a social group that refuses to let her help it turn its suffering into a public affair. In such a case, as Stengers explains, "the danger" is that

> "the Deweyan sociologist will be 'troubled', certainly, but not in the sense where the trouble will mark, for her, the beginning of learning. She is not equipped for learning from such a rejection and her reaction will rather be: how to convince this group to accept itself for what it is, in such a way that it will have a chance of making itself heard? Empathy, perhaps, condescension, certainly" (Stengers 2006, p. 134).

So, according to Stengers, by making the social sciences subservient to his idea of a true democracy, Dewey's conception of social science cannot help but turn the social scientists into condescending social reformers using the people they encounter as means for realizing Dewey's utopian idea of a Great Community. The reason why Stengers worries about this is not just that she dislikes such a condescending attitude, but also that she

thinks it may have bad consequences. As she explains, there is thus a real danger that Dewey's idea of a Great Community, in so far as it "calls for transactions which secure an ever richer communication and sharing of experiences", may "at the same time, enable the most summary condemnation of those who, for one reason or another, do not want to "compromise"" (Stengers 2006, p. 146). In *La vierge et le neutrino* Stengers is not very explicit about what reasons a group might have for not turning its suffering into a public affair, but she seems to think that a major reason could be that the "public" language the group would have to use to make its case public was so loaded against it that it would have to present its interests in a way that radically "compromises" or undermines these interests. This seems at least to be suggested by the fact that she not only sharply criticizes the fact that the ruling ideology of "good governance" forces everyone to present themselves publicly as "stakeholders[…]having a right to participate in negotiations" alongside all the other "free entrepreneurs" (Stengers 2006, p. 120), but also explains that her own thinking is based upon "the rejection of any collusion with the interests of the public order" (Stengers 2006, p. 148), which she sees as the product of "campaigns of 'pacification' and eradication" (Stengers 2006:, p. 150). So the reason why Stengers is not just worried about the fact that Dewey's conception of social science has been rejected by the majority of social scientists, but also worries about what the consequences would have been if it *had not* been rejected, is that she is convinced it will turn social scientists into well-meaning but condescending social reformers who cannot help but harm the interests of the people they interact with by forcing them to make their suffering public even if the language of the public order is loaded against them. The big question is of course whether these worries are justified. But before I move on to discuss this all-important question, I will first take a look at Stengers' explanation of why Dewey was led to create a conception of social inquiry that, according to her, has such problematic consequences. For, as the next section

will show, she does not think it was an accident, but a direct consequence of Dewey's very conception of philosophy.

Transcendence disguising itself as immanence

In order to understand the way in which Stengers' takes Dewey very conception of philosophy to be responsible for the failure of his thinking about social inquiry, it is necessary to take a quick look at the way in which she thinks about the nature of philosophy. As mentioned in the introduction, her primary inspiration is Gilles Deleuze, whose concepts of "immanence" and "transcendence" she uses to define a 'good' and a 'bad' way of doing philosophy. On the one hand there is a good, immanent way of doing philosophy where the philosopher thinks of her practice as a "creation of concepts" (Stengers 2006, p. 25) tailored to a specific socio-historical situation and explicitly rejects "any position of transcendence, 'beyond fray' but also 'beyond the epoch'" (Stengers 2006, p. 26). And then there is a bad, transcendent way of doing philosophy where the philosopher thinks that it is her job to develop a universal conception of "the human being as such" that "transcends our conflicts" in such a way that it enables the philosopher to "make the humans converge as humans, beyond the divisions which destine them for war" (Stengers 2006, p. 146-7). Besides Deleuze, however, Stengers is also inspired by "pragmatism in William James' sense" (Stengers 2006, p. 60), which she takes to be very similar to Deleuze's conception of philosophy. As she understands it, the most characteristic thing about James' pragmatism is the idea that "the 'truth of an idea' […] is nothing but what its process of verification 'brings', the differences which it allows one to make" (2006: 34) and she thinks this comes close to Deleuze because she takes it to amount to a rejection of any "abstraction that claims to separate an idea from its consequences, that attributes to it a 'truth' transcending its consequences" (Stengers 2006, p. 60). So, according to Stengers, what unites James'

pragmatic and Deleuze's immanent approach to philosophy is the fact that they both reject the idea of transcendent truth. There are two reasons why Stengers prefers such an immanent-pragmatic approach to philosophy. On the one hand she thinks it is able to do something that transcendent ways of philosophizing are unable to do, namely, resist "capture" (Stengers 2006, p. 26). By "capture" she means the process whereby ideas are made to work in ways that go against the intentions of the thinker who created them, and the reason why she thinks that transcendent ways of thinking are unable to resist such capture is that the transcendent thinker's belief in the transcendent truth of her ideas makes her inattentive to the social situation in which these general ideas are going to work. The other reason why she prefers an immanent-pragmatic approach to philosophy has to do with "power" (Stengers 2006, p. 27). By making herself "the spokes-person of what would transcend our conflicts", Stengers thus thinks that a transcendent philosopher cannot help but cast herself in the role of a powerful "judge who has the right to demand that everyone bow down" (Stengers 2006, p. 147) to the transcendent ideal in the name of which she pretends to speak.

Since the two problems that Stengers associates with a transcendent way of philosophizing ('capture' and 'power') are the exact same problems that she take to mar Dewey's thinking about social inquiry, it will probably not come as a surprise that she thinks Dewey was led to think about social inquiry as he did because "transcendence disguises itself as immanence" (Stengers 2006, p. 145) in his very conception of philosophy. What she means by this is that Dewey's conception of philosophy may, on the surface, seem immanent-pragmatic, but at bottom it is actually transcendent. In order to back this claim up, Stengers quotes from *Reconstruction in Philosophy's* meta-philosophical first chapter on "Changing Conceptions of Philosophy", where Dewey suggests that:

"Philosophy which surrenders its somewhat barren monopoly of dealings with Ultimate and Absolute Reality will find a compensation in revealing the moral forces which move mankind and in contributing to the aspirations of men to attain a more ordered and intelligent happiness" (Dewey 1948, pp. 26-7)

In her comments on this passage, Stengers admits that Dewey's rejection of a "barren monopoly of dealings with Ultimate and Absolute Reality" can make it *seem as if* his conception of philosophy is immanent-pragmatic in so far as this clearly amounts to a rejection of a very prominent form of transcendence, namely, the claim to know the essence of reality. As she sees it, however, this is *merely an appearance* since there is *another* form of transcendence left in Dewey's suggestion that philosophy should "find compensation in revealing the moral forces which move mankind and in contributing to the aspirations of men to achieve a more ordered and intelligent happiness". As Stengers interprets it, this suggestion thus implies that "philosophy will be in league with the moral forces which drive humanity; it will search for peace and the possibility of human happiness beyond conflicts and disorders" (Stengers 2006, p. 146), and it is because she is convinced that Dewey's conception of philosophy implies such a search for peace and happiness "beyond conflicts and disorders" that she is led to claim that "transcendence disguises itself as immanence" in it.

The way in which Stengers takes this transcendent approach to philosophy to be responsible for the failure of Dewey's conception of social science is pretty straightforward. On the one hand she thus thinks that he was led to suggest that the social sciences should be practiced in an experimental way because he believed that "the same logic – the experimental logic – prevails in every case". So, as Stengers sees it, Dewey thought that his "experimental logic" represented a universal, transcendent truth and this belief then led him to think of everything - from "the history of living creatures" to "the practice of the inquiring sociologist" - in experimental terms. In a similar way Stengers also thinks

that Dewey was led to suggest that the "primordial goal" of the social sciences should be to forward his idea of true democracy as a Great Community because he thought that this idea represented a transcendent truth. As she explains, Dewey thus thought that:

"sociology should work at the creation of forms of knowledge which affirm and activate the possibility of democracy because this does not constitute just one way of organizing the public order among others. As a philosopher, he maintained that it's the political regime most suited for the actualization of the human being as such, the mode of human existence being communication and shared experience" (Stengers 2006, p. 131).

So just as Stengers thinks that Dewey was led to suggest that the social sciences should be practiced in an experimental way because he thought that his "experimental logic" represents a transcendental truth, she also thinks that he was led to suggest that their primary goal should be to forward his idea of a Great Community because he took the transcendent truth about human nature to be "communication and shared experience". In the end Stengers thus thinks that it is Dewey's transcendent approach to philosophy that is responsible for the historic failure ('capture') of his conception of social science as well as for the fact that this conception would have led to 'violence' if it had not been a failure. The question, however, is whether this analysis of Dewey's thinking about social science is convincing.

The local as the ultimate universal

As the previous sections have shown, Stengers' worries about Dewey's conception of social science are based upon an interpretation which emphasizes two key components: the idea that the social sciences should adopt a non-positivistic experimental logic from the natural science and the idea that their primary goal should be to forward the realization of Dewey's conception of a true democracy as a Great Community.

In order to assess whether her worries are justified, it is thus necessary to assess whether this interpretation of Dewey's conception of social science is well-founded, and this is, accordingly, the purpose of this section.

There can be no doubt that Stengers is right when she claims that Dewey wanted the social sciences to adopt an "experimental logic" from the natural sciences. In the final chapter of *The Public and its Problems* on "The Problem of Method" Dewey thus explicitly states that the social sciences should replace the reigning "absolutistic logic" with "an experimental social method" (Dewey 1927, p. 200) or an "experimental[…]logic" (Dewey 1927, p 2002), and in the penultimate chapter of his *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* on "Social Inquiry", he similarly suggests that social inquiry is "relatively so backward in comparison with physical and biological inquiry" (Dewey 1938, p. 487) because it has not whole-heartedly adopted that experimental logic or "pattern of inquiry" which he takes to be operative in these sciences. At the same time, Stengers also seems to be right when she explains how Dewey did not think that this experimental logic gave immediate access to pre-given facts, since he took all such facts to be relative to "an 'inquiry'….prompted by a difficulty, a trouble, which the inquirer turns into an obstacle to be overcome or a problem to be solved". In *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*'s pivotal sixth chapter on "The Pattern of Inquiry", Dewey thus explicitly states that every inquiry begins with a "disturbed, troubled, ambiguous [or] confused" (Dewey 1938, p. 105) situation which, then, is "taken" or "adjudged to be problematic" by the inquirer (Dewey 1938, p. 107), and it is also this idea of a problematic situation as the starting point for every inquiry that Dewey uses to criticize the positivistic idea of immediate knowledge in the same work's chapter on "Immediate Knowledge: Understanding and Inference".

So there can be no doubt that Stengers' description of the non-positivistic "experimental" element in Dewey's conception of social science is correct. When it comes to the "democratic" element that she also claims is present in Dewey's conception of social science, the situation seems, however, to be somewhat different. She does, admittedly, seem to be correct when she claims that Dewey's conception of democracy operates with an idea of a "Great Community". In *The Public and its Problems*, for example, Dewey thus explicitly links his idea of democracy with the idea of a "Great Community" (Dewey 1927, p. 142) – a link which is particularly prominent in the fifth chapter entitled "Search for The Great Community". In a similar way, Stengers' description of Dewey's idea of a public as one that is defined by the indirect consequences of social activities also seems correct. In *The Public and its Problems* Dewey thus explicitly states that "the essence of the consequences which call a public into being is the fact that they expand beyond those directly engaged in producing them" (Dewey 1927, p. 27). Finally, Stengers also seems to be correct when she claims that Dewey thought the public was unorganized and eclipsed because the connection between social activities and their indirect consequences has become too complex and impenetrable for the public too perceive. In *The Public and its Problem's* fourth chapter on "The Eclipse of the Public", Dewey thus explicitly states that "the machine age has so enormously expanded, multiplied, intensified and complicated the scope of the indirect consequences […] that the resultant public cannot identify and distinguish itself" (Dewey 1927, p. 126). So in all of these respects Stengers' understanding of Dewey' thinking about democracy seems substantially correct. However, when it comes to the most fundamental part of her interpretation, the claim that Dewey thought the "primordial finality" or "the primary goal" of the social sciences should be to help promote the realization of his idea of a Great Community, Stengers seems to have seriously misunderstood Dewey. There is, admittedly, no denying that Dewey took a particular form of social inquiry to be a precondition for the realization of his idea of democracy. In *The Public and its Problems*, for example, he thus explicitly states that "the prime condition of a democratically organized public is a kind of knowledge and insight which does not

exist" (Dewey 1927, p. 166). But to say that a particular kind of social inquiry is a "prime condition of a democratically organized public" is clearly not the same as saying that the "primary goal" of social inquiry should be to promote the realization of Dewey's idea of "a Great Community", and I think a number of facts strongly suggest that it would be wrong to attribute such an idea to Dewey. First of all Dewey seems to have explicitly rejected the very idea of giving the social sciences some kind of "primordial finality" or "primary goal". In *The Public and its Problems*, for example, he thus claims that the adoption of "an experimental social method" like the one he suggested "would probably manifest itself first of all in surrender" of the non-experimental idea that a "preconceived goal" or "fixed determinate end ought to control educative processes" – an idea that he took to be common to both "the disciples of Lenin and Mussolini" as well as "the captains of capitalistic society" (Dewey 1927, p. 200). It is, however, not just because Dewey explicitly rejected the idea of a "preconceived goal" or "fixed determinate end" that it seems wrong to claim that he thought the "primary goal" of the social sciences should be to promote the realization of his own idea of a Great Community. Just as importantly, this idea also seems to be made dubious by the fact that the idea of a Great Community does not play such a fundamental role in Dewey's thinking about democracy as Stengers claims. As already mentioned, Dewey does indeed operate with the idea of "a Great Community" in *The Public and its Problems*, but there he also subordinates this to the idea "a local community", which he takes to constitute the essence of his idea of democracy. At one place in the final chapter on "The Problem of Method", for example, he thus explicitly states that "in its deepest and richest sense a community must always remain a matter of face-to-face intercourse" so that even though "The Great Community, in the sense of free and full intercommunication, is conceivable […] it can never possess all the qualities which mark a local community" (Dewey 1927, p. 211). At other places in the same

chapter he similarly claims both that "Democracy must begin at home, and its home is the neighborly community" (Dewey 1927, p. 213) and that "the local is the ultimate universal, and as near an absolute as exists" (Dewey 1927, p. 215). So because Dewey explicitly subordinated his idea of a "Great Community" to his idea of a "local community", it seems highly unlikely that he should have thought the primary purpose of the social sciences should be to promote the realization of his idea of a Great Community, as Stengers claims. If he had thought the social sciences should have a primary goal, it seems clear that he would have suggested that they should try to promote the organization of that "local community", which he took to be "as near an absolute as exists". So the primary premise in Stengers' explanation of Dewey's failure – the claim that he thought the "primary goal" of the social sciences should be to promote the realization of his idea of a "Great Community" – seems unfounded, which means that her explanation of this failure also seems unfounded. For if Dewey did not suggest that the primary goal of the social scientists should be to stand "in the service of a living democracy", there is no reason to think that his conception of social science has been rejected by the majority of social scientists because it makes it impossible for them to defend their status as real scientists in a society dominated by an image of science that emphasizes political neutrality.

That this rejection of Stengers' explanation of Dewey's failure is well-founded is also supported, I think, by a critical assessment of her claim that the acceptance of Dewey's conception of social science would have turned the social scientists into utopian social reformers. For if the previous criticism of her claim that Dewey made the social sciences subservient to his idea of a Great community is correct, then this worry also seems unfounded. In the case of the Deweyan sociologist who encounters a group who is not interested in turning its problems into a public affair, for example, there is thus no reason to think that a Deweyan sociologist would force them to do this. For if this sociologist follows

Dewey in thinking that "the local community" is "as near an absolute as exists", it is obvious that such a sociologist would suggest that a group should not try to turn its suffering into a "public affair" if the language of the public order is such that the publication of their suffering will undermine their local community. That this second worry in fact is unfounded is supported, I think, by some explicit comments that Dewey himself made about the idea of utopian social reformers. In *The Public and its Problems*, for example, Dewey thus explains how the decision to base his own thinking about democracy on the idea of a local community is inspired by a desire to "reach an idea of democracy which is not utopian" and does not lead to "extravagant and fanatical violence" (Dewey 1927, p. 149). So, according to Dewey, he explicitly decided to base his idea of democracy on the idea of a local – as opposed to a great – community because he wanted to avoid the kind of utopian violence that Stengers claims his conception of social science leads to. And if one turns to *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Dewey seems to criticize the idea of utopian reformism even more explicitly. In the introduction to this work he first mentions how "it has been charged that the view here taken of the work and subject-matter of philosophy commits those who accept it to identification of philosophy with the work of those men called 'reformers' – whether with praise of with disparagement" (Dewey 1948, p. xli). As this passage shows, Dewey was well aware of the fact that some people could be led to think that his philosophy was "reformist", and the way in which he answers this accusation in the main body of *Reconstruction in Philosophy* clearly indicates that he took such an accusation to be unfounded. In the final chapter on "Reconstruction as Affecting Social Philosophy" he thus explains that:

"the increasing acknowledgement that goods exist and endure only through being communicated and that association is the means of conjoint sharing lies back of the modern sense of humanity and democracy. It is the saving salt in altruism and philanthropy, which without this factor degenerate into moral condescension and moral interference, taking the form of trying to regulate the affairs of others under the guise of doing them good or of conferring upon them some right as if it were a gift of charity. It follows that organization is never an end in itself. It is a means of promoting association, of multiplying effective points of contact between persons, directing their intercourse to modes of greatest fruitfulness. The tendency to treat organization as an end in itself is responsible for all the exaggerated theories in which individuals are subordinated to some institution to which is given the noble name of society" (Dewey 1948, p 206)

So in *Reconstruction in Philosophy's* chapter on social philosophy, Dewey explicitly claims that his idea of communication and association (community) is what prevents his own thinking from degenerating into the very thing that Stengers claims his conception of social science degenerates into, namely, "moral condescension and moral interference, taking the form of trying to regulate the affairs of others under the guise of doing them good", just as he explicitly criticizes "the tendency to treat organization as an end in itself", which Stengers claims that his own conception of social science exemplifies. Taken together with all the other arguments presented in this section, I think that this strongly indicates that Stengers' explanation of the rejection of Dewey's conception of social science, as well as her claim that its acceptance would have turned social scientists into violently utopian social reformers, is unfounded. In the final section I will try to show that the same conclusion is supported by an assessment of her claim that Dewey created the conception of social science that she ascribes to him because "transcendence disguises itself as immanence" in his very conception of philosophy.

Pragmatism, transcendence and immanence

As will be remembered, Stengers claimed that Dewey's conception of philosophy is transcendent because she took his suggestion that philosophy should contribute "to the aspirations of men to achieve a more ordered and intelligent happiness" to mean that it should "search for peace and the possibility of human happiness beyond conflicts and disorders". Her argument thus presupposes that Dewey identified "a more ordered and intelligent happiness" with a "happiness beyond conflicts and disorders". This, however, does not seem to be the case. The place where Dewey comes closest to defining happiness is probably in his main work on aesthetics, *Art as Experience*, where he identifies a happy life with a life that is full of aesthetic experiences. But there he also makes it perfectly clear that such experiences are impossible without "crisis", "conflict", "stress", "disturbance" or "perturbation" (Dewey 1934, pp. 15-16) since he believes that it is precisely the "passage from disturbance into harmony" that characterizes esthetic experiences, and without 'disturbance' or 'conflict' such a passage is obviously impossible. In a similar way Dewey also explicitly states in *The Public and its Problems* that "even under the most favorable circumstances [...] there may well be honest *divergence* as to policies pursued" (Dewey 1927, p. 178) and, as has been pointed out by Richard Bernstein, he even seems to think that "conflict and struggle is at the heart of vibrant democracies" (Bernstein 2010, p. 301) in the same way that it is at the heart of aesthetic experiences. At the same time that he does not seem to think of happiness or a perfect democracy as something that is "beyond conflicts and disorders", Dewey also seems explicitly to distance himself from the very idea of transcendence that Stengers claims is hidden in his thinking. In one of the more meta-philosophical passages in *Art as Experience*, for example, Dewey distances himself explicitly from all philosophies of "enclosure, transcendence and fixity" that "take the ideal of philosophy to be the enclosure of experience within and domination of its varied fullness by a transcendent

ideal that only reason beyond experience can conceive" (Dewey 1934, p. 334). In *Reconstruction in Philosophy* he similarly defends "the unique and morally ultimate character of the concrete situation" and criticizes the philosophical tendency "to subordinate every particular case to adjudication by a fixed principle" (Dewey 1948, p. 163). So it is not just the case that Dewey does not think of "a more ordered and intelligent happiness" as a "happiness beyond conflicts and disorders", but in his meta-philosophical reflections he also explicitly distances himself from the idea of transcendence that Stengers claims is hidden in his very conception of philosophy. All in all this seems to point to the conclusion that her claim is unfounded. And the same conclusion is supported, I think, if one takes a final look at the way in which the supposed element of transcendence in Dewey's conception of philosophy is supposed to have affected his thinking about social inquiry, according to Stengers. As will be remembered, Stengers claimed that Dewey took his "experimental logic" and his conception of democracy to represent transcendent truths and then mindlessly applied both to the concrete case of social science without taking the social context into account. There are several reasons why it is highly unlikely that this was Dewey's procedure. First of all Dewey did not seem to think of democracy as "the political regime most suited for the actualization of the human being as such, the mode of human existence being communication and shared experience" as suggested by Stengers. In *The Public and its Problems*, for example, Dewey thus explicitly criticizes all theories that try to explain the state "in terms of an 'essence' of man realizing itself in an end of perfected society" (Dewey 1927, p. 20). And if one looks at *Experience and Nature's* fifth chapter on "Nature, Communication and Meaning", which contains Dewey's most detailed treatment of communication, one is led to the same conclusion. Although he does praise communication as the "most wonderful" thing in this chapter, he also points out that it is impossible for a pragmatist to talk about the nature or essence of something unless he just treats it as a "practical measure"

or an expression of "practical good sense" whose purpose is to emphasize that some consequences are more important than others (Dewey 1925, p. 182-3). This makes it highly unlikely that Dewey should have thought that "the mode of human existence" is "communication and shared experience" in some unpragmatic, transcendent sense. In the same way it also seems highly unlikely that Dewey was led to think that the social sciences should be practiced in an experimental way because he thought that there was an experimental logic that possessed transcendent truth. It is true that he thought it was possible to see the life of all living things as a kind of experiment in the sense of "trial and error". In *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, for example, he thus suggests that it is possible to see even the life of an amoeba as a series of "test and trials" (Dewey 1938, p. 27). But it is a very different sense in which Dewey thinks that the social sciences should be experimental. As he explains in *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry's* penultimate chapter on 'Social Inquiry', he thus thinks that the primary lesson that the social sciences have to learn from the natural sciences is to make the conceptions that guide their inquiries explicit and to treat them as "*hypotheses* to be employed in observation and ordering of phenomena" instead of "as *truths* already established and therefore unquestionable" (Dewey 1938, p. 505). This is clearly not an 'experimental logic' that it is possible for amoeba to follow. And in *The Public and its Problems* Dewey similarly rejects "physical absolutism" understood as the "assimilation of human science to physical science" and explicitly points out that he has "a certain logic of method" in mind when he says that "thinking and beliefs should be experimental" and "not, primarily, the carrying on of experimentation like that of laboratories" (Dewey 1927, p. 202). So he was not even trying to impose the 'experimental logic' of the natural sciences directly onto the concrete case of social science as suggested by Stengers when she claims that Dewey tried to "situate the practice of the inquiring sociologist [...] in a relation of maximum continuity with the experimental laboratory sciences" (Stengers 2006, pp. 128-9).

Given the fact that Dewey did not think that his conception of democracy as community or his experimental logic represented some kind of transcendent truth, there is thus no reason to think that his thinking about social inquiry was the result of a mindless application of these abstract ideas to the concrete case of social science as suggested by Stengers. Instead, there is every reason to think that Dewey in fact followed his own meta-philosophical insistence on "the unique and morally ultimate character of the concrete situation" when he began to think about the concrete case of social science.

So Stengers' explanation of the historic failure of Dewey's conception of social science seems to be unfounded and the same goes for her claim that it would have had problematic consequences if Dewey's conception of social science in fact had been accepted by the majority of social scientists. But what of it? Why is it important to correct this misunderstanding? The main reason why it is important to do so is that our understanding of the past cannot help but influence the way in which we act in the present. In the case of Stengers, for example, her interpretation of Dewey thus comes to guide her own positive attempt to deal with the problem that she takes them to share, namely, how to change the way social science is practiced. Based on what she has 'learned' from Dewey's failure, she thus comes to the conclusion that "the reference to the obligations of scientific practices is of no use" if one wants to offer resistance to the way mainstream social science is practiced. Instead, one will have to develop a 'non-scientific' conception of sociology – one that in no way tries to "prolong the experimental model" from the natural sciences – and that is accordingly what she goes on to do in her book. The way she does this is twofold. On the one hand she suggests that sociologists should forget about "facts" and instead focus on the non-scientific question of what it means to "describe" or "treat well" whatever one studies (Stengers 2006, p. 140-1). On the other hand she also develops a non-positivistic, practice-based way of thinking about the

experimental sciences that makes it impossible to have "experimental success" when the research-subject is a creature "capable of addressing itself to an environment and giving it a meaning" (Stengers 2006, p. 75). As she explains, she is thus convinced that such a creature "*will never be able* to take on the role of 'respondant' to a question, and confirm the pertinence of this question" in the way that her conception of experimental success demands (Stengers 2006, p. 74, my italics). So given the failure of Dewey's – in Stengers' eyes - 'transcendent' attempt to develop an alternative way of thinking about the social sciences that combines a non-positivistic idea of scientificity with a (utopian) democratic goal, she is led to develop a way of thinking that incorporates a non-utopian idea of democracy, but breaks totally with the idea of scientificity. What is surprising, however, is that this seems to ignore the position that actually seems to have been Dewey's, namely, one that pragmatically combines a non-utopian idea of democracy with a non-positivistic idea of scientificity. This is even more surprising in so far as this is the model that she herself decides to use in relation to the natural sciences, where she creates a non-positivistic idea of experimentality that makes democratic accountability a part of experimental success. But she only briefly mentions the possibility of criticizing mainstream social science "in the name of the obligations of the experimental proof" and then immediately dismisses it both because it turns the idea of experimentation into "a generalizable ideal" (Stengers 2006, p. 52), and because she is convinced that mainstream social scientists are "so obsessed…by the fear" that someone will accuse them of not being real scientists that they are "not at liberty" to think about alternative, non-positivistic, ways of being scientific (Stengers 2006, p. 76). So even if she had not (mistakenly) thought that the historic failure of Dewey's thinking about social inquiry was due to an 'internal weakness' rooted in his transcendent approach to philosophy, Stengers would probably have dismissed his actual immanent-pragmatic conception by reference to recalcitrant external circumstances. The big question,

however, is whether Stengers is right when she claims that the majority of social scientists are so worried about their status as social scientists that they are not even willing to entertain the thought that there might be other ways in which one can be scientific. This seems questionable. At the same time, it is also worth considering the weaknesses of Stengers' own positive suggestion. Because she breaks with the idea of scientificity, she also rejects any attempt to change the practice of social science by an internal critique. In her book she thus comes to the conclusion that it is "thoroughly impossible to address oneself to scientists 'of the method' on the basis of their obligations" and that the only option left therefore is "to address oneself to them as victims, subjected to a model of science which prevents them from thinking" (Stengers 2006, p. 76). So in the end Stengers ends up taking the same condescending attitude towards the mainstream social scientists that she claimed Dewey's social scientists would take towards the groups who are not interested in turning their suffering into a public affair. I think it is highly questionable whether such an attitude will help change the practice of social science. Here Dewey's approach seems a more promising alternative. In a similar way I also think that it is questionable whether Stengers' approach deserves to be called immanent-pragmatic in so far as she ends up creating a conception of experimental science that makes it *strictly impossible* to experience experimental success when the research subjects are interpreting animals. Here she seems very close to becoming the very thing that she claimed Dewey ended up becoming, namely, "the spokes-person of what would transcend our conflicts". Once again Dewey's position seems more promising. In *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* he thus explicitly rejected the many different attempts by conservatives and "revolutionaries" to maintain "the domain of 'values, ideas and ideals as something wholly apart from any possibility of application of scientific methods" (Dewey 1938, pp. 77-8) both because he thought that it represented an unpragmatic move, but also because he

believed that it was possible to change the practice of (social) science in a more humane direction by means of that immanent connection between a non-positivistic conception of science and a non-utopian idea of democracy that figures so centrally in his own thinking about social inquiry. Whether it will be enough is an open question, but I hope at least to have shown that it has not been a historic failure for the reasons that Stengers suggests, and that it, consequently, still should be an open question for anyone interested in changing the way social sciences is practiced in an immanent-pragmatic way whether Dewey's thinking about social inquiry may still be part of the solution.

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PRAGMATIST VIEWS OF URBAN EXPERIENCE:
SENSORIAL PERCEPTION IN URBAN STUDIES

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ABSTRACT: The paper investigates how classical pragmatist views of sensorial perception may contribute to current research on urban life. It focuses upon the possible diffusion of pragmatist stances within accounts of perceived built environments. It elaborates on the existing use of pragmatism, and shows its strong contextual relevance to this task, in order to illustrate how such a philosophical perspective may serve urban studies. To assess theoretical stances that are often implicit, the author surveys methodological texts by social scientists and samples of field work – distinguishing these two levels in order to improve upon the analysis and theoretical support for perception-driven approaches to urban studies. He then examines several reasons for the relevance of pragmatist views of perception to urban research, focusing upon different yet compatible conceptual legacies.

Keywords: Senses, City, Pragmatism, Philosophy, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, Kevin Lynch, Social Sciences, Action, Situation, Habit.

Introduction

The sensorial perception of built environments and urban situations has not been a longstanding topic in urban social sciences, unlike in such practice-oriented disciplines as architecture and planning. By paying little attention to the materiality of urban settings, the rich tradition of urban sociology, considered here in both its American and French contexts, appears to have neglected the city-dweller's bodily perception of the urban environment. Rather than attempting an actual account of urban experience, sociological approaches to space have often led to a more abstract or formalist 'social space', defined only by human interactions (for instance by Bourdieu 1979, 1994). Whilst this situation has undergone recent amendments amid the emergence of new sociological perspectives on space (Löw 2008, 2013), urban studies still, arguably, lack perception-driven accounts of the vast diversity, complexity, and richness of city life.

Unlike urban sociology, other academic as well as non-academic accounts of city life have provided fine-grained accounts of built environments, urban infrastructure, and their perception by both urbanites and non-urbanites. Thus, for instance, one might refer to various artistic traditions such as in prose, poetry, photography or film. This paper rather explores the possible diffusion of pragmatist stances within accounts of perceived built environments by social scientists and architecture theorists who have considered varying ways of making use of the resources available to a pragmatist philosophy of experience. It will, therefore, investigate how classical pragmatist views of sensorial perception contribute to the work of urban scholars in geography, anthropology, and sociology. Focusing upon selected examples of ethnographic fieldwork and important essays by architecture and urban scholars, it aims to elaborate upon the existing deployment of pragmatist views and show their strong contextual relevance to the task of describing sensorial experience within urban contexts. Finally, the paper will attempt to illustrate how a philosophical perspective may serve urban studies on the issue of a perception-driven approach to urban environments. More specifically, the purpose is to explain the current diffusion of pragmatist ideas throughout the urban social sciences, especially among French-speaking fieldwork researchers and scholars. This increasing use of pragmatist resources within urban social sciences has elements of philosophical justification, as well as strong contextual motivations.

To assess theoretical stances that are often implicit, the paper surveys methodological texts by social scientists and samples of field work – distinguishing these two levels in order to elaborate upon the analysis and theoretical support for perception-driven approaches to urban disciplines. The paper then examines several reasons for the relevance of pragmatist views of perception, focusing upon different yet compatible theoretical legacies. As evolving urban contexts demand more fine-grained surveys, the author argues that pragmatist views of sensory experience enable a refined perception-driven approach to urban environments.

Background

'State of mind' and 'frames': urban sociology without urban space?

How do social scientists characterize the perceptible features of urban space? For most urban geographers, anthropologists, and sociologists, sensorial perception of the environment has not been a topic or a *problem*. The physical space of built surroundings, even living bodies themselves, have appeared as a mere background to social interactions. In other words, elementary ecological conditions rarely mattered to analysts of social interaction. Just as field studies for the most part began with broad descriptions of the setting, the actual context did not play any distinctive role or have a particular effect on the various processes which connect, mingle, or separate people. It seems all the more striking that urban scholars have neglected the specific spatial environments of cities, as the same authors often patiently scrutinize the semantic and symbolic set of social interactions, the 'frames' (Goffman 1974) in which any social experience has to occur in order to be meaningful to its participants. Yet these 'frames' have no material referent. As a result, the material context – the visual, tactile, acoustic, and even olfactory aspects of events – has been largely kept out of focus and, at best, remains in the background of traditional social scientific portraits of the city. Detailed descriptions of physical interactions hardly occurred in classic works of urban sociology and anthropology, even in fieldwork inquiries (Whyte 1943; Goffman 1963, 1971. See also the studies quoted by Hannerz 1980). In the first lines of his 'Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment', Robert E. Park famously wrote:

> [The city] is more than a congeries of individual men and of social conveniences – streets, buildings, electric lights, tramways, and telephones, etc. […] The city is not […] merely a physical mechanism and an artificial construction. It is involved in the vital processes of the people who compose it; it is a product of nature, and particularly of human nature. (Park 1925, 1).

These few sentences are almost the only mention of the materiality of the urban setting in the entire text, even though the article exposes a much more detailed and ambitious program of research and asks an impressive number of questions. As Park briefly distinguishes physical space from the city in its entirety, he tends to reduce the built environment to a mechanism, leaving this aside in order to highlight the city's multiple social and practical functions – its life. In other words, the built environment seems to be both the infrastructure of human activities and their effect (their 'product', in Park's words), but is deprived of any sort of agency or causal propensity in its own right. Park acknowledges that the city is both physical and social, only to emphasize the primacy of social activities over the material environment. The dynamic process of urban life seems to be going only one way, according to Park. Proposing the theoretical programme of a 'human ecology', the sociologist cannot ignore how the city's concrete organization, its infrastructure, and its technological ('artificial') 'factors', affect human behaviour. For instance, 'transportation and communication' do play a role in shaping the ecological context of urban interaction. Yet for Park, as for his colleagues and his students, material conditions as such never come into focus. Only their activation by human use makes them meaningful and interesting to urban sociology. They gain their significance from 'the vital forces resident in individuals and in the community', as if their passive presence awaits consciousness in order to mean something to people. In Louis Wirth's words, Park: 'emphasized that […] human ecology was less concerned with the relationship between man and his habitat than with the relationship between man and man as affected, among other factors, by his habitat' (Wirth 1945, 484). A couple of pages further, Wirth adds:

> [W]e might well be predisposed to follow the general principle that physical factors, while by no means negligible in their influence upon social life and psychological phenomena, are at best conditioning factors offering the possibilities and setting the limits for social and psychological

existence and development. In other words, they set the stage for man, the actor. We are not yet far enough advanced to say with confidence what importance shall be ascribed to any one factor operating in the complex sphere of the social and the psychological, much less to evaluate the relative importance of physical as distinguished from social and psychological factors. (Wirth 1945, 487-488).

However, such dualism remains unsatisfactory, as the two authors' dialectical writing itself seems to attest. Their implicit claim is that the material environment of the city does not really make it a special kind of place, qualitatively different from other inhabited settings. Strikingly, these sociologists ignore the specificities of architecture and urban infrastructure. They barely suggest that differences of degree (quantity, intensity) might count as significant ecological factors of distinction. However, following other lines of inquiry partly envisioned by the Chicago sociologists (Wirth, 1938), one may look for sharper differences between urban and non-urban settings. The present paper claims that, in order to consider such differences at the level of sensorial experience, conceiving the programme of an actual ecology of perception within urban environments is promising. Yet for all the ground-breaking work that Park, Burgess, Wirth, their colleagues and their students achieved in the development of a professional urban sociology, and despite their conceptual work around the intellectual project of a 'human ecology', they never aimed at an *urban ecology* in the fullest sense of the term[1].

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[1]. The phrase 'urban ecology' is, strictly speaking, a neologism that the Chicago sociologists barely used. 'Urban space' too hardly occurs in their texts, evidence that describing the urban built environment was a mere peripheral aspect of a research program centered on 'collective behavior', 'social control', and interactions between groups or communities. Space and material environment are remarkably absent in the overwhelming series of questions or 'suggestions' asked by Park in the rest of his groundbreaking article. His priority is always to study social or 'population' issues, that is, a neighborhood's organization and history, the attitudes, vocations, occupations, mobility, customs, and social unrest of its inhabitants, their collective psychology and

A few decades later, Erving Goffman's *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings* (1963) and *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order* (1971) came much closer to the possibility of an actual urban social ecology. Goffman's observations and remarks paid attention to the roles of physical space and the built environment within social interactions. Although his initial field work was done in the Shetland Islands in the early 1950s, and despite his interest in closed 'total institutions' such as asylums and hospitals, the majority of situations mentioned by the sociologist were undoubtedly urban. Most of these situations even played out in historically specific urban environments. Goffman's field of observation was mainly the streets, restaurants, clubs and cafés of postwar North American industrial cities – and he deployed newspaper reports about what was going on in these places. In this regard, there is strong implicit continuity between Goffman and the earlier Chicago sociologists. And, as for his predecessors, urban infrastructural elements were somehow left out of his main focus. Just as in Park's analyses or descriptions, for Goffman the physical urban environment is underdetermined and non-specific and, as a matter of fact, the issue of experience remains unquestioned. The Canadian sociologist's famous concept of 'framing' never refers to physical space or infrastructure, as if the material features of the settings of interactions could not in themselves become a significant factor in public interactions .

Yet physical space matters. Strolling the streets of an American industrial city does not easily compare to walking along the roads, beaches, and past the house fronts of the Shetland Islands. For example, these different contexts convey utterly distinct histories and senses of the passing of time. The more immediate conditions of sensorial experience also vary in crucial

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behavior, moments of crisis, the perpetuation of social control, and phenomena of 'disorganization' such as delinquency, drug abuse, corruption, and crime, which tend to create their own 'moral regions'.

ways. Such variations depend upon architecture and urban design, the presence and shape of urban furniture, the width of the streets, the height of the pavements, the intensity of car and pedestrian traffic etc. In the section from his book *Relations in Public* 'The Umwelt' (Goffman 1971, 248-256), Goffman does not even suggest these variations, proving that his consideration of spatial issues is remarkably abstract. In his text the environment remains a mere background and, at most, an implicit subtext for human gestures and behavior. Since any given place contains 'alarming' factors and signs which will affect our perceptions and trigger our actions, nothing really seems to distinguish a particular area or place from another. For all the compatibility of his observations with more space-focused investigations, and the recurring presence of street life in the situations he describes, Goffman never mentions urban infrastructure, architecture, or design. It is as though they do not make any difference.

By focusing upon social interactions alone, early generations of urban sociologists seem to have reduced the dynamics of urban life to a sort of live theatre performance. Yet a street is never just another street. Its specific qualities single it out from two different angles, that is, from any other space that is not a street, and from any other street which may be similar to it but does not duplicate its form and social life.

A consistent ecological and perception-driven approach to urban space needs to consider these qualities in order to grasp their full meaning. What makes a city different from other environments is both physical and historical. Neglecting architecture, urban design, and material infrastructure in the name of the meaningful and animated diversity of human interaction, is unsatisfying. Inversely, human diversity and density count as material and empirical perceptual factors as well, and not exclusively as social or intentional factors. As many scholars have insisted over the last century, culture cannot be sharply separated from nature (Dewey 1925; Descola 2006; Ingold 1986, 2000, 2004). Quoting Park's words to mitigate his own view: the city as 'a state

of mind' cannot be separated from its 'physical organization' and from the city-dwellers' living bodies. These elements also lie at the heart of urban experience, and distinguish it from other types of human experience. Material infrastructure and urban life do not only 'mutually interact' (Park 1925, 4), they should never be separated in the first place.

Through the analysis of sensorial perception, urban social scientists may shift their focus onto urban architecture and design, to consider built environments as a concrete conditioning factor of social interactions themselves. To some extent, such a project might have been part of the unfinished programme of human ecology. Yet, in this regard, the legacy of the Chicago tradition of urban sociology still awaits significant revival and critical update. Using sensorial perception as a guiding principle, it seems possible to argue that physical space not only makes up the setting or stage (or 'backstage') of human interactions within cities, but directly shapes them. Since no city life would occur without the subtleties of human perception, there remains room to attempt a convergence between research or scholarship in architecture and various currents of urban sociology (from human ecology to social interactionism).

**Analysing urban space:
geographers, architects, and essayists**

For Goffman as for Park, the actual spatial analysis of cities was not a sociologist's purpose. It remained, rather, a task for urban geographers and planners. However, on the other hand, most architects and planners have long neglected the possibility and fecundity of an in-depth study of perceptual experience in urban space. Some pioneering exceptions aside (Lynch 1960, 1973; Gehl 1977, 2010; Sennett 1992, 2002), perception was not a specific issue to practitioners during the industrial era and up to the 1960s. And even when they took it into account, or occasionally alluded to the presumed 'effects' of built environments on

people, urban scholars did not consider neither sensorial perception to be a problem.

Unlike sociologists, urban geographers have examined infrastructures of transportation and communication (Gottmann 1961; Webber 1964; Soja 2000). Gottmann, for instance, argued that the material density of these networks and the intensity of their use distinguish urban and suburban areas from rural districts. Later other geographers also stated, echoing Georg Simmel's views (1903) and Park's early 'suggestions' (1915), that consciousness was affected by urban space or 'urban experience'. In particular, the critical geographer David Harvey came relatively close to conceptualizing perception as a legitimate topic of inquiry (Harvey 1985, 250-276). However, he did not really address the specificity of urban experience at the sensorial level. From a more general standpoint, the potential conceptual resources to sustain a perception-driven approach to urban space in the social sciences appear to have been neglected.

Beyond the social sciences, planners and architects have increasingly contributed to such a task, starting from the 1960s. Significantly, practitioners were the first to take the full measure of the issues of scale that modern city planning and design have bequeathed urban life. It may even be said that the perception of built space has been a problem long familiar to architects, planners, artists, and to some aesthetic philosophers. In particular, the two major architectural treatises of the Western tradition give the problem of articulating scale some thought[2]. Yet until the 1960s and 1970s, fine-grained conceptual analysis and empirical field work on the topic of ordinary sensorial experience of urban spaces and built environments were still lacking, for theorists as well as practitioners. One of the most influential urban planners of all time, Robert Moses, did not seem to consider human perception as a manifold

and complex problem. Rather, he appeared to think of it as a universal and homogeneous element that planning needed to address, among other constraints. Interestingly, enhancing the urbanite's general experience was one of Moses' declared intentions. He aimed to improve the city-dweller's experience by transforming their environment (roads, parks, bridges, beaches). Yet, leaving aside the need for a more explicit and exhaustive approach to the question of a perception-driven approach to urban design, Moses notoriously focused upon the development of a coherent road traffic system at the previously unseen scale of the metropolitan area of New York. While his idea was to improve accessibility to the suburbs, his plans clearly neglected the perceptual impact of the massive infrastructures he had designed. The unprecedented reshaping and modernization of the entire New York region traffic system would eventually appear as 'the fall of New York' (Caro 1975), and famously gave rise to major public movements of protest and opposition, some of which were successful.

What implicit concept or image of human sensorial experience did Moses and other modernist planners had in mind? They most likely had a contextually coherent idea of experience – a functional and positivist view of human perception. During the 1960s, architects, designers, and planners began to address in more systematic ways the problem of the sensorial perception of built space. Following Kevin Lynch's pioneering studies *The Image of the City* (1960) and *What Time is this Place?* (1973), urban landscape analysis progressively emerged with new studies of American cities, cityscapes, and suburbs. Some essayists attempted spatial descriptions of urban settings *as perceived*, ascribing specific functions to architecture and built environments. The methodological principles and findings formulated by Lynch (1960, 1973), Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour (1972), Gehl (1977), and Whyte (1980, 1988) are still used in the training of young architects and planners. Moreover, these groundbreaking books have helped to bring the issue of

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[2]. During late Antiquity and the early Renaissance, practical knowledge about perception, particularly visual, found actual theoretical expression (see Vitruvius, Leone Battista Alberti).

the perception of built environments to the attention of urban social scientists. Yet it was not until the 1980s and 1990s that the issue of perceived built space really found its way into ethnographic fieldwork.

**Fieldwork in urban ethnography:
involving the senses, finally**

During the last three decades, urban ethnographers and sociologists have approached the issue of sense perception of the environment in more or less direct ways. Ethnographers Elijah Anderson, Lyn Lofland, Mitchell Duneier, Sudir Venkatesh, and Jack Katz in the United States, and Jean-François Augoyard, Isaac Joseph, Michel Agier, and Stéphane Tonnelat in France address essential questions such as: How do city dwellers perceive their everyday spatial environments. A question that many architects, planners, artists, environmental psychologists, and eventually some social geographers had alluded to, with their own intentions and methods.

While these ethnographers remain focused upon social interactions with their rich architecture and infrastructure, urban environments progressively emerged in field work descriptions and analyses. Thus observers of urban social life have begun to turn their traditional introductory remarks on the setting of interactions into actual descriptions of the built environment. This trend is visible in the very titling of their books[3]. In their detailed accounts, the layout and design of streets, squares, parks, avenues, sidewalks, shopping malls, blocks and individual buildings finally play roles in the organizing processes of public interaction. Getting to know the sensorial properties of streets – their width, their length, their colors and textures, or the type of buildings and activities that typically occur in them in connection with their form and design – is not only the work of an architect or an ethnographer. Everyone must carry on this task in order

to acquire the practical skills to cope with the physical and social environment they live in. A crucial part of the 'folk ethnography' (Anderson 2011, xv, 11, 74)[4] that people spontaneously practice relates, in part, to the physical surroundings and the landscapes they are familiar with. Knowing one's way around the streets of a city involves these skills, if only to understand what is appropriate or acceptable, or not, in a definite spatial context. For instance, one's normal appearance and attitude on a subway platform, in a bar, in a commercial building or at a station, or the variations of physical distance between strangers within a market area, a public transportation system, or along a crowded pavement. Among others, essayists such as Jane Jacobs (1961) and Richard Sennett (1992, 2002) had already suggested general observations of this sort, although in ways that were far from systematic. Current urban ethnographers give a new range to these scattered remarks, coming closer to elaborate and test hypotheses. This evolution has led scholars to emphasize how the environmental qualities of settings, for instance, their accessibility or the (in)visibility to actors, play a crucial role in social situations (the importance of the pavement, benches or front steps of a building, for instance). Urban ethnographers have used more perceptual verbs to hint at the processes by which actors learn to cope with the setting, such as:

> This street wisdom is largely a state of mind, but it is demonstrated through a person's comportment. It represents a perspective gained through public interaction, the give and take of street life. This perspective allows one to 'see through' public situations, to anticipate what is about to happen based on cues and signals from those one encounters. In essence, a 'streetwise' person is one who understands 'how to behave' in uncertain public places. (Anderson 1990, 8-9).

According to Anderson, the perspective of the 'streetwise' person is not only an image for learning how to deal with people in the street. Since it involves

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[3] *A Place on the Corner* (Anderson 1978), *Sidewalk* (Duneier 1999), *The Cosmopolitan Canopy* (Anderson 2011).

[4]. See also O. Schwartz (1993).

appropriate behavioral responses, this type of knowledge ('wisdom') exceeds mere intellectual or linguistic competency. It engages all the senses of a living and perceiving body, amid a perceived physical environment which varies according to the architecture and built elements, the temperature and the intensity of light, the time of day or night etc. It involves taking a physical stance, acquiring perceptual habits and dispositions which may also include, in the most literal sense, a capacity to shift perspectives.

Such contributions[5] help to theoretically frame spatial perception as a complex, concrete, and important issue. The need for a conceptually consistent and methodologically fruitful approach to the perception of urban space becomes manifest. Using what theoretical assumptions do researchers address bodily perception of urban space? Which concepts help us to take into account its ecological factors? Deliberately or not, scholars found their observations and inquiries upon various implicit philosophical approaches to sense perception, from behaviourism to idealism. Classical pragmatism (James 1890; Dewey 1925, 1934, 1938; Mead 1934, 1938), social phenomenology (Schütz 1967; Merleau-Ponty 1945), and environmental psychology (Sommer 1969; Gibson 1979) are three major sources. There are several reasons to focus upon the legacy of pragmatist philosophers, which appears to be the most influential in contemporary urban studies when approaching the question of sensorial experience. It remains to demonstrate the details of such an influence as well as its justifications.

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[5]. See also Duneier (1999). Other sociological field works that highlight actors' perceptions of cities include: Augoyard (1979); Lofland (1973, 1998); Joseph (1984, 1998, 2007); Agier (2015), and to a lesser extent Zukin (2010).

The relevance of pragmatist views of perception to urban studies

Two complementary rationales motivate the relevance of pragmatist views of perception to the urban social sciences. The first is historical and contextual, the second stems from the appropriateness of a pragmatist epistemology of perception.

Historical and contextual reasons: urban mutations

The current diffusion of pragmatist concepts in urban social sciences, and their convenience for the epistemology of urban studies as a whole, has historical and contextual grounding. Over the last half-century and throughout the world, most cities, urban, and suburban spaces have undergone dramatic physical mutations which partly outdate pioneer works on city-dwellers' perceptions (Lynch 1960; Gehl 1977; Arnheim 1977).

The first of these transformations concerns scale. Ever since the postwar economic expansion, individual car use and daily commuting have constantly increased. In just a few decades, this generalization has entailed a significant discrepancy of planning and perceptual scales in most developed or developing countries. Lewis Mumford was among the first scholars to note and criticize the modernist failure to articulate the new urban shapes and the scale of human experience (1961, 525-567). Later ,architectural historians and theorists such as Françoise Choay (1969; and 2006, 154-198), Joseph Rykwert (2000), and Albert Pope (1996) also analysed this discrepancy in more anthropological terms. Indeed, a great number of urban infrastructures built during the Cold War era radically exceed our ordinary capacity of perception, not so much for their absolute size as for their disproportion to bodily existence. One can feel excluded or oppressed by over-large avenues, by the highly elevated expressways that enclose horizons and deprive pedestrians of easy access, by sight or by foot, to the countryside, landscapes, and the natural scenery which traditionally surrounded cities. To some

extent, this striking discrepancy of scale is also made obvious by the contemporary public status of architecture. In many cases, large publicly-subsidized architectural and urban designs are massive projects, and are tantamount to aggressive programs of renovation. Such projects often propose iconic or landmark renderings in order to promote a sort of gigantism. Yet no one can pretend to clearly identify the limits of our urbanized areas, or define precisely what sort of material thing the term 'city' signifies, without including the infrastructural level and the 'seen but unnoticed' (in Harold Garfinkel's words) forms and context which organize our daily experience.

The issue of scale, therefore, does not stand alone, as it were, as a mere problem of size. Ongoing mutations of built space also affect its perceptions in many qualitative ways, which concern identification, orientation, and psychological well-being. The disarticulation of planning and human scales is thus aggravated by a lack of meaning and singularity, the anonymity of built environments which one may be tempted to describe as 'generic' (Koolhaas 1995). The systematic application of zoning and the separation of activities previously juxtaposed in cities have practically shattered the infrastructural conditions of historic urban experience. As Jane Jacobs (1961) or Melvin Webber (1964) very early diagnosed, planned modernized urban spaces, primarily designed for automobiles, suggest the idea of a 'non-place urban realm' (Webber 1964). Whilst this tendency was already criticized fifty years ago, common practices of regional or metropolitan planning still rarely invoke such concerns. The consequences of modern urban design are so durable, overwhelming, and generalized that it is difficult, to this day, to take the full measure of their impact on sensorial experience. If only to identify and enumerate with sufficient accuracy the recurring features of contemporary urbanized environments, one needs to specify one's view or concept of experience in the light of such transformations, especially those that communication and transportation technologies have entailed – for

instance, in the growing contexts of urban 'sprawl' and 'edge cities', and the decline of perceptible landmarks in the built environment (Koolhaas 1995; Choay 2006; for a striking visual account, see especially Friedlander 1978 and Friedlander 2010).

To answer this need, philosophical pragmatism turns out to be particularly helpful, since the above-mentioned factors make it necessary to re-evaluate the *active* and *practical* dimensions of ordinary sensorial perception. Urban environments change at different paces because local contexts make each situation, beyond apparent similarities, geographically, historically, and culturally different from another. Thus, for the sake of a truly workable urban ecology the epistemology of sensorial perception cannot be reduced to a relatively abstract matter of neurophysiology and cognition. Looking for cooperation between the philosophy of perception and urban studies demands that we enrich cognitive epistemology with social, cultural, and normative approaches to experience. Sensorial perception involves a great variety of references, preferences, and organizational constraints that people who share a public space on a daily basis also have to share, if only in a minimal and implicit way. In particular, Dewey's non-dualistic approach to the normativity of experience is extremely helpful in enlightening this aspect. His concept of 'valuation' (Dewey 1939) explains how, before any conscious expression or claim to values, we develop practical preferences through our gestures, attitudes, and conducts in various situations. In other words, valuations are embedded in our concrete bodily actions, progressively giving the succession of these actions a coherence and continuity which makes it possible to speak of 'human conduct' (Dewey 1922). Rather than conscious judgments or assertions, values emerge from the choices and preferences we manifest when confronted with situations. Little by little, we come to establish hierarchies and formulate retrospective 'evaluations' (Dewey 1939), instead of acting from them. Such a contextual and empirical approach differs from the dualistic view of a conscious subject positioning

themself before an objective world. Thus Dewey's theory of valuation provides a clear example of how and why pragmatist approaches to sensorial experience can help us to attempt subtle descriptions of ordinary perception. More specifically, philosophical pragmatism seems an excellent resource to elaborate an ecological understanding of perception capable of direct application and testing in urban studies' fieldwork.

Are scholarly uses of pragmatism by urban scholars able to reflect the contemporary displacements and mutations of urban environments, given the latter's impact upon ordinary sensory experience?

The pragmatist epistemology of sensorial perception at work in urban studies

Since the 1990s, a small yet significant number of urban social scientists, especially French researchers and scholars, have referred to James' psychology of perception, Dewey's philosophy of experience and inquiry, and Mead's social psychology (Joseph 1998 and 2007; Quéré 2003; Tonnelat 2012; Thibaud 2015, 255-285).

There may be several reasons for this . The first belongs, to some extent, to historiography. The proximity of American pragmatism to urban sociology apparently makes strong historical sense. Some Chicago sociologists were not only contemporaries, but academic colleagues of these psychologists and philosophers. It is well-known that John Dewey was the first head of the University of Chicago Department of Philosophy, Psychology and Education from 1894 to 1905 and that his colleague and friend, George Herbert Mead, taught classes in social psychology for almost four decades (until his death in 1931), which were attended by several generations of young sociologists of the University of Chicago Sociology Department. Addressing Mead's and Dewey's comparable views on society and experience in general, including politics, has proved to be fruitful. However, the exact range of their influence and the actual measure of their intellectual dialogue with major academic sociologists such as Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, and Louis Wirth remains unclear and difficult to establish with certainty. Yet it is all the more interesting to note the specificity and legacy of the combined on-going reception of these two intellectual traditions in the contemporary French-speaking academic world (in France but also in Belgium, Québec, and Switzerland[6]). On various topics, the same authors read, translate, and discuss pragmatist accounts of experience and Chicago's sociological tradition in the search for compatibilities, differences, variations, quotations, shared references, and evolutions of thought.

One of the most promising of these topics is the possible elaboration of a perception-driven approach to urban life in its complexity. Dewey and Mead are often quoted together for their compatible, whilst not entirely similar, concepts of sensorial experience and perception. In order to characterize a pragmatism-inspired approach to perception, requires us to summarize and combine the authors' differing compatibilities. Five main features of such an approach appear to foster a fine-grained inquiry into urban social interaction, while enriching the more general philosophical understanding of perception:

1. The first is the close connection between perception and action. Against any dualistic conception, both Dewey and Mead follow James' *Principles of Psychology*. The act of perceiving is a moment of practical activity, and it involves by no means a separate or autonomous faculty of the mind (Dewey 1925). When we have a sensorial experience, we do not interrupt the practical process in which we are already engaged. Rather, we apprehend the perceived situation through our on-going activity, and the further practical possibilities involved in the current situation. In fact, as Mead puts it: 'sensing is itself an activity'

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[6] For instance, one may add to the above-mentioned names Joan Stavo-Debauge, Mathieu Berger, and Jean-François Côté.

(Mead 1938, 3). Perception is thus a crucial part of action. It is a dynamic element of our presence in a situation and, in turn, makes for the continuity of this situation as well as the continuity of our activity. Besides the important consequences for the perception of others and the study of interactions, this close connection between perception and action helps us to understand how we deal with our spatial surroundings. It seems especially appropriate to test this view in the context of the experience of urban public spaces and urban life, in which the individual has to deal with multiple simultaneous perceptions yet remains perfectly able, most of the time, to perform consistent everyday actions.

2. Another significant feature of pragmatist views of perception is the explanatory role played by the context. For an empiricist approach such as the pragmatist type, understanding an experience logically involves analysis of the given circumstances in which it takes place. Yet circumstances by themselves do not explain everything. They become part of a larger picture, that is, the situation, which is produced and maintained by the activities of living organisms. Accordingly, the concepts of *adjustment*, *situation,* and *habit* (Dewey 1922; Mead 1934 and 1938) comprise an original contextualist epistemology of experience, anchored in practice (Dewey 1925; see also Frega 2006). This ecological view tends to relate every single perception to its broader physical and meaningful environment, as well as to previous experiences, so that various places and moments may be coherent and compose an experience (Dewey 1934, chapter 3). Perceptual operations are crucial in this process of context-building. Without *adjusting* to one another and relying upon our *habits*, none of us could make sense of the current situation we perceive – for instance, a conference in a room, a show in a theatre or a busy street, an open market, a meeting, a protest. Extending the scrutiny of perceptual experience to context-dependent notions such as adjustment and habit requires, of course, much more justification to convince philosophers of perception, but it might nevertheless be fruitful to test these explanatory views for their application in urban studies.

3. The third reason why the pragmatist approach to experience is relevant is what Mead himself calls the '*social factor*' in perception (Mead 1938, chapter 9). Since we have been shown and even taught to use physical things in definite ways, we perceive physical objects through acquired and shared 'perspectives'. Mead even claims that things, in our sensorial experience: 'respond to an organization of attitudes' (1938, 137-138). This means that the necessary selection and abstraction that make our perception of things possible echo the selection and abstraction that others display in their own perceptions and manipulations of these things. In other words, socialization and education play a major role in the tacit learning processes which supports our ordinary perception. As we learn how to deal with the physical world, we acquire and share the attitudes of others towards things, thus we learn to see, hear, touch, smell, and taste *things* rather than meaningless and chaotic stimuli. Whilst this idea requires development, this 'social factor in perception' (Mead 1938, chapter 9) is not only an interesting hypothesis for the project of an urban ecology of experience but it also throws light on implicit ideas at work in the field reports and descriptions elaborated by urban scholars and ethnographers.

4. As a fourth feature, in Dewey's social and political thought shared perception plays a significant role in constituting and shaping a public through the process of 'social inquiry' (Dewey 1927, and 1938,

chapter 24). A public comes into existence as a temporary collective practical agent if a sufficient number of people *perceive* a problem to be public. This empirical process fits with the philosopher's encompassing theory of inquiry. It supposes that several people can share a perception of the possible consequences of an actual situation, and of their own actions. In this context, perceiving essentially means being aware of, and has less to do with the sensorial response to immediate surroundings. However, Dewey may also have used the term to emphasize the necessary presence of sensorial experience in the process. The recent popularity of his concept of 'public', at least in the francophone social sciences (Cefaï & Terzi 2003; Cefaï & Terzi 2012), has not yet exhausted its potential uses by urban scholars (Tonnelat 2012).

5.   Finally, a fifth instance of classical pragmatism's relevance for a perception-driven approach to urban studies is that James, Dewey, and Mead all conceived sensorial experience as a historical process, concerning both individuals and social groups (no longer distinguished as two different realities). In other words, perceptions not only belong to the 'contextual whole' (Dewey 1938) of a situation, a they are also included in diachronic processes according to which perceptual experience, always open to change and alteration, is progressively unified by learning and the formation of habits (Dewey 1922, 'Custom and Habit'). One may call this diachronic feature of perception its 'cultural dimension'.

Thus classical pragmatism promoted an empirical and naturalistic approach to experience, clearly distinguished from theoretical dualism as well as from physical reductionism. With such an orientation in mind, it seems promising to attempt an innovating ecological approach to perception within urban space. Combining Dewey's conceptualization of experience and Mead's 'social

behaviourism' enables us to outline a fine-grained pragmatist account of sensorial perception which is helpful to reopen, to some extent, the Chicago sociologists' program of a human ecology. More precisely, it makes it possible to consider the idea of an urban ecology of sensorial experience. These five features suggest in an already concrete way how this project might avoid the dualistic preconceptions that early Chicago sociologists were themselves eager to escape, although their primary interests did not concern the description of sensorial experience of the built environment or the urban landscape – but rather interactional processes within social groups and between them.

**Pragmatism, bodily experience,
and the contemporary city**

In addition to the five features described above, pragmatist views of perception seem to be highly compatible with specific attempts to merge the social sciences and architectural theory (Rykwert 2000; Sennett 1992 and 2002; Lofland 1998; Choay 2006; Tonnelat 2012). Since they support a context-specific account of the ecological conditions of urban experience, there are two further reasons for their relevance to contemporary urban studies. Unlike the first five features, they may be termed 'external':

6.   Based on practical investigations which Dewey formalized in his 'theory of inquiry' (1938), pragmatism's heuristic character is appropriate to address the unprecedented historical evolution of recent and current urbanization processes. Since they do not aim at a 'pure' theoretical conception of truth, separate from action, pragmatist approaches to experience are themselves revisable and context-dependent. They suggest that even the most general forms of sensorial experiences are located in definite historical situations and anchored in socially shared and biographical

memories. The extent of the urban mutations initiated in the 1950s and 1960s called for a complete re-assessment of the active, practical, and localized dimension of perception. Using pragmatist epistemology, it becomes possible to question historically the definition of perceptual experience, commensurate with mobility and the growing complexity of objects (city, urban space, built environment or urban landscapes). Thus urban social sciences can put philosophical pragmatism to use in order to describe the diversity of sensorial solicitations, of social, cultural, political, aesthetic, and psychological contexts – which the encompassing term 'urban' tends to conceal. Individual and collective perceptions are heterogeneous, various, and often contradictory. Unlike passive repositories, they serve as interpretative resources and as bearers of normativity. Social movements and local demonstrations contesting large-scale urban projects illustrate this point.

7. Finally, these views of perception are compatible with interdisciplinary attempts, especially those willing to combine the social sciences, psychology of perception, and aesthetic theories of architecture and urban landscape. Recall the essays of Richard Sennett (Sennett 1992 and 2002), the ethnography of urban atmospheres (Augoyard 1979; Thibaud 2015), or the 'soma-esthetics' of architecture (Shusterman 2010). Some authors claiming their filiation to the pragmatist tradition have been contributing to this trend. In particular, two interesting texts by John McDermott address urban experience in suggestive ways (McDermott 1976, 179-231). Shusterman's 'Soma-esthetics and architecture: a critique alternative' shows that contemporary philosophers are aware of this potential. In his text, Shusterman explores the various ways in which architecture and building design affect the living body, broadening the usual meaning of perception. He cites,, for instance, the temperature one experiences when visiting national monuments such as the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. as an important sensorial factor in the perceptual experience of a built environment. Cold conveys something of the solemnity commonly attached to the place, leading to a feeling of discomfort. Whilst approaches to perception are too often limited to visual stimuli, many other factors count and sometimes play a decisive role in the ordinary ecology of bodily perception. Across different urban spaces, one experiences the architecture of buildings, the design and layout of streets, through many factors and conditions which largely exceed the visual aspects of cities. These factors include variations of temperature, luminosity and contrast, sound levels, olfactory sensations, topographic variations, textures of ground surface, the intensity of the wind, the humidity of the air. On the basis of such remarks, it should be possible to consider further applications for analyses and inquiries into various urban contexts and situations. The concern for interdisciplinary research has major precedents, especially those between psychology, philosophy, and the sociology of perception. In particular, a renewed pragmatist epistemology of urban experience should address the legacy of Simmel's idea of a 'sociology of the senses' (1908), and recall the crucial importance of this author for generations of urban sociologists trained at the University of Chicago.

Guidelines for future research

The formation of perceptual habits
within evolving urban experiences

The program of an urban ecology of perception requires a conceptual clarification that philosophical pragmatism can elaborate. Justification for this claim emerges both from reading the unfinished discussions on spatial and

social conditioning by early Chicago sociologists, and by observing that the pragmatist epistemology of experience has become diffused among French-speaking urban scholars.

On this basis, how can a philosophy of social sciences contribute to on-going and future research on urban life? If one of the main pragmatist indications about sensorial experience is its mutability and constant recomposition, it seems promising to direct future research on urban experience towards the formation of habits. According to Dewey, processes maintaining the precarious unity of each singular experience constitute distinct ways of articulating, coordinating, and connecting the larger 'flux' of sensory experience (Dewey 1922; 1925; 1934). As that description recalls that the emergence of habits is a highly context-dependent process, it should be of particular interest to analyse the formation of such habits in city-dwellers and urbanites in connection with their ecological contexts of interaction. Further study of the perception-based formation of everyday habits in urban life would attempt to capture the empirical grounding of practical skills socially acquired and shared by urbanites – enabling such basic activities as orienting oneself, managing pedestrian activity, or interacting in public among complete strangers. It seems arguable that a number of perceptual habits might result from a certain amount of time, activity, and elementary socialization spent within urban environments. Importantly, these habits are not identical yet similar and compatible, from one individual to another and from one city to another. The crucial point is that city-dwellers can elaborate their conducts by acknowledging, consciously or not, the perceptual *likeness* of ordinary urban situations. This likeness emerges from an open list of perceptible features or qualities of experience, which include the continuous physical proximity of complete strangers, the busy landscapes and soundscapes of street life, or the excessive dimension of cities vis-à-vis the spatial limits of human perception – making the representation of cities as totalities a problematic issue.

As urban scholars have observed, city-dwellers develop 'skills' (Hannerz 1980; Joseph 1984 and 1998) to cope with urban public situations. Perceptual habits are an essential condition for acquiring such skills. These habits are practical, contextual, and dynamic – a living organism never stops to adjust or update their gestures, even in everyday routines. Recurring situations become familiar to city-dwellers through socialization *and* sensorial perception. Whilst instrumental and context-dependent, habits are not entirely reducible to each particular setting or social group, especially since their urban variations involve a distinct degree of capacity to renew adjustments within changing environments. The omnipresence of infrastructure in and around cities might also contribute to coordinate and connect habit-forming processes. Arguably, urban habits might be easier, more quickly mastered, and shared than in other environments, which require much longer and more difficult learning or even training.

All these suggestions for further research call for closer cooperation between philosophy and social sciences . Hypotheses about the formation of urban habits have yet to be confronted with empirical evidence and, specifically, with ethnographic fieldwork and inquiry. Their focus upon concrete and local situations can provide multiple contexts to evaluate the relevance of a perception-driven approach. For instance, there is Mitchell Duneier's study of 6th Avenue vendors of printed material in the Washington Square district of Manhattan (Duneier 1999). His fieldwork accounts and analyses show that acquiring forms of perceptual knowledge or habits in an urban environment is not a matter of 'living there' or 'being from there'. A person acquires urban skills by coping with the environment on a daily basis, which does not mean that they have to actually belong to the neighbourhood in question to understand its functioning and get used to it. One needs to learn habits and skills in order to enhance their own perceptual and ultimately social experience, yet they do not have to become an actual member of a social community in order to do so. Duneier's main

interlocutor, the street vendor Hakim, introduces himself as a 'public character' in Jane Jacobs' sense (Jacobs 1961), rather than as a member of the local community or a resident of the neighbourhood – he lives in New Jersey. The perceptual conditions of urban pluralism, its habit-forming factors, and their impact upon civil life, are still to be explored and scrutinized.

The most common features of urban experience condition the acquisition of specific perceptual habits. Comparable factors, of course, exist in any other milieu or human context. However, urban environments consist of buildings. They are most directly and extensively shaped by human intentions and, more precisely, by the coexistence of multiple and eventually incompatible intentions. Consequently, an inquiry into urban sensorial experience should not only describe the organism's 'adaptation' to its environment. Its purpose is also to ask if and how built space and infrastructure may answer comparable needs, and entail comparable social reactions and uses beyond geographical or cultural differences. No simple formula of these needs and uses can epitomize the sensorial perception of built space since no habits are universal. Yet it might be possible, on the basis of observation, to compare efficiently urban situations with each other using the optic of sensorial perception.

Conclusion

The potential contribution of classical pragmatist philosophy to a perception-driven approach to cities and urban spaces is manifold and promising. It appeals to various practices of urban studies, from ethnographic field work to the planning and design of public spaces. The wide range of possible inquiries supported by pragmatist views exceeds the traditional analyses of interaction at a microsociological level. They may include, among others, studies in the fields of politics, history and aesthetics of architecture, environmental psychology, and the theory of collective emotions and actions. As the paper has shown, pragmatist-inspired views of perception are well-suited to the distinctive instability and mutability of urban experience.

Finally, it should be emphasized that pragmatism can help us to question our shared intentions so as to control our own actions at a collective level. As cities and urbanized environments arguably display more complex cultural and normative influences than they did a few decades ago, it matters to ask what it means to have public or collective perceptions and on what conditions they might serve collective actions. The type of public perception at work in everyday urban public life does not amount to perceiving *together*, nor to perceiving the same things in the same way and at the same pace. People do not share perceptions as they share ideas, and having similar sensorial perceptions does not mean that you belong to a unique community or share a common worldview. In other words, city-dwellers do not agree on what they experience, since nobody perceives in the same way as others. Thus, in the everyday processes of urban life, one must cope with the plurality of habits and conducts in public. This elementary experience plays a crucial role in interactions, as people constantly share the use of places and spaces they do not own. Accordingly, more work on the observation of diverse but comparable perceptual habits should help us to clarify the connections between urban public space and pluralism, civic life and, perhaps, the concrete conditions of cosmopolitanism.

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V. Book reviews

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This is an informed, insightful, erudite, and admirable book. It is moreover clearly written and, especially at the level of detail (if not that of rationale), carefully argued. It aims at filling a gap in the scholarship and, in fundamental respects, this study succeeds in no small measure in accomplishing this aim. In Richard Atkins, Charles Peirce has a staunch advocate and able defender, if not always a tough enough co-inquirer on interlocutor. On topic after topic, he does however recall the most serious objections of especially recent commentators and critics, then responds to them in a judicious, thoughtful manner. He goes as far as his intellectual conscience allows him in defending Peirce and, as it turns out, this is a considerable distance, with very few concessions.

The task of a reviewer encompasses that of conveying a sense of the structure of a work and the quality of scholarship. Allow me to offer a quick sketch of this structure and then a more detailed assessment of the scholarship.

An Introduction admirably provides the reader with a map of the journey to be undertaken in this study. It is however unfortunate that Atkins concludes his Introduction by so one-sidedly stressing the undeniable flaws in Peirce's moral character (p. 5). Peirce was in later years a tragic figure. There is evident, in his commitment to inquiry, a nobility of character as noteworthy as his undeniable flaws and shortcomings. Atkins's rhetorical strategy is to draw a sharp distinction between Peirce's moral character and his practical philosophy. The vices of the former do not preclude the virtues of the latter. One wonders however if this is too facile or at least too quick. Is it altogether justified to let a pragmatist off the hook in this regard? Even so, Atkins's strategy is certainly reasonable. Another issue evident at the outset is that the author is not careful enough in distinguishing ethics as a normative science (and, hence, as a strictly *theoretical* undertaking, the conclusions of which "are far off in the future" [Atkins, 5]), on the one hand, and ethics as *Sittlichkeit* (the embodied mores of an historical community), on the other. As a result, this study courts the fallacy of equivocation (when the author is referring to Peirce's "practical philosophy," is he concerned with the normative science of ethics or rather some historically determinate form of morals?). For those who are knowledgeable of Peirce, this does not pose a thorny problem; they can rather easily identify the sense in which *ethics* is being used and make the appropriate qualifications themselves. For those who are interested in ethics, but unfamiliar with Peirce, this is a much more serious problem. Finally, the Introduction would have been the place to define three pivotal terms: sentiment, instinct, and (I would add) reason (or reason *and* reasonableness). The extent to which human rationality is itself instinctual and, beyond this, "sentimental" (i.e., a function of sentiments) needed to be noted at the outset. Closely connected to this, the degree to which human instincts are alterable and in particular our moral sentiments are traditional (habitual "feelings" possibly tracing their roots to innate tendencies but unquestionably deriving their form from shared practices and enveloping traditions) also need to be stressed in the Introduction or early in the Chapter. If we are to become clear about Peirce's singular contribution to practical philosophy, we ought to make his clears (specifically, his conception of instinct, sentiment, and reason) clear.

In the opening chapter, the author contrasts James's rational radicalism with Peirce's sentimental conservatism. This will not doubt seem to be an odd and even misleading characterization of James. On the surface, his will (or right to believe) is a defense of our passional nature, not our individual rationality. This

suggests that, at least, the figure of James is not in as sharp focus as he needs to be for an accurate contrast between the author of *The Will to Believe* and that of "Philosophy and the Conduct of Life." An alternative way of reading the differences between Peirce and James regarding ethics is that they constitute a family quarrel. What we have is a clash between two forms of sentimentalism, not a conflict between sentimental conservatism and *rational* radicalism. James in *The Will to Believe* no less than Peirce in "Philosophy and the Conduct of Life" is engaged in a critique of moral *reason*, when reason apart from the passions presumes the authority and simply capacity to guide conduct. There is no necessity either to make reason the slave of the passions or the passions the enemy of autonomy. The pragmatists, including James, were steering a middle course between the Humean denigration of reason and the Kantian deprecation of emotion. Reading "Philosophy and the Conduct of Life" as "an oblique criticism of James's philosophical views as found in *The Will to Believe*" is illuminating. The opening chapter makes a convincing case for this hermeneutic approach, even if it fails to show compellingly that this is the best way to read Peirce's text.

Chapter Two offers "A Defense of Peirce's Sentimental Conservatism." The section entitled "Peirce on the Instincts" (55ff.) is especially good, since it is one of those places where Atkins draws attention to parts of Peirce too often ignored. Chapter Three ("Heeding the Call of One's Savior") turns from ethics to the philosophy of religion. The transition from the previous chapter could have been made much more smoothly than the author accomplishes and here is one of the places where the unity of the work is less than evident (Is this book a survey of Peirce's detached ideas on morally important topics or is it a unified study of what is itself an integrated position on the wide range of practical concerns?). We encounter as the heart of this chapter the author's heroic effort to offer a charitable reading of Peirce's "Neglected Argument for the Reality of God." He

tries to respond to Christopher Hookway, Manley Thompson, and Dennis Rohatyn's criticisms of this essay. Chapter 4 is entitled "On Becoming Welded into the Universal Continuum." This title is one of the few places where the author's rhetorical skills completely abandon him. While descriptive of the content of the chapter, in an expression drawn directly from Peirce's writings, other expressions to be garnered from those texts would have been less clunky. The content of this chapter however more than makes up for this title. It offers an overview of Peirce's "esthetics" (i.e., his normative science of the ultimate end governing human conduct). Here, however, is one of the places where the crucial distinction between a normative science (in this case, esthetics in Peirce's sense rather than ethics), on the one hand, and the practical matter of self-cultivation, including self-habituation (in other words, cultivating the virtues of that form of character worthy of emulation), on the other. Chapter 5 takes up the topic of "Self-Control and Moral Responsibility." It includes a very good account of Peirce's critique of psychological hedonism. The book concludes with an attempt to portray Peirce as an ethical theorist who "eschew[ed] highly theoretical approaches to practical ethics" (211). It offers a very suggestive reading of Peirce's contribution to ethics, but is hardly as compelling or superlative as the author contends. The author has hit upon a hypothesis and, without considering carefully enough alternative hypotheses, he is off and running in the direction of showing why this is *the* way to read Peirce on this topic. It is hardly Peircean to proceed in this fashion. A more responsible approach demands a more patient, judicious if preliminary consideration of alternative readings. This chapter and hence the book (since there is no Epilogue or Afterword) concludes with a quotation from Peirce: "the essence of conservatism [is] to refuse to push any practical principle to its extreme limits – including the principle of conservatism itself." (219). The *history* of conservatism however has been one of extremism, if often in direct reaction against

extremist measures, movements, or policies. When it has not, it has often been a justification for quietism (32, note 8). It is certainly reasonable to stress that Peirce is skeptical of allowing highly theoretical conclusions *directly* to influence our practical conduct, while admitting that insights born of theory ought with "secular slowness" (38) and thus indirectly be allowed to inform conduct. In fact, this is not a case of allowance: such insights are, in Peirce's judgments, destined to transfigure the sentiments constitutive of the deeper parts of the human psyche. A recently announced scientific discovery concerns cannibalism. The researches allege that among *Homo sapiens* eating conspecifics has been historically much wider than most people realize and, more broadly, such a practice is found in a number of species. It is one thing to throw out one's scientific "belief" about this matter, quite another immediately to change one's eating habits! But the unshakeable confidence in the beneficent outcomes of "the long run" might look differently to a Northerner who has been born into privilege and a Southerner who has been born into slavery. What James got and Peirce missed was what in later decades would be called "the fierce urgency of now." The random quote that "there may be some circumstances under which a sentimental conservative would 'advocate radical reforms" (38) was hardly the kind of thing that would provide solace to Zina, Peirce's first wife, in her efforts to win equality for women. He thought the efforts of such women misguided. Given Benjamin Peirce's acceptance of slavery, and given what appears to be Charles's less than fully enlightened view on this definitive issue, his practical decisions and attitudes might intimate the philosophical limitations of occlusions of his sentimental conservatism. While aware of such matters, Atkins hardly gives them the weight they deserve. But this is an uncharacteristic blind spot. For the most part, he displays an admirable moral sensitivity as an interpreter and defender of Peirce.

In each one of the chapters, Atkins is strongly disposed to offer a vigorous, spirited defense of even Peirce's most implausible, because least pragmatic, positions (most notably, Peirce's sentimental conservatism). To return briefly to a point just made, there is a tendency to make his task too easy, by skirting obvious yet important objections. In a manuscript, Peirce wrote:

> If they [i.e., my readers] were to come to know me better they might learn to think me ultra-conservative. I am, for example, an old-fashioned christian, a believer in the efficacy of prayer, an opponent of female suffrage and of universal male suffrage, in favor of letting business-methods develop without the interference of law, a disbeliever in democracy, etc. (Unpublished Manuscript 645)

Is it adequate to draw a sharp distinction between these historically situated judgments and Peirce's unabashedly "conservative" orientation, as though he was mistaken in the former while being enlightened in the latter? Heidegger cannot be simply dismissed as a Nazi. But, then, one can exonerate him too quickly and completely by drawing a sharp distinction between the life and thought of this philosopher. Analogously, Peirce cannot simply be dismissed as a misogynist or racist. But, then, it serves neither him nor his contemporaries (in particular, those who got it, i.e., those who were on the right side of history) to let him off the hook too easily.

Whatever it flaws, this study unquestionably fills a gap in the literature on Peirce, though perhaps not as large a gap as the author imagines. But it is arguably not as deep a book as either the thinker or the topic deserves. In suggesting this, I am should not be taken to be implying that *Peirce and the Conduct of Life* is superficial. It is indeed anything but superficial. Even so, this thinker on this topic call for an even deeper engagement than Richard Kenneth Atkins accords them.

This is possibly related to the point regarding the size of the gap he is trying to fill. Some names are notable by their absence, above all, John E. Smith, Peter Ochs,

Vincent Potter beyond his 2967 book, Irwin Lieb, and others. The failure to reach a more desirable depth might be, in part, a function of not having engaged a wide enough range of scholarly commentators, especially ones of the stature of Smith and Potter. But this critical note or, better, hermeneutic reservation ought not to resound to the point of rendering inaudible what most deserves to be sounded at the outside: this is quite a good study of an elusive genius whose varied contributions to philosophical discourse are still not fully appreciated, even by those who are deeply sympathetic to, and intimately conversant with, countless pages of his monumental *oeuvre*. It is such a good primarily because it so painstakingly shows how Peirce's singular contributions to "practical philosophy" deserve careful consideration. Even if his main philosophical strengths are most evident in his work on phenomenology, logic, semeiotic, metaphysics, and other highly technical fields, his discussions of ethics and religion are worthy of a much more detailed, comprehensive, charitable, and ultimately critical treatment than these discussions have yet received. About this, Atkins is unquestionably right. He convinces us – at least, he convinces this reader – not by what he says at the outset in framing this project (Peirce *did* have a practical philosophy, it differed dramatically from the practical philosophy so memorably formulated and forcefully defended by William James, and Peirce's contribution to this field merits our attention). He is convincing by showing in detail just how nuanced, considerate, and (despite the unmistakable respects in which it cuts against the grain of contemporary fashions) reasonable.

I wish however that the influence of Max H. Fisch (another name absent from the Bibliography of this book) was greater upon the generation of scholars represented here by Richard Atkins. Fisch would have read the draft of this book and, if I may be so presumptuous, would have advised the author to go back and begin anew by collating all of the relevant writings by Peirce on practical philosophy. There would

of course be no necessity for the author to engage in the Herculean task of reconstructing Peirce's practical philosophy from all of these collated writings. But the focus on, say, *Reasoning and the Logic of Things* (1898) could in light of such a survey be better appreciated. Just what *are* the relevant writings regarding the topics in which the author is interested? A sense of context no less than a sense of chronology is aided by collation and dating. As it stands, however, Atkins at the outset jumps into a specific text with both feet and begins swimming energetically to his conclusion. Even more surprisingly, he concludes by a suggestive attempt to fold Peirce into the casuistic turn in contemporary ethics. This seems promising. But there is, again, no consideration of alternatives. At the conclusion of the opening chapter, he insists: "Peirce's 1898 lecture 'Philosophy and the Conduct of Life' is best read as an oblique criticism of James's philosophical views as found in *The Will to Believe*" (32). My sense however is that a much more complicated story needs to be told about both this specific text and the general project (practical philosophy) to which it makes such a significant contribution. James is no doubt important in this connection. But the exclusive focus on give for the purpose of illuminating Peirce's position seems unduly narrow. Fast forward to the conclusion. In the conclusion of the concluding chapter, the author of the book under review asserts boldly: Peirce would eschew would today are identified by their critics as "highly theoretical approaches to practical ethics" (219). He would endorse casuistry. Perhaps. But what Atkins and so many other Peirce scholars miss – more fairly stated, what they appear to miss in my judgment – is the depth to which Peirce was indebted to Aristotle specifically and ancient Greek thought more generally (Fisch 1986, __). The relevance of suggesting this here is that, for some of us, Peirce appears fall in the tradition of virtue ethics. Alasdair MacIntyre, another unabashed conservative and anti-rationalist, is another name not appearing in the Index or Bibliography of this book, though Peirce is as

arguably as close to him as he is to such contemporary ethicists as Albert Jonsen, Stephen Toulmin, Tom Beauchamp, and James Childress. I certainly might be wrong about this characterization of Peirce. But even simply a provisional consideration of this plausible interpretation of Peirce's ethical stance is missing here. Again, the author jumps into the swiftly running current of a contemporary stream and manages to manage the current in an extremely adept manner. It is hardly unreasonable to ask, however, why this stream? Certainly some reasons are given and they have force. But one way of reading virtue theory is that human beings are social animals who are initiated into distinctive forms of human life. The legitimate function of moral theories, in the judgment of such theorists, is not to deduce the goodness of an action, or the nobility of a form of character, or the necessity of certain kinds of community, from a set of principles or, even more implausibly, a singly highly, abstract principle.

It is not at all clear to me that Peirce did not espouse a traditional conception of the divine being. Atkins however confidently claims, "Peirce's conception of God is not the traditional conception of he monotheistic religions, an omniscient, omnipotent, omnibenevolent deity" (85). The main reason appears to be that "Peirce regards the idea of God to be vague" (ibid), but traditional theologians held a much more determinate idea of the divine being. It might be the case that, in order to defend the traditional understanding of God, nothing more than an invincibly vague conception of that Reality is either possible or needed. Those within the various traditions of the monotheistic religions – more precisely, some within these traditions – appear strenuously to argue for a *via negativa* that is very close to Peirce's emphasis on vagueness.

Of far greater importance, however, the topics of fallenness and *ecclesia* are virtually ignored. The author argues as though religion was first and foremost assent to a cluster of propositions. But religion is for Peirce principally not only a personal way of life but also a communal form of life. The parallels to and, more tellingly, the divergences from the community of inquirers need to be explored more deeply than Smith, Potter, Raposa, Ochs, Anderson, or anyone has yet done.

What Atkins appears to fail to appreciate is that Peirce's unblinking assessment of the seemingly inherent propensity of the human animal is closely liked to his sentimental conservatism. Why would it be unwise to place too much trust in our individual rationality? Such reason becomes increasingly unreliable the closer it touches upon urgent affairs in which personal stakes are high (in James's expression, "vitally important topics"). Part of the answer is that Peirce had a profound sense of human fallenness. He was suspicious of reason because it so readily serves as an instrument of rationalization. "Men many times fancy themselves," Peirce astutely observed, "that act from reason when, in point of fact, the reasons they attribute to themselves are nothing but excuses which unconscious instinct invents to satisfy the teasing 'whys' of the ego. The extent of this self-delusion is such as to render philosophical rationalism a farce" (Peirce, *Collected Paper*s, volume 1, para. 631 [*CP* 1.631]).

It can only sound slighting to suggest that *Peirce and the Conduct of Life* is based on too thin a selection of Peirce's writings and, of equal importance, not sufficiently deep an engagement with this this thinker on these topics, especially as Peirce self-consciously took up these topics. He did so as an avowed Christian. He was far more than James committed to conserving the truth not of religion in general but of Christianity in particular (at times however, of a Buddhisto-Christian orientation). The logical sentiments of faith, hope, and love were before being christened such by Peirce of course theological virtues. As such they were divine gifts. As envisioned by Peirce, the life of religion is that of an individual in a community of worship wherein the practices of prayer, meditation, and musement play an indispensible role. It has far less to do with assenting to propositions than with forming one's character (as we so

tellingly say) *in light of* an exemplar whose own life is a singular revelation of the divine being. Such a character is known first and foremost by its fruits. More accurately, the transformation of one's character is itself the fruit of having heeded the call of the divine. To make Peirce palatable to contemporary taste – to dress him up, for example, as a casuist – is, I do not doubt, not without justification. How else can we win for him a hearing? But it is at least as imperative to attain an interior understanding of even his seemingly most implausible positions. The dangers of Peirce's sentimental conservatism are clearly evident in his emphatic contrariness ("I am … an opponent of female suffrage and of universal male suffrage …"). The strengths of it have been made evident by T. L. Short and, now, more recently by Richard Kenneth Atkins.

One of the principal tasks of Peirce scholars is simply to make his thought available, but especially to make it available in its full force and most salient details. *Peirce and the Conduct of Life* takes more than a few instructive strides in this desired direction. I found it this book to be one with which I was prompted to ague, at more than a few critical moments. But, when I did, I found it was a book from which I learned, even in those instances where my reservations or doubts were strengthened by this critical engagement. Some books are not worth arguing with. Others truly are – and this is clearly one such work.

GIOVANNI MATTEUCCI, IL SENSIBILE RIMOSSO. ITINERARI DI ESTETICA SULLA SCENA AMERICANA

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Il sensibile rimosso (translatable as *The Repressed Perceptible*) published by Mimesis Edizioni in 2015, is a recent book written by Giovanni Matteucci, full professor of aesthetics at the University of Bologna. The book's purpose is to provide the reader with a critical and at the same time historical overview of the problems concerning the complex relationship between sensibility and aesthetics. The book basically focuses on how some important American philosophers have developed these problems from the beginning to the end of the 20th century. Matteucci drives us across heterogeneous languages and theories of different thinkers, many of whom have remained almost unknown to the European audience for many years (especially in Italy, where a critical analysis of these texts was still missing until recent times).

Il sensibile rimosso is divided in two parts. The first part, entitled *Profili*, aims to analyze some 20th-century American authors, such as Santayana, Dewey and Langer, whose aesthetic theories did not always receive an adequate academic attention due to their distance from analytic philosophy. In Matteucci's view, these authors of the first half of the 20th century share the same fundamental focus in their researches, which are all aimed at understanding the epistemological and phenomenological relationship between aesthetics and sensibility, often enriched with anthropological arguments. The main theme of the philosophies of these authors is the potential content of the perceptible, which, in Santayana, takes the form of a search for the sense of beauty, conceived as an intrinsic, positive and objectified value, immanently springing from the tension between the perceivable reality and the ideal dimension.

Beauty is therefore the main aesthetic manifestation in which we apperceive the *synolon* of experience and value; the latter cannot be separated by means of intellectual fantasies, but must be always presented in a relational and – at the same time – immanent way. Hence, for Santayana, there are two consequences: first, something like an emotional perceptive consciousness becomes an essential feature of the human being *qua* being; secondly, the overthrow of Kantian epistemology which states the primacy of transcendental categories over perception. Matteucci, in his analysis of Santayana's book *The Sense of Beauty*, states that Santayana's search is aimed at the clarification of the relationship between the material empirical element and the value.

In Dewey's work, this issue is developed through a study of the qualitative structures of experience, and also enriched by anthropological nuances. To do this, Dewey raises strong objections to any dualism that contrasts facts and values on a practical level, matter and form on an aesthetic level, and what is mental and what is corporeal on a metaphysical and epistemological level. In order to succeed in his criticism Dewey uses a pragmatic notion of the real, which collects in itself both poles of the respective dyads. As Matteucci points out, Dewey's naturalistic pragmatism pays attention to both everyday experience and the artworld. Everyday experiences are understood not as intra-psychic facts, but rather as the result of dynamic functional interactions where a plastic subjectivity is able, through an active perception, to let emerge the real already loaded with meanings. Meanings, in turn, are understood as the result of a semantic relationship between the organism and the environment. Principally, art is for Dewey a powerful experience (or, as he famously says, "*an* experience") for two reasons: first, the experience of art improves the active and performative character of perception. This affects the power of signification of the object, and consequently the extension of the polysemous character of meanings. Secondly, art is conceived as human *poiesis* which turns what is not perceivable into the perceivable. Due to the presence of a new artistic medium, it is possible to have

a new experience with its peculiar strengths, qualities and meanings. According to Matteucci, Dewey is the philosopher who has expanded the concept of experience without opposing it to imagination, and by doing so he also conceived of perception and art as connected to each other on the basis of a philosophical-anthropological conception. Therefore, he represents one of the philosophers most dissociated from metaphysical concepts, as well as from analytical or hypostatized definitions.

Matteucci focuses then on Susanne Langer and, in particular on her argumentations in support of a logic of feeling that takes place in the symbolic form of the artwork. In the book *Philosophy in a New Key* Langer's theory of symbolization is already set out. Two types of non-exclusive symbolisms are proposed here: in the representational logic signs are univocally related to the significance, while in the presentational logic symbols immanently contain a plurality of meanings. Thus symbolization is linked to human sensibility and has a functional-evolutionary role that allows us to plunge semantically, before than ontologically, in our world environment. This theory requires that the contents of perception are already symbolized by our senses which have specific categories of understanding. Therefore, the human mind is primarily a stream of symbols, which is pre-rationative but not pre-rational, and only later a stream of consciousness. A fundamental consequence of Langer's logic is the following: the reception of appearance, no longer labelled as merely fictitious, but already loaded of meanings due its immanent logic in the iconic-representational sensibility.

The last author treated in Matteucci's *Profili* is Richard Wollheim, an atypical analytic philosopher both for his phenomenological references (mainly Merleau-Ponty and Dufrenne) and for his interpretations of Wittgenstein which leads him to confute the extensional theory of art and also the intensional one. In *Art and its Objects*, a new reading of Wittgenstein's linguistic theory is given. Particularly, the notion of form of life is interpreted as the hybridization of naturalness and historicity. Art in its material component is, for Wollheim, a language with its practical and anti-elementarist grammar which has the peculiarity of mixing sign and referent. To understand this, it is important to go back to the relationship between perception and understanding. Wollheim understands our sight as something grammatically and phenomenologically structured; therefore humans have a representational view which enables them to *seeing-in* perception, understood as the immanent interconnection between perceptible content, expression and emotions.

The second part of the book is entitled *Problemi e prospettive*, and its purpose is to analyze some among the most important themes of contemporary analytic aesthetics. The first theme on which Matteucci focuses is the complex relation between sensibility and judgment in contemporary debates on aesthetic properties. Matteucci analyzes the contributions of a large group of authors on this argument, such as Sibley, Beardsley, Kivy, Walton, Scruton, Petit, Lennon, Azton, Bender, Zangwill, and Zemach. They are divided in two streams which are still in conflict: the former thinks that it is possible to outline an intersubjective logic of aesthetic judgments; the latter considers it as impossible to identify this logic, and leaves to the individual and her personal judgment the ability to identify and formulate aesthetic properties. Still on the relationship between sensibility and faculty of judgment, Matteucci individuates another classic problem of philosophical aesthetics – namely the connections between appearance and judgment.

By eschewing reductive prospective such as classical empiricism and absolute idealism, analytic philosophy seems to return to Kantian apriorism, on the one hand, and to a phenomenological matrix, on the other. While Kantian apriorism holds that the principles that structure our judgements are prior to our experience, phenomenology moves in the opposite direction by stating the dependence of judgement from perception.

As a contemporary supporter of the first perspective Matteucci enquiries McDowell, according to whom it is possible to theorize an immanent structuring of perceptions immediately conceptualised, in a perfect congruence between sensibility and intellect and without space for appearances. Instead, Crane's philosophy risks to propose a simplification of the phenomenological notion of intentionality that leads him to a more empirical path than the Husserlian one. Matteucci concludes the chapter by reminding us that the relation between appearance and judgment is also a main focus of Dewey's and Wollheim's philosophies, the only two philosophers who provided an original interpretation without trying to reduce the sense to a presumed origin from which all experience should result.

In the penultimate chapter of the book, the analysis of the problem of artistic creativity starts with Elster's philosophy. In his opinion, creativity does not concern the authenticity or originality of the artwork but must necessarily be subjected to constraints, exactly as his theory of pre-commitment demonstrates: only within these constraints it is possible to maximize the aesthetic and creative value of the work, whereas without them the human being would be unable to make projects and create anything. However, this theory is not fully satisfying because it formalizes creativity up to the point of paralyzing it in a sort of causal determinism where expressive freedom has no resonance. So, in order to escape the fallacies of Elster's theories, Matteucci also makes use of some conceptual tools provided by Bourdieu and Ryle.

The last chapter of the book is entirely dedicated to Shusterman's philosophical and anthropological concept of the aesthetic field, starting from the overcoming of the dichotomy between a natural and a historical aesthetics. Shusterman proposes the idea of a historicized naturalness that can also be linked to Bourdieu's concept of historical transcendence and Gehlen's idea of artificial nature. The aesthetic field is read by Matteucci as the first acknowledgment of pragmatic aesthetics in our contemporaneity, inasmuch as this concept represents an attempt to interpret the dynamic interrelationship between history and nature. On this basis, we can conclude that the aim of the book is a sort of rehabilitation of these pragmatic and anthropological issues in aesthetics within both the Italian and the international philosophical context. The leftover, for future philosophers, consists in some significant conceptual tools through which engage in new researches.