ACTION, AGENCY and PRACTICE

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Introduction: Pragmatism on Action, Agency and Practice. An Overview

Philipp Dorstewitz, Frithjof Nungesser

Action is the central concept around which pragmatism pivots. Right from the beginnings of the tradition conceptual reconstructions pointed at human agency in redefining concepts like truth, meaning, experience, knowledge, education, value or the self. Thinking in terms of action helped pragmatism to overcome dualist accounts of the relation between mind and body, theory and practice, individual and society, ordinary life and the supposedly detached realm of the arts and sciences. Many pragmatists since Dewey and Addams went beyond finding new conceptual determinations and saw the point of their philosophical investigations in changing our social and political practices by means of a reciprocal engagement of practical endeavors and intellectual inquiries.

Various projects in philosophy, social theory, sociology, or the cognitive sciences paid tribute to pragmatists like Peirce, Dewey or Mead in developing a new understanding of practice, meaning, perception, interaction, communication, identity, institutions, or the transactive continuum of human and non-human agency in environments. Yet, given the central position that the concept of action occupies in the pragmatist tradition, it is remarkable how few pragmatist scholars took an explicit agency-theoretic approach in delineating their standpoint. This said, a number of prominent authors have zeroed in on the way pragmatism affects our understanding of agency and practice. Classical works like Dewey's Human Nature and Conduct or Mead's Philosophy of the Act precede a number of more recent works like Bernstein's Praxis and Action, Joas's The Creativity of Action or Strauss's Continual Permutations of Action.

Today's advances in fields like biology, robotics and artificial intelligence, human enhancement technology, or digital technology make questions about the transacttive formation of coordinated agency and about the environmentally embedded nature of human action topical. Looming environmental catastrophes and failure of political systems to respond adequately pose urgent questions about collective and political agency and urge the search for solutions in a better understanding of human agency as embedded in social and environmental situations.

The articles assembled in this special issue of Pragmatism Today address implications and consequences of pragmatist thought for our understanding of action, agency and practice. The papers prove once more that the pragmatist conceptualization of action provides an instructive perspective in a broad spectrum of areas. This holds true with respect to the topics analyzed, which range from embodiment and animal cognition to sociality and socialization to games and sports to normativity and justice. It also holds true with respect to the transdisciplinarity of the special issue, which contains articles from philosophers and sociologists but also touches on issues in sport science, cognitive science, or primatology. Finally, the breadth and timeliness of the pragmatist account of action, agency, and practice can be recognized in the volume by the dialogues it facilitates with other theoretical traditions such as phenomenology or cultural psychology.

The first three articles in the special issue deal with questions of agency, practice and embodiment. In "The Primacy of Practice and the Phenomenological Method", Daniil Koloskov reconstructs the relation between practices and meanings. He uses Heidegger's ontological analysis, which holds that meaning discloses itself through projection (Entwurf) and that it is the possibilities and limitations of such projections which free objects to realize their being, a move that resembles to some extent Dewey's proposal to include experience as a practical transactive process within, rather than juxtaposed to reality. The question which Koloskov sees unsatisfactorily treated by both pragmatists and the Heidegger interpreter, Dreyfus, is the exact relation between background practices and meaning. Whereas the latter sees meaning firmly grounded in a primacy of practice and determined by social habits, from which they source their significance and possibilities, Koloskov

argues that understanding and practices are "equiprimordial" because meaning making and projecttion include the possibility to refine our practices by understanding or even reconsidering them in view of new possibilities that open up within given constraints. Koloskov sees this non-reductive interpretation of the relationship between meaning and practice better realized in Heidegger's original than in his commentators. Heidegger introduces Dasein as the "ability-to-be" and his understanding of a background as "Spielraum" or a set of interrelated possibilities resonates with Koloskov's own view that "meaning itself is pragmatic".

In his article, Ondřej Švec engages Robert Brandom and Hubert Dreyfus in an instructive dialogue on "Situated Acting and Embodied Coping". For each thinker Švec starts with what he conceives as the key strength of the approach and then identifies a major shortcoming. Brandom's pragmatist account of action, he argues, provides a convincing argument for the constitutive social embeddedness of human action. By conceptualizing the motives and reasons for action not as private mental states but in terms of the agent's public commitments and entitlements Brandom shows that agency and sociality are ineluctably intertwined. However, according to Švec, this elaborate account of the social embeddedness of practical commitments suffers from an intellectualist bias since Brandom conceives of bodily action merely as the execution of these practical commitments. This is the point where Dreyfus comes into the picture. From Švec's perspective, Dreyfus's approach is the mirror image of Brandom's, because he conceptualizes action primarily as absorbed and embodied coping. By doing so, Dreyfus considers not only the seminal role of bodily and affective processes in human agency but also the situatedness and contingency of action. Yet, Dreyfus's approach also mirrors the shortcomings of Brandom's because it downplays the importance of the agent's discursive and conceptual capacities. Building on his critical comparison of Brandom and Dreyfus Švec aims to preserve the best of both philosophical worlds by reconstructing the "continuity" between practical, and especially normative,

reasoning and embodied coping skills. By doing so, one could say, that Švec follows the antidualist impulse of classical pragmatism to critically engage with two important contributions to contemporary philosophical debates.

The spectrum of forms of agentive involvement with the world, with other human beings and with one's own body is nowhere more variegated than in games and sports. This can be seen in Raúl Martínez-Santos's paper "Time, Order, and Motor Action Domains: On the Praxiological Classification of Sporting Games." Following closely the methodology outlined by Pierre Parlebas, Martínez-Santos offers a motor-praxiological study of human agency through the lens of various games, ranging from judo and tennis to chess and snooker. All games coincide in their nature as embodied processes, and all games and "ludic situation" are made possible by participants taking a position in systems of rules, laws and signs. Most of them involve some form of temporally sequential or simultaneous social interaction. However, the difference between games are very telling, not merely phenomenologically, but in a motor praxiological and motor semiotic sense. Whereas the rules and the temporal structure of judo or tennis require participants to engage in mutually perceived simultaneous gesturing, games like snooker or darts will be social in a more strategic and sequential way. These important differences are not only of epistemic value for understanding the panoply of different forms of bodily, social, cognitive and rule-governed interactions. They also help reconceptualizing physical education by providing an orientational praxiological grid of dimensions and criteria that can help engaging and developing diverse forms of engagement with one's body in social, temporal, spatial, interactive, strategic, and rule-governed situations in students.

The relation of agency, interaction and sociality is discussed in the next two articles. Antonia Schirgi provides an in-depth investigation of crucial concepts of Mead's pragmatist theory, which take center stage both in his understanding of action and of sociality. The main objective of her analysis is to trace the "The Manifoldness of Mead's

Action Theory". This manifoldness, she claims, is due not only to the fact that Mead uses different concepts when studying action but also to the changes in these concepts over time. To substantiate her claim Schirgi distinguishes three main concepts of action in Mead: a "wider model of action", the "social act", and the "gesture". The first concept, developed mainly by Dewey in the 1890s, was of critical importance for the development of Mead's thought. The second concept, the "social act", Schirgi argues, was developed later and changed significantly between the 1910s and the 1920s. While in the earlier writings social interaction resembled a chain of individual social acts, later the social act was conceptualized as a complex entanglement of the actions of multiple individuals. The third concept, the "gesture", was also reformulated over time. Modifying arguments of Darwin and Wundt, Mead first thought of gestures as fixed communicative signals that evolved though the truncation of social interaction (e.g., biting turned into baring of teeth). Later, in the 1920s, the concept of gestures became much broader comprising every action that initiated a social interaction. Schirgi's analysis is a valuable contribution to Mead studies because it forces scholars to look more closely into the development of key concepts of Mead. If her argument is correct, conceptual inconsistencies in Mead's writings could be interpreted not as theoretical contradictions but as the result of theoretical developments. Also, Schirgi's argument could be instructive for pragmatist social thought more generally because, as she indicates in her concluding remarks, different readings of Mead (such as Joas's or Blumer's) might be connected to the fact that they draw on different versions of Mead's key concepts.

Within the framework of Mead's pragmatism, human agency is based on the capacity of perspective-taking, which makes it possible to act in a self-reflexive and intelligent way and to adjust behavior according to cultural norms and social expectations. In "The Social Evolution of Perspective-taking", Frithjof Nungesser looks into Mead's account of the evolutionary emergence of perspective-taking and contrasts it with Michael Tomasello's

seminal contributions to primatology, evolutionary anthropology, and cultural psychology. Tomasello's studies, he claims, help to overcome two key shortcomings of Mead's theory: First, insights into great ape social interaction and cognition help to correct Mead's dichotomous comparison of animals and humans. Second, Tomasello's work allows for a more gradualist reconstruction of the emergence of perspective-taking in the course of humanization. Based on the dialogue between Mead and Tomasello, Nungesser argues, it becomes possible to outline a refined conception of perspective-taking that distinguishes between three forms of perspective-taking that vary in complexity: While simple forms of perspective-taking already evolved before the advent of humanity and can today be found in non-human primates (and probably other animals), the two complex forms of perspective-taking only evolved in the course of hominin evolution – first with the genus Homo, later with the species Homo sapiens. According to Nungesser, this distinction between three forms of perspective-taking also helps to dissolve contradictions between Mead's account of human evolution and his well-known arguments on the development of perspective-taking in the course of socialization.

The last two contributions to this special issue discuss questions of agency, value and normativity. Hugh Mc-Donald pursues his project of presenting a pragmatist interpretation of value-theory as a first philosophy. In his contribution "Action and Creation of the World", he develops this idea from an agency theoretic perspective. He maintains that the determination of value should be mostly free from "psychologizing", and that values cannot be defined in terms of either subjective or nonempirical properties. McDonald's argument tries to avoid two extremes: that of reducing values to vacuous normativity, and that of cashing out values in terms of empirical consequences defined by a predetermined success criterion. However, instead of relying on given value determinations or reducing final purposes to set premises in practical

inferences, he understands values as manifested in the structure of human agency. For McDonald values are constitutive of the realization of actions. If we, like many pragmatists since Dewey, accept that reality is an unfolding process in which human activity plays a participating role, and if we agree that values are constitutive for the direction and manifestation of activity, we shall accept that values play a role in creating the world. This is what McDonald identifies as the movement of "creative actualization"; it is, indeed, a metaphysical determination of values. Moreover, values give structure and definition to reality: as actions are coordinated and concluded by goals, values make courses of actions (i.e. instances of world making) plural and countable. The normative character of values is preserved in McDonald's adherence to a Jamesian idea of meliorism. The actualization of values in human action is the successive and cumulative realization of goods. While these may never be perfect, they still allow, and even demand, the effort to improve and refine values and achieve better goals.

Inquiry into democratic deliberation as a practice (rather than an ideal or standard derived from foundational normative principles) raises an important question: what role should our theories play in our democratic practices? In his article "What is Normative Democratic Theory for? Beyond Procedural Minimalism", Quinlan Bowman suggests that normative democratic theory should emerge out of reflection on lived experience with democratic values. Focusing on lived experience with "free" and "equal" treatment serves to clarify what motivates people to engage in democratic deliberation in the first place. It also clarifies what responsibilities people typically assume when they do treat each other as "free and

equal." Normative theories that are grounded in actual human experiences of pursuing and deliberating over moral ends are best equipped to motivate, and so guide, citizens. Bowman criticizes the prominent normative-democratic theories of Robert Dahl, Jürgen Habermas, and Joshua Cohen for being insufficiently attentive to these matters. The reason for this, he suggests, is that each author's theory is inadequately connected to (observation of) actual (as opposed to idealized) democratic practice. Bowman's own anthropological-interpretative approach borrows from Dewey's ideal of democracy as a specific kind of "shared experience," involving continuous ethical inquiry. Correspondingly, Bowman advances a "doubly empirical" approach to normative democratic theory, which emphasizes the origins of normative theory in democratic experience and points to normative theory's role in continuously guiding further inquiry.

The collection of papers presented here opens many doors for further discussion and research. A few themes in particular will strike the eye of the reader: the relation between forming actions and understanding our world through practices, ways of defining goods and actualizing values, forming deliberate actions and embedding them within rule-governed practices, understanding the coordination of human behavior and the formation of agency and intentionality as a product of social interacttions, the lessons we can learn from non-human behavior for understanding human action and the place of theory within social and democratic deliberation. Collectively these papers stand to reignite an interest in the very core of the pragmatist approach, namely that action is a matter of upmost theoretical importance and that our theories are entangled with our living practice.

AGENCY, PRACTICE, AND EMBODIMENT

THE PRIMACY OF PRACTICE AND THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD[1]

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ABSTRACT: The pragmatic tradition inspired by H. Dreyfus and M. Okrent uncovers a great pragmatic potential in Heidegger's notions of understanding and possibilities. Pragmatists claim that 1) understanding is based on grasping meaningful possibilities open in a given situation, 2) that meaningfulness as such is grounded in the background practices and 3) that such practices consist in skills, habits and not explicit beliefs. Taken together, this amounts to a thesis also known as "primacy of practice." The problem with such an approach is that the combination of the phenomenological method and the primacy of practice formulated this way leads to the placement of the source of meaningfulness beyond any possible human competence, leaving us without possibility of feedback on it. I will argue that pragmatic motives in Heidegger must be explicated differently: instead of sourcing meaning from the pragmatic ground, we could also demonstrate that meaning itself is pragmatic, i.e. its essence consists in disclosing and maximizing possibilities of acting and thinking. The ecstatic character of Heidegger's notion of understanding, which is "equiprimordially" constituted by significance and for-the-sake-of-which, gives us a thread into such a conception. I will argue is that 1) understanding is guided by the maximization of our ability-to-be, i.e. by the maximization of disclosed possibilities and that 2) practices are created and organized in a way that maximizes such possibilities.

Keywords: Heidegger, Understanding, Pragmatism, Primacy of Practice, Dreyfus

Introduction

At the end of the 20th century, H. Dreyfus and M. Okrent made a series of attempts to explicate and develop pragmatic motives in Heidegger's early philosophical project. By putting Heidegger into a dialogue with American Pragmatism, and J. Dewey in particular, they managed to build a highly original and independent pragmatic system, placed within the limits outlined by Heideggerian phenomenology, but which went far beyond from what Heidegger intended to say. The core element of the elaboration was a suggestion that both Heidegger's and Dewey's approaches should be interpreted as committed to the same thesis, known as "primacy of practice," according to which any sort of intelligibility and meaningfulness originates from our background practices, which are "complex structures that sustain action"[2] making it possible for us to cope with the world. Cognition and our search for theoretical truth are further grasped as a "continuation of practice by other means."[3]

As I understand it, however, the primacy of practice particularly formulated this way combines poorly with the lack of naturalism in the Heideggerian project. In this paper, I'd like to argue that without reference to the evolutionary theory and naturalism (or any other objective criterion of change in the background), approaches that solely explain meaningfulness in terms of the background practices reach an untenable conclusion. Naturalism presents an objectified account of practices, viewing background as a self-subsisting and one-sided source of intelligibility, and sets up an objective criterion – evolutionary adaptation to the environment, – which explains how our background practices occur and evolve. Pragmatic readers of Heidegger preserve this objectified account of practices (at least in a certain specific sense, as I intend to show in the second section) but omit the objective naturalistic criterion obviously incompatible with Heidegger's methodology.[4] As I will demonstrate, this further obscures the possibility of change in practices, which was already hampered by the objectified description. The principle according to which they occur and evolve remains unclear since any subjective feedback is excluded and the objective criterion is omitted. If considered on the same plane with Dewey, therefore, phenomenological pragmatism appears as inconsistent, as it lacks an essential element in its system.[5]

This doesn't mean that we should give up on developing the pragmatic motives within the phenomenological tradition. Instead of adding the partial primacy of practice to Heideggerian philosophy as proposed by Heideggerian

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[2] H. Dreyfus, M. Wrathall, Background practices, p. 4
[3] R. Rorty, Heidegger, Contingency and Pragmatism in: Essays on Heidegger and others, p. 31; R. Rorty, C. Taylor and H. Dreyfus, A Discussion, p. 50
[4] See, for example, M. Okrent's criticism of Heidegger in: "Heidegger's Pragmatism Redux" in: Cambridge Companion to Pragmatism
[5] Ibid, p. 154; W. Blattner, What Heidegger and Dewey Can Learn From Each Other

pragmatists and claiming that it should be complemented with naturalism, we can try to reformulate their thesis so it better fits the phenomenological method. As I will argue, this would primarily mean reconsidering the one-sided relation between practices and meaningfulness: instead of saying that practices one-sidedly grant all possible meaningfulness and thus enable our being-in-the-world (like Dreyfus and others did), I will seek to reverse this claim and demonstrate that practices enable our being-in-the-world exactly because they are meaningful. This presupposes a further investigation into the nature of meaning and intelligibility, which will be based on Heidegger's notions of disclosure and understanding. My main claim is that the task of understanding cannot be reduced to the disclosure of fixed meaning formed and shaped by practice, as Dreyfus and other pragmatists sometimes seem to depict it. It also "equiprimordially" includes possibilities of attaining better understanding and reconsidering of practice itself. Furthermore, I will argue that the criterion for what I find less or more meaningful can be defined as disclosing potential, i.e. the extent and interconnectedness of revealed possibilities of thinking and acting.

The first two sections start with a preliminary analysis of Heidegger's notion of understanding and its consequent reception by pragmatic tradition. In the third section, I will propose another criterion of understanding – disclosing potential – and argue that it plays a more fundamental role in the explanation of meaningfulness than recourse to preexistent practices.

I. Heidegger's analysis of understanding

Heidegger spent a significant part of his early philosophical efforts trying to demonstrate that the way we are related to the world represents a fundamental philosophical problem too often overlooked. One symptom of this is treating such a relation as an ontic relation between two intrawordly beings. For example, perception of a window would mean a relation between the window in one place and a subject standing in another place: if the window is withdrawn, the relation vanishes. If the subject is withdrawn, it vanishes as well. This is a way of conceiving relations as something belonging to objects, i.e. is based *in* them as a sort of predicate. Heidegger counters this sort of objectivism by drawing on the obvious fact that we can relate to something that doesn't enter into any relation with us. More than that, we can intend things that have never occurred at all. This is possible, says Heidegger, only if we "intend in general"[6] and such intention is a determination of our ontological structure. Relation doesn't simply belong to us as a possible predicate but constitutes our being as such. The other extreme is to see intentionality as something immanent to a subject, belonging to its "subjective sphere."[7] This false subjectivation of intentionality, where the latter is conceived as a sort of capsule for the intended,[8] creates an illusion that studying it is equivalent to studying subjectivity detached from the world. Again, his critique is largely descriptive: what we see and experience are things, not experiences of things. On the contrary, if we start with our own subjectivity, there is no way we can break free from it.

In order to avoid pitfalls of both objectivism and subjectivism, Heidegger stresses that the relation between *intention* and *intendum* necessarily contains something he calls "perceivedness of the perceived."[9] Now, such perceivedness doesn't alter the content of perceived thing in any sense. A perception is expected to show an object as it is and not its mental appearance; "the mode of uncovering … must be determined by the entity to be uncovered."[10] On the other side, Heidegger also emphasizes that perceivedness isn't automatically guaranteed by the entity in question. In order for things to show up as they really are, a corresponding sort of understanding must be achieved. We can discover things as they are only *after* such understanding is secured. Think, for example, of Chinese characters. It is possible that instead

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[6] M. Heidegger, The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, p. 60
[7] Ibid, p. 61
[8] Ibid, p. 64
[9] Ibid, p. 48
[10] Ibid, p. 70

of reading them, I will take them to be some chaotic drawings and, therefore, fail to intend them as they are. So, even though understanding "must be determined by the entity to be uncovered," the entity in question doesn't guarantee that such understanding will actually be determined, as it doesn't contain it among its predicates. That is why Heidegger claims that understanding is irreducible to extantness, saying that "not only do *intentio* and *intentum* belong to the intentionality of perception but so also does the understanding of the mode of being of what is intended in the *intentum*."[11]

Heidegger offers the following definition of understanding: it is a projection onto possibilities.[12] A first thing that needs to be clarified regarding such a definition is that we shouldn't conflate the term "projection" (German "Entwurf" meaning "draft" or "construction") with some inner psychological state that is violently imposed on reality. In a psychological sense, projection means something that isn't "really" there, something untruthful, which must be clarified. Heidegger, on the contrary, stresses the ontological aspect of projection. The point is that we cannot grasp entities as they are simply by looking at them; in order to be accessed, they need to be projected or related to something else. My understanding of what a hammer is, for example, isn't a contemplation of the handle attached to an iron head. It instead consists of my ability to use it in various ways (hammering nails, crashing things etc.) The understanding of what a hammer is is disclosed by something other than the hammer. So, according to Heidegger things don't simply occur as themselves but must be somehow *brought* to themselves. Speaking in Heidegger's terms, Dasein *frees* things to be themselves. We can see, therefore, why it is so misleading to treat projection psychologically: even though without Dasein there would be no projections, the fact that things can be accessed only through such projection doesn't follow from some psychological, "merely" subjective will, but from things themselves, a thesis that Wrathall incisively described as a "relational ontology."[13] We disclose things through projection, not by imposing our subjectivity on them. Projection lets things unpack themselves – it lets entities be themselves.[14]

But what is projected and where exactly does this projection go? As an ontological structure, Heidegger claims, understanding projects the being of Dasein "equiprimordially" onto "significance as the worldliness of his world" and Dasein's "for-the-sake-of-which."[15]

The first term – significance – stands for the fact that we understand entities and activities based on a system of references. Projection reveals a specific function that a given entity or activity performs, and the way it is related to other things and activities.[16] By doing this, projection reveals its "in-order-to"[17] showing in what relation this entity or activity should be grasped – as serving to what aim. This is what defines its identity as a specific thing or a specific activity. Significance, in such a way, presupposes a part-to-whole relation: we grasp the entity as a part, in view of some referential whole. For example, to be itself, a chair must be referred to tables and eating, among other things. If conceived without this reference, the chair is hardly a chair at all; it is rather a piece of wood or a stand. Furthermore, the term "for-the-sake-of-which" is meant to emphasize that this system of references cannot be indifferent to Dasein. Significance, claims Heidegger, is grounded in "for the sake of which:"[18] taken as a whole, it doesn't serve to any further specific aim, but corresponds to Dasein's ability-to-be. To signify something as relevant for Dasein also means to embody a certain potential for its being. What is disclosed by understanding, in other words, "equiprimordially" uncovers Dasein's ways of being; it *matters* to him as providing a certain way of living in the world. A projection onto significance is, thus, equiprimordially a projection onto certain praxis of living a life.

[11] M. Heidegger, The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, p. 71
[12] M. Heidegger, The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, p. 277

[13] M. Wrathall, Heidegger and Unconcealment. Truth Language and History, p. 136
[14] M. Heidegger, Being and Time, p. 103
[15] Ibid, p. 136
[16] Ibid, p. 81
[17] Ibid, p. 78
[18] Ibid, p. 78

Heidegger, however, insists that understanding necessarily "*co*-discloses"[19] (*miterschlossen*) both significance and for-the-sake-of-which. Together, they equiprimordially constitute being-in-the-world as a whole.[20] The point is that for-the-sake-of-which doesn't precede concrete significant things; the latter as "needs in themselves" doesn't find its realization in the former. Any sort of for-the-sake-of-which, i.e. any such praxis of living a life, must already occur as a concrete comportment of meaningfulness of which is granted by a referential whole. This is a crucial claim. Heidegger's approach isn't akin to de La Rochefoucauld's reflexive strategy that reveals egoistic motivations behind every act. He doesn't believe, as Spinoza did, that there is something like an objective essence of Dasein that predetermines what significant things it is going to face. What Heidegger wants to demonstrate is that this relation is reciprocal: significance and for-the-sake-of-which come into existence through mutual merging. In this sense, the claim that any kind of entity (whether it be a hammer or Higgs boson) might be grasped only for-the-sake-of Dasein isn't anything else but a general expression of the ecstatic character of Dasein's existence. For-the-sake-of-which doesn't bear with itself any specific content. As ability-to-be, Dasein always has *something* to do (*etwas* zu können); it is this purely formal "something" that belongs to it as a constitutive element. On the contrary, "significance" is what defines for-the-sake-of-which exactly Dasein exists by giving to it some determinate content. Heidegger's point, therefore, isn't to show significant things as a manifestation of Dasein's will, but simply to show that any kind of significance must be potentially contributable to Dasein's existence. So, a hammer is to hammer nails and build homes; Higgs bosons are to confirm the Standard Model – but all these frame what can be done, observed or created by Dasein as such, all these belong to its being-possible (*Möglichsein*).

To put it differently, an act of understanding discloses things as they are based on their own significance (as defined by other things and events) and, at the same time, it discloses Dasein as the ability-to-be about such things. By doing this, it transforms subject and object into indivisible components of being-in-the-world. Understanding might be inauthentic if it is lost in significance and treats entities as self-obvious or it can be authentic as long as it remembers that any concrete comportment is enabled only for-the-sake-of Dasein.[21] The important thing here is that this twofold structure is preserved in every case: *being-in* the world presupposes *beings* in the world and otherwise. These two moments are covered by the term "possibility": entities have possibilities that make them themselves and, at the same time, they give Dasein some possibility to be. This explains why things in their "ownmost" being still appear as "serviceable", "usable" and so on.[22]

In such a way, through projection, Dasein gets what Heidegger calls the room-for-maneuver (*Spielraum*, literally – a room for play*)* of its ability-to-be,[23] a key term that is often undertranslated. *Spielraum* is existential space, a network of interconnected possibilities that mutually enable each other, thus, providing a livable place for Dasein, which is livable only because it is mottled by such various possibilities. It is this existential space disclosed by understanding that explains the nature of Dasein's relation to the world. First and foremost, it doesn't have beliefs or representation of it. Neither does it make judgements or formulate propositions. Its being is being-possible: for the most part, it is occupied with what can and cannot be done, with projects that can be realized etc., thus, realizing its own being as a possibility. This existential awareness of available possibilities is knowledge of a very specific sort – it has nothing to do with a voluntary creation of a specific plan or immanent

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[19] Ibid, p. 134
[20] Ibid, p. 134

[21] The role authenticity plays in understanding is explicated in more details in J. Haugeland's and S. Crowell's readings (see, J. Haugeland, Truth and Finitude and S. Crowell, Normativity and Phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger)
[22] Ibid, p. 135
[23] Ibid. (Der Entwurfcharakter des Verstehens konstituiert das In-der-Welt-sein hinsichtlich der Erschlossenheit seines Da als Da eines Seinkönnens. Der Entwurf ist die existenziale Seinsverfassung des Spielraums des faktischen Seinkönnens.)

self-perception.[24] It is knowledge of one's way around the world, which is equivalent to the knowledge of one's own self. As understanding, Dasein "'knows' what is going on, that is, what its potentiality of being is."[25]

However, this understanding still leaves a lot of room for interpretation. Heidegger's holistic emphasis on explanation of possibilities is clear. What isn't at all clear, however, is how these holistic structures are to be interpreted. This gives rise to an astonishingly diverse variety of readings. H. Dreyfus, in his article "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics", roughly divided his interpretations into hermeneutical holists (which covers a broad group of authors ranging from C. Lafont to G.-G. Gadamer) and pragmatic ones, of which one was famously presented by himself. For the aim of this paper, I will not address the hermeneutic readings for the most part (I will also leave aside originative readings within the pragmatic traditions proposed by R. Brandom[26], S. Crowell[27] and O. Švec[28], which complement Heidegger's approach of the game of giving and asking for reasons). Instead, I will concentrate on how pragmatism explicated and took over these Heideggerian motives by linking notions of understanding, meaning and possibility together with public practices.

II. Understanding, Meaning and the Primacy of Practice

As one would expect, the pragmatic tradition inspired by H. Dreyfus and M. Okrent places a great emphasis on Heidegger's notions of understanding and possibilities as not interchangeable with cognition and objects. Consequently, they view them as non-cognitive phenomena founded in average public practices. I'll give a more systematic account of this interpretation below.

According to Dreyfus, the term "possibilities" has even more specific meaning for Heidegger. Heidegger, claims Dreyfus, isn't interested in enlisting of "things that are

logically or physically possible."[29] His interest lies in what Dreyfus calls "existential" possibilities, i.e. possibilities that are actually open in a situation, thus, making possible our orientation in it. Borrowing the expression from W. James, Dreyfus speaks of them as "live options"[30] that source from our very placedness in a certain context. To give a quick example, my placedness in the kitchen equips me with possibilities of making breakfast or a cup of tea. Logically, it is also possible to sing here, but singing doesn't follow from this position. Taken together, such options/existential possibilities constitute a "room-for-maneuver", i.e. set of meaningful and appropriate involvements available for Dasein. In the same fashion, M. Wrathall speaks of the "leeway", situations that "provide us with a range of possibilities for pursuing a particular course of activity or a particular identity."[31] As thrown, Dasein finds itself always already in a certain situation and already in possession of some possibilities. Even though such possibilities come into being through Dasein, Dasein doesn't get to choose or create them spontaneously from his "free-floating"[32] being. Dasein *is* these possibilities rather than just having them: they aren't an addition to his autonomous being-in-itself but constitute its very being as they "limit and make sense what to do."[33]

According to Dreyfus, the concrete situation is able to be understood because of our "local background", a "range of possibilities that Dasein 'knows' without reflection,"[34] which defines "the room for maneuver in the current situation.[35]" In particular, concrete possibilities organically follow from the general and non-thematic background possibilities "making up significance" (like, for example, a possibility of hammering follows from the background of building). Dreyfus treats such background as "the average public practices"[36]: it is our general tech-

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[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] See R. Brandom, Dasein, the Being that Thematizes
[27] See S. Crowell, Normativity and Phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger
[28] See O. Švec, The Primacy of Practice and the Pervasiveness of Discourse in: Pragmatic Perspectives in Phenomenology

[29] H. Dreyfus, Being-in-the-World, p. 115
[30] Ibid, p. 115
[31] M. A. Wrathall, Heidegger on Human Understanding, p. 190 in: *Cambridge Companion to Heidegger's Being and Time*
[32] H. Dreyfus, Being-in-the-World, p. 115
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid, p. 95

niques and skills built from social training that define what we can do and what makes sense for us to do each time. Only because practices delimitate and specify the use of entities "there can be any understanding at all."[37] In the same way, T. Carman says "the way anything manages to be expressively intelligible is by conforming to the public and anonymous norms governing our shared background practices."[38] Another corroboration (this time Wrathall): "background practices make the world, in general, intelligible to us."[39] And lastly, by Blattner, "the intelligence and intelligibility of human life are to be explained fundamentally in terms of practice, and the contribution that cognition, conceptuality, and theory make to it is derivative of the contribution made by practice."[40] In this sense, background skills, habits and norms or, in short, background practices that we are trained into during our socialization ground actual possibilities and meanings accessible for understanding. These practices make us Dasein[41] and sustain us this way by disclosing the very possibility of meaningfully governed activity.

Dreyfus is insisting (bringing Wittgenstein as a witness) that the background doesn't consist of beliefs, which differs Heidegger from theoretical holists such as Davidson and Gadamer. [42] It is made of "habits and customs, embodied in the sort of subtle skills which we exhibit in our everyday interaction with things and people."[43] Since it isn't a belief system, the background cannot be explicated, justified or even thematized. In support, he again quotes Wittgenstein: "Giving grounds [must] come to an end sometime. But the end isn't an ungrounded presupposition: it is an ungrounded way of acting."[44] So, either we

admit that we need some sort of non-cognitive skill to apply for the purposes of cognition or justification or we fall into endless regress.[45] Practices themselves are historically contingent and ungrounded as such, as Dreyfus stresses many times. In the end, it is just the way we happened to act. The pragmatic readings, in such a way, "ground" intelligibility in shared practices that are themselves ungrounded.[46] They view average everyday practices as a sort of practical substrate, i.e. actually existing (although ungrounded and contingent) skills, norms and habits that are sustained and transferred by the anonymous power of publicity.

These three points, namely that (1) understanding primordially is based on grasping meaningful or existential possibilities open in a given situation, (2) that meaningfulness or intelligibility as such is grounded in the background practices and (3) that such practices consist in skills, habits and not explicit beliefs, represent a point of convergence among pragmatic interpreters, which is covered by the rather broad label of "primacy of practice". This, of course, isn't confined to Heidegger and his interpreters. The similar or co-existent approaches can be found in P. Bourdieu, L. Wittgenstein, J. Dewey, M. Foucault, R. Rorty, E. Reitvield and many others. For methodological reasons, however, I will limit the scope of the investigation to Heideggerian re-interpretations only.

The problem that follows is that the primacy of practice formulated this way places the source of meaningfulness beyond any possible human competence, leaving us without any possibility of feedback on it. Because background practices create and sustain any intelligibility, any possible finding, criticism or creative solution must be already presupposed by the background practices, otherwise it won't be meaningful at all. The background is something that "lends intelligibility to criticism and change."[47] This means that any actual success or failure in the world is irrelevant to it: every correction of

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[37] Ibid.

[38] T. Carman, Heidegger's Analytic, p. 236

[39] H. Dreyfus, M. Wrathall, Background practices, p. 9

[40] W. Blattner, What Heidegger and Dewey Can Learn From Each Other p. 59

[41] Here it is worth mentioning that according to pragmatists' readings, Dasein is indeed not interchangeable with human being or consciousness (so, babies have consciousness but they are not Daseins); it is our ability to orient at meaning that makes us Dasein (i.e. socialized individual) and this is achievable only through socialization through practices

[42] H. Dreyfus, Holism and Hermeneutics, p. 4

[43] Ibid, p. 8

[44] L. Wittgenstein, On Certainty, p. 114

[45] H. Dreyfus, Holism and Hermeneutics, p. 8

[46] H. Dreyfus, Being-in-the-World, p. 96

[47] Ibid, p. 99

the practices, every act of learning must be already accounted for by the background practices. Such an approach renders them to be an objectified and self-subsisting force that one-sidedly enables any possible meaning forwards without being enabled backwards. Dreyfus, of course, considers the possibility of change in the background, saying that "new technological and social developments are constantly changing specific ways for Dasein to be."[48] He also gives a lot of consideration to Heidegger's history of being and different epochal disclosures of the world.[49] But because of an objectified account of practices, this remains a purely nominal possibility. If Dasein (as constituted by public practices) cannot allow any feedback, then what exactly causes a change in the background? Any social change must be first located in the background. Heidegger never mentioned an objective *telos* of practices (whether it be coping with the environment or development of the labor power) and it is hard to suspect him of any sympathy to such attempts. Without it, however, the very idea of a change in the objectified background seems to lose its foundation.

The problem will only deteriorate if we, along with B. Lahire[50], cast aside a rather dogmatic assumption that there is only one coherent set of practical dispositions available for an individual. Modern societies have made dispositional plurality an obvious fact and plenty of such dispositions are in a state of direct conflict. The task of selection is an open challenge posed to an individual and the result cannot be predetermined by the mere availability of some practical set of skills. Such sets must be better or worse, more or less appropriate, at least in some sense in order to render any selection among them meaningful. How can this decision be made if the background grounds any possible intelligibility? How are we to choose between two conflicting backgrounds? It seems too far-stretched to

explain such a choice by postulating that another background urges us to a decision.

Later in his career, Dreyfus has proposed a different solution to this problem, which, as Wrathall pointed out, is "consistent with the idea that all intelligibility is ultimately grounded in social practices."[51] He proposed a special account of cultural expertise, a sort of practical "*phronesis*"[52] which allows Dasein to understand a situation without relying on average norms and skills. Expert Dasein has a much more subtle sense of the situation, which cannot be covered by the rather general and abstract everyday norms. The typical example is a social actor who knows without any explicit rules when to tell the truth and when it is wiser to lie (even though social rules prohibit lying as such). As I see it, however, this account is either incompatible with Dreyfus's original claim or doesn't introduce anything new to his original position. It seems that according to such an approach, mastery over practice consists exactly of our ability not to lean on the original background, instead substituting it with a richer and more efficient set of background skills and assumptions. Expertise discloses possibilities that were not accounted for by the average background and consequently adapts the background so it can capture new possibilities. To claim that much more subtle possibilities are already presupposed by the practice means to completely ignore the fact that an expert (exactly because of his expertise) doesn't follow the same set of rules and can potentially reformulate the very meaning of these practices on a permanent basis. If, on the contrary, Dreyfus holds to the original claim saying that such changes are already presupposed by the background and the expert Dasein is only receptive enough to reflect on such changes, then this solution would not differ from the original one according to which practices change autonomously and Dasein just grasps this *fait accompli*.

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[48] Ibid, p. 98
[49] See H. Dreyfus and C. Spinosa, Highway Bridges and Feasts. Heidegger and Borgmann on How to Affirm Technology
[50] B. Lahire, From the Habitus to an Individual Heritage of Dispositions

[51] H. Dreyfus, M. Wrathall – Background practices, p. 12
[52] H. Dreyfus, Could Anything Be More Intelligible than Everyday Intelligibility? p. 29 in: Background practices

Another approach to the change in the background was proposed by J. Haugeland[53] and C. White[54] (and supported by Dreyfus himself[55]) who draw a parallel between T. Kuhn's account of normal and revolutionary science and Heidegger's notion of authentic/inauthentic understanding. Haugeland claims that our paradigms of understanding can fail and become inappropriate to given circumstances (when a teacher, for example, realizes that the traditional methods of teaching no longer work), which gives us chance to reconsider this paradigm in order to continue the activity. White, along with Dreyfus, outlines a more general analysis claiming that it is possible to commit a "leap from dominant practices to marginal ones" that rediscloses the world for Dasein "when current practices run into anomalies."[56] Once again, this move, if combined with the primacy of practice thesis, claims more than it is actually allowed to. Kuhn's account of scientific revolution presupposes a task placed outside the paradigm. Namely, a potential integration of all the data into one non-contradictive system, and an explicit proposal of how this can be done in the most efficient way. The primacy of practice, which claims that *all* the intelligibility as such is based on the background practices, excludes the possibility of a meaningful task placed outside them. Any possible failure as well as any possible success, therefore, must be already presupposed by the background. But the following question arise, why does the background predetermine certain practices to fail and why do they occur as such? Is this because they help (or fail to help) to adapt to the environment? Or is it because they are a manifestation of the development of labor power? Once again, the lack of an answer to this question represents a crucial missing element in such interpretations.

I believe that a primacy of practice thesis according to which practices one-sidedly ground intelligibility is applicable to philosophers like Dewey or James, who believe that they occur as a result of the objective process and are ruled by the objective criterion. However, when applied to phenomenologists who tend to criticize any idea of self-standing objectivity (whether it be objectivity of entities or more subtle second-order objectivity of processes (such as evolutionary adaptation or development of the labor power that further grounds "shifting" objectivity of things)), this conception leads to unresolvable paradoxes caused by radically different methodologies. The "grounding" in practices is a problematic move as it is. Its critique raised by J. Habermas[57], D. Davidson[58], H. Putnam[59] and S. Blackburn[60] (to name a few) is also well known, and there is no need to dwell on it since it isn't my aim to simply reconstruct the critique of objectified account of social development. My point is to exactly demonstrate that merging of such pragmatic views with phenomenological tradition turns this problem into an open paradox. In what follows, I will try to demonstrate that explication of pragmatic motives within the phenomenological tradition must take a different direction adjusted for its specificity. This might propose not only a more consistent account of phenomenological pragmatism, but help to deal with criticism addressed to pragmatism as such.

III. A Pragmatically-Phenomenological Account of Understanding

Pragmatic interpretations, as I attempt to demonstrate, provide a sort of grounding for understanding, even if this grounding is itself ungrounded and consists in unjustified and unthematized ways of action, skills, etc. This very grounding creates a practical frame within which both our practical and unpractical comportments take place. This means that the nature of our relation to the world is pragmatic because any possible meaning disclosed by understanding as such has a pragmatic source – ungrounded ways of action. This view culminates logically in the account of theory, which isn't anything else but a non-practical method that takes over practical

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[53] J. Haugeland, Truth and Finitude
[54] C. White, Time and Death: Heidegger's Analysis of Finitude
[55] H. Dreyfus, Foreword to Time and Death
[56] H. Dreyfus, Foreword to Time and Death, p. 52

[57] J. Habermas, Discourse on Modernity
[58] D. Davidson, On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme
[59] H. Putnam, Pragmatism: An Open Question
[60] S. Blackburn, Pragmatism: all or some?; in: *Truth: A Guide*

tasks (i.e. "practice pursued by other means"). In this section, I want to argue that such framing of any possible meaningfulness isn't the only way of manifesting the pragmatic nature of understanding. Instead of its grounding in such pragmatic source, we could also demonstrate that meaning itself is pragmatic, i.e. its essence consists in disclosing and maximizing possibilities of acting and thinking. As a result, we can come up with a pragmatism that doesn't need an objective account of how practices and meanings evolve.

Firstly, let's get back to the notions of logical and existential possibilities. As we have seen, the idea proposed by the pragmatists was that existential possibilities make sense, whereas logical possibilities don't. This was explained by the fact that existential possibilities, unlike logical, follow from certain backgrounds or practices. The problem here is that logical possibilities must make at least some sense in order to be intended at all. This fact can hardly be explained solely by the reference to "deworlding," i.e. the second-order process of abstraction from the context, as Dreyfus insisted. Our everyday orientation in the world presupposes not binary coding into existential/logical possibilities but an endless variation of deeper/narrower grasps on the situation. Once again, it seems too far-stretched to explain all these endless variations of understanding by the different intensity of abstraction. I think that this impasse can be potentially avoided if we resort to pragmatists' favorite strategy, translation of rigid oppositions into flexible ones. Instead of treating existential possibilities as meaningful and logical possibilities as meaningless, we could say that both of them are meaningful but to a different extent. In this case, they would only be the extreme parts of the same "equiprimordial" spectrum of meaningfulness. I think such a move will eventually prove itself, as it can potentially describe our everyday experience much more adequately. At this point, however, it provides nothing but further questions. It becomes no longer possible to view practices as a source of meaningfulness: practices don't make anything meaningful; they can only make it more meaningful. Practices, therefore, can no longer function as the explanatory principle; on the contrary, now they are what need to be explained in the first place, since it is no longer clear why exactly isolated possibilities are less meaningful than the ones that follow from some background.

We can take, as a guiding example, a possibility of taking a shot in soccer. It might be an existential possibility if a player has certain skills and norms in his background. If he doesn't, however, the possibility loses its existential character: it would still be possible for the player to kick a ball towards the goalposts, but it wouldn't make *much* sense for him. Naturally, we can try to explain the rules of the game to this player hoping to transform shooting into a meaningful possibility. So, we start by explaining this very possibility: the player should kick the ball inside the goalposts (1). This is a fairly transparent and understandable task but *what's the point,* he might ask. What's the meaning of this? When the trainee raises these questions, we add that (2) there is a goalkeeper trying to parry his shots with hands. Furthermore, we also add that (3) other players from the opposite team will try to tackle the ball and (4) score by themselves. And finally, (5) there also are teammates to whom the player can pass the ball in order to keep possession. As a result of such an explanation, we have introduced the background and thus transformed (1) into a sufficiently meaningful possibility. The same works for each of the mentioned possibilities. We can start the explanation with (5), which taken by itself would be more or less meaningless and then add (3), (4), (1) and (2). Or we could start with (3) and add (5), (1), (2) and (4). Order here is irrelevant: each possibility is made meaningful because other possibilities are included. They receive existential character because of their interconnection to the other possibilities.

Now, what exactly happens between (1) and (2), so they can become mutually more meaningful? Of course, merely placing them alongside each other isn't enough to explain such a transformation. In order for (1) to make sense, it must somehow interact with (2). But what is a

meaningful interaction? Why do shooting and passing interact meaningfully, whereas hammering and singing don't? Borrowing a term from Heidegger, it could be said that a meaningful interaction sets out "leeway", a room-for-maneuver, where possibilities are limited by the possibilities they interact with and, at the same time, they are disclosed by. This moment belongs to the very meaning of the word *Spielraum*: limitation here doesn't negate possibilities completely but leaves open a chance to overcome it. This gives to the involved possibilities a certain space to maneuver, which enriches their content. Continuing the example, the possibility of a shot can never be the same after we add the goalkeeper to the game. Because the goalkeeper limits scoring, shooting has now subdivided into the possibilities of taking an accurate shot towards the corner (1a), curving the ball (1b), tricking the goalkeeper with a feint (1c) etc.; analogously, goalkeeping now includes the possibilities of parrying the shot with hands (2a), legs (2b) or coming off the line (2c). An interaction between (1) and (2), in such a way, turns into an interaction between (1a) (1b) (1c) and (2a) (2b) (2c) because it enriches both sides of the *relata* through mutual limitation. Each of these freshly disclosed possibilities is context dependent. They aren't conceivable without each other as they presuppose each other analytically: the shot into the left corner presupposes also a possibility of the shot into the right one. Because I can shoot in the both directions, the goalkeeper stays centrally, ready to dive to either side. If one of these possibilities is removed (a right corner shot), the other two (a left corner shot, a goalkeeper dive) becomes meaningless as well: there is not much sense for the goalkeeper to stay centrally if I am going to shoot towards the left side only. But this would mean that there is not much sense to place a shot into the left corner either since the goalkeeper will easily save it. The whole activity is rendered meaningless if the right corner shot is removed. Shooting, therefore, makes sense precisely as a possibility of placing a shot into the top corner/trick shot/etc. – *it is meaningful insofar that it inherently presupposes other possibilities and is presupposed by them*.

On the contrary, shooting, conceived as a mere placing a ball within the net, is barely meaningful because it doesn't presuppose anything but itself.

So, the (1)-(2) couplet something I call disclosive potential, namely, a potential to establish interplay *Spielraum* leading to the disclosure of further, *complex* possibilities, i.e. possibilities inherently presupposing other possibilities. Because of this inherent complexity or richness, we can grasp them as more meaningful. If we add (3) to these two possibilities, it will further increase the disclosing potential of leeway already set by the (1)-(2),because tackling, more goalkeeping possibilities and shooting are disclosed as well. Shooting will also include the possibilities of timing and positioning, tackling will include the possibilities of deciding a distance and blocking, and goalkeeping will presuppose possibilities of cooperation with teammates. Taken together, possibilities (1), (2) and (3) sets out a richer interplay, i.e. they have a greater disclosive potential and, thus, the possibilities disclosed by their interplay are more meaningful than possibilities disclosed by (1) and (2). This means that the practice of (1), (2) and (3) is a better, more meaningful than the practice consisting of (1) and (2) only. The same happens when we add (4) and (5). Each of them becomes more meaningful because it is enriched by the interaction with leeway constituted by different possibilities; and the leeway itself gets enriched by this interaction. Possibilities, therefore, don't interact and become meaningful because they belong to some practice. On the contrary, practices are created and sustained as a result of the specific interaction of possibilities that maximizes disclosing potential. A background isn't anything else but a set of essentially interrelated and mutually disclosed possibilities, not a ground that enables them.

The ability of projection onto possibilities, therefore, is a pragmatic ability from top to bottom, but not because such a projection is based on embodied skills and habits. It is pragmatic simply because it aims at maximization of our ability-to-be: understanding is guided by the necessity to provide more disclosive or more complex possibilities of

being (i.e. possibilities inherently presupposing other possibilities), which enrich our being-in-the-world by giving to it more content. In other words, understanding entrenches our situatedness and intensifies our being-in-the-world by disclosing more possibilities. So, a person unaware of football would hardly recognize the specificity of his own situation if placed on a football field. For him, the related possibility of kicking the laying ball would appear as a logical gesture, which says almost nothing about what can be done in such a situation. On the contrary, for an expert, this possibility discloses the whole world of further possibilities in which Dasein can dwell. In the second case, we have a situation that better discloses Dasein as ability-to-be or as being-possible; we have a richer, more extensive being-in-the-world. Concrete practices, therefore, are not the source of meaningfulness but means of its maximization: configured the way they are, possibilities maximize the disclosive potential and make the most sense, which maximizes Dasein's ability-to-be and helps to make the most sense out of its existence.

To get a clearer idea of this, we can once again revoke Spinoza and his notion of "conatus." Spinoza sees conatus as a fundamental principle according to which "each thing, as far as it lies in itself, strives to persevere in its being."[61] A relation of an individual to the world is, thus, explained as grounded in its determined essence, which aims at a specific self-realization as prescribed by this essence. What happens when we drop the objectified approach to this relation? For one thing, we could no longer describe conatus as "perseverance." For there isn't anything that can persevere: there is no Dasein without the world as there are no baseball players without baseball. We cannot postulate an essence that then finds its predetermined application, because the way Dasein exists is exactly through the world: understanding discloses ways of being in the world equiprimordially with things in this world. So, the reason why we are drawn to the world is not because it is prescribed by our particular essence; it is because of the ecstatic character of our existence that can find its way of

being, only by elaborating it in the world, amidst things themselves. What Dasein's conatus consists of is, in other words, a need to take roots in the world by showing what can be done, said or observed in it. So, understanding strives to enable *some* form of being and to give to Dasein's existence *some* content; *ab initio,* it is guided by the necessity to maximize its ability-to-be.

The approach that treats practices as more or less meaningful (as more or less contributing to Dasein's ability-to-be) paves the way for a much more successful explanation of a change in the background. Possibilities coexist within a given practical frame because they productively limit and disclose each other, contributing to our ability-to-be. Hypothetically, we can always imagine another configuration within a given practical frame, which will include new possibilities or alter current ones. For the most part, however, this remains a mere thought experiment. As J. Haugeland has argued, the functioning of everyday practice is based on the rule of non-contradiction and double-checking: I can imagine me using the hammer differently, but I will fail to hammer a nail.[62] This rule defines how one should behave in order to reach its goals. In this sense, any re-configuration would only decrease its disclosing potential by disrupting the system of interactions. However, sometimes a new configuration can prove to be more efficient and instead increases such potential. Take, for example, the introduction of the substitution rule in sports. Because the price of any serious foul has now grown, defenders tend to play more cautiously, which discloses more attacking possibilities and invites more complex forms of defense. So, although untypical, it isn't unconceivable that the alteration is introduced because practices as such are constructed based on maximizing the disclosing potential. They occur because they make sense and evolve because they make better sense in a different way. It is our understanding that motivates their occurrence and change.

All of these sit well with pragmatists' critique of the cognitivist approach to understanding and the back-

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[61] B. Spinoza, Ethics, part 3, prop. 7

[62] J. Haugeland, Truth and Finitude, p. 200

ground. Our cultural background might well be composed of non-cognitive, non-conceptual skills, norms and habits that (unlike the discussed example of the football rules) "cannot and shouldn't be explicated or justified." The point is that their meaningfulness is under questioning every bit as much as the meaningfulness of possibilities they disclose. Even despite their inexplicability, such elements are still involved in meaningful patterns of life without being placed in a position of an "unmoved mover." In other words, both the possibilities that skills enables and skills themselves are dependent upon their disclosive potential: they are worth being followed as long as they are linked to other possibilities. If possibilities that skills disclose become somehow less relevant, so do these skills. So, Dreyfus's favorite example, a skill that helps us to keep personal distance enables a number of possibilities (to hear what other person says and to be heard by him, the possibility of not being clingy and disdainful at the same time). If any of these possibilities vanish (like when we are stuck in the overcrowded metro), it makes lesser sense to hold to this skill, and it doesn't matter how explicated or cognitivized it is. To conclude, certain skills might be so all-pervasive that they cannot be explicated, but new possibilities can make them irrelevant by making irrelevant possibilities that disclose them and were disclosed by them.

The notion of disclosing potential, in such a way, conglutinates practices and dispositions, skills and their use. Their disjunction leads either to viewing every skill as an implicit validity claim or to the rigidifying of practices, the problem that I was trying to describe in the previous section. In the latter case, Heideggerian pragmatism indeed appears as an abstract negation of reason, as Habermas and others were always glad to point out. [63] To claim, along with Dreyfus and other pragmatists, that our existential possibilities are somehow brought into reality by our background practices means to substitute cognition for practices but retain the relation of grounding, which results in deprivation of flexibility and transparency. What

needs to be done to overcome this struggle, however, isn't to duplicate the basic move of intellectualistic philosophy but to establish a circular relation: neither implicit skills nor explicit possibilities would be possible if not their connection. They mutually enable each other and withdrawing any part of this relation would mean removal of the other.

Conclusion

My interpretation highlights a problem common both to the American pragmatism, Heideggerian pragmatic reinterpretations and to a wide range of other pragmatic trends. Even though they problematize givenness of objects, discard observational theories of knowledge and cognitivism of any sort, they still think that there is a process (the principle of evolution) or phenomenon (public practices) with its own objective logic and firmness that determines or grounds meanings of entities and practices, slipping back onto traditional vocabulary of ultimate grounds and archai of being. In this sense, the primacy of practice (as proclaimed by Dewey and Dreyfus) isn't such a distant relative of Platonic idea of good: both presuppose that we need some "light" to see entities as they are, but most importantly both view this light as something objectively grounding meaning of entities. In doing this, both are taking refuge in the world handing over the meaning-making to an objective principle. On the contrary, one of Heidegger's most profound insights, as it seems to me, was the idea that even though the objects are given "as they are," the way we grasp them and their meaning cannot be derived from or based on any objective process (and this extends to Dreyfus's ungrounded ground). A notion of disclosing potential that I have introduced was meant to explicate such irreducibility of understanding. The source of meaningfulness is neither an entity itself nor an objectively existing skill or principle. What we call meaning is accessible because Dasein strives to finds itself in the world, to dwell in it. What understanding is ultimately aimed

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[63] J. Habermas, Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, p. 138

towards is to disclose the richest possible being-in-the-world; and the way this objective is reached is in by no means predetermined.

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Situated Acting and Embodied Coping

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ABSTRACT: The pragmatist account of action in Brandom's *Making it Explicit* offers a compelling defense of social embeddedness of acting. Its virtue consists of redefining the agent's reasons for action in terms of her public commitments and entitlements. However, this account remains too intellectualist insofar as it neglects the embodied sense allowing the agent to respond to various situational demands and social constraints. In my article, I provide a less disembodied account of action that draws on Dreyfus's emphasis on bodily skills as constitutive aspects of intentional acting. Dreyfus' notion of absorbed coping certainly highlights the role of body and affectivity in guiding the performance of action, but it ends up in underestimating the role of discursive and conceptual capacities in human agency. Against Dreyfus, I will demonstrate that involved and embodied coping not only answers to the demands of a given situation, but also involves responsiveness to reasons. My ambition is to defend a continuity between practical reasoning, i.e. our capacity to justify our performances through reasons, and our embodied coping skills, a continuity that has been overlooked by Brandom's intellectualist and denied by Dreyfus' anti-rationalist accounts.

Keywords: Action, Intention, Reasons to Act, Skillful coping, Brandom, Dreyfus

Introduction

Against all conventional attempts to explain action by agent's individual beliefs and desires, Brandom reveals and emphasizes the social dimension of acting. His normative pragmatism explains that the sociality of action is grounded in our capacity to justify our various performances in the game of giving and asking for reasons, where our intentions become public commitments to be acknowledged by our peers as entitlements for our acting. In the first part, I will lay out the merits of Brandom's account that consist in making explicit the social and rational underpinnings of action. Instead of being identified with private mental states, reasons to act should be viewed as social commitments that we publicly endorse. Since the content of intention is determined by its articulation within the game of reason-giving, all intentional acting presupposes discursive and therefore social practices as the background of their intelligibility. Responsiveness to reasons and sensitivity to shared rules are thus revealed as essential to our intentional agency. However, Brandom owes his readers an explanation about the way in which the sensitivity to rules intervenes not only in our endorsing practical commitments to act, but constitutes also part and parcel of performing the action. In Brandom, the agent *first* adopts a practical attitude, which *then* brings about her action causally. On this account, only the first stage of deliberation and endorsing practical commitments involves sensitivity to norms and rules, while the bodily execution of action does not. It merely follows from the antecedent endorsement of practical commitments. His conception of action thus remains only contingently embodied since it reduces the body to a mere instrument of realizing the practical attitude adopted on a discursively articulated level.

The second half of my paper seeks to redefine our sensitivity to norms and rules in a less intellectualist fashion. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty and Dreyfus' analysis of motor intentionality, I strive to expose the role of the body in rule-following. More precisely, I claim that our embodied coping skills and habits allow us to be sensitive to norms without a need for representation. My aim is to delineate our bodily responsiveness to the normative significance of the situation in which we are actively engaged. The embodied sensitivity to rules entails that one's own body is responsive to the affordances as well as to the social constraints and situational demands. Thanks to our habits, we implicitly and spontaneously understand what is proper and improper in a given social milieu. In other words, our acting is constantly backed by our embodied sense of correctness and incorrectness, which is engrained in our acquired yet flexible habits and skills. However, while Dreyfus considers absorbed bodily coping as non-rational and non-conceptual, I argue on the contrary that our action remains responsive to reasons even when we do not articulate them (not even for ourselves). Such thing is possible because, first, we count on reasons that are deposited or sedimented in commonly shared bodily habits, and secondly, we rely upon

our coupling with the norm-governed and familiar social environment to which we constantly adjust our conduct. Then, my final aim is to defend a continuity between practical reasoning (i.e. the capacity to justify our performances through reasons) and our embodied coping skills, which is overlooked in Brandom's intellectualist approach and explicitly denied by Dreyfus' anti-rationalist polemics. While both authors fail to notice the reciprocal ties between our embodied coping skills and discursive capacities, I will demonstrate that our involved and embodied coping with the demands of a given situation necessarily entails responsiveness to reasons and, conversely, that our linguistic performances presuppose our bodily responsiveness to solicitations.

The social dimension of action in Brandom's pragmatism

Brandom's pragmatic and inferential account of action received relatively little attention in the otherwise large corpus of literature inspired by his normative pragmatism.[1] Such neglect is not only surprising, but also regretful, since Brandom's redefinition of intentions in terms of acknowledged commitments opens up new ways to understand human agency and its dependency upon the shared space of reasons. According to the traditional view, action differs from mere behavior to the extent in which they are brought for and guided by agent's intentions, resulting from her individual beliefs and desires. Against such an individualistic or monological account of action, Brandom objects that we cannot start with "intrinsically motivating preferences or desires" that would ground the authority of "norms governing practical reasoning and defining rational action" (Brandom 2000, 31). Such a conception would amount to the impossible task to derive norms from merely first-person attitudes of members of the community, criticized as psychologism since Frege's times. In the special case of action, such criticism resists any derivation of what is valid (gen-

eral norms) from what individual members of the community actually take to be valid (because something occurs within their minds). Brandom's proposal consists of considering things the other way around: it is only because we are able to endorse normative commitments and to attribute to each other normative entitlements to act that we can be said to hold particular intentions, beliefs, desires, preferences and other practical attitudes. In other words, only because we rationally assess each other's intentions in the game of giving and asking for reasons, that each one of us can be sure of having identifiable intentions. It is precisely this discursive articulation of our reasons that allows us to be acknowledged as actors with intentions amendable to critical assessment, which includes assessment about what should we do to make these intentions true.

Furthermore, the very content of the agent's intention is beholden to her capacity to articulate and defend its *rationale* in the social practice consisting of exposing the premises behind such intention and defending the acceptability of its consequences. It follows that an agent would be unable to identify her own intentions (and therefore unable to act in the light of reasons and norms) if she were not able to articulate their content in the social game of reason-giving. Thus, each of us, in order to properly assess the meaning of what we intend to do, is answerable to social norms, according to which all such inferential relations between intentions and reasons for action are assessed in discursive practices. In other words, it is only within a larger sphere of public discussion that we might ascertain whether our intentions – in their inferential connections with other practical attitudes – provide a sufficient set of reasons to justify one's action.[2]

How does a discursive articulation of practical reasons in the reasons-giving game come about? We expose our own intention into the public space of reasons and

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[1] The two notable and insightful exceptions are R. Stout (2010) and S. Levine (2012).

[2] For an instructive overview of Brandom's account of the social dimension of reasoning and the inferential articulation of the content of normative attitudes, see Koreň and Kolman, "Introduction: Inferentialism's Years of Travel and Its Logico-Philosophical Calling" in Beran, Kolman & Koreň (2018).

thus we make our action intelligible and treat it as a candidate for a rational assessment. Insofar as these reasons are acknowledged, they become commitments for which we are accountable in front of others. On this account, when the agent declares what she intends to do, she endorses a commitment rather than describing her inner state of mind. Think about Luther's famous words "Here I stand, I can do no other" when he was summoned to the Diet of Worms in 1521. Rather than factual assertion resulting from his self-knowledge, such an attestation is better understood as an illocutionary act through which he gave a public account of the link between his convictions and the way in which he intended to conduct himself in his further confrontation with opponents.

Endorsing a commitment entails that we let ourselves being judged by our capacity to act and live up to them. In this way, *what we intend* is also accountable to *what we really do*. No matter how much I cherish the idea of becoming a guitar-player, if I never start practicing guitar and dedicate all my leisure time to sports or family, I *should* doubt about the reality of any such intention (and I might be challenged by others to question the authenticity of my intention). I can thus be sure to have distinct intentions to the extent that I am able to act accordingly to them. The crucial point of Brandom's inferential pragmatics lies in the further development of this idea: what it means to act accordingly to such and such intention cannot be decided unilaterally by me, since it is a matter of public articulation of stakes involved. Even in the case of a supposedly lonely guitar-player, the fulfilling of her intention to become one is answerable to the recognition by others that she holds in esteem as successful players or at least as persons able to judge her performances. In the absence of reciprocal attribution of commitments, each agent would be accountable only to herself, i.e. would be committed to whatever *seems* right to herself. But if there is no way to establish that one is wrong about one's commitment, there is no commitment at all. Herein lies the social dimension of acting for reasons: whether the agent is committed to act in a certain way depends upon what she is able to articulate in the norm-laden and social discursive practices, not upon something that only she can access through introspection. In other words, if knowing one's intentions implies knowing *what must hold true* for accomplishing them successfully, then our personal practical commitments are intelligible only within open-ended and inferentially articulated practices.

Then, not only is the content of agent's intention, but also the meaning of her action based on such intention determined by larger inferential significance of her avowed attitudes. In order to make sense of our action, our co-actors and interlocutors strive to infer collateral commitments that serve as both premises and consequences of our practical stances. Furthermore, one's commitment to some intentions and performances might remove her entitlement to other performances. Thus, in one of previous Czech governments, a Social Democrat Minister for Education put her child to a private and high-priced *lycée* and then acted surprised when criticized for her (supposedly private) act. 'Does not anybody strive to get the best available education for her children?', she claimed. Yet, public opinion and press did not dispute at all the intention to see her child placed in the best school possible, but rather her intention to act politically as a Social Democrat Minister for Education. This intention, no matter how sincerely held by the Minister herself, was indeed identified in the public debate with a commitment to making the best available education in public, rather than private schools. What can we learn from this actual case is that we are often held responsible for the implications of our commitments beyond what we are able to grasp reflectively. Admittedly, such explicit commitment appears most visibly within the field of political action, where one is repeatedly and most severely questioned not only about her intentions, but also about their inferential implications. Nevertheless, we are required to undertake similar responsibilities even in our daily lives, whenever we are solicited to provide reasons for our acting by others or whenever we invite them to support our initiatives, in the hope of enhancing our own capacity to act.

Brandom's merits and shortcomings

The principal merit of Brandom's account of action consists in emphasizing the social dimension of action that disqualifies any individualistic or monological view of acting. Brandom invites us to consider action as socially embedded not only in its overt performance, but also in its very intentional structure, insofar as he suggests to treat intentions as publicly endorsed commitments, rather than private mental states. The social dimension of acting is further developed in his claim that any reasons to act worthy of its name should be – at least in principle – linguistically articulated. Finally, Brandom is able to account for the difference between human agency and responsiveness to rules, on the one hand, and inanimate objects' subjection to laws of nature, on the other. Such difference is most often explained in a Kantian fashion: while objects obey to laws blindly, rational agents act according to the *idea* of principles that guide their action. In order to avoid representationalist connotation of Kant's "Vorstellung von Regeln zu bestimmen" (1968, 32), Brandom (1994, 31) prefers to insist on agent's ability to adopt an "attitude towards the law" to be followed.[3] Between the rule and its instantiation in action, agent's attitude towards the law would amount to introducing a third term allowing for a freedom within constraints of the rule-governed space of reasons. In other words, agent's capacity to endorse practical commitments in the light of the rule(s) to be followed would account for a difference between acting for reasons and obeying to natural necessities. While rational agents are sensitive and responsive to the rules, inanimate things in nature are merely subject to natural laws. At the same time, Brandom would still be able to bypass the Kantian reliance on the mental representation of law as the distinctive feature of human responsiveness to rules and norms.

That is why he insists, that our attitudes towards the rules, according to which we guide our conduct, are of social, public and linguistic nature (Brandom 1994, 31ff).

His anti-representationalist stance notwithstanding, Brandom's picture is beholden to a mediational epistemological picture to the extent in which it separates our perception from our acting and inserts our discursive capacities as an intermediary between perceptual "entries" and practical "exits", to use Sellarsian terminology embraced by Brandom (1994, 235). On this view, the agent, informed by his perceptual and discursively articulated acquaintance with the standing situation, *first* adopts a practical attitude according to his self-positioning in the space of reasons, which *then* brings about her action causally:

> What in action causally elicits the production of performable states of affairs (by the exercise of reliable differential responsive dispositions) is in the first instance deontic attitudes rather than statuses: acknowledgments of practical commitments (Brandom 1994, 261).

Brandom not only owes his readers a better explanation of what these "differential responsive dispositions" might be, but most of all, his account introduces a major gap between our perceptual capacities and the guidance of our active performance, since our acting upon the world decides how the world appears to us, what phenomena will become relevant in the situation in which we actively partake. Insofar as it fails to recognize this essential entanglement between acting and perceiving, Brandom's account reminds the classical picture according to which perception provides the input to be grasped by our cognitive and conceptual capacities in order to provide, as a final step, a determinate reply to the same external environment. To be sure, Brandom's rejection of the "myth of the given" is a clear sign of his distance towards this empiricist affiliation, the fact remains that he re-introduces an illegitimate separation between perception and action, with a space of reasons standing between perceptual entry transitions and behavioral exits.

Furthermore, one might raise objections against Brandom's decision to separate the realization of our

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[3] Stout (2010) provides a detailed and enlightening analysis about Kantian heritage in Brandom's differentiating between the ways rational agents and inanimate objects are subject to rules.

practical commitments into two stages. In the first stage, we endorse a practical attitude through our partaking in the reason-giving game. In the second one, we are causally induced to act according to our acknowledgment of such commitment: "In action, alterations of deontic attitude, specifically acknowledgements of practical commitments, serve as stimuli eliciting nonlinguistic performances." (Brandom 1994, 235). Rowland Stout has already identified an important negative side-effect of Brandom's "two-ply theory of action" that limits our responsiveness to rules only to the first step consisting of production of attitudes:

> The second stage involves things actually being made to happen but involves no sensitivity to rules (or reasons). This fails to take seriously the idea of action as a process of rationally transforming the world— i.e., a process in which the changes characteristic of the action involve the rationality characteristic of agency. Instead the rationality characteristic of agency is manifested in the production of attitudes (Stout 2010, 148).

If the second stage is identified as a causal response elicited by our acknowledgement of commitment, then our performance of the attitude cannot be guided by our responsiveness to rules. I subscribe to Stout's criticism and intend to develop it further into two interrelated arguments that will prove crucial to my own position. To my understanding, what is omitted in Brandom's account is precisely our embodied sensitivity to the specific demands of a given situation and, consequently, the embeddedness of our temporally unfolding acting to the ever-changing and open-ended situation.

First, the practical skills involved in our competent performance of action are open to normative correction to the extent they are publicly expressed. If the only thing involved in bringing about the action were the causal functioning of our objective body and its physiological mechanisms, there would be no possibility to assess its functioning as competent or incompetent, appropriate or inappropriate. However, it is a matter of fact that skills involved in our performances are deemed corrigible and hence accountable to our shared norms of conduct. Concerning the open-ended character of situa-

tion in which we have to act, Brandom completely omits to account for our embodied capacity to track subtle or profound modifications of the game that unfolds while we are acting, because of our own initiative and other agents' responses to it. Our acting has to remain flexible insofar as the agent must repeatedly provide refined replies to a fluctuating pull of new solicitations and affordances that has not been present to her at the moment of her initial acknowledging of commitment.

Dreyfus on embodied coping and sensitivity to solicitations

In order to see how the two above-mentioned requirements for situated acting are met by our bodily involvement in a situation, let us first turn to Hubert Dreyfus' account of absorbed coping. According to Dreyfus, most of our actions consist of perceiving *what to do* and responding to it without thinking. We do not even need to formulate any intention in order to guide our action, we rather perceive a possibility to act and we let ourselves to be drawn by such perceived affordances and solicitations. Dreyfus (2013: 37n12) helpfully introduces a conceptual distinction between "affordances" and "solicitations". On Gibson's account (1986: 127–43), affordances correspond to all perceivable possibilities offered by an environment to a certain kind of creature and they are real features of the world. Solicitations, for Dreyfus, are those affordances that are salient from the perspective of our long or short-term projects and that are able to draw us to act precisely because of their relevance. Seeing a stick as an affordance to swing it like a weapon is only possible for an organism equipped with longer hands, but it is perceived as a solicitation to act only for an agent ready to engage in fighting (be it real or playful).[4]

Dreyfus' emphasis on our practical openness to affordances and our sensitivity to solicitations provides a welcome antidote to Brandom's account of agency that

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[4] However, whether an affordance will appear as a solicitation to an agent depends not only to organism's needs and desires, as Dreyfus would have it, but also to her acknowledged, i.e. "Brandomian" commitments.

omits to take into consideration the embodied skills allowing us to cope with the difficulties and requirements of any interpersonal transaction. These skills include our affective attunement to various demands that the situation imposes on us. More than often, we feel that the situation calls for an intervention of our part. For example, I feel drawn to reply in an angrily way to a demeaning offense. At the same time, I remain affectively attuned to norms of conduct and various hierarchical positions of other agents and the right ways to address them. Certain possibilities to redeem the situation just feel right, while others are simply out of question as inappropriate, without any need to think about them. These considerations aim to enlarge Brandom's overly intellectualist account of sensitivity to norms, that focuses unilaterally on our rational and intralinguistic assessments. We can see that the normative dimension of our conduct entails more than responsiveness to reasons and includes all kinds of "felt pulls" and embodied responsiveness to various degrees of salience in perceived opportunities for action.

Furthermore, our affective sensitivity serves to guide our acting in providing a constant feedback about how we fare in respect with tasks to be performed. Not only is our body sensitive to the demands of a given situation, but it is also sensitively monitoring if its conduct meets or not such demands. Such a tracking includes affective responsiveness to our ongoing and partial successes and failures in all such endeavors. Each agent unreflectively, but continuously assesses if she is doing well at the given moment precisely because she senses a tension when loosing or deviating from an optimal grip on things (Dreyfus 2014, 246). Such a feedback provides us both with a sense of situation and with felt hints or indicators telling us whether our acting is making the situation better or worse. For all these various reasons, our acting upon the world might be purposive without the need of conscious representations of a goal to be achieved and without endorsing a discursively articulate commitment.

How do these descriptions of absorbed coping relate to Brandom's account of action? How does Dreyfus' phenomenological analysis of embodied responsiveness

to solicitations modify or supplement Brandom's understanding of action's responsiveness to reasons? In my view, one promising way to remedy the insufficiencies of Brandom's and other intellectualist accounts of acting would be to recognize the specificity of the space of motivations as the primary ground allowing to make sense of human action, and then, to consider how to move from there to the realm of reasons.

The space of motivations

For Dreyfus (2005, 56), we primarily move and orient ourselves within the space of motivations, where we rely on our situation-specific responsiveness to the most salient affordances. Emphasizing the space of motivations as the primary background of our being-in-the-world opens a promising path for understanding how we are *moved* by the world neither in a mechanistic nor in an idealistic sense: we are moved neither by mental representations of things, nor by their physical and causal impingements on us, but first and foremost by their perceived solicitations in relation to our bodily capacities. My proposal aims to apply Dreyfus' as well as Merleau-Ponty's account of motivation in order to emphasize the role of the lived and living body in the genesis of affective monitoring that guides our action. In particular, the methodological choice of starting with the space of motivations – rather than with causal interactions or cognitive judgments – allows us to appreciate the contribution of kinesthetic experiences to the monitoring of how one's body is positioned with regards to the requirements of its project and to the normatively structured environment. These two kinds of demands are not to be thought separately, but rather as merging together, to the extent that the situation in which I am involved is articulated primarily according to "I can" or "I can't", rather than "I think". The first thing to observe is that our performances within a perceptual field are closely tied to felt variations of our capacity to meet the requirements, novelties and disturbances of our environment. I am affectively responsive to all kinds of tugs and pulls of the

world according to what I am able or unable to do about them. I am affectively sensible to certain matters as threatening when I tacitly see my bodily capacities restricted (typically in dark places or in other cases of momentary sensory impairment), as frustrating when I perceive others as obstacles on my path, and as exciting when I hope with uncertainty to be capable of living up to some rare occasion. As an integral part of this synchronization or "living communication with the world" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 53), kinesthetic experiences and other "gut feelings" tacitly shape and articulate worldly matters into relevant, recalcitrant, attracting and otherwise existentially significant objects or situations. Bodily immersed in the space of motivations, we are constantly seeking to ascertain our grip on things.

This practical and non-conceptual orientation is something that Brandom himself acknowledges as an essential part of intentionality. Furthermore, intentionality itself is not so much the mark of mental, as it was for Brentano and his followers, but rather the general capacity proper to sentient beings allowing them to comport themselves towards the world. „[The] founding idea of pragmatism is that the most fundamental kind of intentionality (in the sense of directedness towards objects) is the practical involvement with objects exhibited by a sentient creature dealing skillfully with its world" (Brandom 2008, 178). Despite his acknowledgment of practical and infra-rational know-how as a basic kind of our relating to the world, Brandom does not recognize the space of motivations as the third term that can be neither reduced to "space of causes" (laws of nature), nor to "space of reasons" (rational assessments). As we have seen, in his "two-ply" account of human agency, he decomposes our capacity to act into two aspects and situates each of them into one of the two distinct spheres: "an element of conceptually articulated endorsement, and a reliable differential responsive disposition" (Brandom 2010: 328). In its first stage, endorsing a practical commitment is entirely situated within a space of reasons; in its output, the final stage, the very performance of an action is reduced to a causal interaction

with the objective world (including our body seen as object).

For Brandom, our action is intelligible only insofar we are able to account for it in the game of giving and asking for reasons. He thus omits the possibility of making sense of one's own or others' acting in terms of "being motivated" by the situation and its most salient affordances to which we are immediately responsive. As I have argued above, in order to remain the optimal way of replying to unfolding demands of one's environment, the performance of an action cannot amount to nothing more but an *exit transition* from the space of reasons as if this final output were already determined by an earlier commitment endorsed by the agent. The space of motivations is not without a logic of its own: it is the logic of motor cues, vector forces of attraction and repulsion, salient perceptual affordances and gradually relevant aspects to be dealt with. Action is thus intelligible on a more basic level, when we recognize our activity to be motivated by the affordances of the given situation to which we are unreflectively responsive. Because of the binary separation of reasons and causes as the only two candidates allowing to make sense of action, Brandom's account does not have means to explain action out of emotion and other pre-conceptual, affective attunements to motivationally salient aspects of the situation.

In Dreyfus' account of action, to be motivated to act in a certain way should not be equated with acting for reasons. First of all, felt tensions, gut feelings or immediate perceptual assessment of salient affordances motivate the agent to act *in a certain way* or to take a certain *course of action*, but they do not necessarily determinate the goals of the action itself, as reasons for acting do. While discursive articulation of reasons is supposed to identify *what* should be done, perceiving a salient affordance indicates a way to be followed and possible scenarios one might expect when following the indicated path. Secondly, while reasons to act might be shared and acknowledged as valid from a detached perspective, motivations to act are often far too much situation-specific to count as reasons (Dreyfus 2007b, 107). Moti-

vations are simply part of agent's subjective engagement with the ongoing and ambivalent situation, while the space of reasons requires to appeal, in Dreyfus' picture, to universal claims about *what counts as reason for what*. The third difference is connected with the previous one. When we translate the *flow of motivations* in terms of reasons, i.e. when we strive to grasp the logical structure behind our pre-reflective tendencies to act, we inevitably reduce the highly complex and miscellaneous mesh of motivating features into an abstract scheme of our acting. The ambivalence of our vital communication with the world is simplified, when I stand back from it in order to translate my being-moved into a set of beliefs, desires and explicit reasons. When I do this, "when I want to express myself, I crystallize a collection of indefinite motives in an act of consciousness" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 309). To grasp one's implicit motivations consciously, i.e. to translate non-thetic solicitations to move one's body into an explicit reason to act, has a price to be paid. In Mark Wrathall's (2005, 119) words, any attempt to reformulate one's motivated experiences into reasons "ends up focusing on some narrow subset of a rich and complex set of motives". For all these various points, motives are not entirely reducible to reasons.

So far, I have reappropriated for the purposes of my account of action the basic tenets of Dreyfus's original insights concerning embodied coping skills and their importance for guiding our various everyday performances. Now, it is time to critically assess the relevance of Dreyfus analysis for a more general and pragmatically oriented theory of human action. First, one might object from a Brandomian perspective that emphasizing subject-related motivations amount to discard the social dimension of acting that is crucial for its proper understanding. Second, one might wonder if Dreyfus' presentation of "absorbed coping" and "acting-in-the flow" as paradigmatic cases of action does not result in a flattened picture of human agency insofar as it appeals to cases of mere behavior. Finally, there is a suspicion that even our most basic bodily coping does not answer only to the demands of a given situation, but also involves

responsiveness to reasons, against Dreyfus's repeated claim.

The first worry concerns the way of making action intelligible while appealing to someone's personal and context-specific motivations. Since both perception of affordances and responsiveness to solicitations is subject-related, have we not lost the social dimension of acting emphasized by Brandom? One could rephrase Brandom's objection against monological accounts of action in the way that rejects the possibility of making sense of action within the space of motivations: privately felt motivations (analogically to privately held intentions) commit us neither to act nor to be accountable for our action, hence, they are not essential in bringing about the action, nor to make such action intelligible. In order to reply to this objection, we have to say more about the relation between bodily coping skills and habits.

In my view, the ability to experience salient aspects of a given situation is made possible by habits that we acquire mostly by repeated participating in structured practices, understood as patterns of appropriate action. Since our practical know-how about what to do and how to proceed is carried in and encoded in these practices, we can become sensitive to the rules of a game simply by taking part in it and learning from our co-actors' replies to our performances. Once we have incorporated the logic of a certain practice into our skills, we are able to reply smoothly to the situational demands without having to worry about these rules, at least most of the time. The primary locus of an agent's understanding thus lies not in her own representations, but in shared practices that form the background for her orientation and skillful coping within a variety of situations. Therefore, even though the agent's responsiveness to salient affordances stems from her own *felt* motivations, the sociality of her involved coping with the situation is guaranteed by her enculturated bodily habits and skills.

The sociality of our embodied coping is thus guaranteed by the way in which we acquire our skills and habits. Sometimes, "one learns the game by watching how others play it" (Wittgenstein 1953: 27). Such imitation of

exemplary conducts is never mechanical, but socially articulated: even when we learn our skills by merely imitating others, there is an element of social recognition involved in such a learning. Children spontaneously imitate their parents, university students unreflectively follow their professors' styles of reasoning and speaking, beginner dancers shape their skills through synchronizing their bodily movements, steps and posture with those of their more experienced partners and so on. Two remarks pointing beyond Wittgenstein are in order: while he acknowledges the plurality of possible introductions to the game, he emphasizes that mere watching might be enough. I would rather rephrase this point by saying that participation might be enough, insofar as physically putting oneself in different situations of the game allows the agent (unlike the mere spectator) to be guided by others via their bodily negative and positive feedback. Secondly, such an unreflective imitation is more than often accompanied by reflective critical assessment, where the social recognition plays an explicit role in enforcing the validity of the rules to be "blindly" followed. Only those who the novice recognizes as competent social actors are those whose consent matters to her when she strives to see herself acknowledged as acting correctly, that is, to be assessed her performance as fulfilling the norms of a given practice. When writing her first papers in philosophy, the novice practitioner searches to comply with demands of her peers, professors and not of her parents (unless they are themselves acknowledged experts in the field of humanities). Does she or her peers or professors evaluate the norms in terms of which she or them understand the required norms and skills? Only to a certain level and probably never in their entirety. One can always explicitly criticize any particular norm guiding one's conduct or any limited set of such interconnected norms, but one can never question all of them at once. Considering that there are potentially infinite manners in which philosophical ideas might be expressed (think about Socrates' provocations of his fellow citizen, Enlightenment pamphlets or Nietzsche's puns and aphorisms), there is probably some

blindness in almost everybody within academia following the prevailing style, rhetoric and structure of philosophical arguments to which one was raised.[5] The point of this observation is not to criticize, as so many have already done, the evils of conformism, but an almost contrary claim: our tendency to conform our speech, thinking and behavior to shared practices is to be considered as the background condition of our capacity to think and act with others. Our explicit acknowledgement of rules is not necessary, quite the contrary: our unreflective conformity to rules is a necessary pre-condition of our conceptual skills. When interacting with others within an already rule-governed practice or game, we develop a non-conceptual feel about how to behave correctly and some fine-tuned understanding about the right adjustments to be made towards other participants moves. To be sure, merely imitating exemplary models does rarely transform the follower into an expert of her own, but it is an essential part for becoming a competent agent able to act in accordance with the requirements of the rule-governed social environment. The pragmatic lesson to be learned from these observations is that individual action depends on socially acquired habits and not the other way round, as if individual and single actions were the basis of all intelligibility, while habits would be relegated to mindless repetition of the same.[6]

The relation between habitual conduct, instantiated in absorbed coping, and intentional action is closely linked to the second concern to be raised about Dreyfus' analysis of *coping* insofar as it presents itself as an alternative theory of action *tout court.* An objection to such ambition might be formulated in terms of a traditional question concerning the difference between action

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[5] "Blindly" obeying the rules of the game thus amounts on my interpretation to knowing how to act correctly (and being in possession of respective embodied skill for telling the correct from the incorrect), even when one is not able to evaluate the validity, the explicit content and the reach of the norms to which one replies while partaking in a particular practice. This partial interpretation does not aim to give an exhaustive account of the rule-following problem in Wittgenstein, nor to engage with the massive amount of its extant readings.
[6] For further development of the pragmatist Copernican revolution consisting of placing habits as grounds for all individual and intentional action, see Kilpinen (2009).

properly said and mere behavior. Does Dreyfus' account of what he calls "skilled action" deal with actions at all, or does it rather provide a phenomenological description of mere conducts? Most of the time, Dreyfus (2005, 2007, 2013) takes cases of driving around, acting-in-the-flow, exiting doors or keeping an appropriate distance in elevators to be paradigmatic cases of human agency. However, these and similar cases seem hardly suitable to illustrate the peculiar nature of human action, since they are mostly instances of everyday behavior. Dreyfus might answer that even when my actions are simply drawn and guided by perceived solicitations and inculcated requirements and constraints, they are still purposive and answerable to norms of appropriateness (as we have seen above). This should lead to the acknowledgment that intentional and deliberate actions are just a subset of larger family of purposive and normatively controlled action. Furthermore, Dreyfus (1991: 72) provides an explanation about the emergence of deliberate and intentional action from the background of our unreflective coping based on bodily skills and habits: when things go wrong and our fluid coping with a situation is disturbed or when we discover that our habitually employed skills are simply not enough to deal with an unexpected or otherwise problematic situation, we have to appeal to our capacity to deliberate about hidden (not immediately perceivable) possibilities to be explored in order to achieve our projects and goals. Dreyfus' account thus presupposes various types of actions that differ by the means deployed to guide our performance: "feeling of greater and lesser tension" when directly replying to perceived solicitations on one hand, and deliberation when dealing with recalcitrant or otherwise problematic situations on the other. Only in the latter case, the agent would have to appeal to rational assessment and articulated reasons. However, such division of action into "mindless" bodily coping and "minded" deliberation opens an unjustified divide within a single phenomenon. To my understanding, our habitual embodied coping is not deprived of rationality and conversely, our deliberate and intentional acting largely depends on enculturated

bodily habits and skills. Therefore, the answer to the objection concerning the illegitimate identification of action with "skillful coping" has to dwell on more arguments than Dreyfus' account can offer, while rejecting some of its shortcomings.

My final aim is to defend a continuity between practical reasoning (our capacity to justify our performances through reasons) and our embodied coping skills, that is overlooked or denied by both Brandom's intellectualist and Dreyfus' anti-rationalist accounts. While both authors introduce a gap between embodied coping skills and conceptual skills our discursive capacities, my claim is that our involved and embodied coping with the demands of a given situation entails responsiveness to reasons and conversely, all partaking in discursive practices can be seen as an extension of our bodily coping skills. To my eyes, Brandom and Dreyfus commit the same error, albeit from diametrically opposed perspectives. Brandom begins with linguistic practices and discursively articulated intentions and ends up providing a disembodied or only contingently embodied account of action, while Dreyfus proceeds from the bottom up, i.e. from our absorbed and mindless responsiveness to solicitations to singular episodes of rational deliberation or detached reflection, following breakdowns in our otherwise smooth and transparent coping with the world. Thus, they both neglect the extent to which our deliberation and reason-giving practices are part and parcel of our intra-subjective and bodily intentional transactions. The shared mistake behind these inverted accounts consists of thinking in bifurcated terms from the start. There is neither *ground-floor* of bodily absorbed coping nor an *upper story* of discursive articulation of reasons, but rather continuous relying on our bodily capacities to track changes, solicitations and affordances within the normatively rich social landscapes that is always already infused with instituted reasons and that frames all of our acting. In my subsequent attempt to undermine the unfortunate contrast between our perceptual/practical responsiveness to ambient solicitations and responsible action guided by reasons, I draw

on already existing criticisms of Dreyfus' prejudicial collapse of intentionally bodily agency into merely mindless coping. Many essays in both Schear's volume *Mind, Reason, and Being-in-the-World: The McDowell-Dreyfus debate* (2013) and Švec and Čapek's volume about *Pragmatic Perspectives in Phenomenology* (2017) reject a rather crude dichotomy between articulated reason-giving and its supposedly "detached" attitude, on one hand, and absorbed, skillful and "mindless coping", on the other, that one finds in Dreyfus.[7] The aim of my essay, however, is not to engage in the McDowell-Dreyfus debate about the extent to which conceptuality permeates all of human experience, but rather to point out the necessity of taking into account – for the sake of a pragmatist theory of agency – the normatively rich landscape that frames our responsiveness to seemingly immediate solicitations while we initiate, perform or redirect the course of our action.

Responsiveness to reasons in bodily and skillful coping with the situation

Unlike Dreyfus, I will claim that there are not two separate classes of action, but that the same acts are to be explained both by our practical commitments functioning as reasons for action and by our sensitivity to the unfolding demands of situation. At the same time, I am in complete agreement with him that agents do not have to form any representations of rules even if their actions are norm-governed by their partaking in shared practices. Moreover, I want to overcome Dreyfus by developing his own original and often overlooked claim in which he situates the rules in "the *landscape* on the basis which

skilled coping and reasoning takes place" (Dreyfus 2005, 53, my emphasis). This insight merits to be explored further than Dreyfus himself does. Rules to be followed are not in our heads (consciously or unconsciously), they do not have to be "internalized", since they are all around us in the instituted frameworks of intelligibility, shared practices, in the familiarity of the world to which we were introduced. It is therefore enough to remain responsive to the demands of a given situation, since our social environment as such is norm-governed and permeated with already instituted reasons. However, it also follows that Dreyfus is wrong in his repeated claim that involved and embodied agency does not appeal to reasons at all. He omits, first, that our embodied skills allowing us to master norms as solicitations and are depository of instituted reasons that proved to be worthy in the past. Second, he fails to acknowledge that the situation in which we can directly respond to perceived affordances without thinking is always already permeated with instituted reasons that belong to the "objective spirit" of the community, to use a Hegelian term, rather than to the skills of each of the individual actors involved. Our reflective and conceptual skills intervene on our habits to shape and to adjust them each time when they prove to be maladaptive or when they lead us to dead-end streets. Judgements and critical evaluations are then stabilized in a transformed set of socially shared habits allowing each member of community to cope anew unreflectively in a reconfigured situation.

Merleau-Ponty establishes a structural analogy between our orientation in a familiar surrounding based on our bodily habits and skills and our orientation in the world of thoughts on the basis of previously acquired judgements:

> When I move about in my house, I know immediately and without any intervening discourse that to walk toward the bathroom involves passing close to the bedroom, or that to look out the window involves having the fireplace to my left. [...] Similarly, there is a "world of thoughts," a sedimentation of our mental operations, which allows us to count on our acquired concepts and judgments, just as we count upon the things that are there and that are given as a whole, without

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[7] However, none of these criticisms deals explicitly with the thorny issue of our actions' responsiveness to reasons, but mostly with the pervasiveness of concepts within our understanding and perceptual experience. A partial exception is McDowell's own essay "The Myth of the Mind as Detached" in Schear (2013) where McDowell argues against Dreyfus that all our acting, including its most absorbed and spontaneous kinds, are permeated with rationality. When it comes to questioning Dreyfus' dichotomy between bodily absorbed coping and discursive practices, I highly recommend Carl Sachs' chapter "Discursive Intentionality as Embodied Coping: A Pragmatist Critique of Existential Phenomenology" in Švec & Čapek (2017).

our having to repeat their synthesis at each moment (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 131).

We "count upon" a lot of things taken for granted without having to think about them, since our environment (both physical, social and linguistic) is permeated with coordinates that we learned to master through habit-acquisition. The point to be stressed is that our habit-formation not only runs in parallel with though-sedimentation, but that these two processes are tied up.[8] To my sense, taking into account our habit-formation through time and within a social environment that serves as depository for ready-made reasons provides the most promising path to close the gap between acting for reasons and responding to perceived solicitations. The passage from *Phenomenology of Perception* quoted above suggests that conceptual content is deposited in our habits in a form of sediment. It follows that, *pace* Dreyfus, our embodied openness to perceived affordances is permeated with sedimented or instituted rationality and that, *pace* Brandom, our capacity to reply reasonably to the shared norms is beholden to our learned and embodied habits and skills.

The sedimentation of reasons in the practices by which we inhabit our social world further explain why agents can act in accordance with rules while obeying them *blindly*, as Wittgenstein famously states in *Philosophical investigations* (1953, 85). Because we take the patterns of action embodied in shared practices for granted and reliable, our performance of action sticks with "the rules of the game" without being a conscious application of rules. Thanks to their embodied and enculturated sensitivity to salient coordinates, the agents act in accordance with the requirements of the rule-governed social environment. Each one of us, with the possible exception of the most severe cases of autism spectrum disorder, can be said to act as an "expert" (in Dreyfus' sense of the "involved coper" immediately and

appropriately responding to solicitations) in one's own social environment. Such dependence of our expert skills upon a background of familiarity goes unnoticed most of the time, but think how quickly we get "lost" when displaced in an unfamiliar environment, where we are obliged to proceed according to trials, errors and learning from our missteps and where we are trying to formulate provisional hypothesis about rules that we are supposed to follow. Merleau-Ponty's structural analogy between moving in one's own house and moving in the "world of thoughts" that we inhabit helps to make sense of our bodily *and* rational dependence upon available coordinates in the familiar environment.

In a similar vein to my account, Levine proposes to consider "our capacities for rational action as acquired capacities that develop in time due to a series of overlapping processes" (Levine 2012, 16). This runs against Dreyfus' dissociation between bodily coping skills and responsiveness to reasons.[9] Furthermore, Dreyfus' illustrations and arguments for rejecting that absorbed coping involve any responsiveness to reasons are not entirely convincing. Consider his example of acting without any sensitivity or responsivity to reasons: "A door affords going in and out, and an observer can see that that's why a person leaving the room goes out the door. But the involved coper does not act for that reason as such" (2007b, 361). To be sure, not all affordances are reasons for actions, so far I am in agreement with Dreyfus. However, in the example above, the door as affordance figures as a mere part of the whole situation, as an affordance, but not even a solicitation. Nobody, not even an intellectualist theorist of action, would equate this affordance with some reason for action, suggested in Dreyfus's "that's why". In order to see where the real issue about involved responsiveness to reasons lies,

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[8] Berendzen (2010) rightly points out that these two processes, i.e. habit-acquisition and though-sedimentation, are not independent from one another and running in parallel lines but support each other.

[9] My paper is prolonging Levine's (2012) own attempt to overcome the separation between rational capacities and bodily responsiveness to solicitations by taking into consideration the social genesis of our habits. To his account, I would add that our present embodied skills are depository of instituted reasons that proved to be worthy in the past. Furthermore, I want to use these insights to contest other shortcomings in Dreyfus' theory of action that Levine mentions only in passing.

think rather about someone exiting the door on a harmful remark or offensive gesture made by her partner. Such an exit strategy would still be one of the "involved coper", as opposed to the "detached observer". At the same time, the solicitation to which she replied by going out was surely perceived by the coper herself as a reason propelling her to leave the room. Finally, such a strategy is not without ties with other inferentially related reasons: it is better to leave than to assault; the exit is to be perceived as an expressive gesture of someone concerned about conserving her personal dignity; it might leave some space for our partners' quieter re-assessment of a situation that was about to escalate, and so on. To put it starkly, the way in which we perform – no matter how hastily or unreflectively – our *exit strategy* is never an *exit from the space of reasons*.

Another example might illuminate our responsiveness to reasons in absorbed coping even more convincingly. Consider the insistence with which the dirty dishes "speak" to me from the sink where they were left, as if they begged me to be washed. In such cases, I unreflectively reply to a perceptual solicitation, without thinking about the reasons of my acting or the rules that I am following. Nonetheless, these reasons and rules exist and they were part of my acquiring the habit of washing the dishes shortly after their use. These reasons are mostly sanitary, they are tied up with societal and familiar demands about the cleanness of one's habitat and they involve rules and normative assessments concerning how thoroughly and how quickly after their use one is supposed to wash the dishes. They have become embodied through my family upbringing while I was prepared for life under social conditions. We can see from these examples that at least some of our habits are acquired based on reason-giving practice. However, even when they are transmitted by repetition or imitation, there is a general *rationale* to stick with our habits and to follow them blindly: social coordination (I shall come back to the role of habits and reasons in the coordination of joint action in the concluding section below).

Continuity between sensitivity to solicitations and answerability to reasons

All these illustrations help us to see that it is a mistake to stipulate a stark contrast between acting for reasons and bodily skillful coping. We feel drawn or inclined to a certain course of action and simultaneously, we are more or less aware of reasons propelling us on such a path or direction. In fact, when we give an account of our acting, we often appeal to both *reasons for action* (our practical and explicitly acknowledged commitments) and to the way we *felt solicited* by opportunities, constraints or frustrations that we have met while executing our performance. It is worth to be noted, even though I cannot develop this point in detail, that in the justificatory accounts of our past action, our acknowledgement of responsibility appeals more often to reasons for action, while our effort to exculpate ourselves rather tends to emphasize our immediate reply to the most salient solicitations as main motivations of our conduct. This second strategy is not without a rationale of its own to the extent it appeals to solicitations and salient affordances of that I have previously identified as instantiations of socially instituted norms to which we are supposed to reply in an appropriate manner. At the same time, the recurrent mixture of both justificatory strategies in unified accounts further demonstrates that we should not conceive of reasons and motivations as belonging to independent realms, but rather as continuum with two ideally abstracted extremes of "pure reasons" and "unmediated replies to solicitations". To put it simply, a large part of our actions are simultaneously accountable as motivated by perceived solicitations of the environment and done for reasons. The same point was raised by O'Conaill in order to soften the binary conception of "space of reasons" and "space of motivations" that one finds in Dreyfus: "If the agent feels drawn to act in a certain way and also acts in that way because it is in accordance with reason, then the action will be both motivated and rational." (O'Conaill 2014, 449) Although I fully subscribe to O'Conaill's conclusion that it is a mis-

take to think of spaces of motivations and reasons as "mutually exclusive", my point is slightly different from his own: it is crucial not to conceive of "reasons" and "motivations" as two separate "items" producing in parallel my acting, as if one belonged to my mental capacities and the other to my bodily capacities. There is no animal nature in me, existing aside from my being rational, but rather constant transformation of my innate endowment through my adherence to social standards and instituted reasons. What motivates my behavior is thus not only translated, but also *transformed* when I appeal to solicitations and motivations in the account of my acting, that *ex definitione* belongs to the space of reasons and that has to answer to socially acknowledged frameworks of intelligibility.

The continuity between bodily coping and rational activity involved in our agency should not be understood as mere transition from fundamental layer of non-cognitive bodily responsiveness and higher layer of rational and discursive capacities. Such continuity should rather be considered in terms of mutual transformative relation between non-conceptual and conceptual, spontaneous and socially instituted, sentient and sapient aspects of human experience. In Brandom's terms, there is a radical transformation of our "sentient" nature through our "sapient" skills, a point already raised against Dreyfus by McDowell (2007, 344), according to whom our acquisition of linguistic capacities thoroughly transforms the character of our embodied coping, "including the disclosing of affordances". At the same time, we should not omit, as it happens to Brandom and McDowell, the constant and never completely overcome dependency of our conceptual and discursive skills on the bodily responsiveness to others, of which they are extension. Such a reciprocity is emphasized by Merleau-Ponty, for whom every aspect of human existence is simultaneously animal (sentient) and institutionalized (sapient), so that any clear-cut delimitation that we try to establish between the two supposed layers shows up, in final analysis, as arbitrary:

It is impossible to superimpose upon man both a primary layer of behaviors that could be called "natural" and a constructed cultural or spiritual world. For man, everything is constructed and everything is natural, in the sense that there is no single word or behavior that does not owe something to mere biological being – and, at the same time, there is no word or behavior that does not break free from animal life, that does not deflect vital behaviors from their direction [*sens*] through a sort of *escape* and a genius for ambiguity that might well serve to define man (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 195).

What is crucial in this long quote is the reciprocity between natural and constructed: to be sure, all biological impulses are transformed in human existence through being subject of societal demands, but also all conducts bear witness of their evolutionary origins and from the natural forces that first produced them. Our sexual conduct is thus both responsive to animal drives, perceived stimuli and solicitations and answerable to incorporated habits of conduct and reoriented by joint searching for all kinds of refined and consensual pleasures. The crucial point of this observation is that these two levels cannot be separated but *in abstracto*, since the supposedly "higher layer" has thoroughly modified our animal sexuality and changed the repertoire of our behavioral responsiveness to sexual signals, however without completely breaking free from our perceptual sensitivity to such solicitations. Corollarily, we are accountable for our actions even in cases where we might claim – often in bad faith or hypocrisy – that we merely followed our innate drives or animal nature.

An analogous consideration can serve against the split between rational and bodily capacities responsible for our agency, a split that is reminiscent of both body-mind and nature-nurture dualisms. The first step is to follow Brandom and locate reasons for action in discursive practices and not to some separated, mental realm of detached contemplation. In the second step beyond Brandom, it is crucial to acknowledge that discursive practices are embodied insofar as they require perceptual-practical skills of adjusting one's conversational conduct to affordances and solicitations provided by our

interlocutors. Joseph Rouse (2015, 122) provides a naturalist argument for considering our linguistic skills as extensions of integrated bodily capacities. On his evolutionary account, our involvement in reason-giving practices thus presupposes "a practical-perceptual capacity for robust tracking of protolinguistic performances in their broader circumstances and for flexibly responsive performances (both linguistic and nonlinguistic) motivated by them". Such practical-perceptual skills come into play each time when we have to coordinate our linguistic performances with our interlocutor's demands, objections, silences and gestures. Our capacity to reply reasonably to our interlocutors and co-actors is thus beholden to our learned and embodied habits. Rouse's entanglement of our discursive capacities within our perceptual and practical tracking of available solicitations is further developed by Carl Sachs in his attempt to explain our social practice of giving and asking for reasons in terms of highly specialized form of embodied coping. On Sachs' (2017, 98) conception, we are bodily attuned not only to salient features of our surrounding, but also to the contents of each other's assertions, questions or objections: "The pragmatic statuses of commitments and entitlements whereby we track propositional contents are themselves affordances and solicitations – they are affordances and solicitations for the rational animals that we are". All these insights help us to overcome the intellectualist tendencies in Brandom and McDowell, whose concept of rationality is surely context-specific, but only contingently embodied.

With this correction, we can side with McDowell (1994, 85) against Dreyfus and claim that our embodied coping is indeed permeated with instituted rationality. Such rationality is not to be searched in individuals' minds, but rather in community's shared commitments. It opens a shared and argumentative space of available reasons for action that each member of the community can appropriate as her own when solicited to give an account of his conduct. Such shared space of available reasons was identified by Hegel in terms of "objective spirit" and by Merleau-Ponty as "the human space made

up of those with whom I discuss or of those with whom I live" (2012, 25). It is precisely as members of this instituted space of reasons that we are directly and immediately responsive to perceived affordances and solicitations. This supposedly "basic" responsiveness however is not a "fundamental layer" that we share with animals,[10] but rather something continuously transformed through historically evolved norms of correctness, that are still ongoing subject of polemics arising from our sapient nature.

Conclusion: Acting Together in a Precarious World

In conclusion, let me summarize which insights about social and situational embeddedness of action might be gathered from this critical assessment of Brandom's and Dreyfus' accounts of agency. My aim was not only to compare their relative strengths and weaknesses, but mostly to use this comparison in order to better understand several important aspects that any pragmatically oriented theory of action should take into consideration: the open-ended character of the situation in which we act, the dialectics of action and milieu, the plurality of actors and the requirements of social coordination for acting in a precarious world.

Thanks to Dreyfus' account of embodied sensitivity to ongoing solicitations, we are now in a position to better understand how an agent is able to realize her "Brandomian" practical commitments in order to make them true in a social world. We have seen that Brandom's mistake is to understand our acting as causally and unilaterally dependent upon an acknowledged commitment: the performance of the action was seen as "exit transaction" from the space of reasons. Situational embeddedness of agency requires that the agent remains not only committed by the attitudes that she has endorsed, but also involved and open to whatever solicitations emerge within an ongoing situation. By focusing

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[10] Contrary to Dreyfus' polemical claim directed against McDowell: "in their direct dealing with affordances, adults, infants, and animals respond alike" (2005: 56).

unilaterally on the responsiveness to publicly articulated reasons, Brandom omits our bodily sensitivity to the unfolding and diversely pressing demands of the situation itself.

What is missed is also "the dialectic of milieu and action", to use Merleau-Ponty's term (1966: 168–169), or the dynamic nature of transactions between the organism and the environment, pointed out by Dewey (1925). According to Merleau-Ponty, while our body moves in order to get a better grip on a situation, the phenomenal field is transformed in a way that allows us to disclose its previously hidden aspects and to adjust our performance accordingly. Similarly, Dewey emphasized a reciprocal relation between our acting and our undergoing the consequences of our action (1896: 358–359; 1925: 253). Since the solicitations of a milieu change while and because we act, much of our intelligent engagement with the world goes well beyond of what we can frame through representations while we deliberate or shape the intention upon which we act. Hence the need to constantly adjust our performance to new options available, while dealing with previously unforeseen recalcitrance of things. So even though it would be absurd to say that actions are not goal-directed, one should never forget to add that their goals or ends remain mostly indeterminate because of the re-configurations that are emerging in concomitance with our acting.

Furthermore, this open-ended character of the situation to which we belong and whose stakes outrun our current understanding is beholden to the plurality of actors involved. During the course of its performance, my acting is mediated by its interaction with other co-actors. Individualistic accounts of intentional action are simplistic insofar as they neglect each agent's necessity to cope with the significance that others bring into a shared situation. The opportunities of further acting in the same direction might be foreclosed if relevant others refuse to second my proposal or initiative, as they might be enriched with new affordances brought by my partners, especially when they push me outside of my comfort zone. Dreyfus' paradigmatic case of lonely driver,

virtuoso player, expert carpenter or kitchen chef are misleading if taken as illustrating essential features of human agency. As results from Arendt's analysis in *Human condition*, it is a common mistake to theorize about action (*praxis*) according to the model provided by fabrication (*poiesis*). Conceiving of action in terms of fabrication completely misses the plurality of involved actors perceiving the common stakes or issues – *pragmata* in the sense of *things held in common* – from diverse and often contradictory perspectives.[11] Unlike the work (*poiesis*) of an expert carpenter who is in a position to predict and control the result of her activity, our true acting (*praxis*) has to cope with boundless consequences we can neither fully anticipate nor control.

For all these reasons, actors do not put in execution a plan they have already conceived from scratch (predicting each step leading from the current situation to a desired outcome). Rather, they commit themselves to initiate something new according to their current commitments and anticipations and then let themselves be involved in a Brandomian game where each of them has to reply to each other's reply in order to better grasp the stakes involved from others' perspective. This is because there is always a complex issue or stake in possible outcomes of an action, rather than an easily singled out end to be identified by the actor alone. The intralinguistic practice of giving and asking for reason, however, is nor the only game in town, neither a self-sufficient way to appraise how one's performance is perceived and how such perception affects its future outcomes. If the actor wants to see her initiative to be successful in interactive contexts and if she strives to get a better grip on its material implications, she has to remain sensitive to the manifold ways in which her performance affects the others in their hopes, frustrations, feelings of solidarity or reciprocal trust. In order to see the pragmatic limits of

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[11] Arendt's paradigm for action is the political action of citizens. To my sense, such a model fits much better than absorbed coping of a lonely carpenter with a piece of wood the peculiarities of human agency within an indeterminate and shared situation, where common future of diversely oriented actors is at stake.

reason-giving game in politics, consider the contemporary rise of populism, the hopes and frustrations upon which it dwells, how it undermines the trust in contemporary institutions, putting at stake the very meaning and future of liberal democracy.

This brings us to the final issue of the temporal structure of acting and its essential orientation towards unforeseeable future, from which its meaning will be determined. We have seen that what is at stake in action always outruns my current understanding, since the inferential and material implications of my initiative reach far beyond what I could possibly anticipate. Let us consider Gorbachev's program of reforms in the late 1980s from the perspective inspired by Brandom's inferential pragmatism. At the time of perestroika ("reorganization"), most members of the Communist Party as well as the few dissidents in the Eastern bloc were interested above all in Gorbachev's intentions, his sincerity and commitment to go on through with it, despite the opposition of his more conservative comrades. Only from the perspective of present day, we are in a position to understand the stakes involved in introducing several liberalizing reforms into a largely authoritarian regime, resulting in its complete dismantlement. On one hand, this observation confirms a point already established above: the meaning of an action can never be articulated only according to the actor's own intentions, but also involves its reappropriations by an irreducible plurality of co-actors. On the other, it points towards a larger problem: the meaning of an action is also the sum of its material consequences that the interaction between actors produced, even though *none* of them, nor *all of them* could have articulate such meaning at the time it was performed. When Gorbachev introduced perestroika and glasnost ("openness"), he began a new process and opened the way for a transformation of a state built upon the rule of a party, into a republic where singular voices can be heard, leaving at the same time more space for autonomy to other socialist countries. To be sure, the consequences of such achievements were entirely different from what he or any of other implicat-

ed co-actors intended. From the perspective of the present day, it is nevertheless possible to establish not only a chronological but also a logical or inferential link between his reforms and the subsequent disintegration of authoritarian regimes in the East.

What lesson might be learned and pragmatically formulated from this and previous examples emphasizing the social embeddedness of action? The first lesson consists of the reformulation of Peirce's pragmatist maxim in a way that is valid not only for clarifying our ideas or conceptions, but also for determining the content of intentions upon which we act: to ascertain the meaning of an intention, one should consider the sum of consequences resulting from the successful making-true of that intention. Second, such consideration of practical bearings is not something that the agent can do on her own: *what she shall do*, while acknowledging her intention to act, depends on socially structured normativity and is made explicit in the game of giving and asking for reasons. Third, because of the open-ended character of the situation, the actor also needs to rely during her performance on embodied skills, habits and sensitivity to most salient affordances that are disclosed while and because she acts (and not through merely intralinguistic reason-giving practices). Finally, because of the irreducible plurality of actors' standpoints and attunements, our actions point ahead of themselves towards stakes that are indeterminate from the perspective of the present day, so that neither the actor, nor her co-actors or impartial observers are able to establish the sum of outcomes in their complexity. This last lesson provides one more reason to think of action not according to belief-desire model, but rather as embodied coping with open-ended and ambivalent situations, while depending on clues provided by our shared background of practices.

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Contingency, uncertainty and ambiguity belong to our condition, as pragmatists from Dewey to Rorty have often emphasized. The situations in which we act are indeterminate and open-ended, our fellows might be-

have in unpredictable ways, and our intentions sometimes bring about the opposite of what we most sincerely hoped for. And yet, we cannot act without orienting our actions towards one another and towards a common future. This is a general *rationale* behind our following of the clues provided by our shared and embodied practices that put constraints on our joint acting and make us answerable to generalizable, even if continuously revisable set of norms.

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TIME, ORDER, AND MOTOR ACTION DOMAINS:

ON THE PRAXIOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION OF SPORTING GAMES

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ABSTRACT: Games and sports are nothing but action. Therefore, anybody interested in understanding human action should be interested in understanding what games and sports are and how they work. Motor praxeology is the science of motor action proposed in the 1960s by Pierre Parlebas whose study object is the internal logic of sporting games. Developed as a semiology of game-playing, it is conceived both as a science of action-systems and a science of sports agency. His classification of sports in eight motor action domains, based on the consequences generated by the relationships of the agents with their physical milieu and social entourage, is revisited trying to answer to a simple question: Is snooker, a one-on-one billiards game, member of the family of individual sporting duels like judo, fencing or tennis? Our inquiry deals with fundamental issues about the nature of games and sports, their classification, and the structural constraints that shape human actions and situations. Our main conclusion is that snooker's sequential structure of interaction transforms the corporal semiosis proper to the family of sports duels into a space-mediated semiosis.

Keywords: physical education, sporting games, motor praxeology, game theory, snooker

> *The pragmatism that arose in the United States constitutes an entirely original and autonomous way of interpreting the creativity of action. For pragmatism, the guiding metaphor is neither poetic expression, nor material production, nor revolutionary transformation of society, but instead the creative solution of problems by an experimenting intelligence.*[1]
>
> Hans Joas

1. Introduction

Games and sports are nothing but action. Therefore, anybody interested in understanding human action should be interested in understanding *what* games and sports are and *how* they work. Play and games were for

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[1] Joas, Hans. 1990. "The Creativity of Action and the Intersubjectivity of Reason: Mead's Pragmatism and Social Theory." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 26 (2):165-194.

Dewey (1897) key elements of general education in primary school. There is no need today to keep vindicating the social relevance and curricular importance of physical education, even less if understood as an education of motor action competences, as the *experiential development of motor intelligence to creatively find adaptive solutions to the problems posed by ludic situations*, rephrasing Joas. However, such an endeavour will be pedagogically untenable in the absence of a theory that link together the intelligence of teaching and the intelligence of playing. Fortunately, such a theory exists since it was proposed and developed in the last half century by an outstanding French physical education teacher and university scholar in La Sorbonne with two honorary doctorates, born in 1934 but more active today than ever: Pierre Parlebas. "Physical education will be scientific or it will not be", he said in 1971 after producing, in the 1960s, a synthesis based on the state of the art of the social sciences in form of a new project he called *motor praxeology*: science of the motor action.

As an expert in physical education and sports confronted with such a sound, open topic as *Action, Agency and Praxis,* my objective is to answer to a question that may seem too concrete in the first place, but pertinent when it comes to understand human action: Should the temporal structure of interaction, that is the order that players can be forced to keep when attacking, be included as prima facie classifying trait of sporting games? For instance, can judo, tennis, and snooker be included in the same class of sports from a praxeological point of view? Do they belong to the same *motor action domain*? Even more, and taking into account the double structure of praxic communication (rule-coded and sign-mediated), is sheer-opposition domain as solid a class as it seems to be?

From a pragmatic point of view, these questions point at the consequences of *order* on human praxis, both on the informational, structural conditions of decision making and the semiotic, cognitive strategies put in play by intelligent agents. In this case, these two matters impact on the praxeological categories of sporting games, on one hand, and on the basics of learning and

teaching, on the other. Judo, tennis, and snooker are individual sports duels: games of opposition without collaboration, one-on-one sports competitions in which two agents interact in accordance to bodily counter-communicative procedures determined by the rules (e.g., throws and immobilizations in judo, drives in volleys or tennis, safeties in snooker…). Any other interaction possibilities, like the use of snooker cues as spades or canes, are casted out no matter how interesting they might be from the spectator's position, but something else could be missing in this precise game due to a temporal structure in which players can only take their shots in turns. It could be argued that tennis players also take their shots in turns, but it is obvious that the Mead's *conversation of gestures* (1982) that judo and tennis consist of seems to be totally absent in snooker.

I have structured my contribution in three parts. The first, shorter one is kind of a preamble about Parlebas and his scientific project, which I believe to be of the utmost interest for the pragmatist community. The following part, on *the theory of motor action domains*, deals with the controversial issue of game definition, its juridical nature, and the praxeological classification of sporting games. Even though definition is not but a second degree of clarity, as Peirce proposed, it can also be interesting to reflect on the juridical nature of sporting games: any game is a cultural, legal action-orienting device which is best defined this way. Law and the laws give shape to the social world, reason why the human conducts are to start with signs of the *legal* systems they belong to, before becoming motor, praxic interpretants of a specific semiosis that Parlebas named *semiotricity*. The final part: *Judo, boxing, fencing, tennis… and snooker. The same combat?*, considers how the praxeological classification of sporting games can be seriously challenged by that *alternate interaction* proper to snooker, curling, and the likes. A look into the family of individual sports duels will let us wonder if temporal sequentialization of agency has any consequences that might take us to reconsider certain elements of the theory of sporting games. In this case, the systemic angle of games will be prioritized while keeping an eye on the pragmatic, subjective nature of sports action. Our main conclusion will be that snooker's peculiarity consists of a semiotic drift: the alternating, sequential interaction of snooker transforms the bodily semiotricity of judo and tennis into a spatial, mediated semiotricity.

Motor praxeology deals with human action in a way that may be interesting in a broader sense: epistemologically, as an example of sound reflection and systematic inquiry on a realm of human action that relate to the multiple dimensions of experience, that is societies, communities, groups, and individuals; educationally, as a way to reconcile pedagogics and didactics, theory and practice illustrating that *everyday problems* are the source of most valuable issues; and methodologically, as a prove that transdisciplinary contributions can enrich those communities that Peirce likes to name *science*. For this reason, I have decided to focus on my area of expertise trying to give the reader enough information to carry on reading, to hopefully find as many connections with other areas as I expect, and, in any case, as much as to enjoy with me thinking about games and sports *as outsiders could not understand*.

In search of a science of motor action

On the 26th of October, 1984, at the Durkheim Amphitheatre of the Faculty of Sociology of La Sorbonne, Pierre Parlebas obtained his *Doctorat d'État ès-Lettres et Sciences Humaines*.[2] Accompanied by many "come from really far sometimes, so numerous that not everyone would be able to enter; come out of curiosity, interest, sympathy, friendship" (Delaunay, During, and Paris 1985), the fifty-year-old researcher presented and outstanding piece of research: *Social psychology and game theory: study of certain sporting games*, a title much less intriguing than audacious the challenge defended in front of a jury that included top-class experts in different

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[2] At the time, higher than a 3rd degree doctorate, it enabled for the direction of research.

fields of humanities.[3] One of the members of the jury, Jacques Ulmann, professor of philosophy and a key academic figure in French physical education, finishes his account on that Friday by saying: "Pierre Parlebas' work is a remarkable contribution to the knowledge of sport, the first attempt to approach it in a truly scientific way. This large work can only inspire admiration and recognition for the clarity and depth of its analyses and the honesty of its author. This thesis, matured for a long time in contact with the facts by a physical education teacher who is not only a theorist but also an educator, a man with his feet on the ground, brings a lot to his readers, hopefully, a great lot." (1985, 75)

We have access to the text of his presentation, so we can share somehow the effervescence and passion of that day. To start with, the why of the topic, a double one: "Originally, dissatisfaction, a desire for better understanding the situations we faced every day (…) We were continuously immersed in both practice and teaching of physical activities: athletics, team sports, ski, swimming, diving, outdoor pursuits. (…) Besides, I had the feeling that, under certain conditions hard to understand, motor tasks exerted a very important influence on the dynamics of the groups. The conducts of kids and teenagers in action, their verbal as well as bodily reactions permitted to think that ludomotor situations harboured an unsuspected cognitive, affective and relational richness."(Parlebas 1985, 86) In a very acquainted way, teaching practice had put his beliefs to the test, urging him to rethink the foundations of his educational action almost from scratch.

As far as the thesis was concerned, the object of study were *games and sports* and praxeological the perspective, equivalent to say that the questions, doubts, and hypothesis that so profoundly disturbed his

beliefs had to do with the way that pupils behaved when involved in the situations generated by games and sports. "Taking action as a topic, from the specific angle of sporting games, became a very stimulating matter. Based in the first place on psychosociology and game theory, the direct study of field conducts, in connection to theoretical and methodological references which had already proved their value, was already possible." (86) This approach would be complemented with different levels of qualification in sociology, linguistics, semiology…, but not at all costs, not in any way: "The intelligibility of sporting games demands a new pertinence, independent from the pertinence of an existing discipline as much as from the juxtaposition of any of them." (87). As he recalled in a recent paper about interdisciplinarity in social sciences, a sort of professional autobiography actually, the search for a transdisciplinary, specific knowledge of motor action was in the end like being at the wheel of a *drunken ship* (Parlebas 2014), very much an experience as Rimbaldian as sports practice can be.

Unsurprisingly, doubts and questions gave way to conclusions and stronger beliefs: "At the end of this work, it seems to us that the hypothesis of the specificity of the field of motor action attains an undeniable probability of validity. A new intelligibility of the motor action seems possible, for all the results are compatible with this original hypothesis: every phenomenon related to space and distance, time and sequentialization, communication and violence, decision and strategy, organize themselves in remarkable coherence around a unitary interpretation in terms of motor action" (Parlebas 1985, 89). The resulting *motor praxeology* was conceived as "science of motor action, in particular of the conditions, modes of operation and results of its accomplishment" (LEX, P:44)[4] [5], developed in a transdisciplinary way, with

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[3] The panel was composed by Marc Barbut (mathematics, Paris V), Jacques Lautmann (sociology, Paris V), Raymond Boudon (sociology, Paris V), Claude Bremond (semiology, EPHE), Claude Flament (mathematics, Aix-Marseille), Jacques Ulmann (philosophy, Paris I) and Roger Daval (social psychology, Paris V), Parlebas' tutor. Anyone familiar to the history of social sciences can easily appreciate how high the standards faced by the *defendant* were.

[4] One of the three parts of Parlebas' thesis was published 1981 as a lexicon: *Contribution à un lexique commenté en science de l'action motrice*. The second, updated edition was published in 1999 with a slightly different title, but same spirit: *Jeux, sports et sociétés: lexique de praxéologie motrice*. This book is online at https://books.openedition.org/insep/1067, reason why all references will be related to this online edition, indicated as LEX. More precisely, any citation will be identified by the initial

physical education in mind, and from a structural-systemic point of view.

In the vein of Alfred Espinas' "technology for the agent", that dealt with the "conditions and laws of action efficacy", and "mathematical praxeology" as Marc Barbut understood it; in the same way that Roger Daval differentiated "the very necessary distinction between a science of the actor and a science for the actor", Parlebas ventured to claim action as the *spearhead*, as he would say years later (2006), of physical education:

At the outset, it should be noted that motor praxeology is much less ambitious than the theories of Baudouin or Parsons. It does not nourish the project of covering all human actions, and even less that of unifying the social sciences. More simply, it aims to study specifically motor action, the kind of action that makes sense of its bodily performing, of the actualization of motor conducts. The field is vast - motor situations of play, leisure, work - but limited.

The fact remains that the two perspectives identified by Roger Daval will also compete here: a science of motor action that studies phenomena from the outside as a physicist would do, and a science serving the individual acting on the demands of a concrete task. It is this duality, very badly perceived, which underlies the violent conflict opposing, in the field of sport and physical education, theory to practice. (LEX, P:53, 54).

In 1981 his closest collaborator Bertrand During presented Parlebas structural physical education as a scientific physical education based on a *semiological approach to sporting games,* the exit to "The crisis of bodily pedagogies": "The experimental dimension introduced in physical education by P. Parlebas is all the more fertile as it is organized from a perspective that does not vary: that of considering motor conduct as communication, as a particular mode of relation between individu-

als and their physical and human environment." (233) Semiology, the *science for the study of the life of signs in the social life* conceived by Saussure would drive Parlebas' thinking on both planes: the understanding of *motor agency* as the pedagogical objective of physical education, and the understanding of games and sports as *motor action situations* whose internal logic can be brought out to light. The Copernican turn that put the person, not the movement in the centre of teaching action in physical education had to be reinforced, complemented by an equally necessary turn in the comprehension of the psycho-social systems to which individuals belong when they play: *malgré tout,* the *new praxeological* paradigm (Parlebas 2013) needed to be a Kuhnian revolution too, and that is the deeper layer of this essay on snooker that can hopefully be of any interest for a general reflection on action.

The theory of motor action domains

In search of its scientific, autonomous foundation, Parlebas realized that "motor conduct", the "meaningful organization of motor behaviour" (LEX, C:105), is the cornerstone of physical education, understood consequently as the "teaching of motor conducts" (LEX, E:11). If motor conduct is equivalent to linguistics *parole*, "motor action", understood as "process of accomplishing the motor conducts of one or more individuals acting in a determined motor situation" (LEX, A:1)[6], is the equivalent to linguistics *langue*, "a system that knows only its own order" as Saussure put it. Praxeological inquiry aims at bringing this order to light by understanding the "internal logic" of ludomotor situations. In the same way that the grammatical structures of *a language* materialize *human language* and make verbal interaction possible, the internal logic of a sporting game sustains its emergent action making possible motor communication. Athletic shotput, baseball, fencing or hide-and-seek are different games

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letter of the term in French, the chapter it is included in, and the ordinal number of the paragraph: P:54 for instance is the 54th paragraph in chapter P.
[5] *Praxéologie motrice : Science de l'action motrice, notamment des conditions, des modes de fonctionnement et des résultats de la mise en œuvre de celle-ci.*

[6] *Action motrice : Processus d'accomplissement des conduites motrices d'un ou de plusieurs sujets agissant dans une situation motrice déterminée.*

because when each of them is practiced a unique motor action emerges, a unique cultural phenomenon with its own "internal logic: system of pertinent traits of a motor situation and consequences which it entails in the performance of the corresponding motor action." (LEX, L:4)[7]

Games and sports are one of the most valuable *assets* of physical education: "Miniature societies, true laboratories of human conducts and communications (…), effervescent microcosms" (Parlebas 1985, 90). For this reason, a praxeological classification of sporting games is an essential instrument for scientists and educators alike, challenged in different ways by a triad of issues that many times come as one without notice: that of the meaning of game-playing, that of nature of games and that of game classes.

A game language called "game"

Any handbook of philosophy of sport dedicates one of its first parts to the definition of game and sport. It seems sensible and wise, unavoidable, one of the things philosophers are expected to do. The seminal paper by Bernard Suits (1967) "What is a game?" is still cited nowadays when it comes to discussing about *how much game or sport* an activity is. To make things worse, Suits discovered years later that this ontological question concerns another element, that the problematic couple was, in fact, a threesome, a "tricky triad" (1988) composed by *play, game,* and *sport*. ESports, for instance, has been in the official program of the 2019 Asian Games endorsed by the International Olympic Committee, the very same institution that hosts the World Federation of Bridge since 1995 and the World Federation of Chess since 1999, no matter how far these games are from Pierre de Coubertin's original project.

Institutional interests are also defended in the linguistic arena, many times with as much drama and intelli-

gence, cruelty or subtlety as in Shakespeare's plays. *What's in a name? -asks Juliette in despair- That which we call a rose// By any name would smell as sweet.* "What is a game?", we ask ourselves once and again, hoping to find *the answer* without taking into account that a disciplinary or professional field usually depends on and generates its terminology; that we need to expect that *the same word* refers to a different object in the mouth of a psychologist, a sociologist, a historian or a mathematician; that we cannot ignore that semantic fields from different languages about *the same object* do not match perfectly, being that of "game" a perfect example.

Should we speak in French or Spanish, we could easily agree with Jacques Henriot (1969) about three substantive levels of analysis when thinking about games:

The first sense of game is *what is playing* who is at play. Structured, more or less necessarily codified, it presents itself as a system that draws for the players the scheme of a hypothetically compulsory conducts.

In a second sense, game can be conceived as *what a player does*. When a person is engaged in a certain game, for her the game also consists of the act of playing itself. This type of conduct can also be produced in the absence of any constituted ludic structure.

In a final sense, game is *what makes a player play*, precisely what makes possible in them (and by its intermediation) game-playing and the very reality of the constituted game.

Suits' definition seems to cover these three levels in one single proposition: "By means of a critical examination of a number of theses as to the nature of game-playing, the following definition is advanced. To play a game is to engage in activity directed toward bringing about a specific state of affairs, using only means permitted by specific rules, where the means permitted by the rules are more limited in scope than they would be in the absence of the rules, and where the sole reason for accepting such limitation is to make possible such activity" (1967, 148). A game, any game, would be *action, guidance, and attitude* to play: a course of action oriented by rules only tolerated by an inclination... to play! Tricky indeed.

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[7] *Logique interne : Système des traits pertinents d'une situation motrice et des conséquences qu'il entraîne dans l'accomplissement de l'action motrice correspondante.*

Parlebas does not dismiss the question about play: "A game is a dream. The act of play is not reducible to the functioning of a biological machine that spends a surplus of energy. Nor can it be compared to a futile, meaningless relaxation. Play makes sense, and the playful sense is of the same order, or disorder, as the dream-like sense" (1975, 784). In *Sporting games, dream, and fantasy*, a text of outmost beauty, he too reconciles three different levels, but in a subtle distinctive way that shows, as he would claim in 1984, that sporting game and motor action are a genuine, complex and pertinent study object:

Dream of the acting person, dream of the confronted groups, dream of the hosting society, sports games are the fulfilment of a fantasy. The body, the sports body, is the valuable place on which the dictates of the institution are massively projected. On the other hand, the ludic body, impulsive and much less comprehensible, tends to be depreciated by the authorities. Rejecting the traditional game, sport has become the revealing myth of the contradictions of technical civilization.

Despite what a tenacious tradition claims, playing a game is neither free, disinterested, nor sterile. On the contrary, a sporting game deeply engages the player, the team and the society in praxis, in a motor creation that entails a sense often unconscious and difficult to decipher. Usually dead letter in the discourses, the body reappears here as a body of life and action, all at the same time permeated by the norms of society and passionately charged with the aspirations of the player. This deep implication, this power of expression is at the source of this little scandal: the pleasure of game playing. (803)

We play because it is pleasurable to engage in such activities, and understanding these activities is a highway to understanding this scandal that, for many, is the only way to "good life" (Carlson 2018, Suits 1978).

Even though, what Parlebas really needed at the time was a solid corpus of analysis, and, maybe because of that, he came to the conclusion that the only way to tame the polysemy of "game and sport" was an operational defini-

tion of the object he was interested in: "Sporting game: motor situation of codified confrontation, called 'game' or 'sport' by social authorities. A sports game is defined by its system of rules, which determines its internal logic."[8] As he explains in *Éléments de Sociologie du sport*: "Clearly poor as far as its notional content is concerned, this is an ostensive definition that refers to repertoires of practices managed by federations or educational organizations." (1986, 46) Far from the logical problems caused by Suits' one (Meier 1988), this definition may be poor, but relies on pertinent traits that allow us to identify fundamental categories of human activity and culture:

- Sporting games suppose *la mise en jeu du corps*, to *put-body-at-play* roughly translated. Chess and bridge are not sporting games because the players' decisions are not affected by the characteristics of their bodily materialization; the players do not display motor conducts, they do not participate in a "motor situation" (LEX, S:106).

- Sporting games are *competitions*, either with memory (like all sports) or without memory (like many traditional games): confrontations regulated by rules that create a task to be completed. Cricket, rounders, and blob-tag are sporting games; having a stroll in the woods or jumping over the waves are not sporting games, because agency is not regulated by any constraint other than individuals' needs, whims, and desires.

- Sports are *institutionalized* sporting games. This feature is not included in the definition of sporting game because it is external to the motor task. Undoubtedly, there is a linkage between internal and external logics of sports that flows in both senses: not every game is selected by the institutions (unstable or ambivalent ones

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8 *Jeu sportif* : Situation motrice d'affrontement codifiée, dénommée « jeu » ou « sport » par les instances sociales. Un jeu sportif est défini par son système de règles qui en détermine la logique interne.

are kept away from it), and the governing institutions (federations or international committees) change the rules to align them with their interests, economical ones mainly (Parlebas 1986).

Games, play action and game? *Jeux, jouer et jouant? ¿Los juegos, el jugar y el juego?* Let's admit that the understanding of the nature of "game and sport" is a formidable exercise that challenges our most basic conceptual tools, just like any vital, truly important matter can do, just like Wittgenstein himself appreciated when presenting his concept of language-game. From now on, "sporting game" refers both to any situation - understood in the most Goffmanian way (1964) - that put agents in a motor competition and to the category of such situations generally speaking. But before becoming a real situation *hic et nunc,* a sporting game has another, previous kind of *existence* that we need to deal with to understand the connection between games and action.

Sporting game as a juridical entity

Games are not necessary, but after their creation a new necessity is born: a *juridical*[9] *necessity* consisting in a certain manner of acting that must be respected should the game not disappear. Unlike natural or logical necessities, which impose their authority through universal laws or mathematical relations, a sporting game is a juridical entity whose only *raison d'être* is to orient human action in the selected direction by creating a framework where the legitimate agents are *free to act*

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[9] I have decided to use "juridical" -the sematic root "*iure*" to be more precise- when needing to refer to the *legal* nature of any phenomenon, games and sports in this case. LAW is a clear example of non-matching semantic fields for English and Spanish or French speaking people. Just in case they could be different issues, these different languages combine with different traditions of building Law, *el Derecho, le Droit*. I do not feel comfortable with "legal" or "lawful" when it comes to refer to the system or perspective that constrains, guides, orients human action by means of *acts, statutory laws, carters, ordinances or statues* that belong to *civil or criminal divisions*, in order to determine by *judgment, sentences or decisions* whether an act is *legal* or *lawful*, whether any *remedy, redress* or *relief* must be ordered (Alcaraz 1994).

(Robles 1984). It is generally accepted that games are a rule governed kind of activity, but it is rarely mentioned that rules are, as the professor of philosophy of Law Gregorio Robles points out, "linguistic expressions oriented to directly or indirectly direct human action" (95) that create a system of action possibilities or "competencies". Games and sports have been frequently used to explain what law is, like card games (Weber 1971), chess (Ross 1994) and cricket (Hart 1990, Raz 1991). Surprisingly enough, it is very rare to find juridical analysis of sporting games, despite Law, no matter how complex, intricate and paradoxical it may become, is the way we have given ourselves to coordinate our actions sustainably for the last three millennia.

Parlebas is the only one who takes this path somehow. "A sporting game is first and foremost a corpus of rules that governs the conditions of practice and sets the modes of interaction, thus defining each ludosystem." (1988, 97) Furthermore, he ventures to explain why *games of rules* are even possible, why they are respected and operate, getting to the conclusion that for ludic confrontation to happen collaboration must reign at a deeper level. If societies are built upon Rousseau's social contracts*,* sporting games are also based on a "founding pact", on an "explicit or tacit agreement that binds the participants to a game by fixing or renewing the system of its rules". Parlebas names it "ludic contract" (LEX, C:154): "The ludomotor contract must be understood in the first place as the juridical category that legally founds the game. The players' conducts would lose their coherence and profound significance if they were not supported by this contract and its clauses." (1986, 101) In this sense, any kind of confrontation, any sports competition is the visible consequence of an invisible *cooperative infra-game* that casts out anarchical behaviours and, in the case of sports at least, puts "relational perverse effects" (114) under control.

Most likely, the only internalist account of why it is reasonable to expect a certain course of action instead of another when a game is practiced is its *legal nature* (Martínez-Santos 2018). A game is the covenanted result of extrinsic actions, of "extra systemic" decisions (Robles

1984, 40), like the ones made by a group of dissidents who gathered in London in 1863 and recognized each other as the members of the new-born Football Association, or the ones made in 1891 by a single man who created a game with two bottomless baskets of peaches and a football for a group of troublemakers. When Naismith typed and published his 13 rules a new action-sphere was created, whose existence was independent of its later actualization and consisted in a system of intrinsic possibilities of action: "What a game is does not depend on it being practiced or not, for its nature is identified by a set of linguistic propositions conventionally adopted. As a whole, the purpose of these linguistic propositions is to direct action, but the fact the action is not produced does not imply that those propositions have no meaning nor, consequently, the game they compose and constitute exists no more." (Robles 1984, 38).

The intriguing process of transformation of these *speech acts* into motor action is beyond our scope, but it is fundamental to understand that it as an expression of how intelligence operates in two complementary senses (Martínez-Santos and Oiarbide 2020): *From the words to the acts*, when the players interpret the rules and explore the possibilities they have to resolve de task with respect to the laws, and *from the acts to the words* when they have to assess any displayed action and give them the first value a game-playing action always receives: their juridical legitimacy. Robles calls the first ones "immanent decisions" and the second ones "diriment decisions", and, strangely enough, the *survival* of a game does not depend on the players' respect of the rules, that is on them always abiding by the rules, but on the acceptance of the consequences of the diriment decisions, that is on the application of the remedies provided by the convention if acted against it.

It is pertinent at this point to put on the table von Wright's clarification about "act", not only because in a book entitled *Norm and action. A logical inquiry* (1963)[10]

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[10] This book can be found on
https://www.giffordlectures.org/books/norm-and-action/iii-act-and-ability

he refers to "rules of a game" as "the prototype and standard example of a main type of norm", but mainly because his most basic assumptions about act and activity allow us to understand motor action better, the "activity" of game-playing: acting is about intentionally effecting changes in the state of affairs, or stopping them from happening, having the opportunity to do so; the result of an act can be both the factual doing of the act and the act already done; the consequence of and act is linked to the transformations of the world produced by the results of the action. Sporting motor action is based on a juridical fabric on which playing acts, results, and consequences are weaved through the players' choices.

In sports, the first interpretation of players' conducts is on their *lawfulness*, and the consequences to them attached have always a *legal sense*: faults, penalties, scores, cards, disqualifications, etc. Sports agency is juridical all along and, as action-orienting systems, sporting games protect themselves from *disrespectful* or unskilled players by resorting to one of two kinds of legal remedies: annulment and sanction (Robles 1984; Martínez-Santos 2018):

- *Annulment based sports*, like athletics and gymnastics, endure because any rule-breaking has as a consequence the annulment of the sportsperson's action, totally or partially: illegal acts are non-existing acts, and there is nothing worse in competition than not having acted. Athletes and gymnasts have no better reason to play by the rules that their interest in producing a valuable result, for in these sports it is impossible to win breaking the rules.

- *Sanction based sports*, like combat and team sports, endure because any rule-breaking has as consequence a penalty, sometimes on the scoreboard, sometimes on the playing conditions. In some of these sports, it is possible not to lose in spite of breaking the rules.

Under these two juridical logics, infinite games are possible: athletic races and contests, acrobatic contests, combat sports, team sports... All of them coerce action

juridically but create different, unique problems that challenge intelligence and creativity in distinctive ways. We can call the content of this challenges the "motor tasks" that the players have to solve: "Objectively organized set of material conditions and constraints defining an objective, the achievement of which requires the actualization of motor conducts by one or more participants" (LEX, T:1), and considerer our final step in this analytical effort to reduce this infinity of tasks to a finite, structured system of categories that allow us to foresee their most relevant consequences on sports agency.

The praxeological classification of sporting games

"A classification responds to a desire for inventory and organization, to a search for intelligibility in front of a collection of objects or phenomena. All disciplines devote their first efforts to classification censuses." (LEX, C-2) What makes two sporting games alike depends on the classification criteria used to compare them. There is no need to insist on it. In our case, we aspire to distinguish types of challenges and problems, classes of situations that put creativity to the test in significantly different ways.

> The principle behind the development of the classification that we propose consists of considering any motor situation as a system of global interaction between an agent, the physical milieu and any other possible participants. The agent is therefore not seen as an individual isolated from the context, so anatomical or purely descriptive criteria become obsolete. The relevant criterion is that which indicates a connection between the agent with the environment on one hand (criterion: uncertainty of information from the environment), and with others on the other hand (criterion: motor interaction). The key factor present in any situation is the notion of uncertainty: the informational dimension, therefore, takes on prominent importance. (LEX, C:11)

Uncertainty, understood as "property of unpredictability attached to certain elements of a situation" (LEX, I:1), is the subjective correlate of the informational characteristics of the world around, the most determining feature of the circumstances in which an agent has to act:

- uncertainty due to the physical milieu is null when we play on a tennis court, an athletics track or a gym, but it can grow out of control when hiking or skiing, diving or sailing, gliding or climbing;
- uncertainty due to the presence of other agents is null when we perform alone, as in many athletics and gymnastics disciplines, or present and disturbing when we must confront another intelligence opposed to ours, face to face, a team against a team or in many other ways, even paradoxically as in traditional games like *sitting ball, elbow tag,* or *puss in the corner.*

These two vectors can be transformed into three distinctive dichotomic traits: presence or absence of *uncertainty* due to the physical milieu, presence or absence of *opponents*, and presence or absence of *partners*. Figure 1 shows the praxeological classification system of sporting games proposed by Parlebas fifty years ago. Each of the eight classes of equivalence that compose this taxonomy, exemplified with sports, in this case, is a "motor action domain: field in which all the bodily practices included are supposed to be homogeneous about precise criteria of motor action." (LEX, D-74) This is one of the new terms contained in 1999, extended second edition of the lexicon, a good chance to recapitulate about the classification itself:

> It is advisable to choose carefully a small group of criteria that will determine action domains in a sufficiently important number to offer the desirable variety but sufficiently reduced to guarantee essential ease of use. (C-77)
> These factors, proposed in 1967, were unusual and disconcerting at the time. In reality, they are in harmony with the knowledge that has since then been confirmed in the human sciences, in particular with cognitivist concepttions: in fact, these three traits refer to uncertainty, to information in other words, which can be taken from the environment or others (partner or opponent). This is a way of favouring information processing and decision-making processes, that is to say a way of favouring cognitive competencies directly related to motor action. (C-78)

These cognitivist principles may seem obvious today, but in an article published in 1971 with the title *L'éducation physique, la mal aimée,* Parlebas was *kindly invited* to

get rid of so many technicities and speak more clearly. In the end, a compromise was settled, and a few footnotes included to explain concepts like cognitive, empathy and creativity…
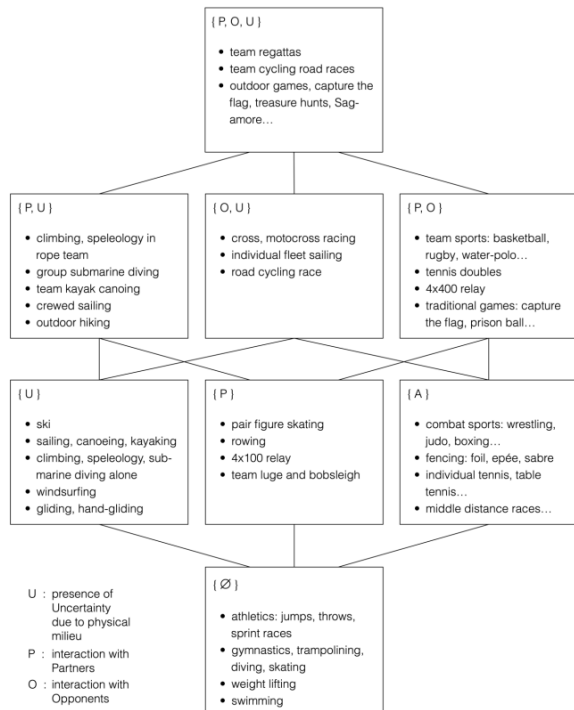

Figure 1. Praxeological classification of sporting games in eight action domains (Parlebas 1986, 80).

Every action domain is a category of equivalent problems, so to speak, of problems that can be resolved in a similar way. But how real are they? How certain can we be that team sports are different from athletics? Is not athletics the most fundamental sport? If basketball fundamentals are *running, passing, jumping* and *shooting* athletics must be the basic practice for basketball players of any age and condition. The syllogism behind the reasoning looks solid. The only problem with it is that athletics is not even the basics for athletics itself! A simple calculation of binary correlations between the scores obtained by athletes in every discipline of the Olympic decathlon shows that best performances in jumping do not have to correlate with endurance or throwing: there is no such thing as an athletic core competence, not to speak about an allegedly *general factor* of motricity (Parlebas 2000). Moreover, the presence of opponents dramatically transforms the internal logic of motor situations, so how certain can we be

that *running, jumping* and *shooting* be equivalent in athletics and basketball?

This is the general postulate behind the praxeologycal classification of sports. "This organization in motor action domains will not be enough to predict all the consequences of practicing the planned activities, but it will offer a decisive basis for reasonable educational projects and propose capital orientations for research of all kinds. In this line, it will suggest experimental work which will verify whether the effects obtained correspond to the expected effects and the desired effects." (LEX, D:83) In 1998 Parlebas published the results of an experimental piece of research designed twenty years back to test whether the expected "learning transfer" (LEX, T:90) from athletics is factual or not. Through a precise definition of the *controlled variables* (academic and socioeconomic levels, gender, basic motor competence, and intervention style), it was possible to relate the differences on the *dependent variable* (sociomotor competence) to the characteristics of practice proposed to the four groups of twenty-four 10-11-year-old boys and girls during the eight sessions between the pre-test and the post-test, interpreting the presence or absence of differences as the effect of the *independent variables* (internal logic and level of institutionalization of activities) on learning transference.

Results showed that the practice of athletics does not prepare for team sports, nor traditional games with the same relational structure (symmetric confrontation of two teams). On the other hand, learning transfer between team duels is positive in both directions, no matter the cultural relevance of the practiced activities: traditional games prepare for sports, and sports prepare for traditional games, but athletics prepares for none of them! Motor conducts are domain-specific, and even if we considered appropriate to analyse *sports technics,* we should realize that it is praxeologically specific too: at the service of energetic efficiency in sports races, of normative efficacy in sports contests, and of semiotic effectivity in sports duels. "The individual that plays is not a biomechanical machine in a Cartesian way, nor a thermosdynamic machine *à la Carnot,* nor a cybernetic machine in a Wienerian

way: a player is a person who adopts attitudes, chooses strategies, experiences pain and pleasure, invents new motor conducts, creates unusual meta-rules of communication, is stirred up in illusion and symbols" (1986, 72), and the science of motor action keeps trying to prove it on the basis that motor conduct is one, complex, multidimensional, biographical expression of a personality that always acts as a whole (Collinet 2005).

The praxeological classification of motor situations is the perfect combination of pedagogical and epistemological awareness we claimed for above. Pedagogically speaking, the three main aims of education – learning about oneself, about the others and about the world – can be implemented from the information/communication vectors that generate the eight action domains. Epistemologically speaking, this classification is due to a *semiotor* perspective that substitutes the mechanistic outlook from which sports activity was, and still is, analysed: "The semiotor point of view introduces a decisive break. We can no longer be satisfied, as Demeny did, to speak in terms of 'movement'. Motor action does not exhaust itself in the extended thing, in a description of displacements in space and in time. The introduction of meaning, symbolism, and metacommunication requires the use of a concept capable of accounting for it: the concept of motor conduct". (LEX, S:263) As explained elsewhere (Martínez-Santos 2020), frontal opposition to cartesian dualism led Parlebas to semiology *in a similar, but totally different way* as it took Peirce to semiotics.

Furthermore, Parlebas identified three main semiotor areas in semiotricity (LEX, S:43)[11]:

- *Referential semiotricity:* Bodily expression, mime, ballet, and artistic activities put in play communication processes in which "external references" are evoked to build up symbolic gestures.

- *Socio-affective semiotricity* regards to the interpretation of conducts in terms of their affective

and relational values. It finds it way in traditional sporting game in which players have the choice to freely determine with whom and how interact: for instance, *the sitting ball*, an ambivalent-unstable sociomotor game, has been proved to be a suitable substitute of sociometric questionnaires (Obœuf, Collard, and Gérard 2008).

- *Instrumental semiotricity* serves the interests of sportspersons whose behaviours must be first and utmost understood as a way to outperform the opponents: at any degree, the only pertinent interpretation of the agents' corporal behaviour is strategic, like in our sports duels.

We have learnt so far that sporting games are action creating entities; that sports agency is juridically controlled in two different ways; that uncertainty is key to understand sports performance; that we can distinguish eight motor action domains regarding the main features that characterize sports situations: relationships to the spatial milieu and social entourage. We can now turn our look back to the question posed in the title putting all these praxeological elements to play for us, and try to understand if the temporal structure of interaction affects anyhow the system of motor action domains presented.

Judo, boxing, fencing, tennis… and snooker. The same combat?

Whereas judicial combats on *fields of honour* were already something from the past in late XIX century, sport, developed in the very same century, has in duelling one of the quintessential modes of its expression. Every day, all over the world, a myriad of couples of individuals try to fight one another without any need of previous offense, but not always *to first blood*: Isn't this a clear example of the civilizing process described by Norbert Elias (Elias and Dunning 1992), a clear source of pride for humanity? From the classificatory point of view, these games focus the agents' attention and decisions on the competitive relationship with an opponent: *space* is limited but stable, produces no information, creates no

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[11] *Semiotricité : Nature et champ des situations motrices envisagées sous l'angle de la mise en jeu de systèmes de signes directement associés aux conduites motrices des participants.*

uncertainty; there is *no partner*, so agents do not have to coordinate their decisions within a team.

Sport is a subset of the set of sporting games as previously defined, more exactly the finite set of sporting games controlled by national or international governing bodies in charge of updating its rules and monitoring their compliance. Institutionalized pure opposition can be experienced in a *face-to-face* encounter or an *each-on-their-own situations.* Sports in the class [O] can only have two different "motor communications networks" (LEX, R:26): *individual 2-exclusive-stable networks*, like combat sports, tennis or fencing; and *individual n>2-exclusive-stable networks*, like in 800 m or F-1 races. We can call *individual duel* any situation of the first kind, in which agents must overcome the opponent's determination to obstruct and prevent them from scoring, a subcategory of "sporting duels": situations of "confrontation between two adversaries whose interests are diametrically opposed: what one wins, it is to the detriment of the other one who loses it." (LEX, D:110)

Snooker is a billiard game played on a large table in which two players, using long and sharp *sticks*, try to win the match by getting a number of *frames* sooner than the opponent. In a frame the objective of each player is to get more points than the adversary by potting as many balls as needed in accordance to certain rules: each one of the fifteen *red balls* is equal to one point, and *colour balls* (yellow, green, brown, blue, pink and black) are worth from two to seven points; the first ball potted at every break must be red, and after a red ball is potted any colour ball must be aimed; potted colour balls are replaced until there are no more red balls left to be aimed at; a player has the right to try to get more points until failing to pot or committing a fault, like playing balls in the wrong sequence, potting the cue ball, touching the balls, etc.; for every fault called the offender's opponent gets a minimum of four points. As in any other billiard game, opponents play sequentially, alternating turns in a very polite and respectful atmosphere: when one of them is at the table the other is *at the chair*. Even though, *snooker* is the proper word to nominate a shot taken by an acting player who successfully leaves the other player's cue ball (the white ball) without a direct shot on any object ball. In face of a too risky shot, or impelled

by a need of points in excess of the maximum available on the table to win the frame, the *acting player* will make the worst decision possible from the sitting player's viewpoint: like in any other duel, snooker players deliberately try to produce one another as much damage as possible on each other's behaviours and scores.

Snooker is certainly a duel, but is it a duel of the same class as judo, boxing, fencing or tennis? As we are about to see, sporting duels can be very peculiar, but is snooker's peculiarity too acute for sociomotricity? In any of the aforementioned duels, interaction implies that both players act at the same time, that both agents produce their playing behaviours at the same time needing to take into account each other's course of action. What are the consequences of the *alternating motor interaction* of snooker? That is the question we struggle with, the question that might force us to put in quarantine some of the axioms of praxic communication.

The internal logic of individual sporting duels

Some traits of the internal logic of a sporting game are deducible from the rules, while some others can only be properly discovered after observing rational, competent players in action. Among the first group we have the following features of sporting individual duels:

- The network of motor communications is reduced to two agents who can only *counter-communicate* against each other, without a trace of instrumental collaboration. It is the most simple form of sociomotricity, although it possesses all the same features of the sports networks found by Parlebas (2010)[12] long ago.

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[12] This is one of the main findings of Parlebas sociological research: the communication network of any sport is *exclusive* (two players are partners or opponents), *stable* (the relationship between two any players is always the same along the whole competition), *complete* (between any two players of the system there is always a positive or negative relationship) and *balanced*, strongly balanced as in team sports (between any three players of the system, it is always the case that the partner's partner is a partner, the partner's opponent is an opponent, the opponent's partner is an opponent, and the opponent's opponent is a partner), or weakly balanced as in long distance races (in these situations it can be the case that my opponent's opponent be my opponent too).

- Both players perform *at the same time*: on a general basis, in combat assaults and fencing rolls they face each other in equal conditions, with same rights and constrictions; in rackets duels instead, they can only hit the ball by turns, being this right strictly determined by the service order.

- They are games with memory, that is, games with a *scoring system* that keeps a record of the most valuable acts: the *scoring interactions* (LEX, I:108).

- Scoring interactions are always *motor counter-communications*: throwing, holding or strangling in judo; hitting certain parts of the opponent's body in karate, boxing or fencing; forcing errors by the opponent in badminton or tennis, etc.

- The scoring system can be supported by two different structures, *time-limited* or *score limited*, which can apply separately or jointly: in tennis, fencing and karate there is a score-limited system and the first one who reaches a certain score wins the match; in combat sports, like Greco-Roman wrestling, judo or boxing, the match has a limited duration but ends as soon as one of the fighters is awarded a top score (*fall or pin, ippon, knock out*).

- In all these sports competitors can be *sanctioned* with penalties that can affect their scores: e.g., one point to the opponent for out-of-bounds in wrestling; victory to the opponent for repeated medium level infractions in karate; one touch to the opponent for repeated vindictive or violent actions in fencing, etc.

Duellists' decisions make sense in relation to these constraints, either when avoiding sanctionable behaviours, or when showing apparently too risky, almost irrational conducts when the bell is about to ring.

As Parlebas showed (1984), face-to-face opposition has been institutionalized in many ways, and according to a few pertinent traits it can be considered a self-organized subsystem of sports. On Figure 2 we can see how these features articulate with some other invariants of the generated duelling action, a high-resolution picture of some of this family of sports:

- *Direct praxic communication*, understood as the bodily interaction procedures created along with the rules refers to which elements of the body can be used, and how, to dominate, reduce and defeat the adversary.

- Occasionally, interaction is mediated by the use of objects that are sometimes real *weapons*, as in fencing, or mere instruments that cannot be used to hit the other player, as in tennis.

- Finally, action can develop around two types of *targets*: human targets, when scoring depends on reaching a specific part of the adversary's body and protecting one's own body from been touched, or material targets, when scoring depends on reaching the field areas defended by the opponent.

| | | Greek-Roman wrestling / judo | French boxing | foil / kendo stick | badminton |
		free wrestling	English boxing / karate	sword, saber, cane	table tennis
modalities of counter-communication		hitting not allowed *enveloped* grasping floor combat	punchs and hits no floor combat	hits with a weapon (« touche »)	hitting a ball (racket)
		no leg action / leg action	no leg action / leg action	only tip hits / cutting hits allowed (saber, kendo)	separating net inviolable fields
		permanent, direct contact	intermittent, direct contact	intermittent, mediated contact	no contact
weapon		DUEL WITHOUT WEAPONS		DUEL WITH WEAPONS	DUEL WITH PROJECTILE
target		upper body / whole body	upper body / whole body	breast-plate only / upper body (saber) whole body (sword, kendo)	
		HUMAN TARGET: OPPONENT'S BODY			MATERIAL TARGET: A FIELD AREA

	almost null distance	short distance	middle distance	long distance
guard distance	<1 m	1 to 3 m	3 to 5 m	>5 m
interaction space				
degree of violence	non striking combat	striking combat	fencing category	tennis category

Figure 2. System of sporting individual duels (Parlebas 1986, 160).

Most interestingly, these options match together in specific ways that have worked well for centuries. "We can say about those sporting games practiced for ages that they are like pebbles rolled by the sea for a long time: polished by never-ending friction, they have become *good shapes*." (Parlebas 1986, 117). This applies not only to every duel individually but to the collection

of individual duels as a whole. In these sports, action is guided juridically and culturally, at the level of the situation and the level of civilization, because duelling, as a civilized effort to *annihilate* a member of our species, is accepted only when a certain balance between offense and defence is attained, when aggression, evasion, and retaliation are balanced and can still be *fun*. As a consequence, the quantity of space available per player in a game situation, namely the *individual interaction* space, increases within every subgroup along with aggressivity, permitted bodily violence. The same happens with *guard distance*, the distance that separates both duellists when ready for attack.

This system may seem today debatable and out of date. Certainly, Mixed Martial Arts or Ultimate Fight Championship challenge this internal articulation described decades ago, but reflection can be driven in both senses, and the ethical reproaches received by these highly sponsored, televised spectacles find in Parlebas' analysis a solid basis for denouncing them for being practices too far from our sports culture, and not only for the slightly edifying experience produced by the show on the octagon… and the stands. Even though it is a fact that these new modalities belong to combat sports however bloody they can be, that fighters are involved in the same decision making, risk evaluating process as wrestlers, fencers, and tennis players. In his research about risk as a distinctive trait of the internal logic sports, Luc Collard (1998) concluded: "Risk is a two-dimensional entity: it is made of stochastic processes (the random function of the situation) and compromises (the part of the severity of the situation)." (72)[13] Both elements must be present for an activity to be considered *risky*, which is not the same as dangerous, unless we reconsidered what *to be in danger* is. Sports duels are risky sporting games: on the one hand, action is a stochastic process because agents cannot reduce uncertainty to zero no matter how trained and experienced

they may be; on the other hand, something is always put at stake when acting, there is always a competitive compromise in all actions, and there is sometimes a bodily compromise also, like in professional boxing or mixed arts. As in any other sports competition, dominating the rivals consists of anticipating their decisions and exhausting their energetic reserves, but in duels it also consists of making the other live emotions and calculations that may have to deal with pain and not so symbolic fear.

According to Collard's analysis, sporting duels belong to a category in which the "stochastic process is born from the 'simultaneous' action of adversaries who try to make their motor conducts as opaque and blinding as possible. Solutions in terms of 'pure strategies' are utopic, and the bets on the success or failure of the 'mixed strategies' introduce probabilities (objectifiable in theory) in motor decisions." (1998, 97). As in any motor situation with information, the conduct of a *duel agent* is always a "motor decision", a "motor conduct that manifests in its accomplishment a choice linked to the uncertainty of a situation. This decision presents the originality of taking shape in a motor behaviour, during the very flow of the action, and of participating in the field in the resolution of a motor task." (LEX, D:6)[14]

Generally speaking, no matter if intentional or unconscious, fast or slowly taken (Kahneman 2013), any motor behaviour displayed by a person acting under uncertainty is a decision, a sign that can be interpreted in accordance with the task. Sports motricity is instrumental, not expressive or purely affective, and for this reason, the semiotricity at play is instrumental when it comes to make decisions in a competitive situation. In this kind of sports, success depends on the competence to guess the opponents' intentions while hiding or faking the own ones. This is the key to success in duels, the praxeological cornerstone that puts risk under control,

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[13] *Le risque est une entité à deux dimensions ; il est fait de processus stochastiques (c'est la fonction aléatoire de la situation) et d'enjeux (c'est la part de la gravité de la situation).*

[14] *Décision motrice : Conduite motrice manifestant dans son accomplissement un choix lié à l'incertitude d'une situation. Cette décision présente l'originalité de prendre corps dans un comportement moteur, au cours du flux même de l'action, et de participer sur le champ à la résolution d'une tâche motrice.*

defines individual competences and sustains game systems.

Having said so, it is evident that this body interpretation is not required in snooker. Isn't it solid, sufficient evidence against the claim that snooker is a duel? None the less, it is evident as well that snooker players are *doomed* by the same risk-taking logic as judokas and tennis players. Can we really get rid of such an essential feature of motor interaction without epistemological consequences? These are precisely the two questions we need to answer to get to a fruitful outcome no matter how dangerous it may be, but we all know that trying to make our ideas clearer is a risky game…

Praxic consequences of alternating motor interaction

A motor action domain contains activities that demand participants to put in practice the same "action principles" (LEX, P:94). In situations with opponents and information-free physical milieus, these principles have to do with *decoding the others*: feinting has a key role; semiotor encoding and decoding are of paramount importance; anticipation of anticipations are required; motor decisions and strategies are essential; it produces a vivid sociomotor dynamics (LEX, C: Figure 3). Everything said by Mead (1937) about game-playing applies in here: "The child who plays in a game must be ready to take the attitude of everyone else involved in that game, and [] these different roles must have a definite relationship to each other" (151), knowing that "the attitudes of the other players which the participant assumes organize into a sort of unit, and it is that organization which controls the response of the individual." (154). Sociomotor game-playing, understood as instrumental interaction and successful communication processes, requires Mead's *generalized other* to make possible those motor interaction systems that Parlebas studied so thoroughly:

> One of the first authors to be concerned with bodily reactions during the communication process is certainly George Mead. One of his favourite expressions on this subject was "conversation of gestures". He illustrates certain modalities by

the interpretation of the fight between two dogs which both regulate their postures and their attacks on the bodily reactions of their opponent. In an explicit reference to sporting confrontation, George Mead cites boxers and fencers whose feints and guarding reveal how much their conducts are meaning bearers. As he writes: "Gestures become significant symbols" (45) He shows that communication favours the internalization of the others' attitudes and collective rules, representing, in the end, a major factor of the socialization process. (Parlebas 1986, 199)

As he says a little later: "It would be unreasonable to claim that bodily communication has been ignored by psychosociologists", but only to proclaim little further: "The specificity of the motor action deployed during motor situations requires an original and distinctive definition of the phenomena of communication; it will undoubtedly require a methodology adapted to its concepts" (201), meaning that approaching the study of this processes only with language in mind may lead to deadlocks like that of Birdwhistles's kinesics: "It is truly a delicate issue, and so have noticed those who research on kinesics, which, too dependent on linguistic methodology, seem to have fizzled out." (LEX, S:30)

In reality, wrestling or fencing can only be seen as "conversation of gestures" metaphorically, for they are not a process of non-verbal communication: in fact, Parlebas defines a "praxic function" (LEX, F:7) in contrast to Jakobson's language functions to claim the originality of motor communication. A smash in badminton or an uppercut in boxing are not hostile messages imaginatively wrapped: they are "essential motor interactions" from the agents' perspective: "During the resolution of a motor task, there is motor interaction when the motor behaviour of an individual observably influences the motor behaviour of one or more other participants." (LEX, I:118) This "praxic communication" happens in two different planes: *a direct one*, related to the motor procedures created by the rules; and *an indirect one*, related to the metacommunicative value of the direct motor communications, "subordinate to the first, which it guides, facilitates and prepares." (LEX, C:57, figure 7) This axiom of praxic communication regarding the gen-

eral axioms of human communication described by the Palo Alto Group is broken, shattered by the temporal separation of individual actions determined by the rules of snooker. In snooker, players are further away from each other than in judo, boxing, foil, or tennis because space is transformed into time, and the right to defend the goals switches on and off: distance between players is irrelevant and there is nothing like a guard-distance, because only the results of the acts count.

As far as interaction is concerned, snooker is a game with cues, but without clues. A duel of results and consequences, not of behaviours. Still, should it be considered a duel, the uncertainty faced by the players must be due to the relationship between them. It is clear that they do not have to *read* the other's bodily behaviours to make their decisions: snooker players do not have to produce "praxems" understood as: "motor conduct of a player interpreted as a sign whose signifier is the observable behaviour and signified the corresponding tactical project as it has been perceived." (LEX, P:26) A player's shot has no tactical meaning for the sitting opponent, who sometimes is not even watching. The bodily configuration of a player's motor conduct has no semiotic value for snooker players, whose playing would never be undermined for not guessing in time, for not anticipating enough. This is just the opposite of what has been said about duelling: Does it mean that snooker is not a fight between *two intelligences*? One may be likely to accept the absence of blood, but does one also have to accept the lack of brawl?

Snooker players have to find imaginative solutions to problems intentionally created by the rival, problems that consist of complex dynamical interactions of trajectories that must be foreseen, first, and actualized, later, in accordance with the rules and the capabilities of the actor. Each and every configuration of the table, frame-breaking shots excepted, can be totally new, unknown, impossible sometimes, and this newness is precisely what binds both players together in a 2-individual exclusive-stable network which makes their decisions creative and their conducts risky. At any time, a player has two macro strategies at the tip of the cue: to try to pot a ball adding points to the score, or to pass up the opportunity to score trying to hinder the opponent's following shot. In between, a wise player would like to score and play *safety,* leaving the cue ball away from the developing area *just in case* a miss happened. Any decision is driven by a calculation of risks in which the pay to be obtained (the value of the potted ball) must be balanced by the objective conditions of the shot (distances and angles between cue ball, object ball and pocket), subjective rate of success on similar shots already taken, tactically acceptable positioning of the cue ball after the shot, running score in the frame, etc. By default, players choose the first strategy and try to get as many points as possible in any scoring break, a maximum of 147 if possible, but many times they have to give up the table, never before trying to *snooker* their untouchable adversary. Eventually, the snooker way of thinking is a slow, thoughtful calculation of risks in the way explained by Collard (1998, 72), a two-dimensional reflection composed by the probability of success attached to any of the conceivable micro strategies and the scoring value of the corresponding stakes.

Unlike combat sports, fencing or tennis kind of games, this *alternating intermotricity* is based only on the material results of the players' performance, not on corporal behaviours themselves. The radical consequence of this sequentialization of actions is that *spatial semiotricity takes the place of social semiotricity* in a sociomotor situation, breaking the two-layer structure of praxic communication: counter-communication does not rely on the bodily configuration of action – totally pertinent as far as the resolution of the task is concerned – but on the situation of the balls on the green cloth. The signs to be interpreted, the other player's intentions to be fought are the still balls to be played according to the rules. Whereas in the duels in Figure 2 an agent's conduct is not only a sign of their intention, but also a motor interpretant that instantly connects it to the other agent's intentions, in snooker the technical configuration of the shot (direction, intensity, spins, screws, swerves,

etc.) has no communicative value for the opponent. For this reason, this semiotic drift from social to spatial semiotricity also affects the way this billiard task is solved and the action-principles involved: tendency to motor stereotypes, pre-programmed behaviours, and predominantly proprioceptive regulation (LEX, C:figure 3) characterize both competence and training practice in snooker, like in sports without opponents.

Alternating interaction seems to be a subdomain of sociomotricity, but intermotricity in the end. Although based in action's results only, the relationship instituted between snooker players is instrumental, necessary, unavoidable in a way that long jumpers or gymnasts ignore. The allegedly impact that scores can have on the sports agents while competing is not systemic, but personal; not necessary, but contingent from the angle of the internal logic of the situation when that is all that connects agents to each other in a sporting game. The emotional impact of competition is not enough to accept that any game or a contest be a sport; it is not enough either to assert that competition and interaction are the same from our praxeological point of view. But we also have to admit, as the first consequence of all that has been discussed so far, that the observational influence that players exert on each other in sociomotor situations can be as well based on the results of action only, not necessarily on motor behaviours themselves: *(simultaneous) intermotricity* integrates acts, results and consequences; *alternating intermotricity* consists of a battle of results and consequences; *co-motricity*, acting separately but side-by-side (100 m) or one-after-another (high jump), can only involve scoring consequences.

Taxonomic consequences of alternating motor interaction

Snooker, the strangest, most unique member of this family has taken a good shot on our beliefs about praxic communication leading us to an interesting conclusion: essential motor interaction can be based on the action's results only, and in these cases there is a semiotic drift from the social vector to the physical vector

of the situation. This essay has dealt more with the action-system perspective that the acting individual's perspective. It is obvious too that both perspectives are so intimately interlinked that it has been necessary to put ourselves in the agents' shoes to illustrate those structural properties that make all duels one unique kind of game while belonging to one family of sports.

The second praxeological consequence of sequentialization has to do with the cornerstone of the theory of sporting games: information and uncertainty, Parlebas' classification criterion and Collard's constitutive element of risk. Decision making depends on how reliable our beliefs about our circumstances can be, and Collard (1998) distinguishes three types of games in regard to information in his exploration of the stochastic processes in sporting games:

- *Games of complete and perfect information*, like gymnastics, ice figure skating, weightlifting, diving, etc. In these games information is complete because any athlete can be fully aware of the possibilities of action, other competitors' choices, the full spectrum of results and their values, and any agent's motives. "Artistic gymnastics fully verifies these properties. Each gymnastics difficulty is listed and officially rated so that the athletes know all the possible choices and their value." (76) Besides, gymnastics competitors perform one after another, making information perfect.

- *Games of complete, imperfect information*, like team sports and combat sports. Just like in the previous category, any player can know about the choices, results, pays, and motives inherent to the game and game-playing, but the agents' simultaneous actions result in an imperfect certainty that avoids them from having all behaviours preestablished and automatized in advance.

- *Games of incomplete information*, like Formula 1. In these situations the "blind spots" permitted by the rules limit the knowledge about results, choices, pays and motives, dramatically affecting the decision-making process: "These situations can get

to such a high level of complexity that the search for a systematic 'solution' is doomed to fail." (86) Does this scheme fit the theory of motor action domains? On one hand, as Collard himself writes: "There are cases in which information is not just incomplete but outright 'absent' (we call it 'game without information', like the case of the first cyclists in a time trial)" (92); and, on the other hand, according to Binmore "a game is being played when two people interact" (2009, 10), whether they might be spouses, car drivers, a company and a trade union or two states. Moreover, for Binmore chess is the "archetypical example" (61) of perfect-information games, "in which nothing that has already happened in the game, until a certain moment, is hidden from the players when they make a move." (63)

Without any randomness at all, either due to a natural or a personal *probability distribution function*, there is no need to analyse a situation from the perspective of any decision theory: the solution of the game and the pay depend only on the execution of an automatized pure strategy. Furthermore, the situation is the same not only for the first gymnasts or athletes in jumping or throwing contests, but for all of them, because any potential influence operated on contestants by the scores previously obtained by other athletes is "inessential interaction", so negligible as previously discussed: "This is the case of the influence exerted by coaches or spectators during a sports competition, evidence of the marked impact that affective phenomena have on motor conduct, but which does not fall within the framework of praxic communication. This is also the case of what may happen between high jumpers for example, when they take into account the decisions and jumps of their competitors to choose their strategy, knowing, among other things, that the regulations to decide the ties are based on the number and scores of the tries already done." (LEX, I:144) Therefore, *snooker, not gymnastics, is a perfect-information sporting game*, which forces us to redefine the categories of informational constraints that sportspersons deal with.
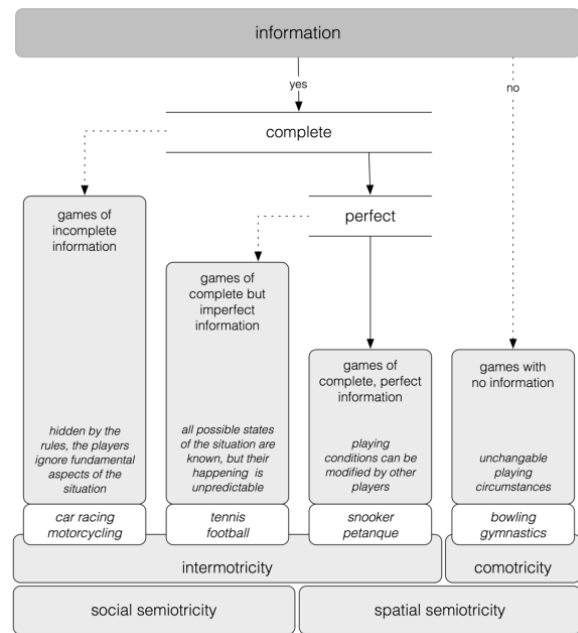
Figure 3. Information and theory of sporting games.

Figure 3 shows the overlapping of intermotricity and spatial semiotricity produced by the sequentialization of actions in snooker. It has been necessary to include a fourth category and rearrange them to reveal that snooker is the sport that the Olympic Committee needs if they want to complete their summer program with a perfect-information motor game, not chess! This subclass of sociomotricity that includes sports like snooker, curling, petanque or lawn bowling, is a nice prove of the wonder that has permitted all of us to enjoy motor praxeology: "When examining the lush field of ludomotor activities can one perceive the incredible diversity and complexity of situations, and realize that we have only taken the first steps for its study." (Parlebas 1988) This second consequence is just another step towards a better understanding of (motor) action that only in community can be attained.

Conclusion

On August 26, 1969, a lecturer of the Normal Graduate School of Sports and Physical Education of Paris finds the first part of his "Advocacy for physical education" at the front page of *Le Monde*, a French, national newspaper.

The combative lecturer was about to open another heated debate in which supporters and detractors crossed *letters to the director* to such a point that forced the recipient to abruptly cut down the discussions. His first part, subtitled *An independent discipline at last?*, was a clear statement in favour of the pedagogical nature, not medical nor military, of physical education, and the need of its adscription to the Ministry of Education: "An advocacy in favour of physical education is by no means an indictment against intellectual education (…) We must no longer think in terms of substitution or hierarchy but in terms of relationship and complementariness. It is better to decompartmentalize disciplines and foster the intimate connections that intertwin those multiple verbal, motor and expressive conducts, to allow the fulfilment of the connections between thought and action. From reflex to reflection, to an acted reflection." (Parlebas 1969a, 11)

The subtitle of the second part - *From magic to scientific research* - was itself a declaration, a declaration of war for many colleagues:

> In short, three points can be identified. The first is that physical education has a specific object: motor conducts, that can be considered according to two dominants: psychomotor conducts when the individual confronts the inert forces of nature, and sociomotor conducts that place individuals in situations valuing the relationship with others either in opposition, either in cooperation. In the second point, the specific purpose of physical education is the conquest of motor self-control (*maîtrise motrice*) directed to a greater capability of adaptation to new situations. Finally, the last point, articulated on the other two, concerns psycho-pedagogical and socio-pedagogical implementation itself. Favoured by a long past, it must be relaunched relying on a wealth of experimental works (Parlebas 1969b, 14).

The 1967 Official Instructions for physical education were the epitome of the prevailing sport centred, technical perspective, very much aligned with the post-WWII era values (During 2013).

Parlebas, educated in the best schools, had already made his position clear against that technical, mechanistic and reductionist understanding of *sports performance*. His very first article, published in 1959 right after graduated from the normal school of teachers, was titled *Physical education and philosophical education*, and already contained the basis of his project: frontal opposition to Cartesian dualism, continuity between motor activity and mental activity, complexity of a personality appealed in each situation, vindication of the person with a self-controlled capacity for action… In brief: "[The role of the physical education teacher] is to make students aware of their existence as agents and their value as creators of action, emphasizing participation and rejecting passivity. Fully involved in each action, the child is recognized as an original being endowed with possibilities of action, with the possibility of contributing and responsible for his psychomotor responses." (Parlebas 1959, 9) As his closest collaborator Bertrand During puts it, these articles, and many more, were "linked to the context by two observations. A profound change came to be added to the 'splitting-up' of physical education that gradually called the old dualist conceptions into question, placing at the heart of a renewed physical education not the articulation of techniques, approached in a mechanistic way, or ascetic values, but the unity of a person involved in the action." (2013, 155) A praxeological physical education is an education of motor decision, an education of adaptability and self-control. If we are born into a world of words, signs, and beliefs that action and its consequences make real, understandable, and controllable, we should not forget that game-playing is a most meaningful source of reality for children and adults.

Both as experience and education, motor action deserves as much attention as any other research field or academic area receives. I have no doubt that pragmatism has much to contribute to physical education (Barrena 2015), and possibly a little to learn from motor praxeology regardless Lally's declaration: "I do not believe that pragmatism provides any sort of answer to questions regarding sport and movement, but I do believe it is a useful idea for conducting inquiries into the meanings, practices, cultural uses, and truths of sport and movement" (2013, 1). Lally seems touched by the

same reluctance to games and sports that motor praxeology tries to prove wrong:

> The body has long been neglected in university studies and scientific research. As a result of this, physical activity, games, and sports have generally been seen as infantile pastimes or, at best, accepted as a way of letting off steam or recharging intellectual batteries. However, over recent decades numerous research projects in many different disciplines have challenged these perceptions. Studies carried out in biology, neuroscience, the humanities, and the social sciences have shown the physical activity makes demands on many aspects of the personality -in a physical sense, of course, but also regarding cognition, emotions, and relationships. Playing ball games like baseball or puss in the corner, running a marathon, taking on a tennis player, or steering a yacht deeply affects individuals and offers them infinite possibilities for expressing themselves (Parlebas 2013, 127).

Fortunately, the volume as a whole proves me wrong giving enough evidence of how close approaches pragmatism and motor praxeology are, in regard to their conceptions of experience, education, learning, and inquiry.

I do not know if I am pragmatist, but if a pragmatist like Lally (2012) thinks that "the experiences an individual undergoes during training and competition shape her worldview in a fashion that is unique" (1); aspires to a "description of lived experience" (2); agrees with James in that a experiencer "feels the tendency, the obstacle, the will, the strain, the triumph, or the passive giving up, just as he feels the time, the space, the swiftness or intensity, the movement, the weight and colour, the pain and the pleasure, the complexity, or whatever remaining characters of the situation may involve" (2); stands by the "intimate connection between though, action, and outcome" (7); and shares that "the depiction of the individual as an agent of action immersed within the universe also generates an undercurrent of optimism regarding the individual's potential to self-determination" (7), I am willing to drop my weapons, whether sword, racket or cue, give up my compulsion for collision, and explore the world of sports action in sheer collaboration with the pragmatist community.

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AGENCY, INTERACTION, AND SOCIALITY

The Manifoldness of Mead's Action Theory

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ABSTRACT: The work of George Herbert Mead has been influential in sociology. One of the aspects of his theory that has been widely received is his approach towards action, especially his description of the "social act" as well as of gestures (as part of what was later termed Symbolic Interactionism). However, Mead's descriptions are not very systematic and contemporary literature on Mead lacks a systematic overview of his manifold concepts of act and action. This essay is concerned with a theory-internal exploration of what "act" or "action" means for Mead. It does so by focusing on the wider pragmatist model of action, which is most commonly known through its contemporary re-reading by Hans Joas, as well as Mead's "social act" and his concept of gestures. The development of the latter two concepts is traced from about 1910 to the mid-1920s. Furthermore, the connection of these concepts in Mead's theory and, going beyond Mead, their possible mutual integration is discussed.

Keywords: George Herbert Mead, action, social act, gesture, habitual action

1 Introduction

Conduct, act, action, interaction (Mead 1909, 406), "social acts" (Mead 1909, 403), "syncopated acts" (Mead 1909, 406), "truncated acts" (Mead 1909, 407) – these are but a few notions of act and action we can find in the writings of George Herbert Mead. Furthermore, there are at least as many different interpretations of these concepts by scholars working with Mead's writings and thoughts. The "social act" has been described as an institutionalized social interaction (Gillespie 2005, 27), it is a "larger system" comprising different "subsystems" (Athens 2002, 30), it can be "primitive" or it can include the "manipulatory phase" (Miller 1973, 31). The central Meadian concept of action has been presented as a larger model comprising different phases – phases of routinized and non-reflexive acting as well as phases of reflexive and experimental acting (Joas 2012[1992]). Others describe it as a "stream of action" (Strübing 2017, 43; my translation) in the sense of an "ongoing activity" (Strübing 2017, 43; with reference to Mead 1925, 256) or a "continuous flow of activity", fluctuating between routinized actions and reflexive problem solving (Hirschauer 2016, 47; my translation). The multitude of notions of act and action in Mead and in Mead scholarship might be accounted to the extraordinary standing that these concepts enjoy in his thought as well as in pragmatist thought in general. Even if pragmatist philosophy, the philosophical tradition Mead can (mainly) be attributed to, touches on numerous issues, it does so by relating them to action. Therefore, one plausible reading of pragmatist philosophy could be that it is a philosophy always aiming at a reconstruction of the concept of action (Dorstewitz 2018, 44). But because of the centrality of act and action in pragmatism it seems even more important to work towards a clarification, conceptualization, and systematization of these concepts; an endeavor this essay wants to contribute to. In the following I, *first*, provide an overview of the different concepts of action which can be found in Mead's writings and, *second*, I show how these concepts are linked and how they might be integrated. In this essay, I focus on those forms of action that take place in social contexts or are highly important in social contexts. The essay therefore excludes those forms of action which are directed towards objects and their manipulation. Although, I acknowledge that action, which consists of a manipulation of objects, was highly relevant for Mead too (Honneth and Joas 1980, 64; Joas 2012[1980], chapter 7). To a large extent in this essay I restrain from specifications of Mead's concepts of act and action that are external to his theory or to pragmatist philosophy in general. I do not discuss differences to other pragmatists or to other philosophical and sociological traditions; rather it is concerned

with an internal exploration of what act or action means for Mead. This is of importance, because (1) it highlights the different aspects of act and action which scholars can draw on, (2) it helps to clarify why there are different readings of some of the Meadian notions of act and action.

A project like the present one is confronted with at least three difficulties: (1) Mead's own publishing activity was rather low (Dewey 1931, 311), and what he published were mainly relatively short essays, some of which were initially manuscripts for talks he gave (e.g. Mead 1912). Mead did not publish any book; the books on his thoughts which can nowadays be found in libraries have been published posthumously, based on manuscripts of Mead and on his students notes (Huebner 2014; Joas 2015[1934], x). Not only the scarcity of his writings, but also the origin of the arguments and descriptions in these books, particularly of *Mind, Self, and Society*, is problematic.[1] Unfortunately, their editors did not make clear how exactly the books were composed. Therefore, what has been taken to be Mead's ideas, terms, and concepts, are in parts interpretations by his students and colleagues. The scarcity of Mead's own publications is closely related to the second issue. (2) Unfortunately, Mead did not develop nor describe his concepts and terms in a very precise manner (Nungesser and Ofner 2013, 2). As can be read in John Dewey's[2] speech at

Mead's funeral, the communication of his philosophical insights was a serious challenge for Mead:

> He experienced great difficulty in finding adequate verbal expression for his philosophical ideas. His philosophy often found utterance in technical form. In the early years especially it was often not easy to follow his thought; he gained clarity of verbal expression of his philosophy gradually and through constant effort. (Dewey 1931, 310)

His difficulties to find adequate expression for his ideas, suggest that the manifoldness of his concepts is not systematic, but rather in need of a differentiation and systematization. (3) The issues are further complicated by the fact that there are not only different concepts of action to be discovered in Mead's writings, but these different concepts were developed further and extended by him over the years; thus, their meaning changed over time. According to Dewey, Mead constantly kept on developing his ideas and concepts and was never satisfied with their current state of development (Dewey 1931, 311). The main aim of this paper is to clarify the concepts of act and action and thus contribute to overcome the challenges three (that the concepts changed over time) and two (that Mead did not describe his concepts very precisely and not always adequately). It also addresses challenge one, by focusing on Mead's own publications (instead of the books edited by his former students and colleagues) and trying to follow *his* line of argument.

Mead himself did not only *not* provide a (systematic) overview of his different concepts of action, but he might have even perceived such a project in parts as artificial distinction of concepts that are experienced as one whole in an individual's everyday solution of problems (this concerns the "social act" and gestures in particular). However, if we are to continue working with Mead's concepts, it is important to know what he meant by the different aspects of action and to be aware of the other aspects that one might not touch upon in a particular project.

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[1] *Mind, Self, and Society* was edited by Mead's student Charles W. Morris after Mead's death. It is based on the notes of several students who attended Mead's regular lecture on social psychology in different years. Therefore, this book is problematic in several aspects, for example because it initially remained unclear which parts of the book were written based on which sources, or because it is unclear which parts of the transcripts are recordings of what Mead said and which parts result from student reflection. Nevertheless, it is Mead's best-known book. Some of these previously unknown details of the composition of this book are now better comprehensible, thanks to Daniel Huebner. On the complex process of creating *Mind, Self, and Society* as well as on the reception of this book see Huebner (2014) as well as the preface by Hans Joas and the appendix by Huebner in the so-called "Definitive Edition" of *Mind, Self, and Society* (2015[1934]).

[2] John Dewey offered Mead a position at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in 1891. When Dewey was offered the position of a professor at the newly founded University of Chicago in 1894, he arranged to bring Mead as his assistant to Chicago. While Dewey went on to Columbia University in 1904,

Mead remained in Chicago until 1930. Mead and Dewey, however, remained friends until Mead's death in 1931 (Huebner 2015, 831–32; Joas 2012[1980], 26–27).

2 Mead's concepts of act and action

Not all founders of pragmatism were equally interested in social aspects (in general and of action in particular). It were mainly John Dewey and George Herbert Mead who developed a pragmatist social theory (Joas 2015, 808). Classical pragmatist theories influenced sociology lastingly; it has been foremost the thinking of Mead that had an impact on sociology. There are historical reasons for the intense reception of Mead's work in sociology (cf. Huebner 2014); still this reception is mainly related to Mead's own theoretical focus. Mead developed the pragmatist theory of action towards a social theory of action, meaning towards a theory of action with others and towards an ontogenetic and evolutionary theory of the social development of the human capacity to act (Nungesser and Ofner 2013, 2). This essay is concerned with those forms of act and action that take place in social contexts or are relevant in these settings. On the following pages, I will first describe the three forms of action – (1) the wider model of act and action, (2) the "social act" and (3) gestures – separately. In doing so I do not neglect that Mead's concepts are strongly interconnected, thus every separate description artificially separates them from the others (cf. Blumer 2004, 15). This partly applies to the interconnection of the different concepts of act and action, but even more so to their relation to other concepts of Mead, foremost to his understanding of the development of the self and of consciousness.[3] Concerning the second and the third concept of action again two forms – one that Mead developed around 1910 and one he developed in the 1920s – will be distinguished.[4] These two different forms represent two different stages of development. Howev-

er, due to some more substantial differences and because of the fact that for some scholars it might be more useful to refer to the earlier versions, I prefer to speak of two forms (rather than of two stages of development). Later I will show how these concepts are linked and/ or how they might be integrated.

The terminology of different forms of action that is used in this essay should not be understood as a typology of action, e.g. in the Weberian sense.[5] Rather, these forms are different approaches towards action or different perspectives on action that can be linked to each other and often vary in their social (one individual, more individuals) and/ or temporal (narrow or extended) scope.

2.1 A wider model of act and action

Action is central to pragmatist thinking in general – not solely for Mead. Nevertheless, the common use of the term "pragmatic" in everyday language and in academic writing suggests that pragmatism were a philosophy of "muddling through" (Joas 2015, 808). This, however, is not an appropriate description of the classical pragmatist philosophy; the early pragmatist thought of action as being based on habitual doings and as dealing with real doubt that acting individuals are experiencing. The first concept of action that is to be discussed here is this more general pragmatist approach to action. Therefore, the present exploration of the concept starts more widely with the pragmatist concept and the more recent literature, before coming back to Mead. Classical pragmatists sought to overcome traditional philosophical dualisms, like the one of subject and object, of body and soul or individual and society. They did so by relating basic philosophic concepts to action and thereby reconstructed the term of action itself (Dorstewitz 2018, 44). Whereas most classical action theories sharply distinguish between action and behavior, the classical prag-

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[3] Mead does not understand action through mechanisms of consciousness, but consciousness through (social) action. Insightful discussions of the relation of consciousness and action can be found also, but by far not exclusively, in his articles published between 1909 and 1913.

[4] With regards to the "social act" and gestures, in this essay I am concerned with the conceptual development over time. However, here I neither discuss other developments (for example Mead's biographical development) nor their potential interlinkage with the development of Mead's concepts.

[5] Max Weber developed a typology of action, distinguishing the ideal-types of rational-purposeful action, value-rational action, affective action and traditional action. Everyday actions often fall in different types at the same time; however, the types themselves are seen to be disjoint (Weber 1984[1921], 44–46).

matists do not (Dorstewitz 2018, 48). Pragmatists conceive action as being embedded in a physical and social world and their theories consider active as well as passive moments of action, more and less conscious doings as well as more and less habitualized activities (Joas 1996[1992]). With Mead we often find terms like act, action, behavior, conduct and activity used synonymously and interchangeably. This can be seen from the following example:

> The important character of social organization of *conduct* or *behavior* through instincts is not that one form in a social group does what the others do, but that the *conduct* of one form is a stimulus to another to a certain *act*, and that this *act* again becomes a stimulus to first to a certain reaction, and so on in ceaseless interaction. The likeness of the *actions* is of minimal importance compared with the fact that the *actions* of one form have the implicit meaning of a certain response to another form. (Mead 1909, 406; my italics)

The meaning of this quotation will be discussed later. For now, it is important to keep in mind, that the terms act and action are used interchangeably by Mead as well as in this essay. By using different terms for doings throughout this essay, it is not intended to suggest any strong differences between action and behavior.

Dewey was the one who described the pragmatist model of action most precisely and extensively. The fundamental ideas on this concept of action can already be found in his article *The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology* from 1896. In those days, the reflex arc concept was an increasingly prominent psychological concept aimed at explaining human behavior (Hildebrand 2018, n.p.). In this article Dewey acknowledges that the reflex arc concept is an attempt to overcome the old dualisms of sensation and idea as well as of body and soul. However, it does not go far enough for Dewey, especially since it replaces old dualisms by new dualisms. Most importantly, it involves a dualism of stimulus and response (Dewey 1896, 357–58). Stimulus and response are artificially separated (Hildebrand 2018, n.p.). After all, "the reflex arc is not a comprehensive, or organic unity, but a patchwork of disjointed parts, a mechanical conjunction of

unallied processes." (Dewey 1896, 358) Within this model, the sensory stimulus, the idea or central activity and the doing are seen as three separate elements. For Dewey, however, they are not separate entities, but different moments of one whole; their relation is not one of succession, but of "coördination" (Dewey 1896, 358). Now, this entity and the "coördination" is not limited to a – however defined – single act. Referring back to William James' well known example of a child who sees the flame of a candle, grasps the flame and burns its hands (cf. James 1890, 25-26, 72-80), Dewey argues that the act of seeing stimulates the act of grasping the flame, because these two acts (the seeing and the grasping) have often happened together in the child's life before and because they are part of a larger "coördination" (Dewey 1896, 358–59). The experience of burning ones fingers, changes the seeing, which is no longer just seeing, but "seeing-of-a-light-that-means-pain-when-contact-occurs" (Dewey 1896, 360). So, for Dewey (1) moments that have previously been seen as separate entities (e.g. the seeing and the grasping) are part of one larger whole and (2) learning (e.g. that grasping a flame means pain) shows that previous activities are not to be understood totally apart from future activities. Rather, the experienced pain influences the way the child now and in future sees the candle and how it behaves towards the candle. The arc "is virtually a circuit, a continual reconstitution" (Dewey 1896, 360). The idea that earlier events impact later activities, not in the sense of succession, but by shifting our scope of action, was later refined by Dewey (Nungesser 2016a, 177). This idea is central to current readings of the pragmatist conception of action. Hans Joas, for example, described the pragmatist model of action as a cyclical model:[6]

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[6] In *The Philosophy of the Act* (Mead 1938) Mead's concept of action is described as a model comprising four phases, namely the stages of an impulse to act, of perception, of manipulation and of the fulfilment or consumption. Even if this model might correspond to Mead's intentions, it was comprised by the editors of that book (Joas 2012[1980], 146; Gillespie 2005, 34). This model is found in Joas' description of Mead's theory of the perception of objects and is compatible with the model described below, but the two models each have a different focus.

According to this model, all perception of the world and all action in the world is anchored in an unreflected belief in self-evident given facts and successful habits. However, this belief, and the routines of action based upon it, are repeatedly shattered; what has previously been a habitual, apparently automatic procedure of action is interrupted. The world reveals itself to have shattered our unreflected expectations; our habitual actions meet with resistance from the world and rebound back on us. This is the phase of real doubt. And the only way out of this phase is a reconstruction of the interrupted context. Our perception must come to terms with new or different aspects of reality; action must be applied to different points of the world, or must restructure itself. This reconstruction is a creative achievement on the part of the actor. (Joas 1996[1992], 128–29)[7]

According to this model, the basis for our everyday actions are routines. Routinized, non-reflective acts can be interrupted by unusual events or circumstances that seem problematic for the continuation of the current act. The action has to be adapted to the circumstances and, if necessary, new solutions need to be experimented with. Over time, new routines can emerge from a successful solution. This model reflects much of what was said above about James' example of the child and the candle. The child had learned in the past that something that is shining is something to play with. This experience is part of her perception of the candle and the unreflected grasping of the flame. Now, the child touches the flame, feels pain and burns her fingers. She learns that not everything that is shining is something that can be touched and played with, but that the flame of a candle causes pain when touched. In addition to what has been said before, it can be added now, that the pain of burning her fingers makes the child realize that the

flame is something that will cause pain. And, as already mentioned before, this experience makes her routinely perceive flames of candles as something that causes pain when touched. Much of what is summarized by Joas in this model was already worked out by Dewey in his early article on the reflex arc. However, much has been presented by Dewey in more details in his later work and Joas' model is not only based on Dewey's philosophy, but it is more generally the pragmatist model of action.[8]

Dewey's essay on the reflex arc concept, just as his collaboration with Dewey in general, was formative for Mead (and it seems that the collaboration had been equally formative for Dewey) (Nungesser and Wöhrle 2013). For this reason, it is not surprising that this idea of action is also reflected in Mead's work. It can be seen as early as in the second half of the 1890s – just after Dewey's article was published – for example in the short article *The Working Hypothesis in Social Reform* (1899). There Mead already discusses the role or "function" of reflective consciousness in action. Action is not driven by the outline of a future world designed by consciousness, rather, the conception of a different world comes only after the individual faces a particular problem in the present world (for Joas this is the moment when situated creativity occurs). This moment, when the acting individual puts her efforts into finding a way to overcome the problem and identifies with these efforts, is where reflective consciousness comes in. It "reaches its highest expression in the scientific statement of the problem, and the recognition and use of scientific method and control." (Mead 1899, 371) Mead further develops his version of the pragmatist action model in *The Definition of the Psychical* (1903), where he explicitly refers to Dewey's essay on the reflex arc concept.[9] Mead repeats

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Mead's four-phase model can proceed routinely (impulse and perception correspond to "unreflected belief in self-evident given facts and successful habits", habitual "manipulation") or as "shattering our unreflected expectations" (an unusual impulse, a "problematic" perception, a "creative" "manipulation") (Joas 1996[1992], 128–29).

[7] According to Joas and the pragmatists, creativity is a form of creativity "situated" in actions. In a situation in which an action takes place, a problem arises which requires not a routine – but instead a creative – approach to a solution. Creativity that is understood in this sense is not a characteristic of individuals that is more pronounced in some people and less in others (Joas, Sennet, and Gimmler 2006, 11).

[8] Joas' interpretation of the pragmatist model of action has been widely acknowledged. Some critics, however, argue that Joas draws too strong a line between habitual action and creative action (cf. Dalton 2004). This critique, unfortunately, cannot be discussed in detail here.

[9] Even if Mead intended to advance Dewey's effort from *The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology* (1896), Dewey was rather perplexed about Mead's article (Joas 2012[1980], 67). Mead himself was later also rather critical about the manner in which

parts of Dewey's critique, but he is then, as it was already the case in *The Working Hypothesis in Social Reform*, particularly interested in the moments of disintegration (the moment when a problem occurs) and reconstruction (the process of finding an adequate manner how to act in this situation and in similar situations in the future). However, now he specifies further that reconstruction is not only required if the problem faced is a major problem, but also in the case of minor or every-day issues. Referring to James and his concept of the "stream of consciousness", he describes the facing of a problem as the "[K]aleidoscopic flash of suggestion, and intrusion of the inapt, the unceasing flow of odds and ends of possible objects that will not fit" (Mead 1903, 101). A description of a problematic situation can for instance be found in *Mind, Self, and Society* (Mead 2015[1934])[10] where Mead reflects the pragmatist action model too. Mead describes the situation of a person walking through the country. Suddenly she finds herself in front of a chasm that makes it impossible to simply move on, even if she wants to. Before the path was suddenly interrupted, this person saw the path in front of her and constantly looked for its further course, but without being aware of this seeing and searching. Now that the person is standing in front of the chasm, she becomes aware of moments in her environment that she has not noticed before. The person is not simply looking around to see how and where the path continues, she also realizes, for example, that the chasm seems to be narrowing to one side, she sees objects in her environment that might be helpful in overcoming the chasm (such as a tree that could serve as a bridge), and tries different possible options that may arise in the situation. Mead introduces this example to show that people are not simply conditioned to react to certain stimuli in a certain way. If people were simply conditioned, they would not be able to consider different options and try different solutions (Mead 2015[1934], 122–24).

With regards to the pragmatist conception of action, this example can be read as follows: Mead first describes a routine and an unproblematic course of the action, i.e. an unproblematic walk. Then the world – or rather the situation – turns out to pose a problem and simply continuing the walk is not possible. This is followed by a more or less intense search for a solution to the problem in order to be able to continue the action (see the reflexive consciousness in Mead's earlier writings). Mead here does not go into the problem of how a new routine can emerge after former routines failed. However, it is rather unlikely that a routine of overcoming a chasm will arise, except if the acting person in the example is one who regularly hikes through rugged terrain. We can assume that this could, however, change the overall routinely perception of the world, by the person who experienced these troubles (e.g. that for her the world is now something that can inhibit simply walking on without hindrances). The establishment of new routines can, furthermore, be found in Mead's writings. The idea is integrated in his description of the ontogenetic development of the human self. Mead understands the self as something that can only develop in social contexts and that continually changes through social interactions and problems that arise in the situation in which an action takes place. Thus, when a problem occurs, the previous organization of habits that constitutes the self, disintegrates. In the course of successful problem solving, the self reintegrates itself in a new way (Mead 1913, 378).[11]

In *The Definition of the Psychical* a similar example can be found, even though it is described less at length. In this text, Mead is particularly interested in the moment of becoming conscious. A "man who hesitates before a ditch, which he is not sure that he can jump, is conscious of inhibited activity." (Mead 1903, 103) In his further discus-

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he expressed his thoughts in this essay. He mentions that he developed his thoughts on the subject of psychology "somewhat obscurely and ineffectually, I am afraid." (Mead 1910b, 175).
[10] On the problematic editorial status of *Mind, Self, and Society* see Footnote 1.

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[11] This can be further discussed by drawing on Mead's distinction of the "I" ("a 'source' of both spontaneity and creativity" (Aboulafia 2008, n.p.)) and the "me" (the objectified) (cf. Adloff and Jörke 2013, 31–35). For a discussion of the "I" and the "me" in new and habitual situations of action see Aboulafia (2008).

sion of disintegration and reconstruction in this early article, however, Mead no longer refers to the example of a person walking alone through the country, but to the example of two people acting together; a situation where "we are forced to reconstruct our ideas of the character of our acquaintances." (Mead 1903, 106) The character depends on the social activity a person is currently engaged in and the social context. If in a particular situation one person does something that does not seem to go in line with her usual "nature" or attitudes as the other has known her, "the immediate result would be that [the other; my annotation] would be nonplused and quite unable to act with reference to [her; my annotation] for the time being." (Mead 1903, 107) The (seemingly) contradictory attitudes constitute a problem, because it becomes unclear what the real nature and attitudes of that person are. But this problem extends to the person perceiving the contradictory attitudes. Not only is she experiencing the problem, but for her there is the uncertainty if she had judged the other person wrong in the past. This example is instructive because it shows that there can be routinized manners of how another person is perceived and that the unusual behavior of another person can present a problem to a person she is interacting with, in the same way as a chasm can present a problem to the hiker. The chasm and the unusual behavior can disintegrate the routinized action of a person and in both cases the person, who can now reflectively become conscious of the problem, will be required to reorganize or reintegrate her actions. This is a first important step towards Mead's theoretical innovation that is to be seen primarily in his social turn of pragmatist action theory (Nungesser and Wöhrle 2013, 61). Even if the wider action model is the central model of action in classical pragmatism, it was formative for Mead's approach to the phenomenon of action and he did already develop it towards a social theory, Mead further elaborates his social theory of action in what he calls the "social act". This social action is the second concept of action that will be discussed now.

2.2 The "social act"

Mead terms an action, in which at least two individuals of the same species are involved, a "social act". The behavior of the two individuals is coordinated, not because they imitate each other, but because it is possible for them to react to each other's actions (Mead 1909, 406). First, an individual behaves in a certain situation in the presence of another. The action of this individual becomes the stimulus for a reaction of the other. This reaction of the second individual can in turn become a stimulus for another reaction of the first individual and so on (Mead 1909, 1910a, 1910b, 1912, 1925, 1926). Individuals also behave towards their material environment, but this cannot create the same form of concatenation of stimulus and reaction. Mead demonstrates this by the example of the weather: humans can behave towards the weather, similar to their behaving towards the actions of other individuals. But, their behavior towards the weather does not (normally[12]) influence the weather *per se* and human behavior does not become a stimulus for a reaction by the weather (Mead 1910a, 403). However, between individuals a mutual interplay of stimulus and reaction can develop.[13]

The "social act" can be found in both, the earlier and the later works of Mead. Nevertheless, Mead's understanding of it changed in one essential aspect over the course of time. I will now first discuss the earlier of the two forms of the "social act", which Mead developed

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[12] The term "normally" refers to people in general, excluding hailstorm control pilots and persons in similar professions.

[13] The terminological similarity of Mead's "social act" and classical (European) sociological conceptions of action, foremost Max Weber's "social action", might be misleading and should not be taken as an indicator for conceptual similarities. For Weber "social action" is a form of action that is oriented in a meaningful way to the past, present or future action of other individuals (Weber 1984[1921], 41). Not only does Mead's focus on the interplay of two or more individuals show that for him a "social act" is "social" in a more comprehensive way than "social action" in the sense of Max Weber, but also does the sociality of action in the Meadian sense reach beyond his idea of the "social act". The individuals' ability to act (in immediately social or not immediately social situation) is social (see "Primary Sociality", (Joas 1996[1992], 184–95); "Intrinsic Sociality", (Nungesser 2016a)). Even if the "social act" is one aspect of Mead's idea of action, it is not a type of action (see footnote 5) and the sociality of action is not limited to this aspect.

primarily in a series of essays published between 1909 and 1913. Afterwards I will look at how Mead comprehended the "social act" in the 1920s.[14]

(a) The "social act" around 1910

In the middle period of Mead's works (here especially from 1909 to 1913) he wrote a series of articles in which he primarily dealt with the development of symbolic interaction.[15] Mead describes the mutual adaptation of the behavior of two interacting individuals for example as follows:

> If selfconscious conduct arises out of controlled and organized impulse, and impulses arise out of social instincts, and the responses to these social stimulations become stimuli to *corresponding social acts* on the part of others, it is evident that human conduct was from the beginning of its development in a social medium. (Mead 1909, 403–4; my italics)

A few pages later he states:

> "[T]he conduct of one form is a stimulus to another to a certain act, and [...] this act again becomes a stimulus to first to a certain reaction, and so on in ceaseless interaction." (Mead 1909, 406)

Mead sometimes describes this process as mutual action and reaction and sometimes he refers to this process as adaptation "on the part of each form to the action of the other" (Mead 1910a, 397). These quotations exemplarily show two essential characteristics of Mead's early understanding of the "social act": (1) Around 1910 Mead defines the "social act" as an action of an individual, which results

from the stimulus of another individual and can in turn become the stimulus for an action of the other individual. Mead thus does not understand the "social act" as an atomistic individual action, but rather as an action that is embedded in a series of "social acts", which are carried out alternately by at least two individuals. The "social act" is not only directed towards another individual, but it is "social" in the stronger sense of being brought about by both, the other individual (whose actions become a stimulus) and the acting individual herself. (2) It becomes apparent that in this earlier phase of his work, Mead speaks of an action that was brought about by an action of another individual and can itself become a stimulus for another action. To distinguish the earlier version of the "social act" from the later one, this series of acts can be described as a *chain*. Every link of the chain is a "social act" and the different links are carried out alternately by at least two individuals.[16] 'Misusing' an example given by Herbert Blumer,[17] this version of the "social act" could be illustrated by the example of a "a game of chess, in which one player makes a move and then waits for a responding move by his or her opponent before undertaking another move." (Blumer 2004, 18) Each move would be a "social act", however, it would not be a game of chess if there were no other moves preceding and following this move and in their interlinkage forming a chain of acts.[18] Blumer would reject this reading of Mead's "social act" even

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[14] For possible counterexamples and ambivalences of this interpretation see section 3. The distinction of the two "social acts" does not correspond to Miller's categories of the "primitive social act" and the "social act that includes the manipulatory phase" (Miller 1973, 31).

[15] In the literature on Mead, those interactions of individuals that are based on symbols are usually referred to as *symbolic interaction*. Symbols are usually vocal gestures. One of their characteristics is that they represent something that is not part of the gesture (e.g. the term "table" refers to a table, but the table itself is not part of the vocal gesture). Symbols presuppose a common "universe of discourse" within which they have the same meaning for all members (Mead 2015[1934], 89). For Mead, vocal gestures are "special" in their effect, because it is primarily this type of gesture, that is not only understood by the interaction partner, but by the acting individual too and indicate (possible) further action to both of them (Mead 1912).
For a detailed reconstruction of this series of articles see Joas (2012[1980], chapter 5).

[16] Further quotes that support this way of reading Mead's early descriptions of the "social act" can be found in Mead 1909, 403–4, 1910a, 403.

[17] Herbert Blumer, one of Mead's students, continued to work with Mead's thoughts and concepts. He developed it further to what he called Symbolic Interactionism (see footnote 15) and thereby made it more receptive for sociology and empirical social research. However, he was not interested in a systematic and comprehensive presentation of Mead's work, rather his reception is "fragmentary" and "one-sided" (Joas 2012[1980], IX; see also Huebner 2014, especially chapter 7).

[18] Blumer introduces this example to show that interaction is not merely "an interlinking of completed acts, in the sense that one organism engages in an action that the other organism perceives and responds to by an action of its own" (Blumer 2004, 18). By this example Blumer intents to show what Mead's "social act" is *not*. If we consider that the "social acts" which are forming a chain are so closely interlinked that they could not be by themselves (because they are motivated by a stimulus from the other and themselves become stimuli to the other even if this is not intended) then this example, still, suits Mead's early "social act".

though it is not too far from Blumer's own reading. For Blumer interaction in the sense of Mead is not merely an interconnection of completed individual acts. "Instead, organisms in interaction are observing each other's ongoing activity, with each using portions of the developing action of the other as pivots for the redirection of his or her own action." (Blumer 2004, 18) Thus, for him the chess game seems a problematic example, if it is understood as a chain of (separate) completed acts without any interaction or interference between them. However, it not necessarily is; consider the interaction of an experienced chess player and a beginner. The expert expresses her concerns or support while the beginner is trying to perform an appropriate move. This chain of interconnected social act would not contradict Blumer's reading of Mead, however, for him the acts of the individuals seem to be still more integrated, which is in line with the later version of the "social act".

(b) The "social act" of the 1920s

The second version of the "social act", too, is characterized by the concatenation of the actions of at least two individuals – of one individual whose action becomes a stimulus for the reaction of another individual, and whose reaction in turn affects the first individual. Mead describes it about 15 years after the previously quoted passages, in his essay *The Genesis of the Self and Social Control*, as follows:

> A social act may be defined as one in which the occasion or stimulus which sets free an impulse is found in the character or conduct of a living form that belongs to the proper environment of the living form whose impulse it is. I wish, however, to restrict the social act to the class of acts which involve the cooperation of more than one individual (Mead 1925, 263–64).

> In a social act, however, the act is distributed among a number of individuals. (Mead 1925, 274)

A similar description can be found in his essay *The Objective Reality of Perspectives*, published in 1926:

> Communication is a social process whose natural history shows that it arises out of cooperative activities, such as those involved in sex, parent-

hood, fighting, herding, and the like, in which some phase of the act of one form, which may be called a gesture, acts as a stimulus to others to carry on their parts of the social act. (Mead 1926, 79)

Contrary to the first version, the "social act" for Mead is now an action that involves several individuals of the same species; the interplay of stimulus and reaction is now part of this one complex action. In the "social act", the doing (e.g. the gesture) of one individual "serves as a stimulus to other forms involved in the same social act." (Mead 2015[1934], 42) Mead also describes this later form of "social act" as "cooperative activities" (Mead 1926, 79), "common act" (Mead 1925, 262) or "complex act" (Mead 1926, 83). According to the later Mead, each individual performs a part or phase of the action, the situation that results from the realization of this part of the action is then the stimulus for the part of action of the other (Mead 1925, 264–65) – one could say that the chain has now become a collaborative complex. Joas too interprets the "social act" in this wider sense. According to him, Mead's "social act" means a "complex group activity" (Joas 1996[1992], 189, 2012[1980], 11; similarly Gillespie 2005, 30).[19] Even if the first version of the "social act" is limited to the action of *one* individual, neither of the two forms of the "social act" is individualistic, since the effect of the other and the retroactive effect on the other necessarily belong to the "social act". Blumer, whom I already cited above, describes the social act as an act "in which each of the participating organisms uses the presented portion of the ongoing act of another as a guide to the formation of its own developing act." (Blumer 2004, 101) To the "portions" he refers as "gestures". Gestures are the concept of action that I am discussing in the next section.

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[19] The title of Joas' early monograph on Mead is *Praktische Intersubjektivität* (Joas 2012[1980]), which translates literally as "Practical Intersubjectivity" (published in English as *George Herbert Mead: A Contemporary Re-examination of His Thought* Cambridge: MIT Press/Polity Press 1985). In this book Joas argues that Mead's theory of intersubjectivity is based on the idea of "a structure that arises and takes form in joint activity of human subjects to achieve ends set by their life needs, a structure into which the corporeality of these subjects and external nature readily enter." (Joas 1997[1985/1980], 14)

2.3 The gesture

Similar to Mead's conception of the "social act", his concept of non-verbal gestures too changed over time. In the case of gestures an earlier and a later version can be distinguished as well. First, I will describe these two conceptions of gestures and second, I will explain in which regard Mead's conception of gesture is a conception of action.

(a) Gestures around 1910

Mead's early understanding of gestures is difficult to grasp. It is mainly developed in the series of articles published between 1909 and 1913. Two developments can be observed here: Mead's intellectual development and the evolutionary development of gestures. Thus, Mead's thoughts developed, and he increasingly started to see the development from what gestures evolutionary were once to what they are now. He develops the core of his notion of gesture with reference to Wilhelm Wundt, whose theory he initially received rather uncritically (especially in Mead 1904; cf. Joas 2012[1980], 95). For the early Mead in earlier stages of evolution there were "natural gestures" that were "the expression of an emotional activity" (Mead 1904, 380; similarly Mead 1909, 406).[20] This emotional content was the core for a further development of gestures (Mead 1904, 380-381). Mead describes this further in 1909 where he states that "the gesture itself is a syncopated act, one that has been cut short, a torso which conveys the emotional import of the act." (Mead 1909, 406) To highlight the character of the gesture as something that has been shortened, Mead used the descriptions "syncopated act" as well as "truncated act" for gestures (Mead 1909, 407). By the "emotional import of the act" Mead refers to the fact that the "cutting short" or truncation of acts involves a "checking of the acts" (Mead 1910a, 398) and this requires that an initiated action is stopped and readjusted to the new circumstances (cf. Joas 2012[1980], 101). This

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[20] Mead's early reflections on emotions started from his reading of Charles Darwins *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (Darwin 1872).

process of stopping and readjusting an action "inevitably" evokes emotions. In the interaction, the emotions are revealed to the other through gestures. However, as individuals refer to other individuals of the same species with their gestures and these react to them, the emotional dimension of the gestures has slowly lost its former importance and gestures have increasingly acquired a communicative or "intellectual signification". What was once a "mere outflow of nervous excitement" has gained meaning in the sense of "the value of the act for the other individual and his response to the expression of the emotion" (Mead 1909, 406–7).

The terms truncation and syncopation refer to a process whereby what was once a full act has been cut short. So far, we only learned that this process of cutting the act short gives rise to emotions, the mechanism still needs to be clarified. Mead himself is not very clear about that, but from his 1909 text we can see that the truncation is not merely a coincidental cutting short of an act caused by a given situation. As Mead's thinking was in general "strongly influenced by evolutionary theory" (Baldwin 1988, 953), gestures too can be understood before the background of evolutionary developments. Mead comprehends gestures as "evolutionary truncated social actions, which replace the former – sometimes violent – forms of behavior and thus enable a fluent, rapid and efficient coordination of group processes in the form of a conversation of gestures." (Nungesser 2017, 88; my translation; see also Nungesser 2016b, 255–56)[21] This can be seen most clearly in animals; there are for example spiders that lift their

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[21] With Mead's 1909 article in mind, the description of gestures as "evolutionary truncated social actions" is most adequate. However, because of the development of Mead's concept of gestures (as described in what follows), some contemporary authors seem to have later moments of Mead's theory in mind when drawing on his description of gestures. Roman Madzia, for example, describes Mead's concept of gestures as follows: "Gestures are attitudes, or goal-directed bodily movements, which are being responded to by others. Mead sometimes referred to gestures as truncated acts which inform other participants of the social act about the result of a certain action of which a gesture is an initial phase." (Madzia 2016, 305–6) This could be read in line with Mead's early understanding of gestures and accordingly with Nungesser's description. More likely, however, Madzia seems to link the idea of gestures as "truncated acts" to Mead's later idea of a mutual social inhibition (see below).

front leg pair, a move that was once part of an attack but now suffices to signify an attack (Nungesser 2016a, 237). Thus, where there once was an entire act, now only a truncated part is left that replaces the formerly larger act. Mead describes this as "the birth of the symbol" (Mead 1909, 407), because the "truncated act" has become a symbol for the larger act. That at this stage of the development of Mead's theory his concept of gesture is mostly limited to biologically functional and relatively fixed acts that can be observed in an entire species can be seen from Mead's description of the reactions to gestures: The acts that have been cut short "could have meanings when they called out definite reactions which call out still other appropriate responses" (Mead 1909, 407). This does not only apply to non-human animals, but to humans too. The "human nature is endowed with and organized by social instincts and impulses" (Mead 1909, 403). A "social instinct" is, however, not deterministic in a strong sense, but it is a "well defined tendency" (Mead 1909, 403) and implies that a stimulus is followed by "certain types of response" (Mead 1909, 404). Even though Mead rejects the explanation of human conduct through imitation, in "animals and young children or primitive peoples" social instinct often leads to observable behavior that seems as if it would be an imitation of the behavior of another individual (Mead 1909, 405).

In a text published the year after, biological examples and explanations remain prevalent (Mead 1910a, 398). That Mead does not restrict this evolutionary perspective on gestures to gestures of non-human animals can, moreover, be seen from his brief remarks on vocal gestures by that time. For Mead vocal gestures (a translation of Wundt's "Lautgebärden") are not systematically distinct from gestures; rather, they are a type of gestures (Mead 1909, 406, 1910a, 404). As it is the case with other gestures, the emergence of vocal gestures is closely related to emotions too. Cries and other sounds were initially "the external parts of emotional acts" (Mead 1904, 383, 1912, 402–3). That for Mead, vocal gestures have originally emerged in biological-evolutionary processes is instructive, because in the further

development of his theory vocal gestures become particularly important for his understanding of specifically human forms of communications and their effects, e.g. the development of a social self (this will, however, not be discussed further in this essay). He indicates the specific effects of language on the self and consciousness at the end of one of his 1910 text, but does not discuss them there any further (Mead 1910a, 404–5). Thus, at least at some stage of evolution, human (vocal and non-vocal) gestures were evolutionary truncated acts. However, Mead himself mentions some restrictions of these descriptions: (1) by stating that "speech belongs in its beginnings, at least, to this same field of gesture" Mead (1912, 402) suggests that this is no longer the case, but that language developed to something beyond that. And (2) as already mentioned, Mead notes that social instincts can be observed in non-human animals, children and "primitive peoples" (Mead 1909, 405) and thereby suggests that they cannot equally be observed in most adults. This concept of gestures as evolutionary "truncated acts" seems little suitable for the description of human gestures at the current stage of evolutionary development. Still, at this stage of the development of his theory Mead does not provide any other description of gestures than the one as "truncated acts" and no other mechanism of the "truncation" than evolutionary developments. Even if Mead successively opens up his theory for other forms of gestures during the following years, he always "avoided taking an extreme position in the nature/nurture debate." (Baldwin 1988, 954) Thus, certain evolutionary and biological moments were always part of his concepts.[22]

Even if emotions were necessarily brought about by the truncation of acts, this display of emotions is not the function of gestures (Mead 1910a, 398). Mead describes the function of the evolutionary later form of gestures

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[22] Even if Mead later describes forms of gestures that are only observable in humans, for him the sociality and gestures of humans need to be seen in a certain continuity to those of non-human animals and not as totally different from them (cf. Nungesser 2016a, 235). With regards to habits, a description of these gradual differences can be found in Baldwin (1988, 954).

(those with "intellectual signification") in 1910 as follows: "The first function of the gesture is the mutual adjustment of changing social response to changing social stimulation, when stimulation and response are to be found in the first overt phases of the social acts." (Mead 1910a, 398–99) So, in his article *Social Consciousness and the Consciousness of Meaning* (1910a) Mead goes beyond his former description of gestures that was in line with Wundt's theory (Joas 2012[1980], 101); however, Mead did not fully revoke his previous description of the gesture as something that communicates emotions. Rather, he started to see his former description of gestures as an earlier phase in the evolutionary development of gestures and social interaction. This quotation, furthermore, indicates the first phase of "social acts" becomes increasingly important for Mead in his development of the concept of gestures. Mead understands gestures as something that is to be found in the early phase of "social acts" or that they are themselves these beginnings (Mead 1910a, 397). Nevertheless, Mead maintains his description of the gesture as a "truncated act" (Mead 1910a, 398). Gestures serve as stimulus for the conduct of another individual. In order to react to the behavior of the other in an appropriate manner, it is important for each individual to be sensitive to the earliest indications of an upcoming act of the other (Mead 1910b, 177). Gestures may now be (1) "beginnings of the outgoing act itself" or (2) "only indications of the attitude and nervous tension which these acts involve" (Mead 1910b, 177). However, both types of gestures have the previously mentioned effect of stimulating the other individual to react to the gesture (Mead 1910b, 177).

Mead argues that because of the importance of the early phase of "social acts", humans, but non-human animals too, are particularly sensitive to these early signs of incipient actions. He links the meaning of the early phase of actions with the description of the gesture as a "truncated act". For it is only the social relevance of the beginning of an action that explains why some elements of this phase persist, while the rest of the action has either disappeared or lost its original value – in other words, a truncation has occurred. Mead makes this very

clear when he writes: "early indications of an incipient act have persisted, while the rest of the act has been largely suppressed or has lost its original value" (Mead 1912, 402). These truncations are much more frequent and stronger in humans than in non-human animals (Mead 1910b, 177–78). Mead argues that it is in this early phase that the "most socially relevant stimuli" (Mead 1912, 402) are found, which affect other individuals so that they can react accordingly in their actions. In his articles from 1910 to 1912 Mead is still very vague with regards to the mechanism that causes the truncation (apart from the biological-evolutionary mechanism that might rarely be observable in human gestures). Mead's references to habitualizations (especially in Mead 1910a) suggest that this mechanism is social, i.e. that certain indications have become so common and institutionalized that there is no longer a need to perform the rest of the act. The early moments of the act have become a symbol (cf. Mead 1909, 407). However, it would be too much of a simplification to equate these habitualizations with the routines and habitualizations mentioned in the context of the wider action model, as the habitualizations described here are individual and not collective (as symbols are).

The effect gestures have on other individuals leads us back to an aspect already mentioned in the description of the wider model of action. In 1910 Mead writes: "The fundamental importance of gesture lies in the development of the consciousness of meaning – in reflective consciousness." (Mead 1910b, 178) Nevertheless, individuals are not always conscious of the meaning of their gestures. This is comparable to the case of two growling dogs circling each other, none of them attacks the other, none runs away, but they simply indicate their readiness to attack the other (Mead 1910b, 178). For Mead, the "meaning is defined in terms of the responses that gestures elicit." (Aboulafia 2001, 10) Thus, the individual becomes conscious of the meaning of her gesture once "an image arises of the response, which the gesture […] will bring out in another" (Mead 1910b, 178) individual. When the gesture is part of what Mead

describes as "convers of gestures" (Mead 1910b, 178), the consciousness of the attitude of the individual herself comes with the consciousness of the meaning of the gesture too. If a cry is not merely an instinctive cry but a cry for help, this "cry is part of the attitude of flight. The cry calls out the image of a friendly individual. This image is not merely a stimulus to run toward the friend, but is merged in the consciousness of inhibited flight." (Mead 1910b, 178)[23]

To describe gestures as the beginning of a "social act" allows Mead to interpret the term in a wider sense. From 1912 onwards, at the latest, Mead understands gestures as signs of impending actions that have not been truncated (Mead 1912, 402–3). In addition to "truncated acts" there are other forms of gestures:

> It is an error […] to overlook the relation which these truncated acts have assumed toward other forms of reactions which complete them as really as the original acts, or to forget that they occupy but a small part of the whole field of gestures by means of which we are apprised of the reactions of others toward ourselves. (Mead 1912, 402)

In Mead's descriptions of gestures around that time, at least two different forms can be identified: (1) "truncated acts", meaning at first primarily evolutionary "truncated acts" but later also other beginnings of acts, that can symbolize something to someone and that need not to be carried out any further. (2) Other expressions (of the face or generally the body) that provide one individual with some information about the reaction of another individual to the first individual's acts. The latter form of gestures can be beginnings of acts that have simply not been completed yet, because they are interrupted before they come to their end. That gestures can be both and that it is not always clear which form of gesture an individual performs (but that they might be the same stimulus) can be shown with the example of aggressive behavior: If a person clenches her fist, then this gesture can be an indication of an aggression that she will not

carry out any further, but (for the time being) only shows through her gesture and thereby communicates her aggression to the other person. But it could be the beginning of a punch with her fist. Mead's well-known example of the boxer proves that, for him, gestures are not only and always "truncated acts", but that the other type of gestures is of high importance for Mead as well. The boxer generally carries out her punch. It is true, that often she will not be able to complete her act, because the other boxer protects herself, a certain punch will not be possible and she will sometimes feign a punch (Mead addresses the feint of the boxer in 2015[1934], 43). This, however, is not a counterexample to Mead's conception of gestures in general nor to my reading of Mead indicating gestures are often the beginning of acts that were to be carried out in full. If our boxer does not carry out her punch, because of the acts of the other, this is a prime example for gestures of the second form – the act has not been completed yet, because it was inhibited by the other and will either be continued as it were very soon or it will be continued in a different way (e.g. as a different punch), because the boxer adapts herself to the changed situation (e.g. the other boxer who now protected a certain part of her body). The fact that the boxer can possibly feign a punch is only feasible because there is initially no difference to a punch that is carried out in full. The beginning of a "social act" indicates to the other what is about to happen, she expects that this is going to happen and she reacts to this, making feigning possible.

(b) Gestures in the 1920s

In Mead's later work, an even more general description of gestures can be found. Mead describes them as "that part of the act or attitude of one individual engaged in a social act which serves as the stimulus to another individual to carry out his part of the whole act." (Mead 1925, 270; a similar description can be found in Mead 1926, 79–80) Examples for gestures can be found in situations like the following:

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[23] From 1912 onwards Mead was particularly interested in vocal gestures, because they indicate the meaning of the act not only to the other individual, but also to the acting individual (see footnote 15).

[A]ttitudes and movements of others to which we respond in passing them in a crowd, in the turning of the head toward the glance of another's eye, in the hostile attitude assumed over against a threatening gesture, in the thousand and one different attitudes which we assume toward different modulations of the human voice, or in the attitudes and suggestions of movements in boxers or fencers, to which responses are so nicely adjusted. (Mead 1925, 270–71)

Gestures can involve bodily attitudes, vocal sounds and much more. Most gestures are found in the early phase of an act, because the mutual adjustments[24] of the acting individuals are best possible in this first phase of "social acts" (Mead 1925, 271). The description of gestures as "truncated acts" is in principle compatible with this conception of gestures, but such a description can no longer be found in Mead's articles from the 1920s onwards (at least not in the ones dealt with here). However, a different form of inhibition of acts appears in Mead's later writings: a form of inhibition within the wider "social act". There are different forms of how an action can be completed and these "conflicting ways of completing the act check the expression of any one way" (Mead 1926, 81).[25] The individuals mutually interrupt each other in their doings and have to adapt to each

other. As a result a different way of completing the act might be taken (by the one individual and/ or the other). What remains important is that in its behavior the individual (mainly unconsciously) foresees the reaction of the other individual. So, the behavior of the individual is to (or has the meaning to) call out an unconsciously foreseen reaction by the other individual.

Within Mead's conception of gestures two major developments can be observed: (1) Mead's focus of attention changed – from the focus on the emotional aspect of gestures and the evolutionary (and soon "intellectual" or social) truncation of acts, to the functions and value of the first phase of "social acts" and, last, to the mutual adjustment of individuals acting together; (2) Mead's conception of gestures started off with a narrow focus and became wider and more open over time. This has a further implication: Whereas in the beginning it would have potentially been possible to create a register of all gestures that emerged in the evolutionary process of being cut short (in a manner similar to the one of trying to capture a particular language in a dictionary), for the later Mead almost any behavior could be a gesture, always if it led to some reaction of the other individual, irrespectively if it was a clear sign or not. My reading of this development in Mead's conception that I want to provide here, is that in his early works the focus was on the evolutionary (and partly on social) development of particular signs that were an acknowledged expression or symbol for something, whereas in his later works his focus moved towards the *situation*, in which the interaction of individuals took place and gestures were made. For example, even if the bodily attitude of a boxer might be the same when she lifts her arm at the beginning of a fight and when, in a very different *situation*, she tries to reach a cup from her upper kitchen shelf, it can be a gesture in the one case and not in the other. Even if it would be a gesture in both cases (e.g. if her intent to reach the cup, indicates to her taller partner that she needs help), it is definitely not the same gesture.

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[24] The fact that Mead describes the interchanging stimulations and responses of two individuals as "nicely adjusted" should not lead to a harmonistic interpretation of his theory. His selection of examples – boxing, fencing, a dog-fight – already indicates that adjustment means something different than a positive rapprochement. It seems appropriate to understand adjustment in the context of the later Mead's concept of "role taking" (for example Mead 1925, 268): one takes the role and attitude of the other towards her own doings and gets ready to react to likely doings of the other (whether she is a caring friend or a boxer taking part in a competitive tough fight). That adjustment is mainly taking place at the beginning of a complex "social act" simply means that often individuals need a moment to get ready for the other before the two individuals continue a rather "unproblematic" mutual exchange of stimuli and reactions. However, it is not limited to the first phase of a "social act", meaning that extensive adjustment might become necessary again later (the opposing boxer might change her strategy, the caring friend might get annoyed and so on). According to this interpretation, the opposite of being "nicely adjusted" would be a constant breaking out of patterns (e.g. a boxer who keeps on changing her strategy or seems to have no strategy at all) (for a critical discussion on domination and power in Mead see Athens 2002; Pettenkofer 2013; Nungesser 2017).

[25] Mead's description of inhibition in 1910 could already be read that way (Mead 1910b, 178–79).

This wider Meadian conception of gestures can be found in Herbert Blumer's writings too. According to his reading of Mead a "gesture is any part or aspect of an ongoing action that signifies the larger act of which it is a part – for example, the shaking of a fist as an indication of a possible attack, or the declaration of war by a nation as an indication of a posture and line of action of that nation." (Blumer 1969, 9) In the case of the shaking of a fist it remains unclear (at least in this brief example) whether a blow is indicated or executed, but the declaration of war is a clear step in the direction of war and usually not an interrupted action.

Before moving on to the possible integration of Mead's concepts, it remains to be made explicit in which regard Mead's concept of gesture is a concept of action. This results from the interconnection of gestures with Mead's early "social act". If one understands "social acts" as a chain as I did earlier, then every element of the chain is an action of one individual. This action of an individual is characterized by the fact that it triggers a reaction of another individual. This is exactly what constitutes a gesture for Mead. A link in the chain of "social acts" is therefore an action that is usually a gesture, i.e. for the early Mead a "truncated act".

3 Connection and Integration of the Concepts

So far it has been shown that at least three different concepts of action can be discovered in Mead's work and that two of them were adapted substantially over time, so that broadly speaking, two versions can be distinguished. The shift of Mead's "social act" and of his concept of gestures can be described as a development or as two versions of one concept. Even if a development has happened (Mead continuously developed his concept and did not radically break with his earlier ideas), and Mead himself does not clearly introduce these distinction of versions, it seems preferable to speak of two version of the concept, because there are significant differences between them. By differentiating two versions of the concept of the "social act" and of gestures, it

should be underlined that in some instances it is possible and legitimate to work with earlier versions of concepts that Mead himself later left behind. Whereas the distinction of the three different concepts seems to be relatively clear in his writings (although they partly overlap), the shift of the concepts of gestures and of the "social act" remains implicit. However, he is not always consistent in his arguments and in some passages a different reading would be possible. In *Mind, Self, and Society* for example, we can find the description of the mutual stimulus and response of more than one individual "involved in the same act". As a few lines later referring to the dogfight, we find that "[t]he *act* of each dog becomes the stimulus to the other dog for his response." (Mead 2015[1934], 42) Here, the "social act" is one complex act involving more than one individual; however, the behavior of each of the individuals (dogs) is an act too. This behavior of each one of the dogs could be described as a gesture (cf. Aboulafia 2001, 10) and therefore as a third form of an act. Ambivalent passages can be found in Mead's articles too, foremost in the earlier ones. In 1909, for example Mead once mentions a "common content of the act" that "is reflected by the different parts played by individuals, through gestures – truncated acts." (Mead 1909, 407) Out of context this could be read as a description of the later "complex social act". For those working with Mead, one of the issues seems to be that it seems possible to find aspects of his later concepts in the earlier Mead when the earlier works are read through the lens of the later Mead and *vice versa*. The advantage, as it could be said, of the absence of the distinction of the concepts in Mead's writings is that he presents them in a unity and thereby outlines the integration of the different concepts. For Mead, "social acts" and gestures are closely related concepts. Gestures are something that people employ in their interactions with other people. Depending on which Meadian definition one draws on, in non-social situations the application of gestures is either meaningless or impossible; impossible, since some gestures are by definition reserved for social interactions. "Social acts" consist of actions and reac-

tions of individuals, these actions and reactions are essentially gestures.

Over the years Mead's concept of gestures has constantly shifted in focus, as did his understanding of the "social act". Nevertheless, the relation between gestures and the "social act" remains coherent. For the early Mead, "social acts" are individual actions that were caused by "social acts" of others and that can become a stimulus for further "social acts". As I have shown by referring to Blumer's example of the chess-players, the chain of acts should not be understood as a row of at first separated and in themselves closed acts. Rather, they are (already by their mutual stimulation and response) more closely interconnected. Gestures are early indications of an action that has been truncated to this early phase. Later, Mead describes gestures not only as "truncated acts", but also as early indications of an action whether truncated or not. In their development from the direct expression of emotions to the function of mutual adjustment in interactions, gestures as "truncated acts" have acquired a communicative or "intellectual" meaning (Mead 1909, 406–7). The evolutionary truncation of acts is nothing that is unique to human action. Rather, human and non-human animals know "truncated acts". In humans, however, the truncation of actions and thus also the development of these meanings occur more often and more strongly. Humans can also develop an idea of the possible reactions of the other individual and thus gain an awareness of the meaning of their own gestures (Mead 1910b, 178). Nevertheless, this understanding of gestures remains very narrow. It can explain the emergence of some gestures of humans and non-human animals, but not the abundance of (institutionalized and not institutionalized) communicative signs that humans can use and grasp. Even if the truncation of acts might describe the original development of (vocal and not-vocal) human gestures, presently it might be more suitable for the understanding of the gestures of non-human animals.

The later Mead considers the "social act" to be a "complex act" comprising the actions and reactions of several individuals. Gestures are then these various actions and reactions, especially those that take place at the beginning of a "social act". It is possible to integrate Mead's early concept of gesture into his later "social act" – the actions and reactions can be "truncated acts" or not. However, Mead's later concept of gesture cannot be brought in line with the early "social act" in a meaningful way, above all because for the later Mead gestures are by definition part of a complex common act.

Compared with the early concept of gestures, the later concept has the advantage, and at the same time the disadvantage, of being wide and open. At first this is a *disadvantage*, because it seems to be almost impossible to restrict. It includes communicative signs in the narrower sense, but also all other gestures which in an interaction become a stimulus for a reaction of another individual. But this offers the chance (*advantage*) to integrate further forms of linguistic and non-linguistic communication into Mead's theory. Habitualizations seem to be of particular importance in this context. As the wider concept of action indicates, habitualizations are an essential part of the pragmatist understanding of action. Even though Mead already mentions habits and habitualizations in his earlier writings (especially in Mead 1910a),[26] he does not connect habits with gestures. Rather, he seems to contrast gestures with habitualizations there, especially with regards to their respective effects on becoming conscious of problems and of forms of behavior. If gestures are understood as evolutionary "truncated acts", then there seems to be no feasible solution for the integration of habitualization with Mead's early concept of gestures and, further, with the "social act". Only at a very abstract level one could argue that they are the beginning of "social acts" that have become so commonly under-

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[26] It has to be noted, when Mead refers to habitual behavior in 1910 his description differs from most of our current interpretations of habitualizations or routines in the pragmatist sense (every-day routines like the way how we prepare our coffee in the morning). Mead refers to the previously mentioned Jamesian example of the child and the candle (Mead 1910a, 400–401). The child's habitualized behavior of not touching the candle in order not to burn her fingers is learned behavior, still it is strongly related to biological conditions.

stood (at the *level of an entire species*) as indication of the oncoming act, that it was no longer necessary to conduct the entire act. If habitualization means that certain actions have become so common to an individual (*individual level*) that they can be conducted pre-reflectively (irrespectively if they result from the individual solution of a "problem" or if they are learned from others and understood by others), they cannot be (evolutionary) "truncated acts". Contrary to that, gestures in the later sense can indeed be individual or collective habitualized actions.

Considering the shifts of Mead's concepts and the difficulties to integrate habitualized acts in Mead's early concept of gestures, it seems no coincidence that, for example, Stefan Hirschauer (2016) and Jörg Strübing (2017), who have recently written about the potential integration of theories of practice and pragmatism, refer exclusively to Mead's later work in their respective contributions. While Mead's earlier conceptions show similar developments in humans and non-human animals, at least to the degree that for both gestures originally emerged from evolutionary "truncated acts", his later conceptions move human social behavior further away from non-human animals. An essential aspect of difference is the ability of humans to acquire practices (Mead 1925).

In both "social acts" mutual adjustment is a central moment and this adjustment is taking place through gestures. Even if the overall meaning of the process of adjustment or adaptation remains the same, the degree of freedom seems to increase (consider the rather deterministic character of the early concept of gestures). In both cases adjustment can be understood as a two-way process, the early concept of gestures and of the "social act" seem to allow a one-sided adjustment too (e.g. if the sudden flight of one individual serves as a stimulus for another to do the same). In the later works of Mead the adjustment truly becomes a two-way process, as it has also been described by David Miller (Miller 1973, 30).

The concepts of the "social act" and gesture of the later Mead can together be integrated with the pragmatist action model. One can see the actions of an individual in "social acts" themselves in terms of this model of action.

However, this model is individual, thus a "social act" means that several individuals who have their respective routines and can be torn out of their routines by different stimuli and circumstances interact with each other. In routine "social acts", the actions and reactions of an individual remain on a routinized and unreflected level. In everyday life many "social acts" remain on this "unproblematic" level. Problems that require a solution can be brought about by the objective as well as by the social world. Problems that are brought about by the social world can be seen, for example, in the fact that the behavior of interaction partners does not harmonize at the beginning of a "social act". At least this is how one could interpret Mead's description that gestures are to be found primarily at the beginning of a complex "social act", since that is where the most extensive adaptation of the interacting individuals is possible and necessary. Even if the action model is a model of an individual, problematic situations can be solved together. Routines of one individual can be adopted by another without them being imitated in a strict sense. Mead's description of the wider pragmatist action model (cf. Mead 1903) adds a further aspect that needs to be considered. In this example, the action is not inhibited by the objective world, which does not allow that the action is pursued as usual, but by the unusual behavior of the other individual. Furthermore, the habitualizations themselves seem to be routines of how to act with this particular other individual (what her attitudes are and her "nature" is and how to respond to them).[27]

Mead's different concepts of act and action can be distinguished with regards to their social and temporal scope: from a single action or gesture that is performed by one individual (even though motivated by another individual) and temporarily not very extended, to the socially extended concept of both concepts of the "social act" (the chain and the complex) that involves the doings of at least

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[27] As Mead later grapples with the distinction between an issue brought about by the condition of the world and its effect on habitualizations on the one side and with problematic social situation and the role of gestures in them on the other side (Mead 1910a), this example would be an interesting case for a separate in-depth study.

two individuals, to the temporally much wider concept of the pragmatist action model, which contains phases of routinized doings and of problem solving, but that is only performed by one individual. Gestures are social (they might have been learned from others and they are directed towards others), but they are performed by one individual at a time. Therefore, from a social perspective they are narrower than "social acts" that involve more than one individual (regardless of it being a chain of acts or one complex). Since the "social act" comprises the doings of more than one individual, it is more extended temporarily too. The temporal scope of gestures is limited (it is limited to the time that it takes to make a gesture). The action model, which involves the repeated doings of one individual can in some cases be extended over nearly the entire life-course of an individual and is therefore the temporarily most extended model. As the action model is individual its social scope is limited.

4 Conclusion

The aim of this essay was to show and discuss the diverse concepts of act and action that can be discovered in Mead's writings. It did not aim at contrasting it with other theories or to specify aspects of Mead's theory by referring extensively to traditions of the interpretation of Mead, such as Symbolic Interactionism or Neo-Pragmatism. But already within Mead's theory there would be numerous possibilities to discuss the relation of the different concepts of act and action with other concepts. Especially some of the concepts of his social theory that he also started to develop between 1909 and 1913, like the significant symbols, the self or "role-taking" would seem prime candidates for a venture like that. However, this has to be postponed to a later publication.

Nevertheless, some closing remarks should be made on the interpretations of some of the authors cited throughout the text. *First*, I discussed the wider action model. Even if I largely restrained from explaining concepts through the lens of a particular tradition, my reading of the wider action model has been influenced by the

interpretation of Hans Joas which, however, goes in line with my own interpretation. *Second*, I described the "social act". Concerning the "social act" my reading is that this is a concept which is very open to different settings. For both forms of the "social act" (the chain of acts and the complex act) the common criterium is that it is social in the sense that one individual is involved and that there is some form of (mutual) adjustment, mainly through the interconnection of stimuli and responses and in the later version through mutual inhibition. This distinguishes my interpretation from those of some other scholars. Alex Gillespie, for example, gives the following description: "A social act refers to a social interaction that has become an institution, with established positions (i.e., buyer/seller, teacher/student, parent/child, boss/subordinate) which are stable over time." (Gillespie 2005, 27) Even if these stable modes of interaction would suit Mead's early understanding of gestures as calling about equally stable responses by the other, this is not Mead's description of human conduct at the current stage of evolution. I do not want to neglect that "social acts" can take place in institutionalized settings as these, but I do not see why they should be restricted to these settings. *Third*, I followed Mead's development of gestures. Because of the development of Mead's theory throughout his life, accompanied by his reference to different stages of evolution and his not very substantial descriptions, the different forms of gestures encountered in Mead remain rather vague. With regards to the interpretation of the early conception of the evolutionary "truncated act" I am in accord with Nungesser (particularly 2016a). To a certain degree, and with regards to an application of Mead's concept of gestures in sociology, I would support the interpretation of Herbert Blumer. Even if he does not consider the evolutionary nature of the truncation of acts, he does consider the process of the cutting short of an action. His descriptions pose these gestures at the ambivalent stage between a (habitually) "truncated act" and an act that is for the moment socially inhibited (but that might be further pursued later) (Blumer 2004, 19). This seems to

be a useful mediation between some aspects of the earlier concept and the later concept of gestures in Mead (even though it does not sufficiently consider the richness of Mead's theory).

In the literature on Mead that has been considered in this essay different "Meads" (different concepts of act and action as well as the different forms of these concepts) can be found. It would be insightful, to further investigate whether there are any systematic differences between those theories that primarily build on Mead's early writings and those that build on his later writings or between the insights of those scholars who approached Mead's theory from his later writings and those who studied it chronologically.

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THE SOCIAL EVOLUTION OF PERSPECTIVE-TAKING. MEAD, TOMASELLO, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN AGENCY

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ABSTRACT: In his social theory, G. H. Mead argues that the development of human agency is linked to the emergence of the human-specific capacity of perspective-taking in the course of social evolution. With his conception of perspective-taking, he knits together three key innovations of pragmatist theory: a non-deterministic understanding of evolution, the notion of organism-environment-interaction, and the idea of the social self. In order to retain Mead's transdisciplinary orientation, it is essential to reevaluate his claims in light of current empirical results – not only from the social sciences but also from the life sciences. Against this background, the paper pursues a threefold objective: First, it aims at a reconstruction of Mead's view on the evolution of sociality, perspective-taking, and agency. Second, the paper contrasts Mead's arguments with Michael Tomasello's seminal contribution to the understanding of human evolution. By drawing on Tomasello's studies, it becomes possible to avoid two major shortcomings of Mead's approach: Tomasello's account of great ape sociality and cognition helps to overcome Mead's dichotomous juxtaposition of animals and humans; moreover, Tomasello's reconstruction of hominin evolution allows to resolve contradictions between Mead's phylogenetic and ontogenetic lines of argument. Finally, the paper proposes a refined conception of perspective-taking. The results of the Mead-Tomasello-comparison, I argue, suggest not only that three levels of perspective-taking should be systematically distinguished but also that the consecutive emergence of these three levels of perspective-taking structure(ed) both the evolutionary and the ontogenetic development of human agency.

Keywords: Mead, Tomasello, pragmatism, perspective-taking, role-taking, normativity, evolution, social cognition, sociology, primatology, anthropology, developmental psychology

1 Introduction:
Pragmatism and the social evolution of agency

Pragmatist thinking revolves around the concept of action. Most of the key insights of pragmatism are connected to its understanding of *action and agency*: from the reconceptualization of consciousness, truth, and the self, to the interpretation of religious, aesthetic, and scientific experience, to the ideas on progressive education and social reform.[1] The pragmatist conception of action is fundamentally relational. Action is not something an isolated organism plans and does. Rather, action is the interplay between an organism and its environment. Agency, accordingly, is the capacity to engage in organism-environment-interaction.[2] This relational viewpoint entails various implications. Three are of special importance: First, because action is conceptualized as a relational interplay with a contingent environment, it does not only involve active but also passive dimensions. Engaging with the environment implies "doing and suffering" (Dewey [1925] 2008, 29). Second, because action is seen as relational, cognitive processes, affective states, or behavioral patterns of an organism have to be understood as reactions to the challenges the current situation poses and the opportunities it affords. Third, the relational conception also implies a constitutive dependency of the organism on the environment. This holds true not only for the physical environment (nutrition, warmth, shelter, etc.) but also for the social environment (care, cooperation, learning, etc.).

Pragmatism is not only built on a specific understanding of action and agency; it is also a constitutively *evolutionary* perspective. Evolutionary theory informed pragmatist thinking in various areas: in psychology and social theory just as in epistemology, historiography, or even cosmology.[3] However, the pragmatist reading of evolutionary theory differs markedly from deterministic or 'social Darwinist' approaches. Due to this general evolutionary orientation, the conceptualization of action as an interplay between organism and environment does not only apply to humans but to all forms of life. Consequently, human agency has to be seen as one specific mode of engagement with the environment that took form in the course of evolution and that resulted from specific environmental challenges.

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[1] Important accounts of the central role of action and agency in pragmatist thought can be found in Bernstein ([1971] 1999), Joas ([1992] 1996), and Strauss ([1993] 2014). For a short overview, see Dorstewitz (2018).

[2] On the origins and development of the pragmatist concept of organism-environment-interaction, see especially Pearce (2014).

[3] For the crucial importance of evolutionary theory for the development of pragmatism, see Wiener (1972[1949]), Pearce (2016), Nungesser (2017).

Because pragmatism is intimately connected with a specific conception of action and agency as well as with a specific understanding of evolution, we also find important arguments on *the evolution of human agency* in the writings of the pragmatists. William James (1879, 1950[1890], ch. V), for example, famously made use of evolutionary arguments to rebut Thomas H. Huxley's deterministic claim that evolutionary and physiological research prove that all organisms have to be perceived as "automata" (Huxley [1874] 1898). Instead, James argues, undetermined agency has to be understood as a highly functional adaptation of higher animals that allows for *flexible, intelligent, and controlled activity* in complex and contingent environments. John Dewey repeatedly builds up his arguments on reflections on the interrelation between organisms and their environment. Usually, he first describes general characteristics of organism-environment-interaction before he discusses the differences between different modes of interaction. He focuses especially on the human-specific form of environmental interaction, which is characterized by frequent *behavioral inhibitions* that result from problematic situations and that initiate processes of *learning and adaptation* (see esp. Dewey [1916] 2008, ch. 1; [1925] 2008, ch. 7, [1938] 1986, ch. 2). Charles Horton Cooley ([1902/22] 2009) advocates the combination of natural and cultural history in order to explain the specifics of human nature. In the course of its evolution, Cooley argues, human nature became more plastic and, hence, socially malleable. The social molding of individuals finds its most important expression in Cooley's well-known concept of the "looking-glass self", according to which individual selves are necessarily *socially constituted selves* because they arise through a social 'mirroring process', in which the individuals *perceive, control, and evaluate themselves* according to the (imagined) perceptions and evaluative standards of others.

The theoretical innovations, which we find in James, Dewey, and Cooley, converge in the work of George Herbert Mead (Nungesser and Wöhrle 2013).[4] In his writings, Mead argues that the emergence of human agency is linked to the human-specific capacity of *perspective-taking*, which is connected to the key-concepts just mentioned. As will be shown in the following, perspective-taking, according to Mead, requires a strong and specific kind of *behavioral inhibition* that can only occur in *social interaction*. Due to the inhibition of social interaction, humans *learned* to perceive themselves through the eyes of others (and every human has to learn it again). This capacity, in turn, allowed individuals to *perceive, control, and evaluate* their own activities *flexibly and intelligently* with reference to *socially mediated standards* including normative or moral rules. Hence, it is in Mead's work, where we find the most consequent connection of three core innovations of pragmatism: Mead interlocks the *non-deterministic understanding of evolution*, the notion of *organism-environment-interaction*, and the idea of the *social self*. And it is the key-concept of perspective-taking that knits these three innovations together. Thus, if one wants to understand the emergence of human agency from a pragmatist standpoint, it seems indispensable to focus on this concept.

Mead developed his account of the emergence of human sociality, perspective-taking, and agency more than one hundred years ago. From today's perspective, his work appears to be highly interdisciplinary. Mead's arguments touch on various areas from evolutionary theory, ethology, and developmental psychology to linguistics, sociology, and philosophy. However, the differentiation of clearly demarcated academic disciplines had only begun when Mead developed his social theory. Some disciplines such as developmental psy-

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[4] For Mead's perspective on James, see especially Mead (1903, 88–92, 101-102, 1909, 402); see also Joas ([1980] 1985, 37, 77, 83, 109); for the seminal importance of Dewey for the development of Mead's thought, see Mead (1903, 98–102, 112) as well as Joas ([1980] 1985, 20-22, ch. 4) and Cook (1993, 37ff., 48ff.); for Mead's view on Cooley, see Mead (1909, 402, 1910b, 176, 1913, 375; Mead [1930] 2009); differing interpretations of the relation between Cooley's and Mead's social theory can be found in Schubert (2006), Wiley (2011), Nungesser and Wöhrle (2013), and Misheva (2019).

chology hardly existed. This disciplinary constellation of Mead's work is relevant for two reasons: First, despite the transdisciplinary character of Mead's work, his writings became important mainly in sociology where Mead was canonized as a disciplinary classic (Coser 1971; Joas 1997). In other disciplines his work has gained little attention – even in his 'home discipline' of philosophy (Burke, F. and Skowronski 2013, vii–viii; Kilpinen 2013, 4).[5] Second, because Mead's work has mainly been discussed in sociology, many of his arguments – especially those that refer to biology or psychology – have either been ignored or accepted uncritically. Yet, if we want to avoid disciplinary isolation and retain the transdisciplinary orientation of Mead's pragmatism, it is essential to *reevaluate his claims in light of current empirical results* – not only from the social sciences but also from the life sciences.

Against this backdrop, this paper pursues a threefold objective: First, it aims at a *reconstruction of Mead's view on the evolution of sociality, perspective-taking, and agency*. This reconstruction will be presented in the following section of the paper (section 2). By reconstructing Mead's juxtaposition of animal and human sociality and his account of the emergence of perspective-taking in human sociality, it becomes possible to identify important shortcomings of his account. These shortcomings do not only follow from current empirical results that conflict with Mead's claims but also from inherent tensions between different lines of argument in his writings. Second, the paper *contrasts Mead's arguments with Michael Tomasello's seminal contribution to the understanding of human evolution* (section 3). Comparing Mead and Tomasello is promising because the two authors approach questions of the evolution of human sociality and social cognition in a similar way. Like Mead, Tomasello combines insights from comparative and developmental psychology with linguistic results in order to tackle major issues in social

and cultural theory. Also, both Mead and Tomasello use evolutionary arguments in order to show why humans became constitutively social and cultural beings. In other words, the quintessence of their work is not to answer sociological questions by biological means but to understand biologically why the social and cultural sciences are indispensable.[6] I will argue that, by drawing on Tomasello's studies, it becomes possible to avoid two major shortcomings of Mead's approach: On the one hand, Tomasello's primatological research shows that at least some forms of animal sociality do not conform to Mead's account and that at least some animal species seem to be able to engage in (limited forms of) perspective-taking. This suggests that Mead's dichotomous juxtaposition of animals and humans is untenable. On the other hand, Tomasello's research on human evolution suggests that the complexity of human sociality, social cognition, and agency developed in stages. This allows for a gradual account of the social evolution of perspective-taking, which also helps to avoid important contradictions between Mead's phylogenetic and ontogenetic lines of argument. Finally, the paper proposes a *refined conception of perspective-taking* (section 4). The results of the Mead-Tomasello-comparison, I argue, suggest not only that *three levels of perspective-taking* should be systematically distinguished but also that the consecutive emergence of these three levels of perspective-taking *structure(d) both the evolutionary and the ontogenetic development of human agency*.

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[5] For the specifics of the reception of Mead's work, see especially Joas (1997, 2015), Cook (1993, xv, 70-74, 203-204), and Huebner (2014).

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[6] Comparing Tomasello's and Mead's work is also promising for other reasons. First, Tomasello himself has repeatedly – though mostly cursorily – identified points of contact with Mead's theory (e.g., Tomasello 1999, 13, 70, 89, 2009, 41–42, 2014, 2, 57, 75, 104, 122, 151, 2016, 96, 115, 136, 158; 2019, 2, 19). Second, comparisons between the two approaches have already been presented in the literature on various issues (e.g., Loenhoff and Mollenhauer 2016; McVeigh 2016; Nungesser 2012, 2016; Ofner 2016). Finally, Tomasello takes a middle position in various questions of current research – for example, when it comes to the complexity of primate social cognition, animal (proto)cultures, or the question of great ape morality. Therefore, his work constitutes a good entry point into current controversies.

2. Reconstruction: Mead's comparative analysis of sociality, perspective-taking, and agency

Mead does not consider the behavior of organisms in an individualistic way. Instead, he understands it as socially embedded, i.e., as part of a larger group activity, which he calls the "social act" (e.g., Mead [1934] 2015, 18, 44, 178). Accordingly, his social theory starts by asking how the activities of different organisms interlock with each other so that a coordinated social process takes shape. The behavioral and cognitive capacities of individual organisms, then, have to be understood as functional adaptations to the requirements of the social processes they are involved in. Although Mead (like his fellow pragmatists) was deeply influenced by Darwin and his evolutionary gradualism (Nungesser 2017), he distinguishes only two modes of social coordination: one he considers to be typical of nonhuman animals, the other he views as human-specific.

If we want to critically assess Mead's account of the evolution of human agency, we have to reconstruct how he conceptualizes the differences between human and animal sociality (2.1). As will become clear, according to Mead, the marked differences between animal and human sociality can be explained by looking into one specific key difference between humans and other animals: the ability of perspective-taking. Accordingly, in order to understand the evolution of human agency, we have to reconstruct how Mead explains the emergence of perspective-taking (2.2). As the critical reconstruction will show, Mead's account of the genesis of perspective-taking entails various problems. These problems do not only become apparent if one contrasts Mead's ethological and evolutionary arguments with current empirical research. Rather, these problems also follow from internal tensions of Mead's theory (2.3). In the next main section of the paper (3), these problems and tensions will be used as starting points for a reformulation of Mead's evolutionary account of human agency.

2.1 Mead's juxtaposition of animal and human sociality

Mead distinguishes between two basic modes of how organisms can adjust their behavior to one another. On the one hand, Mead describes an *instinct-based mode of coordination*, which, in his view, regulates the group processes of nonhuman animals. This mode of coordination operates through the exchange of gestures. According to Mead (1909, 406), a gesture can be understood as a "torso", i.e. as a 'remnant' or 'abbreviation' of an older pattern of social behavior. Mead (e.g., 1910b, 177–78) repeatedly illustrates this argument by referring to the gestural exchange in a dog fight. According to Mead, the gestures of dogs – such as the baring of teeth or the tensing of posture – have developed by reducing the actual fighting behavior to its beginnings. Hence, in the course of canine evolution the act of biting was contracted, resulting in the stereotypical gesture of teeth-baring. Fighting actions were thus transformed into communicative actions, i.e. activities that are carried out solely on the basis of their communicative value for other group members.[7] Thus, it became possible to convey a social claim (e.g., to dominance) without resorting to physical (and dangerous) confrontation. Gestures like teeth-baring, Mead argues, trigger instinctive response reactions of other group members, which in turn provoke subsequent reactions. This chain reaction results in a "conversation of gestures", through which the behavior of animals is coordinated (e.g., Mead [1934] 2015, 43, 178, 358). An example of such a coordinated pattern of animal interaction is the mutual circling of the dogs that can often be observed.[8]

According to Mead (1925, 263), dog fighting "does not call for more than inherited physiological adjust-

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[7] Today, the process Mead describes is discussed under the heading of "behavioral" or "phylogenetic ritualization". The concept was first developed by Julian Huxley and later became a basic concept of modern ethology (Burkhardt, Jr. 2005, 117–20; Goodenough, McGuire, and Jakob 2009, 387–90)

[8] Although Mead was quite familiar with research in animal psychology (Huebner 2014, ch. 2), he did not rely on methodologically established knowledge but on his own experience with pets for his main illustrative example of dog fighting (Irvine 2003). Systematic psychological research on dogs only began much later (see, e.g., Hare and Woods 2013).

ment". What is more, Mead assumes that this kind of instinctive group coordination is characteristic of non-human animals in general.[9] Hence, this claim also applies to nonhuman primates.[10] Given this conception of in-stinctive and fixed social coordination, it is logical that Mead claims that animal sociality can only become more complex if the instinctive behavioral patterns vary in different members of the social group. This is the key argument in Mead's comparison of humans and social insects. Thus, the societies of social insects attain their complexity not because they possess more complex social cognitive skills but because the hard-wired behav-ioral programs differ in the different castes (see esp., Mead [1934] 2015, ch. 30).

To understand Mead's argumentation, it is crucial that he assumes a correspondence between the behav-ioral and cognitive abilities of different species and the challenges faced by members of these species in the course of the respective group activities. Thus, Mead seems to assume that a social order that is regulated by dominance hierarchy – as it can be found in dogs – re-quires above all an accurate perception of gestures and a quick reaction of group members in order to keep the social process running effectively. This results in a func-tionally coherent structure. Since, according to Mead, animal interaction is based on an evolutionary ingrained and therefore precisely regulated interplay of behavior, perspective-taking, learning, or self-reflexivity are nei-ther possible nor necessary for this form of sociality. Accordingly, normativity plays no role for animal behav-

ior. Where there is no indeterminacy of action, there is no possibility to evaluate and modify it on the basis of normative standards.

Mead contrasts the instinct-based coordination mode of animals with *a human-specific form of social coordination* that is based primarily on the ability of perspective-taking.[11] Perspective-taking makes it possi-ble to see oneself as part of the interaction of the social group, to anticipate the reactions of others to one's own behavior, and to adapt one's own behavior with regard to social expectations. Mead repeatedly illustrates these human-specific behavioral capacities using the example of a boxing match (sometimes also a fencing match).[12] Three differences are central in comparison to the dog-fight. First, according to Mead, only humans can feign in a fight. In order to use a feint, a boxer must be able to imagine how her opponent reacts to her own behavior. Only then she can make use of this (assumed) reaction for her own success. The feint therefore illustrates the human ability to take the perspective of others in a prototypical way. Secondly, the boxing match illustrates that the behavior of human fighters is not innate, but the result of long-term processes of learning and habitu-ation. In other words, boxing is not a hard-wired or genetically fixed skill but a matter of training and prac-tice. Thirdly, the fact that the behavioral patterns in boxing are not innate, but have to be learned, implies that it is possible to deviate from these patterns. It is precisely this possibility of deviation that necessitates a new form of behavioral regulation. In the case of boxing this regulation takes the form of explicit and implicit rules. Although he does not deal with this topic in his earlier writings, in his later analysis of children's play behavior Mead argues that this normative and moral

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[9] Mead's position regarding the cognitive and behavioral abili-ties of nonhuman animals is not consistent throughout his work. In some studies he assumes stronger learning abilities of animals and a more developed inhibition of behavior (e.g., Mead 1918, 577–79). In my view the more restrictive view is clearly dominant, however.

[10] In various studies, Mead briefly discusses the mental and behavioral abilities of nonhuman primates, especially their capacity to perceive and manipulate physical objects (see esp., Mead 1907, 389, [1938] 1964, 24, 136). If one considers the contemporary works of Robert Yerkes or Wolfgang Köhler – of which Mead ([1938] 1964, 136) was at least partly aware – his position on primates appears, again, quite restrictive. To my knowledge, Mead does not comment on the social behavior of nonhuman primates, which is not surprising given the state of primatological research at the time.

[11] Mead uses different formulations to capture the process of perspective-taking. Often, he speaks of "taking the attitude of the other" or "taking the role of the other". Especially in his late work, he increasingly uses the concept of "perspectives" (e.g., Mead 1913, 377, 1925, 259ff., [1934] 2015, 153ff., 179ff.). In the last section of this paper I will propose a refined conception of perspective-taking that systematically distinguishes between the different terms.

[12] On this, see especially Mead (1910b, 177–78, 1925, 263, 271, [1934] 2015, 42–45, 63, 68-74, 162).

form of social coordination builds up on the ability of perspective-taking.[13] Only if a person is able to view and evaluate her own behavior (or options for behavior) in the light of the expectations of others is it possible to organize behavior in a normative way.

2.2 Inhibition, object-constitution, and social interaction

By contrasting the two forms of fighting interaction, Mead identifies the ability of perspective-taking as a key difference that distinguishes humans from all other animals. This claim, of course, raises the question of *how this ability has developed*. In a seminal series of articles, published between 1909 and 1913, Mead devotes himself primarily to this question.[14] In order to understand the argumentation Mead develops in these articles it is important to consider his *general considerations on action and perception*, which he had already begun to develop earlier. Drawing on John Dewey's early pragmatist work, Mead (1903, 1907) argues that the behavioral indeterminacy of humans leads to frequent interruptions and inhibitions of activities.[15] Due to their lack of instinctive patterns and the resulting "increase in inhibition" (Mead 1910b, 178), human individuals often 'do not know what to do'. In these phases of inhibition, they then explore their environment in order to identify and solve the problem they are facing. The human capacity to explore the environment is facilitated by another human characteristic – the flexible use of hands. Not only are humans one of the few species that have hands. What is more: According to Mead (1907), they are the only organisms that can use them to explore their environment in a differentiated and delicate way. Thus, when faced with a problem, humans frequently discover new ways of action

by manually exploring the environment. Often, in the course of this process, new objects are constituted in the experience of the subjects. This constitution of new objects does not necessarily entail the discovery of objects that have been completely overlooked before. In many cases, it means that objects gain a new meaning; and this meaning, from a pragmatist standpoint, always results from the relevance of the object in terms of action.[16] So, for example, a child may first perceive a candle as a fascinating object that moves and shines in interesting ways. Yet, in the moment it touches the flame, a problem of action arises. The solution of the problem (withdrawing the hand) then constitutes a new object. The candle, now, is (also) perceived as a "light-that-means-pain-when-contact-occurs" (Dewey 1896, 360).[17] In this way, by facing and handling problems, the environment of human individuals is constantly enriched with new objects. Inhibition, thus, is necessarily linked to learning and an increased knowledge and control of the environment. This is why, from a pragmatist view, the marked indeterminacy and frequent inhibitions of human action are preconditions of effective, skillful, and intelligent conduct.

In his social theory, Mead applies these crucial pragmatist insights into the importance of behavioral inhibition and indeterminacy to the specifics of the problems that individuals face in their interactions with the *social* environment. Problems of social interaction, Mead argues, differ significantly from those individuals encounter when interacting with physical objects. To illustrate this claim, Mead (1910a, 402–3) gives the example of a hiker who faces the question of whether the weather will hold or whether there will be rain. The hiker, thus,

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[13] The fact that Mead discusses the relation between perspective-taking and moral agency only with respect to human ontogeny and socialization generates important problems for his theory (more on this in section 2.3).

[14] This series consists of five articles: Mead (1909, 1910a, 1910b, 1912, 1913). For a detailed discussion of these publications, see especially Joas ([1980] 1985, ch. 5).

[15] The single most important influence on Mead's earliest studies was Dewey's pathbreaking paper "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology" (Dewey 1896).

[16] By emphasizing not only the crucial importance of bodily interaction with the environment for cognition but also the enactive, that is constitutively action-oriented, character of cognition, Mead (and Dewey) anticipated later developments in the psychology of perception, the cognitive sciences, and neurophysiology (for more on that, see Madzia 2013; McVeigh 2016; Nungesser 2017; Shalin 2017).

[17] Dewey adopts the example of the child and the candle from William James (1950[1890], 24, 72) (who, in turn, adopted it from the Austrian anatomist Theodor Meynert). Later, Mead also refers to this example (Mead 1903, 100–101, 1910a, 400–401).

is confronted with a "conflict of tendencies" (hiking vs. taking shelter). This conflict provokes an inhibition of action, which, in turn "directs the attention [to] the sharper definition of the objects". Thus, the 'meteorological problem' the hiker is confronted with will lead to a more precise perception of the clouds and the wind because these environmental objects are relevant for her decision whether to postpone the hike or not. However, while the inhibition of action in this case leads to an exploration of the environment and to a reflexive adaptation of behavior, it does not, according to Mead, provoke a *self*-reflexive adaptation of behavior. The main reason for this, Mead argues, is that the behavior of the hiker herself is irrelevant for the interaction, since it does not influence the weather. According to Mead, this is where the difference to social interaction becomes apparent. If one compares the situation of the hiker with that "of a man face to face with a number of enemies" (Mead 1910a, 404), the difference becomes clear. Here the activity of the man directly influences the behavior of the individuals he is interacting with. It is precisely this mutual reactivity of social situations that induces a decisive learning event. In contrast to the instinct-controlled animals, Mead claims, in such a mutually reactive situation human beings can learn to realize that the behavior of others is influenced by a social object that they have not noticed before, namely, themselves. "We are conscious of our attitudes because they are responsible for the changes in the conduct of other individuals." (Mead 1910a, 403) While in the case of the hiker the "direction of attention" (Mead 1910a, 402) is unilinear from the individual to the properties of the physical environment, in the case of social interaction it is extended by a self-reflexive feedback loop.

According to Mead, the constitution of self-reflexivity in social interaction is facilitated by a specific type of communicative signals, which he calls – following Wilhelm Wundt – "vocal gestures" (*Lautgebärde*). What distinguishes the "vocal gesture" from other forms of communication (facial and bodily expressions etc.) is that it can be perceived both by co-present individuals

and by the individual who expresses it. Because it excites the 'sender' as well as the 'receiver', the vocal gesture causes the individual to "be affected as others are affected" (Mead 1912, 405). This bidirectional irritation and inhibition enable the individual to associate her self-excitation with the behaviors and "attitudes" of the others. And because it perceives a similarity in the reactions of the other and the yet unknown social object of herself, the individual becomes able to perceive herself as a self that interacts and influences others. This is why the "vocal gesture", according to Mead, is crucial for the constitution of self-reflexivity and symbolic communication.[18]

Human agency, for Mead, is based on the constitutive indeterminacy of human behavior and it is constituted through a process of learning that can occur only in the context of social and communicatively self-exciting interaction. Only in this way can individuals become a social object in their own experience. "The 'me' is a man's reply to his own talk. Such a me is not then an early formation, which is then projected and ejected into the bodies of other people to give them the breadth of human life. It is rather an importation from the field of social objects into an amorphous, unorganized field of what we call inner experience. Through the organization of this object, the self, this material is itself organized and brought under the control of the individual in the form of so-called self-consciousness." (Mead 1912, 405) Thus, from a Meadian standpoint, only when the social object of the "self" is constituted in the experience of individuals through the process of perspective-taking, they become able to plan, control, and evaluate their activities in a self-reflexive way.

2.3 Problems and tensions in Mead's comparative account of perspective-taking
Mead's innovative theory tries to understand the emergence of perspective-taking and human agency by ana-

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[18] Here, I can only give a rough outline of Mead's complex (and problematic) argument on the process of self-constitution. For a more detailed discussion, see especially Cook (1993, ch. 6).

lyzing the interconnection between human behavioral inhibition and indeterminacy on the one hand and the challenges of human social interaction on the other. If we take seriously Mead's transdisciplinary claim, we must not only check his theoretical considerations for argumentative consistency; also, we need to scrutinize his arguments against the background of current empirical findings. Such a reassessment reveals various *conceptual and empirical problems*. Four of these problems are especially important.

1) If we contrast Mead's characterization of animal sociality with *recent findings in ethology and comparative psychology*, it is obvious that Mead posits *far too wide a gap between the behavioral competencies of humans and animals*.[19] Particularly problematic is that Mead discusses only one form of nonhuman social coordination and hardly considers more complex sociocognitive abilities of animals. If we consider the methodological assumptions and empirical state of knowledge in ethology and animal psychology of Mead's time, this is hardly surprising.[20] This makes it all the more important to compare Mead's social theory with current results in these disciplines.

2) In his arguments on the social interactions of animals and humans, Mead primarily adopts a "functional perspective" (Niedenzu 2012, 299); that is to say, he analyzes how the interplay between the inhibition of behavior, perspective-taking, and self-reflexively controlled behavior results in a robust and effective mode of social coordination. What is *missing*, however, is a *genuinely evolutionary perspective* that inquires into the *ecological changes and dynamics of selection*, which could explain

the emergence of more complex behavioral and cognitive competencies.[21]

3) In his 1922 paper "A Behaviorist Account of the Significant Symbol" Mead formulates an important assumption regarding the *relationship between human evolution and human ontogeny*. Following his basic argument that the "self arises in conduct, when the individual becomes a social object in experience to himself", he states the following: "It is a development that arises gradually in the life of the infant and presumably arose gradually in the life of the race." (Mead 1922, 160) According to this quote, Mead assumes that the emergence and development of perspective-taking followed the same general logic on the phylogenetic as on the ontogenetic time scale. However, if we look for evolutionary arguments on the development of perspective-taking in Mead's writings, we only find the functional arguments on the emergence of the basic form of perspective-taking discussed above. In contrast, the gradual development of more complex forms of perspective-taking is discusses only in Mead's later analyses of human socialization. As is well known, in these later studies, Mead distinguishes between two major steps in the development of perspective-taking, which he identifies by looking into the play behavior of children.[22] The first form of perspective-taking, Mead argues, is limited to specific individuals (often called "significant others"[23]). This form of per-

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[19] Criticisms of Mead's juxtaposition of animals and humans can especially be found in the field of Human-Animal-Studies (e.g., Alger, J. and Alger, S. 1997; Myers 2003; for an evaluation of these criticisms, see Gallagher 2016b).

[20] As a reaction to Darwin's gradualistic perspective, an "excessive fear of anthropomorphism" (Degler 1991, 331) developed in American comparative psychology in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It seems that this "fear" also left its mark in Mead's writings.

[21] Especially in *Mind, Self, and Society*, Mead ([1934] 2015, ch. 4, 12, 13) repeatedly addresses the phylogenetic changes in the central nervous system and the increased encephalization of humans. He also connects these issues with the question of behavioral indeterminacy. From today's perspective his arguments appear simplistic, which is not surprising given the state of research (Gallagher 2016a, 320). What is more surprising is that he does not combine his arguments with considerations of the changes in the natural and social environment, which may have contributed to these neurophysiological changes.

[22] Mead does not yet distinguish between "play" and "game" in his pivotal series of articles published between 1909 and 1913, but only in his publications of the 1920s. He draws the distinction explicitly in his 1922 essay "A Behaviorist Account of the Significant Symbol" (Mead 1922, 160–62). It is then described in more detail in "The Genesis of the Self and Social Control" and especially in *Mind, Self, and Society* (Mead 1925, 268–70, [1934] 2015, ch. 20).

[23] While the term of the "significant other" became associated with Mead's account of socialization, it was coined only in 1940 by Harry Stack Sullivan (see Burke, J. 2011, 548).

spective-taking allows the child to engage in "play" interactions, in which the child adopts different situationally and dyadically assigned roles (such as "robber" and "police man" or "mother" and "child"). Already in this phase, children understand that different roles are complementary and reversable. For example, if the father and the child play 'shopping', the child realizes that the shopping interaction presupposes two interdependent roles: someone who gets the products (customer) and someone who sells the products (cashier). The child also understands how the other role would be played (often, children enjoy to switch between roles while playing). The second form of perspective-taking develops later and is more complex. It allows the child to take the perspectives not only of multiple individual persons but also of abstract entities such as groups or institutions. Mead uses the term of the "generalized other" to refer to this transsituational and more abstract "bird's eye-view". Taking the perspective of the "generalized other" is a crucial step in the development of human agency since it enables the understanding of general rules and expectations and, thus, allows for the participation in complex social associations such as organizations. Hence, due to his "ontogenetically truncated explanatory strategy" (Niedenzu 2012, 301), we are confronted with a *marked incongruity between the phylogenetic and the ontogenetic time scale* in Mead.[24] What is *missing* is a *reconstruction of the gradual refinement of perspective-taking in the course of human evolution*.

4) Because Mead examines the gradual development of perspective-taking only from an ontogenetic point of view, crucial aspects of human agency are missing in his comparative analyses of animal and human sociality. This holds especially true for the emergence of normatively controlled behavior, that is, *moral agency*. Of course, Mead does address the *basic conditions* of the normative

regulation of action in his earlier comparative work, since he deals with the emergence of perspective-taking, behavioral reflexivity, and the social self. Nevertheless, the idea that normative self-reflexivity is key for an understanding of agency surfaces only on the very last pages of his early series of articles (Mead 1913, 378–79). In contrast, the development of an understanding of normative perspectives, rules, and role-expectations is of seminal importance in his comments on human ontogeny and socialization. Consequently, Mead's claim that the phylogenetic and the ontogenetic development exhibit a parallel pattern implies that the gradual emergence of perspective-taking in the course of human evolution must have been accompanied by a gradual increase in the complexity of normatively structured behavior. The absence of such an account of the evolution of human normativity, thus, constitutes a prominent gap in Mead's anthropological account. This is why, in the following, particular attention will be paid to *the evolutionary emergence and refinement of moral agency*.

Against the background of these problems and tensions the following questions arise: 1) Are there nonhuman forms of social coordination that do not correspond to Mead's conceptualization of animal sociality? And, if so, do these forms of social coordination involve capacities that Mead considers to be human monopolies (such as behavioral inhibition, processes of perspective-taking, normativity)? 2) What ecological conditions and challenges led to the emergence of human perspective-taking and agency? 3) Did the ability of perspective-taking and 4) the normative regulation of action develop gradually in the course of anthropogenesis? These questions will now be discussed by drawing on current empirical findings.

3. Current research: Tomasello on the gradual development of human sociality, perspective-taking, and agency

In order to assess the plausibility of Mead's argumentation on the social evolution of human sociality, perspective-taking, and agency today, it is necessary to refer to current

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[24] The problematic relationship between the phylogenetic and ontogenetic line of argumentation in Mead has also been noted by Shalin (1989, 38–39) and Cook (1993, 205).

studies that compare human and animal sociality, identify the social-cognitive, motivational, and normative characteristics of these different forms of sociality, and outline a plausible narrative how human-specific forms of sociality, social cognition, and morality emerged. An important approach that lends itself to such a comparison is Michael Tomasello's evolutionary cultural psychology.[25] As the following discussion shows, the comparison of Mead's arguments with Tomasello's work suggests that key ideas of Mead are still innovative and theoretically productive, but need to be reformulated considerably against the background of recent empirical findings. This thesis will now be elaborated in more detail with regard to two core aspects. First, it is shown on the basis of primatological findings that Mead's comparative arguments on the genesis of human sociality, agency and perspective-taking are based on a far too dichotomous distinction between 'animals' and 'humans' that is not only empirically dated and incorrect but also poses problems for an evolutionary explanation of hominization. It is argued that great ape sociality can be understood as one crucial transitional step that mediates between the two modes of social coordination described by Mead. Such a transitional step also paves the way for a gradualistic understanding of the evolution of human sociality, perspective-taking, and agency (3.1).[26] Second, it is argued that current research such as Tomasello's makes possible the reconstruction of the development and differentiation of human perspective-taking and agency in the course of hominin evolution. While Mead hardly touches on the question of how the patterns of social interaction and perspective-taking changed after the emergence of the first

humans, Tomasello presents detailed arguments on these changes. In the following it is argued that these arguments, albeit necessarily still speculative to a certain degree, not only help to close a critical gap in Mead's anthropological account but also help to resolve the discrepancies between Mead's account of human evolution and his well-known description of human ontogeny and socialization (3.2).

3.1 The social coordination of great apes as an intermediate step

Current research in the behavioral sciences demonstrates that there are forms of animal sociality that do not correspond to either of the two modes of coordination described by Mead. An example of this, which is particularly important for anthropological reflection, is to be found in great ape societies. In a way, the social coordination of apes can be understood as a transitional step that mediates between the forms of social coordination described by Mead.

If one analyzes the social behavior of great apes by means of pragmatist key concepts, it does not correspond to Mead's characterization of the coordination of animal behavior in central aspects. Importantly, various species are able to *inhibit* their behavior to a certain degree, meaning that they do not act instinctively. This becomes especially clear in primatology. For example, in competitive experiments chimpanzees modify their behavior depending on the situation. If it is disadvantageous for them that a rival hears or sees them, they are able to suppress or change their behavior (e.g., Hare, Call, and Tomasello 2006). Moreover, great ape behavior exhibits a *high degree of flexibility* and is strongly based on *learning*. This applies to interaction with the physical environment, such as the use of tools, which is characterized both by individual and social learning processes (e.g., Boesch 2012, ch. 3).[27] It also applies to interaction

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[25] In the following I will focus on the productive potential of the Mead-Tomasello-comparison. Accordingly, I will highlight similarities and complementarities between the two approaches. This does not mean that there are no important differences between Mead and Tomasello. In fact, substantial differences with regard to the respective conceptualizations of action, cognition, or self-constitution are identified in the literature (see, e.g., Loenhoff and Mollenhauer 2016; Nungesser 2012, 2016; Ofner 2016).

[26] The importance of primatological studies of living great apes for an understanding of human evolution rests on the methodological assumption that their behavior and cognition are similar to the behavior and cognition of the last common ancestor of great apes and humans (see, e.g., Tomasello 2014, 15, 41, 2016, 20, 35).

[27] Tool use is one of the domains where the dichotomous and dated status of the pragmatists' accounts of animal behavior is most obvious. Dewey and Mead, for example, deny that animals are able to use tools (see, e.g., Dewey [1925] 2008, 146; Mead 1906). In recent decades, diverse and in part complex forms of tool use have been described in a broad variety of species. Moreover, current research shows that animal tool use is con-

with the social environment such as communication. In addition to genetically fixed sounds, chimpanzees, for instance, make use of ontogenetically learned manual gestures, which they use in a situation-appropriate manner (e.g., Tomasello 2008, ch. 2).[28] Moreover, both in the area of communication and in tool use there are *group-specific behavioral patterns*, which some scholars characterize as "protocultures" or "wild cultures" (e.g., Boesch and Tomasello 1998; Boesch 2012).

Considering these findings, the behavior of at least some animals cannot be described as instinctive, since important areas of their activity are inhibitable, flexible, and based on individual as well as social learning. Against this background, the question arises of whether the flexibilization of behavior in great apes is accompanied by the ability of perspective-taking, as it is in humans. In fact, many primatological studies suggest that great apes *can take the perspective of conspecifics to a certain extent and with regard to certain aspects*. For example, the aforementioned situation-specific adaptation of behavior and communication that can be observed in great ape interaction can only be explained by postulating a nonhuman form of perspective-taking. In competitive experiments, chimpanzees vary their behavior spontaneously in such a way that others cannot see or hear their approach to the desired food. If, on the other hand, they want to receive food from a co-present human, the apes make sure that they gesture within their perceptual field (e.g., Tomasello 2008, ch. 2). Thus,

apes seem to be able to adopt the perspective of others, at least in terms of their perceptions and intentions. Moreover, great apes cultivate long-term, yet flexible forms of social relationships. In doing so, they not only reveal an understanding of their own alliances, friendships, and rivalries, but also an understanding of relationships between third parties (e.g., Tomasello 2016, 23–31). This also indicates complex and flexible social cognitive abilities.

Primatological research shows that there are modes of social coordination that are not organized in a purely instinctive way and include – at least to a certain extent – flexible and learned forms of behavior, inhibition of behavior, perspective-taking, and strategic management of relationships. Various lines of research suggest that these competencies can be understood as the *result of the competitive challenges prevailing in primate groups*. This thesis of the social origin of primates' extraordinary intelligence has become known as the "social intellect" hypothesis or "Machiavellian intelligence" hypothesis, since it claims that intelligence arose primarily as a result of the increased reproduction of individuals who were particularly skillful in pursuing their interests through their highly developed social skills, which, in turn, led to a further evolutionary increase in their socio-cognitive abilities (Humphrey [1976] 1988; Byrne and Whiten 1988; Dunbar 2009). The above-mentioned abilities of great apes could therefore be understood as the outcome of a socio-evolutionary dynamic that resulted from the complexities of intra-group competition. Hence, it seems problematic to claim, as Mead (1925, 263) does, that the "social conduct" of animals is restricted to "seasonal processes". Instead, many animals, especially nonhuman primates, interact constantly with other members of their group and these interactions shape their behavior and cognition.

With regard to the evolution of human agency and perspective-taking it is also important to ask whether great ape behavior is structured by *normative or moral motives*. As has been shown, Mead discusses questions of normativity in his account of socialization but omits them on the evolutionary time scale. Hence, the question arises

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nected to other important processes such as of (social) learning or causal cognition (see, e.g., Sanz, Call, and Boesch 2013; Mann et al. 2012).

[28] This difference between vocal and manual communication is interesting for another reason. The fact that apes use some kinds of manual communication in "flexible and strategic ways that are in some ways sensitive to the audience" (Tomasello and Call 1997, 249) suggests that uniquely human symbolic communication did not originally evolve through changes in vocal communication but started with developments in manual communication (see especially Corballis 2003; Tomasello 2008). While this theory runs counter to Mead's "vocal gesture" argument, it would actually fit in better with the pragmatist emphasis on the importance of the hands for human action and cognition in general (see, e.g., James 1950[1890], 24–27; Dewey 1896, 358–359, 367-369) and with Mead's arguments on the importance of manual manipulation for human object constitution and perception in particular (see section 2.2).

whether normatively regulated behavior is human-specific or not. To answer this question, Tomasello examines the interactions of great apes with regard to two basic forms of morality. On the one hand, he looks for (pre-)forms of a *morality of fairness*. Therefore, he analyzes their cooperative activities to see whether principles of commitment and fairness are effective in them. In his opinion, the analysis speaks against the existence of principles of commitment and fairness (Tomasello 2016, 32–34). Experimental findings suggest that cooperative interactions of primates are strongly instrumental and not linked to considerations of fairness. Furthermore, it seems that primates do not have strong intrinsic motives for cooperation. For example, chimpanzees do not try to re-engage others in joint activities if they cease to play or cooperate for no apparent reason (Warneken and Tomasello 2006). Also, if they both benefit from cooperation in an experiment, chimpanzees do not divide the spoils equally (Melis, Call, and Tomasello 2006). In both cases, this behavior contrasts markedly with human children, for whom such cooperation is of central motivational importance, in some cases already at the age of one and a half years (Warneken et al. 2011). These findings also converge with field primatological findings that show that chimpanzees do not actively and equally share after a group hunt. Instead, they only share passively, that is, the chimpanzee that catches the monkey accepts that other group members take away some of the flesh because she cannot monopolize all of the monkey's body (Tomasello 2016, 29, 44-45). Only between close and reliable cooperation partners can reciprocal support be observed (Tomasello and Vaish 2013, 233–34). Overall, it appears that primates primarily view other group members as a kind of "social tool" (Tomasello and Vaish 2013, 241), which is necessary to achieve their goals, but to which there are no normative obligations.

On the other hand, Tomasello asks to what extent (pre-)forms of a *morality of sympathy* can be found in great apes, i.e. genuinely prosocial behavior that bene-

fits others at one's own expense.[29] If one examines the interactions of great apes to determine whether prosocial behavior occurs in them, it becomes apparent that under certain conditions they help other individuals altruistically (Tomasello 2016, 28–31). This applies not only to their immediate relatives, but also to group members that have a special value for them, i.e., allies or friends. Experiments show, however, that chimpanzees sometimes even help unknown humans or conspecifics. For example, in an experiment, they help conspecifics to open a door leading to a room with food, even if they themselves have no chance of getting to the food (Warneken et al. 2007). Hence, the tendency to help others, which is so markedly pronounced in human children, is also evident in their closest primate relative: "chimpanzees have the capacity to use a newly acquired skill to help a conspecific as well. This helping occurs spontaneously and repeatedly, even in a novel situation when no reward is expected and no previous rewarding could have trained them to act accordingly" (Warneken et al. 2007, 1418).

From these findings, Tomasello concludes that one can discern elements of a morality of sympathy in great apes, but that they do not show an understanding of fairness or justice. He thus formulates "a middle theoretical position" (Tomasello 2016, 36): Neither does he deny any prosocial inclination to nonhuman primates, as Joan Silk does. Nor does he maintain that nonhuman primates "possess the roots of human morality, including not only a sense of sympathy but also a sense of reciprocity as a forerunner to concerns for fairness and justice", as Frans de Waal claims (Tomasello 2016, 36). In the end Tomasello (2016, 2) maintains that humans remain the only moral primates. Nevertheless, with regard to the evolution of human morality, Tomasello argues that the protomoral aspects of great ape sociality could serve as a kind of evolutionary springboard that

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[29] On the distinction between a morality of sympathy and a morality of fairness, see Tomasello (2016, 1-2, 36-37, 49-50).

allowed for the further development of human morality (Tomasello and Vaish 2016, 190, 212).[30]

> And so we hypothesize that the last common ancestors of humans and great apes were at least somewhat prosocial creatures, that is, toward kin and friends and in the overarching context of intragroup competition. Though modest, this starting point cannot be ignored because, in point of fact, much of human morality, in a very broad sense, is based on this kind of sympathy for particular others, including especially friends and family. Humans have not left this moral dimensions behind; they have simply developed some other forms of morality on top of this that have led them to care for and respect a wide variety of other human beings with whom they are less intimate – not only because they sympathize with them but also because they feel they ought to. (Tomasello 2016, 38)

3.2 Two key steps in the development of human sociality and perspective-taking

Given the contrast between animal and human sociality outlined by Mead (see section 2.1), the gulf between the two forms of social coordination seems almost impossible to bridge. Such a deep gulf would require an enormous leap from a fixed, instinctively regulated and completely amoral to a flexible, self-reflexive and normatively structured mode of behavior. Such an evolutionary leap seems implausible, to say the least. By contrast, ethological, especially primatological, research results allow for a more gradualistic understanding of the evolution of different forms of social coordination. Yet, the work of Tomasello is not only instructive because it provides insight into a mode of social coordination that lies 'between' the two modes Mead describes. Especially in his more recent work, Tomasello also strives to understand how more complex forms of sociality and perspective-taking evolved *in the course of hominin evolution*, that is, in the time-period *after* the human line diverged from the one leading to the chimpanzee genus (consisting of the common chimpanzee and the bonobo). Starting from the time of the 'last common ancestors,'

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[30] As has been mentioned, Tomasello assumes that the sociality of the great apes is close to the mode of social coordination from which the development of specifically human sociality and agency started.

Tomasello argues for a two-step development towards fully developed human sociality, agency, and normativity. This two-step argument will now be discussed.

According to Tomasello, the most profound change in hominin evolution was the turn towards a *far more cooperative way of life*. If one compares the social interaction of humans and great apes, the differences in foraging are particularly striking (Tomasello 2016, 42–45, 57-60). Humans obtain their food mainly through practical cooperation. Other primates also search for food in groups, but they almost never work together, but rather act side by side. It is also instructive that the few cases of collaborative foraging – such as the much-discussed chimpanzee hunting for red colobus monkeys – take place during those phases of the year when food is abundant (Tomasello 2016, 27; Tomasello and Vaish 2013, 234-37). Thus, while for great apes the collaborative provision of food is a luxury, for humans it became indispensable. Similar contrasts can be observed in other areas of interaction. For example, in contrast to great apes, humans regularly support each other in child care (especially Hrdy 2011). Also, human communication has a constitutively cooperative structure (especially Tomasello 2008, ch. 3).

According to Tomasello, these pronounced differences in the patterns of social life began with the appearance of early human species around 2 million years ago. The emergence of these differences was triggered by an external shock that drastically changed the environmental conditions. Tomasello assumes that climatic changes initially led to an expansion of open land areas, which increased competition from ground-dwelling primates such as baboons. This competition forced the early humans to cooperate more closely. Such cooperation may have been necessary to defend carrion against other animals, but later on, the division of labor in big game hunting became a key driver of cooperation (Tomasello 2016, 3-4, 44-45).

In this way – according to Tomasello's (2016, 1–8) "interdependence hypothesis" – people were gradually forced to cooperate more intensively. The individuals were faced with the alternative of either cooperating or

starving. At first, therefore, it was a matter of forced and instrumental cooperation, which was beneficial for both, since together they were able to secure for themselves a chance of important supplies of food, which would have been completely barred to them alone. Tomasello (2016, 13, 18) refers to this form of purely instrumental cooperation as "mutualism". Also, because early humans were now careful to select reliable and good cooperation partners in the course of their cooperation, their social-cognitive and motivational characteristics became even more pronounced. In these ecological conditions, those "individuals, who are coordinating actions with one another more regularly and tolerantly, would then be in a position for natural selection […] to specifically favor cognitive and motivational machinery supporting more complex collaborative interactions" (Tomasello 2008, 194). This evolutionary dynamic, Tomasello argues, led to the emergence of what he calls "joint intentionality" (especially Tomasello 2014, ch. 3). Individuals that are engaged in joint intentionality are not only able to take the perspective of the other individual but also know that they both share each other's perspective. Only through joint intentionality, a "common ground" between two individuals can be established because such a common ground presupposes that the individuals know that the other knows something *and* that both individuals know that they both know it.

Because of the turn toward cooperation and the emergence of joint intentionality early humans became able to mutually adopt their perspectives with regard to their common goals. Also, they became more and more willing to consider the other's perspective and to cooperate in a reliable and helpful manner. The most obvious consequence of this new capacity of joint intentionality was the emergence of pointing (Tomasello 2014, 50–51). Because the essence of pointing is to let someone else know something that is of interest or use for her, it is a constitutively cooperative form of communication. This is why, according to Tomasello, pointing only emerged after the early humans became more cooperative. The act of pointing and its founda-

tion, joint intentionality, thus are not only connected to phylogenetic changes in social cognition but also to the development of strong cooperative motivations. This explains why nonhuman primates, despite their complex socio-cognitive capacities, do not point for each other in their natural habitat (especially Tomasello 2006).

The early humans' new social-cognitive and motivational characteristics gradually transformed the instrumental mutualism of the early phase into a dyadic normativity, which Tomasello (2016, ch. 3) calls "second-personal morality". In contrast to mutualistic collaboration, this kind of morality not only manifested itself in the concern for the well-being of others but also in the willingness to recognize them as equal cooperation partners and to help them at one's own expense. Also, this second-personal morality manifested itself in the fact that the first forms of role ideals developed. For example, within contexts of collaborative hunting the role ideal of a reliable and effective chaser emerged (Tomasello 2016, 54). In the context of this early morality, these role ideals were bound to concrete interactions and persons, i.e. they were characterized by a limited validity (Tomasello 2016, 83–84). Nevertheless, these role ideals provided the first means of perspectival self-evaluation, through which the individuals could compare their actions to a concrete normative standard. To use Cooley's ([1902/22] 2009, 183–84) words, within the context of this second-personal morality, early humans became used to view themselves in a first, albeit situationally and personally confined, normative "looking glass".

The second-personal morality outlined above developed, according to Tomasello, up until about 400,000 years ago. Then, in the course of the emergence of modern humans about 200,000 years ago, a second step towards an "objective morality" occurred (Tomasello 2016, ch. 4). Tomasello assumes that the evolutionary turn towards increased cooperation now became a problem to a certain extent. Because the cooperative form of social coordination was so successful, a marked population growth not only led to a considerable increase in the

size of the individual groups, but also meant that the different human groups could no longer evade each other as before. Inter-group competition thus became a constant threat. As a result of this ecological change, "group life in general became one big interdependent collaboration for maintaining group survival, in which each individual had to play his or her role" (Tomasello and Vaish 2013, 239). Thus, it was no longer only the predominantly dyadic cooperation within the framework of practical interaction that was important. Instead, circumstances increasingly forced individuals to participate in collective practices of all group members – for example, in the context of group defense (Tomasello 2019, 5).

In terms of social cognition, this dynamic in social evolution led to a further decisive development. The individuals now increasingly viewed themselves from the perspective of the entire group and no longer only through the eyes of individual cooperation partners. A transition occurred from the "joint intentionality" of early humans to the "collective intentionality" of modern humans (Tomasello 2014, ch. 4, 2016, 92–97). Tomasello (2016, 96) describes this change explicitly in terms of Mead as the emergence of the "generalized other" in human history. As in Mead's ontogenetic account, the phylogenetic appearance of the generalized other had far-reaching consequences in terms of normativity. Most fundamentally, the genesis of generalized perspectives led to an actor-neutral understanding of norms and thus to an "objective" understanding of "right" and "wrong" (Tomasello 2016, 98–105). This had further consequences. First, the status of roles changed. In contrast to the dyadic cooperation of early humans, the role expectations and ideals of modern humans no longer resulted only from local and situational contexts. Rather, roles and the expectations associated with them were now mostly part of a collectively shared and communicatively transmitted knowledge – a "cultural common ground" (Tomasello 2016, 93–96). Thus, for the first time individuals became not only part of practical cooperative relationships but also members of group-specific cultural institutions: "Making such cultural practices formal and

explicit in the public space turned them into full-blown cultural institutions, with well-defined roles" (Tomasello 2019, 5). Second, "objective morality" generates a previously unknown peer pressure to conform with the standards of the group (Tomasello 2016, 88–90). The members now demonstrated their group membership by acting in conformity with the norm. Importantly, these standards not only referred to *what* the individuals did but also to *how* they did it. Third, expectations and standards became more and more internalized. Acting in conformity with collective standards was therefore now demanded not only by 'external', but increasingly also by 'internal authorities'. These 'internal authorities' consist of moral self-regulation and the formation of a moral identity, which is largely guided by social emotions such as guilt and shame (Tomasello 2016, 107–15).

4. Revision: Toward a refined conception of perspective-taking

As an "empirically responsible philosopher" (Kilpinen 2013), Mead claims that his theoretical approach has to be tenable in the light of empirical results in various disciplines. Given the scientific advances in the last one hundred years, it does not come as a surprise that Mead's theory has to be modified in various respects. With respect to his evolutionary arguments we can now use the lessons from primatology, anthropology, and developmental psychology to arrive at a refined account of perspective-taking.

In order to arrive at such a refined account, I propose to transform Mead's unsystematic terminology into three clearly distinct concepts that specify *three different levels of perspective-taking*. As has already been mentioned, Mead uses different formulations to refer to the process of perspective-taking interchangeably. In contrast, I suggest to distinguish systematically between the capacity to "take the attitude of the other" and the capacity to "take the role of the other" (which comes in two forms). According to this distinction, "*attitude-taking*" does not imply such a complex understanding of

the social situation as "role-taking". Individuals that are able to "take the attitude of the other" understand that their actions influence the behavior of co-present group members. Moreover, these individuals are able to anticipate the behavior of these co-present individuals by adopting their perspective with regard to their perceptions and intentions. This anticipation is based on the interpretation of concrete bodily signals ("attitudes").

Compared to attitude-taking, *role-taking* involves a more complex understanding of the social environment. To take a "role" is only possible if one can understand oneself as part of a shared and structured social context. To engage in role-taking, thus, requires the individuals to understand that they are part of a social interaction, to expect that others share this understanding, and that they all know about the sharedness of the situation. Moreover, it also requires conceptualizing this shared social situation as a structured process in which different roles are assigned. As Mead's analysis of the play behavior of children suggests, the understanding of such a role-based common ground of interaction unfolds in two different stages: First, in the "play" phase, the child is able to take the role of "significant others"; later, in the "game" phase, it becomes also able to take the role of "generalized others".[31] Hence, according to this conception, three different levels of perspective-taking have to be distinguished: *attitude-taking, significant role-taking, and generalized role taking*.

The three levels of perspective-taking, I argue, emerge consecutively in human ontogeny – similar to Mead's original account. Current research in developmental psychology, such as Tomasello's, confirms that Mead's *ontogenetic account* can still claim validity. For example, Tomasello and Rakoczy (2003, 139) summarize their own view on human ontogeny by means of Mead's concepts:

> In the terms of Mead (1934), the child is going from guiding its actions via an internalized 'significant other' to guiding its actions via an internalized 'generalized other'. Importantly, this

difference enables a new understanding of human mental activity in terms of not only individual beliefs but also of collectively intentional beliefs – which have the world-making power to create cultural-institutional realities. Thus, 2-year-olds' understanding of intentions simply does not enable them to grasp the workings of cultural institutions such as money, marriage, and government – whose reality derives from collective practices and beliefs in their existence – whereas 4- and 5-year olds, with their newly acquired concepts of belief and reality, are in a position to begin learning about these collective realities. Indeed in virtually all cultures in which there is formal education, where children learn about such things as cultural institutions and their workings, 5 to 6 years of age is the canonical starting point.

This quote also suggests that, by drawing on this research a chronology of the ontogenetic development can be given – something we do not find in Mead's writings (Joas [1980] 1985, 120). The key steps in this chronology are the following: Within the first year of life, children acquire the capacity of attitude-taking.[32] In the course of the second and third year of life, the child learns to take the role of significant others. Finally, during the fourth and fifth year, children start to take the role of generalized others.

The present article did not focus on the ontogenetic time scale, however. Instead, it looked into current results in primatology and anthropology in order to reconstruct *the gradual evolution of perspective-taking and human agency*. This gradual evolution, it is argued, also followed a three-step development of perspective-taking. According to this evolutionary narrative, the first level of perspective-taking occurred before the appearance of humans. The findings described above suggest that there are nonhuman forms of social coordination that cannot be adequately captured by Mead's conceptualization of animal sociality. Great ape behavior, in

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[31] See the third aspect in section 2.3 for a short summary of Mead's analysis of play behavior.

[32] Although it is not part of his well-known distinction of play forms, one can argue that Mead also describes play interactions that are not yet structured by role-taking (e.g., Mead [1934] 2015, 150). Instead, these play interactions are based on the mere exchange of attitudes. For example, infants enjoy the interactive play with interesting objects (such as a ball or a rattle). Also, early playful interactions like peekaboo are based on the understanding (or developing understanding) of emotional attitudes (such as happiness or surprise).

particular, seems to be based on at least a basic capacity of perspective-taking. As Tomasello (2008, 49) argues "apes understand others in terms of their goals and perceptions and how these work to determine behavioral decisions, that is, they understand others as intentional, perhaps even rational, agents". As has been seen, the apes' social skills are used in strongly strategic interactions. Nevertheless, great ape sociality shows elements of a morality of helping and sympathy, while concepts of justice and fairness seem to be absent. Using the new terminological distinction, I suggest that *nonhuman primates*, especially the great apes*, are able to take the attitude of the other*.[33]

While great apes – and, hence, the imaginary last common ancestor – possess(ed) highly developed social skills, it was only within hominin evolution that the two more complex forms of perspective-taking emerged. The first step, coinciding with the emergence of *early humans*, took the form of *significant perspective-taking* of individuals engaged in practical cooperation. This limited form of perspective-taking (or in Tomasello's terms: joint intentionality) co-evolved with a "second-personal morality" that is built on the ability and willingness of individuals to evaluate and control their current cooperative activity with regard to the normative perspective of their cooperation partner whom they accept as equal and whose wellbeing they care about. In a second step, coinciding with the emergence of *modern humans*, this dyadic form of perspective-taking and morality became more complex. Humans now planned, controlled, and assessed their own behavior as well as that of others according to transsituational and objective standards that were perceived not as representing the perspective of specific individuals but of collective entities such as

groups, institutions, or organizations (i.e., "generalized others"). Hence, it was only with modern humans that full-fledged *generalized perspective-taking* (or in Tomasello's terms: collective intentionality) evolved.

In contrast to Mead, current research also attempts to identify *evolutionary conditions and challenges* that led to the gradual development of perspective-taking and human-specific agency. In the context of primate evolution, it appears that group-internal competitive dynamics have been particularly important for the refinement of social cognition, leading to the "Machiavellian" form of attitude-taking. The emergence of human-specific forms of perspective-taking and agency was then facilitated by ecological changes that forced early humans to engage in increasingly complex forms of cooperation. In the case of early humans, this cooperative turn was promoted by habitat changes and increased competition from other species. The emergence of modern human sociality, in turn, was fostered by increasing intergroup competition and rivalries.

Research in primatology and anthropology, hence, suggests that both the phylogenetic and the ontogenetic development of human sociality and agency were structured by the emergence of the same three levels of perspective-taking. As has been shown, Mead suspected that parallels between these two time scales existed. However, he was only able to reconstruct the gradual development of perspective-taking and agency in the course of socialization, that is, on the ontogenetic level. In contrast, on a phylogenetic time scale he contented himself with a dichotomous juxtaposition of animal and human sociality and social cognition. Current research now opens up the possibility to reconstruct a more gradual evolutionary development and, thus, to 'synchronize' the different time scales. This reconstruction and synchronization, then, results in a refined conception of perspective-taking, which is summarized in table 1.

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[33] Crucially, I do *not* claim that nonhuman primates are the only nonhuman species with the capacity to take the perspective of others. The focus on primates, especially apes, results from the aim of the paper: to outline the social evolution of *human* perspective-taking and agency. Current research in cognitive ethology suggests that very different animal species, including dogs, corvids, and dolphins, possess the capacity of perspective-taking. In other words, Mead was not only wrong about nonprimates but about a lot of animals.

Table 1: Stages and time scales of perspective-taking, agency, and social coordination

Phylogenetic time scale	Last common ancestor / Great apes	Early humans	Modern humans
Level of perspective-taking	*Taking the attitude of others*	*Taking the role of significant others*	*Taking the role of generalized others*
Mode of agency and social coordination	• Attitude-taking focusses on intentions and perceptions of specific and co-present others • No understanding of roles • Elements of a morality of helping and sympathy • No concept of justice and fairness	• Roles linked to current situation of practical cooperation • Roles as situational, complementary, and reversable • Agent dependent and situational role ideals • "Second-personal" concept of fairness and justice	• "Bird's eye-view" on role-relations • Agent independent and abstract role ideals • "Objective morality" and generalized understanding of justice • Social pressure to conform to cultural norms
Ontogenetic time scale (of modern humans)	*First year*	*Second and third year*	*Fourth and fifth year*

Of course, the arguments presented here can only be a first step toward a refined pragmatist conception of perspective-taking. In this paper, I focused on the social evolution of perspective-taking and contrasted Mead's arguments with the work of Michael Tomasello. This approach necessarily involves limitations and problems. At least three central aspects should be addressed in further research:

1) Obviously, the arguments presented here have '*temporal limitations*.' This holds true from an ontogenetic perspective: Both Mead and Tomasello focus on the first six years of socialization, while the further development is omitted. Hence important questions are not examined. For example, the importance of adolescence for the development of perspective-taking is not discussed (Joas [1980] 1985, 120). This would be interesting, however, for different reasons: For instance, the changes in perspective-taking that result from conflicts between different perspectives and the subsequent emotional dynamics that occur in adolescence would be an instructive subject. An analogous limitation can be identified on the historical time scale: Tomasello's reconstruction of perspective-taking stops with the emergence of modern humans. However, within Tomasello's framework, the term "modern humans" refers to the species of *Homo sapiens*, not to "modern societies" in a sociological sense. Therefore, when analyzing human sociality and perspective-taking, Tomasello usually refers to small societies of hunter-gatherers. Whether and how perspective-taking changes with the emergence of complex, pluralistic, highly technological state societies remains unclear in his work. In contrast, in Mead's work we find studies that look into the dynamics of perspective-taking in modern societies, for example with regard to punitive justice or international relations (Mead 1918, 1929). However, Mead does not systematically connect these arguments with the concepts he develops in his account of the ontogenetic development of perspective-taking.

2) Secondly, it is important to see that Tomasello tends to interpret human activity as practical cooperation that serves a specific evolutionary function. With respect to perspective-taking, this rather *rationalistic explanatory strategy* seems problematic for two reasons: First, in contrast to other important theories of human evolution (Donald 1993; Bellah 2011), Tomasello pays little attention to non-teleological forms of (inter-)action such as games, rituals, or artistic practices. However, as his own work in developmental psychology suggests, non-teleological activities (such as playing) are closely linked to the capacity of perspective-taking. Nevertheless, in his evolutionary account, these kinds of activity hardly play a role. Second, Tomasello interprets cooperation not only as highly rational but also as prosocial behavior. Therefore, he tends to overlook that role-taking also gives rise to a broad spectrum of human-specific forms of antisocial behavior – from organized warfare to torture (Nungesser 2016, 267–68, 2019, 393–95). In contrast to such a rationalistic and overly optimistic view on action, a pragmatist perspective suggests that rational behavior is only one specific form of action and that all forms of action – including cruel or irrational ones – have to be conceptualized within one theoretical framework (Joas [1992] 1996, ch. 3.1; Jung 2009).

3) Finally, important difficulties result from Tomasello's methodological strategies. Two are of special importance: First, Tomasello uses extant great apes as 'stand-ins' for earlier species in order to 'look back in time.' In doing so, he wants to understand how the last common ancestors of humans and chimpanzees may have lived. Tomasello himself concedes that this strategy necessarily entails a speculative moment. Yet, from his point of view, there is simply no alternative if one wants to outline a plausible evolutionary narrative (see, e.g., Tomasello 2016, 154). Other approaches to human evolution criticize this methodological strategy as overly speculative (e.g., Dux 2017, 37, 170). However, alternative approaches struggle with other problems such as the poverty of paleoanthropological or paleoarcheological findings and the difficulty to interpret them. Second,

Tomasello often makes use of the idea of recapitulation, in order to relate ontogenetic developments to evolutionary and historical changes. As is well known, the idea of recapitulation was hotly debated in evolutionary theory. Despite its popularity at the end of the 19th century, the idea of recapitulation was finally rejected in biology – especially in its extreme form as in Ernst Haeckel's "biogenetic law" (see, e.g., Mayr 1982, 474–76). Yet, it is important to see that Tomasello's use of recapitulation differs from these earlier arguments in two crucial respects. First, Tomasello's basic assumption differs from 'classical' recapitulation theories because he does not posit a parallel development of embryonic and phylogenetic developments. Rather, he claims that there are parallels between the socio-cognitive developments of human children and the evolutionary and cultural development of the human species. Second, Tomasello repeatedly emphasizes that he is aware of the methodological problems connected with recapitulation arguments. Because of this, he uses the idea of recapitulation only as a heuristic strategy that helps to generate hypotheses about historical processes that are difficult to investigate in other ways (Tomasello 2008, 268, 280, 2014, 41, 144, 150). In other words, the notion of recapitulation does not proof anything but only facilitates the generation of hypotheses that, then, have to be proven by other means.

Given these methodological difficulties, it seems obvious to combine the three methodological strategies (that is, the comparative, paleoanthropological, and developmental strategy) in order to reconstruct the emergence of human sociality, cognition, and agency. Interestingly, in recent studies, Tomasello tries to corroborate his comparative and developmental arguments with findings from paleoanthropology (see, e.g., Tomasello 2014, 36, 79). This seems to be a promising strategy that may allow for a stronger integration of other theories that also strive to understand human evolution in a non-reductionist way (e.g., Donald 1993; Deacon 1998; Sterelny 2012; Dux 2017). Future research should draw on these theories in order to further enrich

the pragmatist understanding of the social evolution of human perspective-taking and agency.

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AGENCY, VALUE, AND NORMATIVITY

ACTION AND CREATION OF THE WORLD

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ABSTRACT: In this essay I will present a basically new theory of value. I arrived at this theory over the course of a long period because of my growing conviction that psychological analyses of value in philosophy and the literature of value actually had little or nothing to do with value. At most the psychological factors and motives may be one, and only one condition of valuation, a prelude to value, and only in the human agent. Values are also independent of the metaphysics of substance and attribute, of subject and object, and of any other metaphysical commitments. The argument is that value is tied to action and action continually interacts with the world to create a novel world.

1. Introduction

In this essay I will present a basically new theory of value. [1] I arrived at this theory over the course of a long period because of my growing conviction that, despite many subtle psychological analyses of value that had been set forth in philosophy and the literature of value, these approaches actually had little or nothing to do with value. At most the psychological factors and motives may be one, and only one condition of valuation, a prelude to value, and only in the human agent. Usually, even if or where they are a prelude to value, they contribute nothing and tell us nothing about value except, perhaps, the relentless egoism of Western philosophy and culture. Value theory, I am persuaded, should be free of "psychologizing," just as logic was liberated from it about a century ago and on similar grounds. Values are also independent of the metaphysics of substance and

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[1] Although novel, the theory of value as creative actualization is closely related to Dewey's notion that value involves "bringing about," and thereby changing the future. Dewey emphasized "bringing about" but he did not present a theory of value as bringing about; this was one element in his complex theory. My theory focuses on a similar notion and thus I can claim it is basically new.

attribute, of subject and object, and of any other metaphysical commitments. However, this paper will concentrate on creative actualization as a value theory as such. The argument is that value is tied to action and action continually interacts with the world to create a novel world.

I will expand upon these points and try to justify them in the course of the article. I will first bring in the elements involved in creative actualization such as teleology, action, and meaning. [2] Since creative actualization is the creative actualization of goods in the world, "world" as an element of this activity will be discussed next. Since the end of creative actualization of goods is improvement in some sense, the amelioration involved in changing the world through creative actualization of goods will be examined.

2. Action, *telos*, Meaning

Values are pursued in time as ends and manifested by acts. There is a close relation between action, ends, and value, which is worth exploring. The relation of action, *telos*, and value to meaning will gradually unfold also. The argument will be made that *telos* identifies the act as aiming at some end; values differentiate the act by finalizing it and thus giving the act finitude so that other activities can be taken up: new acts. The act is completed when worth is actualized or achieved. The endless stream of activities is thereby differentiated. The world is improved by the birth of new or additional goods, meliorism. [3] Value is achieved over time, at different times, through an historical accumulation of goods. Thus values are not merely an analytic element: values can be singular as temporal, especially in personal valuation. However, the value problem is distinct from quantity.

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[2] A precis of Creative Actualization as a theory of value was presented in my article, "Toward a Deontological Environmental Ethic," published in *Environmental Ethics*, Spring 2001.

[3] Meliorism is one thing all the pragmatists share. William James contrasted meliorism with cosmic pessimism (e.g. Schopenhauer) and optimism (e.g. Leibniz). James argued that although the world is not perfect, "the best of all possible worlds," that he thought it could be improved. Meliorism, then, is the belief that we can improve the world, make a bad situation better and the like.

Indeed, one act can be distinguished from another by the worth achieved.

Action is not blind: in acting an agent must not only deal with the actual world, but with value. Acting is a complex of acting in the world, hopefully with skill, improving the situation and doing so while preserving oneself as an actor. Action, following Plato and Aristotle, can be the instrument of some further good or performed for its own sake, a means or an end. This relation of means to ends has a very similar counterpart in every system of philosophy and is thereby independent of the metaphysics of substance and attribute, of subject and object, "process," and of any other metaphysical commitments. The relation of means to ends remains the same even when the metaphysics changes.

Action actualizes goods, that is, action is included in the root of actualization as the means, cause, and agency of creative actualization. Values may motivate our action, but they are also the result or accompaniment of successful action. They are manifested, actualized by and through action. Goods acquire value only through human action. They are pursued, made, improved or acquired, resulting in actual changes in the world: action is the agency of change. Actions bring about situations different from those prior to when the action commenced.

Actions are not independent of value. Creative actualization as a theory of values is a theory in which values limit actions and thereby make actions finite. Creative actualization is the successful achievement of the action and thus finalizes the action. The achievement of the result ends the action and finishes it when good is achieved. By finishing, they end them, which constitutes and marks them off as actions, different from mere coming to be. By ending them, values give actions a purpose. Values thereby make actions possible: they define action. By limiting actions, values differentiate them from one another. Each act is limited and thus distinct from another action: different from one another. We may then define creative actualization as the creation of new goods over time, through action, making goods actual that were only potential goods before.

Values limit value to finitude and thereby separate action from becoming.[4] Our activities are not tied to an endless coming-to-be but end as results or consequences that are improvements. A painter does not work on one canvas forever. When something of value is achieved, the painter generally begins the next painting. The painting or most other actualizations can be improved with minor adjustments, but there comes a point at which the end, the goal, has been achieved. The value is actualized and the action ends. Similarly, a building is completed, a project is completed, and an order to a factory is filled. In religion a ceremony is brought to an end. In science an experiment is completed. A medical treatment is successful; the disease is cured and does not linger. The actions and activities have accomplished something of value. We are then justified in ending the action by its having achieved a good. The "end" is marked by the emergence of some good. Since it is novel in some sense, it involves creativity, the other element in creative actualization. By limiting action, value differentiates, just as the action, in a reciprocal relation, is the agency of creative actualization of the value.

In the context of action, creative actualization constitutes an answer to George E. Moore's famous question about good. In answer to Moore's question, "but is it good?" or "is it valuable, does it have value?" creative actualization ends action by the achievement of good. Value is fully actualized as inherent. No further good can be actualized as *this* good, as this good is actualized and childlike repetition of the question is redundant. The end of a successful action is a practical end to a theoretical infinite. If the action falls short of the goal, good has not been achieved. But good in relation to other goods can be evaluated. This question is one for evaluation, especially moral evaluation and environmental ethics.[5]

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[4] Cf. Hannah Arendt on the distinction of work and labor in *The Human Condition.* Work creates goods while labor is tied to becoming, the cycles of nature, in her view.

[5] I have argued in my book *Environmental Philosophy: A Revalu-*

Should we continue to make plastics? Use atomic energy? Is it worth it? However, evaluation is distinct from any theory of value tied to action.

3. Creative Actualization and the World

Although value finalizes action, value as the cause of action is not final in one sense: it does not bring all action to an end, only one action. By limiting action values make other actions feasible. One comes to an end so another can begin: we can commence new actions. We can evaluate and choose what our next action will be undetermined by finished, completed projects. The world is thus improvable still in the continued possibility of more and better creative actualizations. The world is not in a finished or perfected state. Actions make our world possible: the world is not the flux of becoming or the endless cycle of biology and life. Making a world means a better world is possible. Improvement is the enemy of perfection. Evaluation of what would constitute improvement is ever destructive of the "given." What is "given" to perception are past evaluations of improvement, of successful creative actualizations.

Values limit activities by differentiating them.[6] Values bring actions to an end so that they are not endless and thereby futile (Sisyphus). By achieving something of value, action is given its meaning, purpose*,* and justification, differentiating the worthwhile from the futile. The action is worthwhile, for it is not ceaseless and blind but definite and melioristic. Actual improvement results unless we later discover the action was a "waste of time," "useless," "no good," and so on. In turn, action gives actuality to values. If action is justified by values, values are actualized by activity. Thus action is tied to value: they are mutually connected.

If actions manifest values with creative actualization, can values also be the ground of action? Don't actions as cause "effect" creative actualization? I argued above that values constitute actions and separate them from mere becoming. Values also ground actions by bringing them to an end and so giving them purpose and meaning. Actions are thereby grounded in the world, since the world is made better. Not a lack, a desire, but a valued goal stirs us to action, for a lack is only perceived as such in terms of betterment and a world that can be improved. The goal of improving the world and ourselves stirs action. Value as creative actualization is the source of qualitative changes in the world, of genuine novelties and differences. Change is not a coming to be for creative actualization means that novelties are created by action. The world is indeterminate, for it is modifiable.[7] Values are the ultimate grounds behind actions. They are its sufficient ground for they constitute action and give it meaning. Ironically, due to the double direction of teleology, they are embodied through action. A successful action entails its good; it completes or brings about the value it aims at: its ground. Thus, the relation is not a *pros hen*, a referring back to a justifying first, since value is creatively actualized as ground and consequent. Action is constituted and a necessary part of this process. (Also, values may not be the ostensive "reason" or motive. A person may work to "earn a living." We may judge that "earning a living" requires no justification since in our culture its value is obvious and does not need stating: it is implicit in the "reason" or motive. Or earning a living is of value of itself or superior to alternatives, starving, welfare, living off of relatives, and so on.)

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ation of Cosmopolitan Ethics from an Ecocentric Standpoint, that the distinction of environmental ethics from ethics is untenable. Environmental ethics is the ethics of the future, since our decisions as humans are both within the environment and affect that environment. The environment is a larger whole than the merely human and thus human ethics is only a subset of environmental ethics.

[6] Again, values are the most general term of difference, as they give limits and meaning to actions that differentiate them. However, identity and difference are correlative, as an identity differentiates it from any other identity. Thus the problematic of identity and difference is of limited value.

[7] This topic is addressed in my book *Speculative Evaluations, Essays on a Pluralistic Universe*. Change is not a variation on becoming for creative actualization, that is, within a paradigm of beings. Nor is change an "eternal recurrence of the same." Nothing can be eternal in principle that is subject to human actions. Indeed, genuine novelties and differences arose before humans: cf. Henri Bergson's book *Creative Evolution*.

If value grounds action, how can instrumental values have value? Value as "that which is pursued" covers only end value, not means. Instruments have inherent value, as Clarence I. Lewis first pointed out, as instruments. An instrument such as a tool has proven worth, as it is useful for the creative actualization of something else in a reciprocal relation. The means are justified and grounded in the end, but the ends require the means. Also, as Dewey pointed out, ends can later become means and vice versa. Making a tool is a goal, an end. Creative actualization of a tool, if successful, achieves value as a good. Means and ends are fluid and reciprocal. Moreover, the instrumental value is itself a creative actualization: the tool was creatively actualized at some point in the past but not ultimately for its own sake. Inherent value as a tool is not intrinsic value. The creation of tools and other instruments is novel, and a historical achievement grounded in world. The instrument has value but as an instrument in a relation.

This creative actualization is a general principle, that is, it can be successfully repeated: recreatively actualized. Thus norms, principles, and other "generals" can be manifested by action. A good of its kind is actual as an instance and creatively actualized by action. Action produces instances of the norm but recreation in the world produces further instances. Action thus mediates norms and world by creatively actualizing norms in the world so that they "function as they should." "Oughts" become "is" or in our terms, actual, since their duration is finite and variable. The distinction of "ought" from the actual is merely theoretical and abstract, since practice is frequently the creative actualization of norms and principles. Action attenuates the distinction and creatively makes an "ought" actual.

A relative improvement can be gauged, distinguishing action from becoming. A painting may not be perfect nor make life bearable, but is inherently valuable by itself, for it is better than no painting. The new painting is melioristic, marking a relative, not an absolute improvement by making the world a better place, even if only slightly. Values are pursued as grounds of acting since they are superior. Their actualization is superior to the present situation. Creative actualization must somehow produce a superior world, or the action would not be made into a project. Actions must demonstrate the value of evaluations by first grounding them in the world, creative actualization, and thus demonstrating their superiority over the past. Evaluations are judgments of potential value; their actual value is subject to subsequent critical reevaluation of their success. Actions are guided by value but have their own mode of inherent value as the general means of bringing the potentially valuable to world as creatively actualized. The goals of action are to achieve something worthwhile and meaningful in the world, overcoming futile becoming. A basis in the world is not in need of a further ground, as it is in the world as a good, self-grounded, inherently valuable.

Values are often in the realm of time and space, since they are creatively actualized over time through actions that take place in a space. They are concerned more primarily with the actions that creatively actualize, not the goods that are the product of creative actualization. Thus, values are often bound up with goals or principles regulating future acts, not descriptions of present goods, although they can refer to the latter also, since goods continue or remain as the act of creative actualization. Good is achieved over time, at different times in a historical, pragmatic accumulation. Value is revealed over time, and thus is not a priori or transcendent. Creative actualization is an immanent theory of values.

Good is frequently cumulative and therefore neither permanent nor an endless cycle. Value may come to an end (the beauty of the Parthenon, or the Colossus of Rhodes). Such goods must be replaced or are superseded. Time may also play a part in differences in value. What is adjudged scrap at one time may be a vital component in a broken machine at another. Further, we can have different virtues and exercise different talents because the same kind of value can be actualized at different times by different actions. Since action is completely bound up and constituted by values, creative actualization is historical. However, such action is not

tied to the endless flux of becoming, since time is utilized for improvement and change. Time is constituted as historical. The "ontological" problematic is superseded in the use of time for improvement. Values differentiate and give worth to moments as distinctive. The temporal flow is not similar to endless others—becoming—but have an end or limit created by actualization of the goal.

4. Teleological Grounding

The relation of action, *telos* and value has many different aspects: value is multi-dimensional. Firstly, there is the dimension of space and time: the locus and historical context of creative actualization. An end lies in the future and is actualized over time in a place through action. Another is quantity: that an act is a unity with its end and creatively actualizes a value as a good. Another is quality, which distinguishes the worth of an act. Quality is actualized as an end of the act. There is the causal dimension, the causing of a new good in the world as result. An act has a cause, which is its sufficient ground, thus the end as a cause or ground is presumed. However, the end is also a result or consequence. There is the dimension of the relation of the possible to the actual and the extent to which what is actualized manifests the possible. Further, does actualization of instances manifest general values, norms, and principles? Value comes in different modes. There is the worth of ends as justification of the pursuit of an end in action. For who would pursue worthless ends? The good an act aims at is a distinct aspect from the end as result.

Values are pursued as ends. As I argued above, bringing an action or activity to an end, limiting action to a finite goal allows for other goods: other activities. Limiting action is the cause of more goods and different kinds of good. Further, teleology as an end is actualized in the world. The end as result is separated from mere subjectivity—from mere whim, wish, desire or feeling—by its creative actualization. The goal of action in the world is to creatively actualize this goal as actual: as a part of the world. The result is actual creation of a good,

not a thought of a possible one. Achievement of the goal separates the actual from the possible. Technology is not the result of such psychological factors: not a matter of feeling, desire or will. The goods that are made are in the world and their good is part of the world. Norms as "oughts" are similarly creatively actualized. "*Telos*" is involved in aiming at bringing something into the world.[8]

Value, however, is the ground of *telos* and action. If value is the cause or ground of action, how can it at the same time be the result or effect of action? Aiming at the goal or purpose begins action but achieving the end is the consequence or result. This distinction is not always clearly drawn but is significant because of the time relations it allows. Value grounds both at the beginning of an action and at the end, when a good or value is creatively actualized. The paradox of ends is that they are a first or beginning as the ground of action, since a ground precedes a consequent.[9] Then the end is actualized creatively as result and the action comes to an end as completed. The paradox is that an end is both a cause or ground of action, and its consequence, when the goal is creatively actualized as a result, a good. Thus, value limits by ending the whole sequence as the ground. Value is the "ground" as the goal in the world, which becomes grounded through or by creative actualization. Value has its beginnings or first in its ends. Unless a goal is creatively actualized, the attempt is "no good." Thus the "state of affairs" that is created is the consequent of its creative actualization:[10] value is the ground of action that creates new actualities as a consequence. To crea-

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[8] I am following Aristotle, for whom the end is equated with the good (N.E., I, 1 et al.). Cf. also *Meta*. I, II and XII (partly quoted above); and *Physics* II, 7 for his account of the good as the end. *Telos* has several aspects that are disguised by the unity of the concept. Firstly, *telos* is both end or goal and also good. Secondly, Aristotle does not carefully distinguish end as goal and end as result or consequence.

[9] This paradox was recognized by John Stuart. Mill.

[10] Thus value can only be an "attribute" of a "state of affairs" as a consequence: value is the ground of the "state of affairs." Value constitutes a "state of affairs" in a historical sequence: creation of a new, better state of affairs. This presumes, of course, that we acknowledge and give credence to "states of affairs." The latter is subject to critical evaluation, since "states of affairs" is a clumsy way of saying "actual" that, like "thing" and "object" ignores the genesis of the actual in creative actualization.

tively actualize is to ground in world as a discrete, autonomous instance. The goal is actualized in an inherent instance of a good, which is successfully created in the world. The good differentiates the goal as a successful one that is actualized, thus grounded in the world.

As the ground, evaluated worth pursuing, values are potential good; as creative actualizations, values. There is no value without creative actualization. As I noted above, the point and locus of such a creative actualization is the emergence of a new, distinct good, which is separable in the abstract from ends, actions, even good, although creative actualization lingers as a good.[11] However, creative actualization is also the consequence of acting for the end that is creatively actualized. Thus, if the ground coincides with the result, the achievement of value is successful. In this sense ground is actualized differentiation. By creatively actualizing we have created actual grounds for possibilities, that is, grounds for their actualization. They are not merely of potential value but of proven worth. They are actualized in the world: they are not a dream, a hallucination, a desire or wish. The value of a possibility is actualized in creative actualization. Value ends or concludes activity with actual goods in the world, which remain in the world. Value continues grounding thus continues goodness or what is valuable. Value as creative actualization is reliable.

Values both justify and ground ends since we finish or complete an action when the worthwhile goal has been achieved. Creative actualization grounds by bringing action to an end when the goal is achieved. Our ground in the future, our aim has resulted in an end. We are justified in stopping an activity by the value that has resulted, the good that has been achieved. In sum, value as the ground is the evaluation of worthwhile possible goals and actions as means to them. Value is the creative actualization of such possibilities whose result ends the action. The possible value is then grounded in world as actual: the possible is creatively actualized. Value also

justifies the whole process as its ultimate ground, differentiating the worthwhile as actual. Distinct goods and values are creatively actualized, changing the world for the better. Values justify as the grounds of teleological action.

Values are the "invisible movers" (Friedrich Nietzsche) as they give action and its goals a focus and significance even before they "appear." They are both regulative over acts and made: they make history possible, but are in turn creations of history. An art becomes performed through the significance given to it by evaluation. A person writes a phrase of music, cooks a certain meal, marries a special person, and even picks up an attractive shell along the beach as acts of value. Each act focuses on a determinate and particular end instead of some other end due to value. Just what ends up proving worthwhile differs in time, which allows different actions, and in quality and kind. Such differences are values in the sense of the most general term of differentiation.

Values differentiate goals as singular ends. Knowledge, wealth, art, and other, plural goods can be pursued, aiming at different goods. The goal pursued is a worthwhile one, differentiated as worthwhile. Value is the determinate differentiation of goals in general. Values differentiate goals. In turn, values are discovered through teleological action. Experiment, practice, work and other activities reveal the actuality of new goods. The possibility of such discoveries in turn generates new actions stimulated by new goals in historical accumulation. By differentiating goals, various different goals can be related as mutually feasible.

Values mediate means and ends,[12] harmonize the possible and the actual. If a good end is evaluated as worthwhile pursuing, the action used as its means of creative actualization is well performed and the goal is achieved as a consequence. As singularly actualized, the

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[11] Value is not identical with a good, however, since value is sometimes achieved in different modes, for example, musical notes that are hit correctly but do not linger.

[12] That is, imagination and action. Cf. "thirds" in Charles S. Peirce. However, as I note below, values are ultimately a differentiation as instantiation, so are not mere "generals." Ends are instances of generals, which gives axiology its "logy" element.

good is distinctive, not merely an instance of a principle. This good is distinguished as distinctive: a good. Thus, the end has a "real" basis in the world; it is grounded as creatively actualized. Values, as regulative of ends, have no actuality prior to their actualization as an end. The goodness or worth of ends gives value to the world, but their separate "existence" apart from value would be worthless. Value, in the form of evaluation of potential value, regulates by differentiating which ends are creatively actualized. They are differentiated by creative actualization in world: they are put into practice. The world is thereby changed for the better, if only slightly.

Evaluation, then, is in part normative. Norms are actualized as ends and this includes principled action. "Oughts" as a species of norm are also the ends of action: they involve acting for the future if they are evaluated worthwhile and are not impractical. Oughts are also creatively actualized as a goal over time and in a place as a pro-ject. Genuine oughts as a species of norm predict what will be but is not, unless an ought coincides with the actual already, for example, bravery as a trait of an individual's character. If we ought to do something we will, and this creative actualization of the ought "confirms" it.

Values as creatively actualized ends always involve temporality for achievement. Ends are achieved as a result over a period of time. As goals, potential values remain in the future not the present. They have no actuality prior to creative actualization, thus are in no sense "ontic" or "ontological." Thus, they cannot be attributes of a substance. Substance presumes the being of the substance. However, goods must be creatively actualized with valued qualities for the actuality of a quality to inhere. Plants creatively actualized their own lives by creating a toehold among the rocks and with animals created the biosphere. A world of "being" would have been stable, thus life would not have arisen, a decisive argument against "ontology." Differences cannot arise from stability. Whereas "being" is oriented toward the present (as "presencing"), value is future oriented as creative. Duration is not the temporal mode

of value, since value marks an improvement, amelioration, not a becoming. Differentiation in view of a *telos* is enacted, one that "was not." The "present" is what was enacted or aimed at in the past. The present reflects norms and evaluations from the past. However, the other dimensions of time are not excluded. Instead, value as creative actualization involves a beginning, choosing a project; a middle, taking action to achieve the goal; and an end. The worthwhile goal regulates the whole dynamic creative activity and gives it a unity. The dimensions are united and given worth and meaning. Creative actualization involves evaluation of worthwhile goals as a start in time. Making or other actions and activities are the middle, while achievement at a point in time is the end. [13] Creative actualization of the goal is the end of the action or activity, which limits it as a finishing. [14] "End" is an equivocal (ambiguous) since "end" can mean both a goal, that which remains to be done; and finish, the achievement of the goal. The goal is separable from achievement as value. Action comes to an end when the value is achieved, so value can linger after action.

Value is not identical with the end as a goal, however. Value inheres as inherent to what has been creatively actualized as a good. Value as either intrinsic or inherent constitutes an "in itself," and as such is not a goal, not teleological. [15] The goal is what is aimed at by the activity. Achieving the goal is the result. Value is the point at which the end is reached: no further effort is required, since the end point is achieved because it has been creatively actualized, that is, has value. Value regulates

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[13] Thus there is a "narrative" to creative actualization, which ties it more to Aristotle's *Poetics* than to his *Metaphysics*, although the notion of potentiality and actuality is incorporated into the latter. However, creative actualization is not literary, since creation of literature is only one mode of creative actualization: the literary is one species of creative actualization. Narrative is not privileged, but merely representative.

[14] This presumes the differentiation of value, action and end. I will address this point to some degree in the next paragraph.

[15] This is despite Aristotle's identification of the good and the end (*N.E.* I, 1 et al.). This equation correctly identifies achievement of the end with the good, as a quantitative unity, but is likely to confuse the issue by identifying good with goals. Thus value is more than an analytic element.

both goal and result as the test or point for actualization. However, value is not "present" as an objective or goal. Creative actualization here remains as a project: a projected end. Purposes and goals are pursued by action until they are actualized: until their accomplishment puts an end to the discrete activity. Values in relation to ends are the worthwhile element in any end that is pursued. They justify the worth of ends: whether some end is worth pursuing.

Creative actualization involves practicality as actualization, that is, feasibility. In relation to action and ends, practicality involves the discovery of values in practice, in action or activity. Novelties are discovered through experimentation, trial and error, and testing out hypotheses and other norms in the actual world. The actual feasibility of possibilities in the world is discovered by testing and creation, not by theory.[16] The discovery of value cannot be a priori; it must be tested. As with goals, practicality is temporal, the attempt to solve problems over a period of time. Value emerges over time in historical advances. Values are independent of conceptualization, ideas and other possibilities from the realm of evaluation. Conceiving a possibility as worthwhile is very different from achievement, which requires creative actualization, that is, the feasibility of the possibility. Imagining a project and achieving it are separated by a time in which the possible is made actual. Thus, we cannot investigate the value of what is valuable starting from consciousness, since "value" in the mind or imagination, projected value, is in the realm of possibilities, not value. Value as involving consciousness of any kind, including feeling, attitudes, and so on, is in the realm of evaluation, not value, that is, whether ideas or feelings are *worth* acting on. Value is distinct from evaluation, since the latter governs the possible, which has not yet been actualized as feasible or practicable. Evaluation as a critical notion regarding the value of a value does not

make reference to consciousness except in the personal mode of value.

The pragmatic aspect of value is staying true to practicality. One nail of the same lot bends while the other does not. The former is "no good," although they are conceptually and perceptually identical as nails. Their worth becomes differentiated in practice. Even the difference between individuals may be revealed by practice. Pragmatics means that principles are normative but that circumstances are the context of creative actualization. Pragmatics are true to circumstances as much or as more as to principles. The critical evaluation that "practice makes perfect" would be reformulated as "practice makes actual" and "practice makes better." Pragmatics means that actualization has its own sphere that requires as much attention as inspiration: the realm for critical evaluation. Without such attention to the practical sphere no value ensues. Actualization as melioristic is a pragmatic view of good: good as improvement. The slow accretion of such goods is a bettering, the only good available to us as finite creatures. Pragmatics simply recognizes that we are not God: we cope as best we can but are limited in our powers. Our results are not perfect but limited by the constraints of feasibility, time, funds, circumstances, and so on.[17] However, a Utopian solution is nowhere forthcoming or practicable. Improvements, on the other hand, where practicable, are betterments and so should be adopted.

Since value as the creative actualization of a goal ends action, value ends a causal chain of action to consequence, means to end. The action comes to an end with creative actualization, that is, a successful project. The act is completed when the end as goal is achieved and the worthwhile creatively actualized. Thus, new acts can be undertaken; the act is differentiated through achievement of the end. By ending an activity, creative actualization gives the activity meaning. The action or activity is finite and thus bounded: neither infinite nor endless. The action is grounded, the activity finite and

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[16] Practice is distinct from practicality as action is to feasibility. Of course, an action can be feasible while its end is not: this further reveals the distinction.

[17] A perfect actuality, such as God described by the superlative mode, would evaluate perfectly and thus not require pragmatics.

thus is meaningful since it is not without purpose and significance. The value justifies as it ends the activity by its grounding in world as result. The world is improved and given new meaning by the birth of a new good.

Meaning is a species of value.[18] Activities are meaningful because they are valuable. Value differentiates the endless stream of activity with a genuine change for the better. Even labor comes to an end with the completion of a finite task. Grounds for meaningfulness are ends of activity, which justify the activity, differentiate purposes, and thus end the futility of mere becoming. Change is thus created, and action moves from futile becoming to the meaningful, since the world is improved. Alienation from the world is ended with amelioration. The change also marks the movement toward meliorism as the number and kind of goods are increased. Change is not for its own sake but is purposeful and valuable. Thus, contrary to Arendt, labor also has a "fruit," in completion of the task.[19] The "fruit of our labor" is completion of the harvest. Agriculture is not an endless becoming, since it improves the food supply and is more reliable and fecund than gathering. We evaluate agriculture as an improvement over a haphazard or unreliable food supply that achieves the goal of an adequate food supply.

Only values can give significance to time by differentiating temporal moments as significant. Value differentiates moments and thereby gives worth to moments. Being or existence, as static, makes time irrelevant. Although becoming is temporal, time is not actually significant for becoming since there is no beginning or end to becoming only endless flux. Becoming as a coming to be is an endless cycle unless it is altered, changed in accord with values, a goal that can alter change for the better, differentiating moments in terms of quality or some other mode of value. One starry night resembles another in most respects, but a work of art is unique. The temporal flow is not similar to all others—endless becoming—but has an end, a limit or goal that makes it unique.

Just as activity is given meaning by connecting actors to their world, so do values connect the future and the present. The present, or what is actual reflects past evaluations and their successful creative actualization. Critical evaluation of the results may stimulate further action with the goal of future improvement. The future becomes clearer with valued goals. However, the value of the present is not overlooked, since it holds the record of successful creative actualizations. Those who value are the judges of time. One activity ceases, and they must judge or evaluate how the next time frame will be used. The time can be spent well or futilely: it can be wasted by mere becoming or acted upon wisely in a valuable manner. We are freed from futile becoming, from a Sisyphean fate, by values.

In summary, the passivity of previous value theory as affective is ended by creative actualization. The world is improved by action, not by contemplation. Meaning is not imposed upon us by a transcendent or historical agency: meaning is not determined. Meaning as a species of value is discovered in the world: investigated, revealed, uncovered, and created. Values give action and time meaning by bringing activities to an end. This end is a change and improvement. By distinguishing a time period as important, time is given meaning, which it lacks in mere becoming. Improvement is the end of a cycle of coming to be.

We cannot make a machine work by willing it to work, desiring it will work, emoting at it, feeling it should work, having an "attitude" that it should work or any other subjective factor. A machine that does not work requires action to fix it; when fixed we have recreated the machine for its intended purpose. A machine that was "no good" is now repaired, so good again, regardless of our whims, attitudes and other psychological

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[18] Obviously, I am using meaning in the sense of value, not the analytic sense of the meaning of a concept. However, the latter is actually based on the former, since meaning is a norm and its creative actualization as a word in an utterance is a species of creative actualization (cf. "speech acts"). Further, since analysis or division can go on ad infinitum (cf. splitting the indivisible, the a-tom), an "end" to this activity is required for use of language at the point where meaning is reached. Value is the ultimate basis for analysis into "simple" or singular elements. "Simple' itself is defined normatively and this is the unit of analysis, the end of the process.

[19] For Arendt's view see *The Human Condition*.

factors. Psychology is irrelevant to value, although it may be a factor in valuation and evaluation. But we should not confuse value with either valuation or evaluation. Similarly, the good of the repaired machine is not apart in some "intelligible" realm but very much embodied in the here and now: inherent.

Values, then, are not transcendent ideals in the Platonic sense, since they make a practical difference in action. Among other grounds, values are not similar to Platonic ideals since they do not have "more real being."[20] They are not apart in some objective, intelligible realm (Scheler, the Neo-Kantians), not purely normative, since they are actualized in and through worldly successful action over time. They are not objective, as they are not "beings," since value is independent of goods, and more general. They do not persist as "beings," but mark change and improvement. Again, they are not subjective ideals, since they are actualized in the world by efficacious action. Such ideals are only of potential value until creatively actualized. Value is indifferent with respect to subjectivity and objectivity, the problematic of Cartesian consciousness. This problematic is only a small part, not the whole: one difference among others of the larger whole of values. Values are not "concepts" since they are manifested in world through action as differentiations. They are not imaginary although they are not present until creatively actualized. Because they must be enacted, they may be imperfectly actualized in comparison with the imagined goal.[21] They are ambiguous in some respects since what is truly good may be problematic.

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[20] Creative actualization is the denial of "being."

[21] However, they inform imagination with normative identities during acculturation and development. I will cover this topic in a projected future work on imagination.

WHAT IS NORMATIVE DEMOCRATIC THEORY FOR? BEYOND PROCEDURAL MINIMALISM

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ABSTRACT: Everyday experience indicates that when we reason intelligently about how to craft a democratic process, which treats persons as "free and equal," we reason about procedures, virtues, and cultural practices in conjunction. This suggests that normative democratic theory should aid us in so reasoning. Yet, the prominent theories of Robert Dahl, Jürgen Habermas, and Joshua Cohen push us away from this recognition. The explanation for this concerns the procedural minimalism that characterizes each theory and the tenuous relationship each has to empirical inquiry. These criticisms point toward an attractive account of the status and function of normative democratic theory in democratic practice: such theory should *emerge out of lived experience* with the values of "free" and "equal" treatment and should *guide inquiry* into the procedures, virtues, and cultural practices that, in some particular context, are most apt to promote those values. The argument appropriates two ideas from John Dewey. First, our moral or ethical theories should offer interpretations of relevant aspects of "moral or ethical experience," based on observation of humans *as* they pursue certain values *in* their actions. Second, we should treat these theories as "tools" for practical reasoning, which function to extend the goods that inhere in the relevant kinds of experience.

Keywords: Robert Dahl, Jürgen Habermas, Joshua Cohen, John Dewey, pragmatism, deliberative democracy, contextualism, practical reasoning, proceduralism

> There are values, goods, actually realized upon a natural basis—the goods of human association, of art and knowledge. The idealizing imagination seizes upon the most precious things found in the climacteric moments of experience and projects them. We need no external criterion and guarantee for their goodness. They are had, they exist as good, and out of them we frame our ideal ends.[1]
>
> John Dewey, *A Common Faith*

> That it [The Golden Rule], or any other rule, may be a workable tool, that it may really give aid in a specific case, it must have life and spirit. What can give it the

life and spirit necessary to make it other than a cramped and cramping petrification except the continued free play of intelligence upon it?[2]

John Dewey, "Moral Theory and Practice"

Introduction

What should normative democratic theory "do for" – how should it "relate to" – democratic practice? Or, putting the question differently, how are we to think of "the status and function" of normative democratic theory *in* democratic practice? Here, I want to explore two ideas – both associated with the thought of John Dewey – that provide the basis for an attractive response to this question. Broadly, the first is that our moral or ethical theories should offer interpretations of relevant aspects of "moral or ethical experience," based on observation of humans *as* they pursue certain moral or ethical values *in* their actions. The second is that we should treat these theories as "tools" for practical reasoning, which can help us to extend the goods that inhere in the relevant kinds of experience.[3] Taken together, I submit, these ideas suggest an attractive "philosophic method" for developing a normative democratic theory, understood as one *kind* of moral or ethical theory.

Now, one way to proceed would be to plunge right into an explication of the two ideas. We could begin with a statement of their general form, then indicate how we might deploy them in normative democratic theory. The issue, however, is that unless we appreciate certain problems that arise with approaches that proceed quite differently, we are apt to misunderstand the import and relevance of the two ideas themselves. So, in section 1, I take up three prominent theories which do proceed quite differently, those of Robert Dahl, Jürgen Habermas, and Joshua Cohen. The point is not to consider what each author says about what a "democratic process" should look like; I do not compare their conceptions of democracy itself. Rather, I critically assess selected aspects of how each *develops and presents his theory*, and of what he

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[1] John Dewey, *The Collected Works of John Dewey, 1882-1953,* ed. by Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967-1991), *Later Works,* Vol. 9: 33. Below, I give this edition's chronological classification (*EW=Early Works; LW=Later Works*) followed by the volume and page number.

[2] Dewey, *EW* 3: 102.

[3] See Dewey, *LW* 7: 159-310, *LW* 1: 10-41, 295-326; Gregory Fernando Pappas, *John Dewey's Ethics: Democracy as Experience* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).

says about, or what this presentation may be thought to imply about, "the status and function" of normative democratic theory in democratic practice. Thus, the presentation is exegetical here.

Habermas and Cohen are conventionally recognized as theorists of "deliberative democracy," while Dahl is not. Rightly or wrongly, however, Dahl claims that his theory "incorporates [Cohen's] notion of deliberation" – indeed, "goes beyond it."[4] In any case, each author is evidently after a kind of *procedural minimalism*, which allows for as much moral or ethical pluralism as possible, while still retaining a fundamental commitment to collective choice through democratic decision-making that treats citizens as "free and equal." And so each develops a kind of "*liberal* proceduralism," which directs our attention to the usefulness of articulating ideal procedures/procedural criteria. Yet, the three proceduralisms give rise to certain problems, *and the Deweyan idea that our moral or ethical theories should offer interpretations of relevant aspects of "moral or ethical experience" can help to account for them*. For, as we'll see below, reflection on lived experience indicates that when we reason intelligently about how to craft a "democratic process," which treats persons as "free and equal," we recognize the need to reason, or at least the usefulness of our reasoning, about procedures, virtues, and cultural practices in conjunction. And this suggests that the role of normative democratic theory should partly be to help us to engage in such reasoning. Yet, the three proceduralisms push us away from this recognition. So, we explore what, beyond the pursuit of minimalism, the theories have in common that arguably leads them to this result: none of them is explicitly and consistently based on observation of humans *as* they pursue certain moral or ethical values *in* their actions.

In section 2, we consider how this critical discussion helps us to develop an attractive account of the status and function of normative democratic theory in democratic practice. Adapting the Deweyan ideas mentioned above, such theory, I suggest, should start with reflection on *lived experience with the values of "free" and "equal" treatment.* And such reflection indicates that we[5] apparently do recognize the need to reason, or at least the usefulness of our reasoning, about procedures, virtues, and cultural practices in conjunction. Again, this suggests that the role of normative democratic theory should partly be to help us to engage in such reasoning. Accordingly, I suggest that we present whatever ideal procedures/procedural criteria we do advocate as *"tools" for practical reasoning,* which can guide inquiry into the *procedures, virtues, and cultural practices* that, in some particular context, are most apt to promote the values of "free" and "equal" treatment there. Roughly, this is how I render the idea that, qua one form of moral or ethical theory, normative democratic theory can function as a "tool" that can help us to extend the goods that inhere in the relevant kinds of experience. Crucially, this framing can accommodate the concern for pluralism, while avoiding the discussed problems with the three proceduralisms.

I. Three Varieties of Procedural Minimalism
1.1 Dahl's Proceduralism
In *Democracy and Its Critics*, Dahl offers a "theory of the democratic process" that articulates "criteria for a democratic process." The criteria are "standards – ideal standards, if you like – against which procedures proposed ought to be evaluated in any association to which the assumptions ["that justify a *democratic* political order"] apply." These "criteria specify that citizens ... ought to have adequate and equal *opportunities* to act in

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[4] Robert A. Dahl, "A Rejoinder," *Journal of Politics* 53, no. 1 (February 1991): 229.

[5] Empirically speaking, the scope of this "we" should be left open. For present purposes, however, I refer to those with experience with "free and equal treatment" in joint or collective decision-making, which, at a minimum, presumptively includes those with experience with (close or genuine) friendship; see note 122 on friendship as a relationship that characteristically embodies these values. Furthermore, I presume that friendship is something like a cultural universal; see Daniel Hruschka, *Friendship: Development, Ecology, and Evolution of a Relationship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). In some respects, of course, friendship patterns do vary across cultures, however (expectations regarding material aid between friends vary significantly, for instance; see Hruschka, chap. 7).

certain ways."[6] Here, we can already see two important features of Dahl's proceduralism.

The first concerns his suggestion that the value of the criteria resides specifically in their usefulness in judging alternative "procedures." Now, Dahl does not explicitly deny that they might be useful for other purposes, say, the one I already suggested (and in section 2 argue) they should serve: helping us to reason about procedures, virtues, and cultural practices in conjunction. But aspects of Dahl's presentation push us away from recognizing this potential function of the criteria. Clearly, Dahl is after a kind of minimalism: he wants criteria for a "fair" form of collective decision-making that respects pluralism – citizens' personal and moral autonomy, their freedom to be self-determining.[7] And to him, talk of "responsibilities," at least in the criteria themselves, apparently runs against this minimalism.

This becomes apparent when we consider the second feature of Dahl's proceduralism that is evident above: the criteria are understood as properly articulating – and as only articulating – the "adequate and equal *opportunities*" that citizens should have in a democratic process.[8] Dahl recognizes that someone might object that the criteria should specify "*duties* as well as opportunities – duties of the citizen to participate, to vote, to become informed, and the duty of the demos to determine how the agenda is to be decided." But he re-

sponds: "While I believe that the democratic process does imply duties like these, they are moral duties. They take their place among an array of obligations, rights, and opportunities that would confront citizens in a democratic order." Hence, Dahl feels that he "cannot say that it would always be wrong for a citizen to choose not to fulfill the political obligations implied by the criteria of the democratic process."[9]

Accordingly, he contents himself with: an articulation of the "adequate and equal *opportunities*" that citizens should ideally be granted; a stipulation that the theory does, however, imply certain "duties"; and a further stipulation that it is best to leave it to citizens themselves to weigh those "duties" against the other "obligations, rights, and opportunities" that they (would) con-confront in a democratic political order. For they then "have the freedom to choose how they will fulfill their political obligations," which is more consistent with the values of personal and moral autonomy and the freedom of self-determination.[10] Consequently, the criteria are not to say anything explicit about "duties" or, it seems, "responsibilities" or other cognate terms – as indeed they do not.

Now, keeping these features of Dahl's proceduralism in mind, observe what results: a lack of attention to the need to reason, and to the usefulness of our reasoning, about virtues and cultural practices in conjunction with the procedural criteria he advocates.

Let me first make the point in general terms. Insofar as there is a lack of conscious, explicit attention to the *responsibilities* that a normative democratic theory implies that participants or others should ideally assume,[11] there is likely to be a corresponding lack of attention to the *virtues* that would assist them in assuming (or dispose them to assume) those responsibilities and that they would necessarily exhibit were they to do

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[6] Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 106, 108-9, 114; Dahl's italics. The "assumptions" here referenced are the "Idea of Intrinsic Equality," the "Presumption of Personal Autonomy," and two "elementary principle[s] of fairness": first, that "[b]inding decisions are to be made only by persons who are subject to the decisions, that is, by members of the association, not by persons outside the association," since "laws cannot rightfully be imposed on others by persons who are not themselves obliged to obey those laws"; and second, "that, in general, scarce and valued things should be fairly allocated" (83-105, 107-108). He also posits a set of background assumptions that justifies the existence of a *political* order in general (106-7).

[7] Dahl, 108, 115.

[8] Dahl, 114; Dahl's italics. Consider the criterion of "effective participation": "Throughout the process of making binding decisions, citizens ought to have an adequate opportunity, and an equal opportunity, for expressing their preferences as to the final outcome. They must have adequate and equal opportunities for placing questions on the agenda and for expressing reasons for endorsing one outcome rather than another" (109).

[9] Dahl, 115.

[10] Dahl, 114-15; Dahl's italics.

[11] Minimally, any such theory will imply that *participants* should assume certain responsibilities; see section 1.2. Some, at least, will imply responsibilities for others too: e.g., for paying taxes to support a democratic process.

so. For when we reason about virtues in such theory, it typically is *because* we think that participants ought to assume certain responsibilities; thought about, and discussion of, those responsibilities *lead us* to think about "virtues."[12] For instance, when Gutmann and Thompson suggest that participants should evince the virtue of "civic integrity," it is evidently because they want participants to assume responsibility for justifying their policy preferences. And the recognition of this "responsibility" is apparently what points them to the need to reason about this virtue.[13]

Of course, we also reason about virtues in order to specify how a democratic process might grant certain *opportunities* to participants, too. For instance, if we suggest that participants should ideally be "open-minded," it is partly because we want "the process" to grant participants the opportunity "to convince others of their positions," "to say their piece," "to have a voice in the process," and so on.[14] Notice, however, that this is an *indirect* way of saying that we are reasoning about *responsibilities* here. For to say that a social activity should "grant certain opportunities" just is to say that "certain persons should assume certain responsibilities."[15] And where the

activity in question is a "democratic process," those persons will often be the participants themselves: for "the process" to grant participants, say, meaningful "opportunities" to "express their reasons for endorsing one outcome rather than another," the participants, or some number of them, have to assume responsibility for listening to them.[16]

These considerations suggest that if, like Dahl, we *forego* a discussion of responsibilities (disavowing their inclusion in our criteria for a democratic process, say), we are likely to be less inclined and perhaps even able to engage in a (productive) discussion of relevant virtues. (Indeed, if we are not careful, we might not even see the point of our doing so.[17]) For again, the conscious, explicit recognition of one or more responsibilities is typically what brings our attention to the need to engage in such a discussion in the first place. And indeed, Dahl doesn't offer a discussion of virtues as these are relevant to the promotion of the responsibilities that are entailed by the "opportunities" that his criteria articulate.

What, though, of the "cultural practices"[18] I have referred to? Parallel remarks can be made here too: insofar as there is a lack of explicit attention to the *responsibilities* that a normative democratic theory implies that participants or others should ideally assume, there is likely to be a corresponding lack of attention to the *cultural practices* that could promote a social climate in which they are more likely to assume those responsibilities. For when we reason about cultural practices in the context of a democratic process, it is often *because* we are concerned with participants or others assuming certain responsibilities. For instance, when Young says that "greetings" can help to create a more "inclusive" process, she is concerned with participants assuming responsibility for treating one

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[12] See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007). Throughout, I follow MacIntyre's "partial and tentative definition of a virtue: *A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods*" (191; MacIntyre's italics).

[13] See Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), chap. 2, esp. 81-82. "Because the results of democratic deliberation are mutually binding," they write, "citizens should aspire to a kind of political reasoning that is mutually justifiable" (53). Reciprocity "prescribes accommodation based on mutual respect" (56). When "translated into practices that guide actual political life," it implies "a family of moral dispositions," including "civic integrity" (80-81). Among other things, civic integrity involves participants consistently aligning their speech with their action and accepting the broader implications of the principles presupposed by their moral positions.

[14] Hence, Gutmann and Thompson write that cultivating the "virtue of *open-mindedness* … maintains the possibility that citizens can be convinced of the moral merits of their adversaries' position" (*Democracy and Disagreement,* 83). In other words, the virtue facilitates participants having the *opportunity* to convince each another of their policy preferences.

[15] See Margaret Gilbert, "Walking Together: A Paradigmatic Social Phenomenon," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 15, no. 1

(September 1990): 1-14.

[16] See Iris Young, *Inclusion and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), esp. 52-80, 108-120.

[17] See note 109.

[18] We can think of "procedures" as just being *relatively formalized* "cultural practices," just as Mark Bevir and R.A.W. Rhodes say that "the state [itself] is a set of cultural practices" (*The State as Cultural Practice* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], 198). Still, the categories are useful heuristics.

another with equal consideration, concern, and respect.[19] The explicit recognition of this "responsibility" points her to the need to reason about this cultural practice.

Of course, we often reason about cultural practices in order to specify how "the process" might grant certain *opportunities* to participants, too. When, say, Young suggests that "rhetoric" can sometimes bring much needed attention to un(der)acknowledged grievances, she is partly concerned with "the process" giving participants the opportunity to place issues on the agenda.[20] But, as before, this is an *indirect* way of saying that we are reasoning about *responsibilities* here: for instance, participants' responsibility to listen and give consideration to others' proposals. And again, these considerations suggest that if we forego an explicit discussion of responsibilities, as Dahl does, we are likely to be less inclined and perhaps even able to engage in a (productive) discussion of the cultural practices that could promote their assumption. (Again, we might not even see the point in doing so.[21]) For the recognition of one or more responsibilities is typically what brings our attention to the need to do so in the first place. And indeed, Dahl offers no such discussion.

1.2 Habermas's Proceduralism

In "Three Normative Models of Democracy," Habermas criticizes "two established models" of democratic politics: "the 'liberal' or Lockean view" and "the republican view." He describes them as having certain "opposite features." After characterizing these "established models," he introduces "a new proceduralist conception by way of a critique of the 'ethical overload' of the republican view."[22] Under the section heading "Proceduralist vs. Communitarian Views of Politics," he writes:

The republican model as compared to the liberal one has the advantage that it preserves the original meaning of democracy in terms of the institutionalization of a public use of reason jointly exercised by autonomous citizens. This model accounts for those communicative conditions that confer legitimating force on political opinion- and will-formation. These are precisely the conditions under which the political process can be presumed to generate reasonable results. A contest for power, if represented according to the liberal model of market competition, is determined by the rational choice of optimal strategies. Given an indissoluble pluralism of pre-political values and interests that are best aggregated with equal weight in the political process, politics loses all reference to the normative core of a public use of reason. The republican trust in the force of political discourses stands in contrast to the liberal skepticism about reason. Such discourses are meant to allow one to discuss value orientations and interpretations of needs and wants, and then to change these in an *insightful way*.

But contemporary republicans tend to give this public communication a communitarian reading. It is precisely this move towards an *ethical constriction* of *political discourse* that I call into question. Politics may not be assimilated to a hermeneutical process of self-explication of a shared form of life or collective identity. Political questions may not be reduced to the type of ethical questions where we, as members of a community, ask ourselves who we are and who we would like to be. In its communitarian interpretation the republican model is too idealistic even within the limits of a purely normative analysis. *On this reading, the democratic process is dependent on the virtues of citizens devoted to the public weal.* [QB's emphasis; the other italics are Habermas's.] This expectation of virtue already led Rousseau to split the citizen oriented to the common good from the private man, who cannot be ethically overburdened. The unanimity of the political legislature was supposed to be secured in advance by a substantive ethical consensus. In contrast, a discourse-theoretic interpretation insists on the fact that democratic will-formation does not draw its legitimating force from a previous convergence of settled ethical convictions, but from both the communicative presuppositions that allow the better arguments to come into play in various forms of deliberation, and from the procedures that secure fair bargaining processes. Discourse theory breaks with a purely ethical conception of civic autonomy.[23]

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[19] "No rules or formalities can ensure that people will treat others in the political public with respect, and really listen to their claims. I suggest, however, that situations of political communication, in which participants explicitly acknowledge the other participants [employ "greetings"], are more substantively inclusive than those that do not" (Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, 57).
[20] See Young, 63-67.
[21] See note 108.
[22] Jürgen Habermas, "Three Normative Models of Democracy," *Constellations* 1, no. 1 (1994): 1.

[23] Habermas, "Three Normative Models," 3-4. Regarding the "communicative presuppositions" here referenced, see the index entry for "Pragmatic presuppositions of argumentation" in Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (Cambridge: MIT

Now, consider the claim I've italicized. Taken in context, it reads as though Habermas is suggesting that his own "proceduralist conception" is *not* "dependent on the virtues of citizens devoted to the public weal."[24]

To see this clearly, consider three observations. First, Habermas explicitly aims to "introduce a new proceduralist conception *by way of a critique of the 'ethical overload' of the republican view.'"[25]* Second, the passage in the block quotation comes, as noted, under the section heading, "Proceduralist vs. Communitarian Views of Politics," clearly suggesting that he wants to highlight a *firm* opposition between his own conception of the democratic process and "the communitarian view."[26] Third, the sentence, "On this reading [the "communitarian interpretation" of "the republican model"], the democratic process is dependent on the virtues of citizens devoted to the public weal," is *immediately followed by* the sentence: "*This expectation of virtue* already led Rousseau to split the citizen oriented to the common good from the private man, who cannot be ethically overburdened."[27]

So, taking these observations together, it is reasonable to read Habermas as implying that his own "proceduralist conception" is *not* "dependent on the virtues of citizens devoted to the public weal."[28] Furthermore, it is reasonable to read him as wanting to defend a conception of the democratic process that isn't "dependent on the virtues of citizens devoted to the public weal" precisely *because* he thinks that a conception that *is* so "ethically overburden[s]" or "overload[s]" citizens.[29] But the implied claims are at best misleading. That is, it is at best misleading for Habermas to imply: first, that his own "proceduralist conception" of the democratic process is not, even to some degree, "dependent on the virtues of citizens devoted to the public weal"; and second, that a conception that *is* so ethically overloads or overburdens citizens – and should *therefore* be rejected.

Let us, however, just consider the first implied claim. For if this claim is problematic, so is the second. That is, if Habermas's own conception is, in some meaningful sense, "dependent on the virtues of citizens devoted to the public weal," as I will suggest it is, it wouldn't make sense for him to reject some other conception *because* it is "dependent on the virtues of citizens devoted to the public weal."

So, consider the first claim. First off, it seems that the proper, perhaps even adequate or minimal, functioning of any "democratic process" will be, *in some sense and measure*, "dependent on the virtues of [at least some] citizens [who are at least partly] devoted to the public weal." This "devotion" need not, of course, take the form that Rousseau thought it should. But how could any democratic process "function" – much less function well – if *no* citizen were, in some sense and measure, "devoted to the public weal"? Again, to say that a social activity is to "grant certain opportunities" just is to say that "certain persons should assume certain responsibilities." And any "democratic process" will involve the granting of certain "opportunities *for participation*." Furthermore, for participants to have such opportunities, certain citizens need to[30] assume certain responsibilities that are inevitably *involved in* that "granting." And any time they assume such "responsibilities," they may be said to exhibit a "virtue" or cluster of "virtues." Likewise, unless they do assume certain responsibilities – hence do exhibit certain virtues – the process *won't* grant such "opportunities." Accordingly, I think it should be admitted that the proper, perhaps even adequate or minimal, functioning of any democratic process will be,

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Press, 1996), 622. First published in German in 1992, *Between Facts and Norms* is the earlier, extended presentation of Habermas's "proceduralist" conception. But "Three Normative Models" provides a more focused comparison of the three "models."

[24] Habermas, "Three Normative Models," 1, 4.

[25] Habermas, 1; emphasis added.

[26] Habermas, 3-4.

[27] Habermas, 4; emphasis added.

[28] Habermas, 1, 4.

[29] Habermas, 1, 4. See also Habermas's strong criticism of a "deliberative politics" which "depend[s] on the virtues of citizens oriented to the common good" (*Between Facts and Norms,* 277).

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[30] Or, in non-state associations, "certain *members* need to…"; see note 119.

in some measure, "dependent on the virtues of [at least some] citizens."

But if any reader is unsure about this, surely she will admit that the proper, perhaps even adequate or minimal, functioning of Habermas's own "proceduralist conception" would be so "dependent" – indeed, "dependent," in some sense and measure, on "the virtues of citizens *devoted to the public weal."*

Recall that Habermas's "discourse-theoretic interpretation insists on the fact that democratic will-formation does not draw its legitimating force from a previous convergence of settled ethical convictions, but from both the communicative presuppositions that allow the better arguments to come into play in various forms of deliberation, and from the procedures that secure fair bargaining processes."[31] Surely, however, these "various forms of deliberation" depend, *for their actual functioning*, on at least certain participants exhibiting certain "virtues." For "deliberation" can only happen if at least certain participants assume certain responsibilities, and any time they do so they will exhibit certain "virtues." Likewise, unless at least some participants do assume certain responsibilities – hence do exhibit certain virtues – the "various forms of deliberation" won't function as Habermas intends them to function; indeed, won't "function" at all.

Of course, one might object that these virtues needn't be those of a citizen who is "devoted to the public weal." Hence, one might concede that, in some sense and measure, the proper, perhaps even adequate or minimal, functioning of any "democratic process," including Habermas's conception, will be "dependent on the virtues of at least some citizens." Yet, one might object to the suggestion that the actual functioning of any such conception, or at least Habermas's, would be "dependent on the virtues of [at least some] citizens [*who are at least partly*] *devoted to the public weal*." For one might reason as follows.

Perhaps the only "virtues" that are pertinent are such as have *not* been traditionally associated with "devotion to the public weal," or which, in any case, couldn't reasonably be described as such virtues. For instance, it may indeed be the case that for any democratic process to function, including one that resembles Habermas's conception, many, perhaps most, citizens, much or most of the time, have to be willing to press their political demands, whenever they do so, through "the democratic process itself," rather than, say, acts or threats of violence. Presumably, no "democratic process" can function in a *meaningful and sustained manner* where, say, many or at least most citizens primarily or exclusively press their demands through acts or (plausible) threats of violence. Yet, assuming responsibility for not doing so – a "negative responsibility"[32] – does not, by itself, necessarily amount to exhibiting any such "virtue" as has traditionally been associated with "devotion to the public weal," or which could reasonably be described as such. For instance, the assumption of such a responsibility might flow from a simple *indifference* to "the common good," or "the democratic process," not from any "devotion" to it.

There is, however, a serious issue with this line of reasoning. First, let us grant that not *all* of the "virtues" that are, or would be, necessary for the proper, or adequate or minimal, functioning of some particular conception of a democratic process will be such as have traditionally been associated with "devotion to the public weal," or which could reasonably be described as such virtues. On reflection, however, it seems clear that *some* of them could reasonably be described in some such way.

The point can be given a general formulation, but just consider how it holds in relation to Habermas's normative "model" of democracy.[33] Again, "the discourse-theoretic interpretation" insists that "democratic will-formation" draws "its legitimating force … from both

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[31] Habermas, "Three Normative Models," 4. Hereafter we'll focus on the "various forms of deliberation," but a parallel argument could be made about the "fair bargaining processes."

[32] I mean, roughly, a responsibility that primarily involves *not* engaging in certain forms of conduct.
[33] Habermas, "Three Normative Models," 9.

the communicative presuppositions that allow the better arguments to come into play in various forms of deliberation, and from the procedures that secure fair bargaining processes."[34] Surely, however, these "deliberations" are, or would be, dependent, *for their actual functioning,* on the assumption of certain "positive responsibilities"[35] on the part of at least some citizens. By appreciating this, we can see how at least *some* of the virtues necessary for the proper, perhaps even adequate or minimal, functioning of Habermas's conception would be such virtues as have traditionally been associated with "devotion to the public weal," or which could reasonably be described as such virtues.

Anything like genuine "deliberation" inevitably involves the participants assuming certain positive responsibilities, and not just negative ones.[36] For whenever people *actually* so "deliberate," they do assume certain positive responsibilities in relation to one another: say, for listening to each other and for trying to understand each other's perspectives on relevant social situations and activities. Furthermore, whenever they do so deliberate, we may therefore say that they exhibit certain "virtues": like being, to some degree, "patient," "understanding," "sympathetic." Likewise, if they don't assume *some* such responsibilities, hence don't show *some* such virtues, we aren't willing to *say* they are engaged in "deliberation" (however precisely we define that term). For these reasons, we may conclude that the "deliberations" in Habermas's "proceduralist" conception are, or would be, *dependent on the virtues of citizens*. What is more, some of these virtues are, or would be, such as have traditional-

ly been associated with "devotion to the public weal," or which reasonably could be described as such virtues – even if they are not primarily the *result* of it.

As suggested, a genuine attempt to "understand others' points of view," for instance, is part of what we *mean* by any kind of moral, ethical, or even practical "public deliberation." Whenever we say that certain people so "deliberate," we imply that they make that attempt, which in turn means they exhibit some "virtue," like "patience" (in, say, trying to understand what others' concerns are) or "generosity" (in, say, assuming – without having any way of proving – that participants are at least partly sincere in what they are saying). Likewise, unless they do exhibit *some* such virtues, the "various forms of deliberation" simply won't be reasonably described as such, simply won't function as Habermas intends them to function, or indeed at all. Furthermore, such virtues are reasonably described as virtues that are associated with *a concern for the good of others*; and when that concern is manifest in relation to a broader public (as it is meant to be in such "deliberations"[37]), they are reasonably described as being associated with *some* concern for "the common good." Again, this is true even if the primary motivation for which particular agents show those virtues doesn't reside in a "commitment" to "the public weal" as such.

Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that Habermas's implied claim that his "proceduralist conception" is *not* "dependent on the virtues of citizens devoted to the public weal" is at best misleading.[38] At least to function well, and arguably even at all, that conception would also be "dependent on the virtues of citizens," and, to some degree it seems, "dependent on the virtues of [at least some] citizens [who are at least partly] devoted to

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[34] Habermas, 4.

[35] I mean, roughly, responsibilities that primarily involve intentional and overt conduct, e.g. manifestly listening to someone by (say) asking sincere and appropriate questions.

[36] The point is suggested by Habermas himself: "Only when at least two people encounter each other in the context of an intersubjectively shared lifeworld with the *goal* [QB's emphasis] of coming to a shared understanding about something can – and must – they mutually recognize each other as *persons capable of taking responsibility for their actions (zurechnungsfähige Personen)*. They then impute to each other the capacity to orient themselves to validity claims in their actions" (Jürgen Habermas, *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics* trans. Ciaran P. Cronin [Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001], 66).

[37] Consider Habermas's democratic principle of legitimacy ("only those statutes may claim legitimacy that can meet with the assent of all citizens in a discursive process of legislation that in turn has been legally constituted") and the "ideal role taking" it necessitates; and how "solidarity" is to "develop through … autonomous public spheres" and "procedures of democratic opinion- and will-formation" (*Between Facts and Norms,* 109-110, 299).

[38] Habermas, "Three Normative Models," 1, 4.

the public weal."[39] Furthermore, taking the above considerations together, it is reasonable to say that in the presentation of Habermas's theory in "Three Normative Models of Democracy," there is again a lack of attention to the need to reason, or at least the usefulness of our reasoning, about *virtues and cultural practices in conjunction with the procedural criteria he advocates.* Indeed, the way in which he draws a sharp distinction between his "proceduralist conception" and one that is "dependent on the virtues of citizens devoted to the public weal" directs our attention away from the need for, or at least the utility of, such reasoning.[40]

1.3 Cohen's Proceduralism

Like Dahl and Habermas, Cohen is concerned with the appropriate way of arriving at collective decisions "under conditions of pluralism."[41] Hence, in "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy," he presents an "ideal deliberative procedure" for a "deliberative democracy," construed as a "pluralistic association" whose "affairs are governed by the public deliberation of its members."[42]

First off, Cohen agrees with John Rawls that "[w]hen properly conducted … democratic politics involves *public deliberation focused on the common good*, requires some form of *manifest equality* among citizens, and *shapes the identity and interests* of citizens in ways that contribute to the formation of a public conception of common good." But he disagrees with Rawls's way of accounting for "the attractiveness and importance of these three features of the deliberative democratic ideal": Rawls regards the above three "conditions" as "natural consequences of the ideal of fairness," but Cohen finds this problematic. For if we follow Rawls in "[t]aking the notion of fairness as fundamental" and in "aiming … to model political arrangements on the original position, it is not clear why, for example, political debate ought to be focused on the common good, or why the manifest equality of citizens is an important feature of a democratic association." Indeed, "[t]he pluralist conception of democratic politics as a system of bargaining with fair representation for all groups seems [to Cohen] an equally good mirror of the ideal of fairness."[43]

Accordingly, Cohen proposes "an account of the value of ["an association whose affairs are governed by the public deliberation of its members"] that treats democracy itself as a fundamental political ideal and not simply as a derivative ideal that can be explained in terms of the values of fairness or equality of respect." Moreover, he suggests that "the reason why the three [conditions] are attractive is not [as Rawls suggests] that an order with, for example, no explicit deliberation about the common good and no manifest equality would be unfair (though of course it might be)"; it is rather that "*they comprise elements of an independent and expressly political ideal*," where the focus is "in the first instance on the appropriate conduct of public affairs…"[44]

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[39] One reviewer objected that Habermas has a theoretical orientation and is interested in justifying democratic processes, whereas I (with Dewey) have a practical orientation and am interested in their functioning. So, my criticisms are void, because it is illegitimate to criticize Habermas for not doing something he didn't aim to do, namely, give an account of how democratic processes function. The objection, however, is premised on a peculiar and untenable dichotomy between an interest in "justification" (theory) and an interest in "functioning" (practice). Obviously, to say that a particular process is, or would be, "justified" is also to say that it "functions," or would "function," in a particular way *in practice.* See Richard J. Bernstein, *The Pragmatic Turn* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), chap. 8; Richard J. Bernstein, "The Retrieval of the Democratic Ethos," *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 7 (December 1995): 1-12. See the latter of these sources for a broader analysis of the problematic way in which Habermas distances himself from appeals to "virtue"; also Gerald M. Mara, "After Virtue, Autonomy: Jürgen Habermas and Greek Political Theory," *Journal of Politics* 47, no. 4 (November 1985): 1036-1061.

[40] This analysis supports Warren's critique of "the strategy of model building" in democratic theory, which "leads us into unnecessary theoretical dead-ends," encouraging "expansionist claims along single dimensions [e.g. about procedures], de-emphasizing necessary elements of democratic political systems," such as citizen virtues (Mark E. Warren, "A Problem-Based Approach to Democratic Theory," *American Political Science Review* 111, no. 1 [February 2017]: 39-40).

[41] Joshua Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy," in *Philosophy, Politics, Democracy: Selected Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 26.

[42] Cohen, 16, 22.

[43] Cohen, 19-20.

[44] Cohen, 16, 21; emphasis added.

So, Cohen articulates a "'formal conception' of deliberative democracy," which has such a focus.[45] To describe its role in democratic practice, Cohen adopts a metaphor that Rawls employs, but uses it differently. He quotes Rawls as stating: "The idea [of the fair value of political liberty] is to incorporate into the basic structure of society an effective political procedure which *mirrors* in that structure the fair representation of persons achieved by the original position."[46] Understanding how Cohen himself employs the "mirror" metaphor will help us to appreciate the character of his procedural minimalism.

First, then, the "formal ideal":

D_1 A deliberative democracy is an ongoing and independent association, whose members expect it to continue into the indefinite future.

D_2 The members of the association share … a commitment to coordinating their activities within institutions that make deliberation possible and according to norms that they arrive at through their deliberation. For them, free deliberation among equals is the basis of legitimacy.

D_3 A deliberative democracy is a pluralistic association. … While sharing a commitment to the deliberative resolution of problems of collective choice (D_2), [the members] also have divergent aims, and do not think that some particular set of preferences, convictions, or ideals is mandatory.

D_4 Because the members of a democratic association regard deliberative procedures as the source of *legitimacy*, it is important to them that the terms of their association not merely *be* the results of their deliberation but also be *manifest* to them as such. …

D_5 The members recognize one another as having deliberative capacities, i.e., the capacities required for entering into a public exchange of reasons and for acting on the results of such public reasoning.[47]

Now consider Cohen's "ideal deliberative procedure," which gives "substance to [the] formal ideal by characterizing the conditions that should obtain if the social order is to be manifestly regulated by deliberative forms of collective choice":

I_1 Ideal deliberation is *free* in that it satisfies two conditions. First, the participants regard themselves as bound only by the results of their deliberation and by the preconditions for that deliberation. … Second, the participants suppose that they can act from the results, taking the fact that a certain decision is arrived at through their deliberation as a sufficient reason for complying with it.

I_2 Deliberation is *reasoned* in that the parties of it are required to state their reasons for advancing proposals, supporting them, or criticizing them. They give reasons with the expectation that those reasons (and not, for example, their power) will settle the fate of their proposal. … Reasons are offered with the aim of bringing others to accept the proposal, given their disparate ends (D_3) and their commitment (D_2) to settling the conditions of their association through free deliberation among equals. …

I_3 In ideal deliberation parties are both formally and substantively *equal*. They are formally equal in that the rules regulating the procedure do not single out individuals. Everyone with the deliberative capacities has equal standing at each stage of the deliberative process. Each can put issues on the agenda, propose solutions, and offer reasons in support of or in criticism of proposals. And each has an equal voice in the decision. The participants are substantively equal in that the existing distribution of power and resources does not shape their chances to contribute to deliberation, nor does that distribution play an authoritative role in the deliberation. …

I_4 Finally, ideal deliberation aims to arrive at a rationally motivated *consensus* – to find reasons that are persuasive to all who are committed to acting on the results of a free and reasoned assessment of alternatives by equals. Even under ideal conditions there is no promise that consensual reasons will be forthcoming. If they are not, then deliberation concludes with voting, subject to some form of majority rule. …[48]

This characterization of the ideal deliberative procedure "links the formal notion of deliberative democracy with the more substantive ideal of a democratic association in which public debate is focused on *the common good of the members*":

> Since the aim of ideal deliberation is to secure agreement among all who are committed to free deliberation among equals, and the condition of

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[45] Cohen, 22.

[46] Quoted in Cohen, 20; Cohen's bracketed interpolation and italics.

[47] Cohen, 22-23.

[48] Cohen, 23-25; Cohen's italics.

pluralism obtains (D$_3$), the focus of deliberation is on ways of advancing the aims of each party to it. While no one is indifferent to his/her own good, everyone also seeks to arrive at decisions that are acceptable to all who share the commitment to deliberation (D$_2$).[49]

However, Cohen immediately recognizes a potential objection: "While public deliberation may be organized around appeals to the common good, is there any reason to think that even ideal deliberation would not consist in efforts to disguise personal or class advantage as the common advantage?" "There are," he suggests, "two responses to this question."[50]

First, "in my account of the formal idea of a deliberative democracy, I stipulated (D$_2$) that the members of the association are committed to resolving their differences through deliberation, and thus to providing reasons that they sincerely expect to be persuasive to others who share that commitment." However, the objection is "[p]resumably … best understood as directed against the plausibility of realizing a deliberative procedure that conforms to the ideal, *and thus is not answerable through stipulations.*"[51]

This much is unproblematic. The problem concerns the second response, which, given the way Cohen offers it as an alternative to the first response, we are apparently to understand as consisting, or as largely consisting, in an appeal to a set of factual propositions (as opposed to being primarily "stipulative"). In evaluating this response, I can indicate what I find problematic about Cohen's approach to developing and presenting his theory, including the "mirror" metaphor, a key aspect of his procedural minimalism.

"The second response … rests on a claim about the effects of deliberation on the motivations of deliberators." More specifically:

> *A consequence of the reasonableness of the deliberative procedure (I$_2$) together with the condition of pluralism (D$_3$)* is that the mere fact of having a preference, a conviction, or an ideal does not by itself provide a reason in support of

a proposal. While I may take my preferences as a sufficient reason for advancing a proposal, deliberation under conditions of pluralism requires that I find reasons that make the proposal acceptable to others who cannot be expected to regard my preferences as sufficient reasons for agreeing. The motivational thesis is that *the need to advance reasons that persuade others* will help to shape the motivations that people bring to the deliberative procedure in two ways. First, the practice of presenting reasons will contribute to the formation of a commitment to the deliberative resolution of political questions (D$_2$). *Given that commitment*, the likelihood of a sincere representation of preferences and convictions should increase, while the likelihood of their strategic misrepresentation declines. Second, it will shape the content of preferences and convictions as well. *Assuming a commitment to deliberative justification*, the discovery that I can offer no persuasive reasons on behalf of a proposal of mine may transform the preferences that motivate the proposal. Aims that I recognize to be inconsistent with the requirements of deliberative agreement may tend to lose their force, at least when I expect others to be proceeding in reasonable ways and expect the outcome of deliberation to regulate subsequent action.[52]

Now, I want to underscore the stipulative aspects of this response, placing them alongside some of Cohen's remarks about the ideal deliberative procedure providing a "model" that "institutions" "should mirror, so far as possible."[53]

First, notice the phrases I have italicized in the block quotation above. *Each of these is stipulative or refers back to one or more stipulations*. Take the first phrase: "A consequence of the reasonableness of the deliberative procedure (I$_2$) together with the condition of pluralism (D$_3$)…" Two stipulations are involved here: that the deliberative procedure is reasonable; and that the condition of pluralism obtains. But just consider the first one.

Notice how this stipulation is doing the bulk of the work in Cohen's second response to the objection in question, in his "claim about the effects of deliberation on the motivations of deliberators."[54] Again, "[t]he motivational thesis is [precisely] that *the need* to advance reasons that persuade others will help to shape

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[49] Cohen, 25.
[50] Cohen, 25-26; emphasis added.
[51] Cohen, 26; emphasis added.

[52] Cohen, 26; emphasis added.
[53] Cohen, 29.
[54] Cohen, 26.

the motivations that people bring to the deliberative procedure in two ways." First, he says, "the practice of presenting reasons will contribute to the formation of a commitment to the deliberative resolution of political questions (D_2)." But this, it seems, is only plausible if there already *is* a sincere commitment to "the deliberative resolution of political questions" on the part of some considerable number of pertinent individuals. If not, the motivational thesis arguably becomes significantly less plausible. Hence why the next line reads: "*Given that commitment*, the likelihood of a sincere representation of preferences and convictions should increase, while the likelihood of their strategic misrepresentation declines." In other words, Cohen appears to recognize that this aspect of the motivational thesis depends crucially on the prior, "proper" operation of something like the ideal deliberative procedure itself. And the same could be said of his second claim about the anticipated effect of "the need to advance reasons that persuade others": namely, that "it will shape *the content* of preferences and convictions as well." For this claim also begins with a stipulation: "A*ssuming a commitment to deliberative justification*, the discovery that I can offer no persuasive reasons on behalf of a proposal of mine may transform the preferences that motivate the proposal."

Crucially, however, the imagined objection is not (primarily at least) about the effects that we can plausibly expect to emerge once "the procedure" is already up and running. Rather, it is "[p]resumably … best understood as directed against the plausibility of *realizing* a deliberative procedure that conforms to the ideal, and thus is not answerable through stipulations."[55] Hence, Cohen's premising of the motivational thesis on a number of clear stipulations is likely to leave the objector unsatisfied.

Now, one might initially think it helpful to respond to the objector's concern by reminding her that the ideal deliberative procedure is meant as a "model for institu-

tions" to "mirror, so far as possible."[56] Hence, the stipulations in question are not mere stipulations, akin to saying: the beliefs and commitments referenced just *are* present. Rather, they are statements to the effect that *if* certain "deliberative institutions," closely modeled on the ideal procedure, are present, the motivational thesis *then* becomes plausible. But again, the objection is precisely concerned with the plausibility of this (ever) being so. So, a further *stipulation* that it is so would not be persuasive.

Suppose now that we put aside the objector's concern as Cohen imagined it and just consider the second response[57] on its own terms. Is "the motivational thesis" convincing? Is it convincing to say that "*the need* to advance reasons that persuade others will help to shape the motivations that people bring to the deliberative procedure" in the two ways suggested?[58]

For brevity, just consider the first way: will "the practice of presenting reasons … contribute to the formation of a commitment to the deliberative resolution of political questions," making it so that "the likelihood of a sincere representation of preferences and convictions should increase, while the likelihood of their strategic misrepresentation declines"?[59] Well, perhaps so, *given* the "commitment to the deliberative resolution of political questions," as Cohen says.[60] As a factual premise, however, the claim only seems to have force if: first, we have a fairly clear sense of where that commitment originates, what other already-broadly-held values stand in support of it; and second, we have a fairly clear sense of what "the institutions" look like in which that commitment is widely operative. On both issues, however, Cohen's account strikes me as problematic.

Consider the first issue. The "formal conception of a deliberative democracy" is, Cohen says, "rooted in the intuitive ideal of a democratic association in which the

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[55] Cohen*, 26; emphasis added.

[56] Cohen, 29.
[57] Again, see the block quotation above, beginning with "A consequence of the reasonableness…", for "the second response."
[58] Cohen, "Deliberation," 26.
[59] Cohen, 26.
[60] Cohen, 26.

justification of the terms and conditions of association proceeds through public argument and reasoning among equal citizens."[61] Now, this ideal may well be "intuitive" for self-described democrats who strongly endorse not only the equal moral worth of persons (hence support some form of "equal" citizenship or membership) but also the idea that, as a general matter, (adult) individuals ought to be presumed the best judges of, and most reliable and vigilant defenders of, their own good or interests.[62] For we then arguably have a reasonable way of responding to the inevitable critic of Cohen's "intuitive ideal," who may well retort: "Intuitive for you, perhaps, but not for me! Sure, I agree with the ideal of 'equal citizenship.' But not all citizens, 'morally or intrinsically equal' though they may be, are *equally capable* of engaging in 'public argument and reasoning' about the 'terms and conditions' of their 'democratic association.' Consequently, your ideal seems somewhat *counter-*intuitive to me. In such deeply complicated matters as these, can't we treat citizens as 'equals' simply by having the wiser and more intelligent, or at least the more experienced, give equal consideration to the good or interests of each citizen, much in the way that we allow – and think we should allow – parents to do with respect to their very young children? Why have, say, the significantly less wise, less intelligent, and less experienced deliberate – and on an equal footing?"

Now, if we appeal to (something like) what Dahl calls the Idea of Intrinsic Equality *and* the Presumption of Personal Autonomy,[63] we then have grounds for making an appeal to *fairness* in defending the ideal: it may be "fair" to have, say, parents largely determine what decisions are most apt to promote the good or interests of their very young children, but it is not so with adults. For we generally presume[64] that adults are "autonomous":

we presume that, as a general matter, they are the best judges of, and most reliable and vigilant defenders of, their own good or interests – not that others are.[65] Having this appeal available to us, we can plausibly explain why Cohen's ideal *may* seem "intuitive" to us: *because it broadly comports with "our" actual experiences* of when we think and feel that we are being treated "fairly" qua persons who are (intrinsically) equal *and* "autonomous" (in the above sense), and who view themselves as such.[66]

Yet, Cohen's account pushes us away from this response. D_5 does specify that members "recognize one another as having deliberative capacities, i.e., the capacities required for entering into a public exchange of reasons and for acting on the results of such public reasoning."[67] And Cohen does briefly describe why he thinks his ideal respects members' "autonomy."[68] Nevertheless, the claim about "intuitiveness" would have been stronger had he said: "The notion of a deliberative democracy is rooted in the intuitive ideal, if you like, of a democratic association in which the justification of the terms and conditions of association proceeds through public argument and reasoning among equal *and* autonomous citizens" (not just "equal" ones). Moreover, it would have been stronger had he said that, as a general matter, they regard each other not just as *having* "the deliberative capacities," as depicted above, but also as *being* "the best judges of, and most reliable and vigilant defenders of, their own good or interests."[69] More to the point, however, the claim about "intuitiveness" would arguably be much stronger were it explicitly premised on the idea that those who *are* "equal" and who *are* (presumed to be) "autonomous" (in the above

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[61] Cohen, 21-22.
[62] In other words: for people who endorse not only moral equality but also something like Dahl's "Presumption of Personal Autonomy" (*Democracy*, chap. 7).
[63] See Dahl, *Democracy,* chaps. 6-8.
[64] Minimally, self-styled democrats typically make this presumption.

[65] See Dahl, *Democracy*, chap. 7.
[66] See note 123.
[67] Cohen, "Deliberation*,*" 22-23.
[68] Cohen, 27-28.
[69] Otherwise, the same inevitable critic might again retort: "Why have, say, the significantly less wise, less intelligent, and less experienced deliberate – and on an equal footing? The members might have 'the capacities *required* for entering into a public exchange of reasons and for acting on the results of such public reasoning,' but nothing like 'equal capacities'! Why not give more say to those who have 'superior' capacities?"

sense) *should* be treated "fairly" and with "equal respect."[70]

Again, however, Cohen distances himself from an appeal to (ideal) "fairness." Though his critical comments focus on Rawls's way of "[t]aking the notion of fairness as fundamental," he apparently wants to avoid an appeal to fairness, or at least ideal fairness, altogether.[71] In part at least, this is because "[t]he pluralist conception of democratic politics as a system of bargaining with fair representation for all groups seems [to him] an equally good mirror of the ideal of fairness," and he apparently does not want to endorse that conception.[72] As we saw, he instead proposes "an account of the value of ["an association whose affairs are governed by the public deliberation of its members"] that treats democracy itself as a fundamental political ideal and not simply as a derivative ideal that can be explained in terms of the values of fairness or equality of respect."[73] But in not making *any* appeal to these values here,[74] he thereby makes it harder to respond to our imagined objector. For we are left wondering: what already-broadly-held values could effectively motivate a sincere and continued "commitment to the deliberative resolution of political questions" – *making it* "intuitive" in the first place and in the face of such objections? Would, indeed, "the practice of presenting reasons" itself contribute to that commitment?[75]

Now consider the other issue I raised concerning the plausibility of Cohen's "motivational thesis." Does Cohen's discussion offer a sufficient sense of what "the institutions" might look like, where "the practice of presenting reasons" contributes "to the formation of a commitment to the deliberative resolution of political questions" – making it so that "the likelihood of a sincere representation of preferences and convictions should increase, while the likelihood of their strategic misrepresentation declines"? Again, Cohen says that the ideal deliberative procedure is meant as a "model for institutions" to "mirror, so far as possible."[76] And in the essay in question, he obviously (and understandably) is not concerned to detail the relevant institutions themselves. But to respond to the above question,[77] we have to have some sense of what the pertinent institutional setting looks like. And the ideal deliberative procedure is presumably to help us in figuring this out. Yet, a closer look at the "mirror" metaphor renders this problematic.

First, notice that when, in articulating the motivational thesis, Cohen speaks of "*the need* to advance reasons that persuade others,"[78] he is apparently referring us back to I_2 and D_2 (I_2: "Deliberation is *reasoned* in that the parties of it are required to state their reasons…"; D_2: "The members of the association share…a commitment to coordinating their activities within institutions that make deliberation possible…").[79] That is, he is apparently referring us back to *these stipulations*. But he is doing more than this: he is also making a factual claim about what is likely to occur given the presence of institutions that *are* "mirrored" on the ideal deliberative procedure. Hence, "*the practice* of presenting reasons will," he says, "contribute to the formation of a commitment to the deliberative resolution of political questions."[80] And it is precisely at this point that we should like to know what the institutions themselves look like (or what that "practice" looks like) – beyond the fact that they (it) simply "mirror(s)" the ideal deliberative procedure. Or, to put the point another way, we should

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[70] See note 123.

[71] Cohen, "Deliberation*,*" 20; see also 21.

[72] Cohen, 20.

[73] Cohen, 16.

[74] Elsewhere, however, Cohen does allude to "fair procedure[s] of reason-giving" and "fair conditions of discussion," as well as to "deliberative arenas" which might "encourage a willingness to treat others with respect as equals" (Joshua Cohen, "Procedure and Substance in Deliberative Democracy," in *Philosophy, Politics, Democracy: Selected Essays* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009], 163, 179). See also Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, "Power and Reason," in *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance*, ed. Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright (London: Verso, 2003), 242.

[75] Cohen, "Deliberation," 21, 26.

[76] Cohen, 26, 29.

[77] Or, indeed, any other question about the "procedure's" likely "effects"…

[78] Cohen, "Deliberation*,*" 26; emphasis added.

[79] Cohen, "Deliberation*,*" 22, 24; Cohen's italics.

[80] Cohen, 26; emphasis added.

like to know *what this "mirroring" might consist in* and *how this bears on Cohen's motivational thesis*. Taken by itself, however, the mirror metaphor is not very helpful in sorting this out – nor is the fact that Cohen also states that "*the institutions themselves … determine* whether there is equality, whether deliberation is free and reasoned, whether there is autonomy, and so on."[81]

Take, say, I_2, which stipulates that participants "are required to state their reasons for advancing proposals, supporting them, or criticizing them" and that they "give reasons with the expectation that those reasons (and not, for example, their power) will settle the fate of their proposal."[82] What might it mean to say that some institution "mirrors" these stipulations? Well, with respect to the first stipulation, perhaps it just means that deliberation there *is* "reasoned" in the sense just specified. In that case, fair enough. But we should then like to know how this is so – what, if anything, it *is* about "the institution itself" that "makes it so." Just saying it "mirrors" this stipulation would not give us much to work with here. Indeed, it would amount to just saying that (behavior within) that institution *does* meet the stipulation in question. And parallel remarks could be made with respect to the second stipulation, that participants "give reasons with the expectation that those reasons … will settle the fate of their proposal."[83]

Furthermore, saying that the institutions themselves "determine" whether, for instance, deliberation is "free and reasoned" doesn't, unfortunately, help us to evaluate the motivational thesis either.[84] For again, we should like to know what, if anything, it *is* about some "institution itself" that "makes this so." Does it "determine" whether, or to what extent, participants "give reasons

with the expectation that those reasons … will settle the fate of their proposal"?[85] If so, how? Does it "determine" whether, or to what extent, participants "state their reasons for advancing proposals, supporting them, or criticizing them"?[86] If so, how?

An institutional format might, say, "require" that participants state their reasons. For again, I_2 says: "Deliberation is *reasoned* in that the parties of it are required to state their reasons..."[87] Hence, if actual "deliberative institutions" are meant to "mirror" I_2, it might be thought that they should *literally* "require" participants "to state their reasons..." If so, do we indeed have good reason to expect that "the likelihood of a sincere representation of preferences and convictions should increase, while the likelihood of their strategic misrepresentation declines"[88] – *simply in virtue of that (literal, institutional) "requirement"?* Why should the mere "requirement" to offer one's reasons, regardless of one's antecedent motives, lead to this outcome? Or how might this "requirement," when combined with other "mirrored features," lead to it? Or if such reason-giving is not (literally) "required," what, if any, other "mirrored features" do give us reason to expect that outcome? Further stipulations wouldn't be sufficient to render the motivational thesis plausible on its face.

Now, these comments underscore certain problems and ambiguities that may arise when we *speak* a certain way – and when, relatedly, the normative theory in question isn't clearly connected to (observation of) existing and future *practice*. But there is a further, again-related point: as with Dahl and Habermas, the presentation of the theory directs our attention away from the need to reason, or at least the utility of our reasoning, about procedures, virtues, and cultural practices in conjunction.

As suggested, the idea that an institution might "mirror" certain stipulations that are constitutive of a par-

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[81] Cohen, 29; emphasis added. See also the weight assigned to "institutional measures," "institutional issues," "the proper ordering of institutions," and the like (29). Elsewhere, however, Cohen takes a broader focus, emphasizing "*the social and political conditions* that give a point to joint reasoning" and provide "some basis for confidence that [it] will actually prevail in shaping the exercise of collective power" (Cohen and Rogers, "Power and Reason," 249; emphasis added).
[82] Cohen, 24.
[83] Cohen, 24.
[84] Cohen, 29.

[85] Cohen 24, 29.
[86] Cohen 24, 29.
[87] Cohen, 24.
[88] Cohen, 26.

ticular "independent and expressly political ideal" is by no means clear.[89] Furthermore, this is perhaps particularly so, I now emphasize, where *the stipulations in question refer to beliefs, commitments, expectations, and the like* – for instance, the "commitment to coordinating…activities within institutions that make deliberation possible."[90] Taken by itself, the idea that *an institution itself* might "mirror" this commitment is ambiguous at best. What is more, speaking as though we *could* (simply) "mirror" such stipulations doesn't, by itself, bring attention to the responsibilities that pertinent agents would have to assume to "make deliberation possible." Indeed, it can easily take attention away from the task of judging the specific responsibilities that, in some particular context, participants would have to assume for meaningful deliberation to occur there.[91] And the second way of speaking may do likewise: by speaking of "institutions" as *themselves* "determin[ing]" key outcomes, such as whether or not "deliberation is free and reasoned," our attention may be drawn away from these tasks.[92]

For instance, genuine "deliberation" about moral or ethical disagreement surely entails that participants make a sincere attempt to understand each other's perspectives on relevant social situations and activities. And, to be sure, no "institution" can ensure that they *assume* responsibility for making that attempt. Recognizing this, we are naturally led to such questions as: how, then, might a particular "institution," in this or that setting, help to *cultivate* the willingness, inclination, ability to assume that responsibility? Practically, what might that mean there? That trained facilitators employ certain well-proven tactics? That certain forms of cultural self-criticism are built into the "public-opinion-formation stage" that precedes decision-making? Or…? Furthermore, what, in some particular context, might it

even *mean* for participants to assume responsibility for "trying to understand each other's perspectives on relevant social situations and activities"? Challenging their preconceptions? Learning to be more charitable? Such are the questions that we ask when we *do* explicitly discuss and reason about the responsibilities that participants would have to assume for "the institutions" to "make deliberation possible" in some particular context. Equally, however, they are the kinds of questions that we don't ask when we don't explicitly discuss and reason about responsibilities – whether because we assume that the "rules" or "procedures" will "make deliberation possible" or otherwise.

But two further results are possible as well. First, in not giving explicit attention to the responsibilities that are specified or entailed by whatever ideal procedures/procedural criteria we advocate, we may give inadequate attention to the virtues that participants would necessarily exhibit were they to assume those responsibilities, and that would arguably assist them in assuming (or dispose them to assume) those responsibilities. Second, we consequently may give inadequate attention to the cultural practices that, in some particular context, could promote a social climate in which participants are more likely to assume those responsibilities and so exhibit those virtues.

Again, the two ways of speaking can generate these results: speaking of deliberative "institutions" functioning properly to the extent that they "mirror" the ideal deliberative procedure; and speaking of "institutions" as "determin[ing]" key outcomes, such as whether "deliberation is free and reasoned, whether there is autonomy, and so on."[93]

1.4 The Shared Features and Problems
Below we consider how these critical comments might prompt us to reconstruct our approach to normative democratic theory, offering a more robust and attractive account of its status and function in democratic practice.

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[89] Cohen, 21.

[90] Cohen, 22.

[91] It isn't that "theory" should determine this in advance, but rather point our attention to the *need* to determine it – thus underscoring the need for, or utility of, reasoning about virtues and cultural practices too. See section 2.

[92] Cohen, 29.

[93] Cohen, "Deliberation," 29.

To aid that reconstruction, however, I first underscore the shared features, and so problems, across the presentations.

Clearly, Dahl, Habermas, and Cohen share a fundamental commitment to democratic decision-making that treats persons as "free and equal." This commitment represents, we might say, the "liberal core" that the theories share.[94] Inspired by it, each author pursues a kind of *procedural minimalism*, meant to allow for as much moral or ethical pluralism as is consistent with this commitment. Thus, each develops a kind of "liberal proceduralism."

In doing so, each author points to the usefulness of developing ideal procedures/procedural criteria. But aspects of how each develops and presents his theory push us away from recognizing the need to reason – or at least the usefulness of our reasoning – about procedures, virtues, and cultural practices in conjunction. And beyond the pursuit of minimalism, there is another commonality that arguably accounts for this: none of the theories explicitly and consistently emerges out of – and is presented as emerging out of – observation of humans *as* they pursue certain moral or ethical values *in* their actions. Furthermore, this renders it unclear what role, if any, the theory is to have in further empirical inquiry; or, it leads to a problematic suggestion *about* such inquiry.

To see this clearly, consider the following summary observations about the authors' respective "philosophic methods."

Again, Dahl offers "criteria for a democratic process," which "specify that citizens … ought to have adequate and equal *opportunities* to act in certain ways."[95] Where do the criteria come from? Dahl maintains that they "follow from" the "assumptions that justify the existence of a political order" in general and "a *democratic* political order" in particular.[96] "When I say that

the process ought to meet certain criteria," he writes, "I mean that if one believes in the assumptions, then one must reasonably affirm the desirability of the criteria; conversely, to reject the criteria is in effect to reject one or more of the assumptions."[97] Recall the criterion of "effective participation," for instance:

> Throughout the process of making binding decisions, citizens ought to have an adequate opportunity, and an equal opportunity, for expressing their preferences as to the final outcome. They must have adequate and equal opportunities for placing questions on the agenda and for expressing reasons for endorsing one outcome rather than another.[98]

Commenting on the criterion, Dahl writes: "not to take [any citizen's] preferences as to the final outcome equally into account is to reject the principle of equal consideration of interests," which is "a straightforward application to all the members of the Idea of Intrinsic Equality…"[99] Whether the criterion "follows from" the assumptions isn't my concern here. The point to emphasize is that in reasoning about what to *include* in the criteria, Dahl drifts away from a faithful observation and documentation of *action* in accord with those assumptions (values). Take the phrase: "They must have adequate and equal opportunities … for expressing reasons for endorsing one outcome rather than another." If no participant (genuinely) listened to any of the other participants, we wouldn't say that any one of them had a (meaningful) "opportunity" to express their reasons.[100] *Having* this "opportunity" entails that (some number of) other participants *assume* that responsibility. And the same could be said, mutatis mutandis, of the other opportunities included in the criterion, e.g., "placing

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[94] Of course, contemporary republicanism shares this commitment; see, e.g., Richard Dagger, *Civic Virtues: Rights, Citizenship, and Republican Liberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[95] Dahl, *Democracy*, 108, 114.

[96] Dahl, 106. See note 6 on these assumptions.

[97] Dahl, 108.

[98] Dahl, 109.

[99] Dahl, 108-109.

[100] To give an extreme but indicative example: suppose that each participant only attended the "meeting" in question when it was *her "*turn" to speak, leaving each participant with an audience of zero. More broadly, see Scudder's discussion of the critical importance of participants' "uptake" of one another's reasons and perspectives (Mary F. Scudder, "The Ideal of Uptake in Democratic Deliberation," *Political Studies* 68, no. 2 [May 2020]: 504-522.

questions on the agenda." Consequently, the criteria do entail certain responsibilities.

Minimally, however, Dahl's presentation is misleading on this point. For recall his response to the person who asks:

> If the democratic process is desirable, then should the criteria not specify *duties* as well as opportunities – duties of the citizen to participate, to vote, to become informed, and the duty of the demos to determine how the agenda is to be decided? While I believe the democratic process does imply duties like these, they are moral duties. They take their place among an array of obligations, rights, and opportunities that would confront citizens in a democratic order.[101]

Hence, Dahl feels that he

> cannot say that it would always be wrong for a citizen to choose not to fulfill the political obligations implied by the criteria of the democratic process. It seems to me more consistent with the Presumption of Personal Autonomy and with the freedom of self-determination and moral autonomy to ensure that citizens have the freedom to choose how they will fulfill their political obligations.[102]

Accordingly, the criteria do not specify duties (or responsibilities or other cognate terms). As we saw, however, the criteria themselves *entail* responsibilities; so, minimally, Dahl's response to the imagined objector is misleading here. At best, it simply leaves those responsibilities unspecified. At worst, it occludes the fact that opportunities *for* "*participation"* necessarily entail responsibilities on some people's part – in effect, refusing to name them.[103] Either way, the criteria's usefulness for *further* inquiry is weakened. For the criteria become less useful, or at least less directly useful, in appraising relevant persons' behaviors: in appraising the responsibilities (left unspecified) that at least some would need to

assume for "the process" to grant the opportunities specified; and in appraising the virtues and cultural practices that might promote the assumption of those (unspecified) responsibilities, or even be necessary to the granting of those opportunities.

Moreover, the choice not to specify duties or responsibilities is perplexing in light of the stated purpose of the criteria. Again, they

> are standards – ideal standards, if you like – against which procedures proposed ought to be evaluated … They represent ideas of human possibilities against which actualities may be compared. Even if the criteria can never be perfectly satisfied, they are useful in appraising real world possibilities … Naturally they do not eliminate all elements of judgment in evaluation. For example, the criteria do not specify any particular procedures, such as majority rule, for specific procedures cannot be directly extracted from the criteria. And judgments will have to take into account the specific historical conditions under which a democratic association is to be developed.[104]

So conceived, the criteria do not prescribe specific procedures, based on strict rules. Still less do they specify specific "coercive" means for instituting specific procedures. Consequently, it is unclear why, say, specifying "responsibilities" *in* the criteria would be inconsistent with the Presumption of Personal Autonomy, the freedom of self-determination, or citizens' moral autonomy. On Dahl's own construal of the role of the criteria, specifying that citizens should have "adequate and equal opportunities … for expressing reasons for endorsing one outcome rather than another" is consistent with these assumptions (values). Citizens, for instance, can still decide not to express their reasons at all. On Dahl's own view, then, why would it be *inconsistent* with the aforementioned assumptions (values) for the criteria to specify, say, that citizens should have "adequate and equal opportunities to listen to each other's reasons" and should "assume responsibility for doing so"? Citizens, for instance, can still decide not to listen. Wouldn't the inclusion of said responsibility in the criteria help us to

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[101] Dahl, 115.

[102] Dahl, 115.

[103] Neither does Dahl's reference to (defeasible) "moral duties" (not to be specified in the criteria) clarify the necessary conceptual-practical link between opportunities and responsibilities. Citizens should have equal opportunities to vote, and they should (ideally) vote, he affirms. Likewise, they should have adequate and equal opportunities to participate, and they should (ideally) participate. And so on. Even here, however, there is no apparent recognition of the simple fact that in order for citizens to have the opportunities specified in the criteria, (at least some) citizens *need* to assume certain responsibilities.

[104] Dahl, *Democracy,* 108-109; see also 111.

evaluate, for example, how well different (proposed) procedures (might) promote participants' willingness and ability to assume that responsibility – hence grant each other "adequate and equal opportunities for expressing reasons for endorsing one outcome rather than another"?

Habermas, for his part, makes it clear that his "discourse-theoretic interpretation" of the democratic process is grounded on an analysis of the "communicative presuppositions that allow the better arguments to come into play in various forms of deliberation."[105] But the stress, notice, is on the *presuppositions* of certain kinds of human action (namely, speech acts), not on observation of humans *as* they pursue certain moral or ethical values *in* their actions – including their linguistic *and* non-linguistic behavior.[106] And this has implications for how the theory is presented – and not presented – in relation to democratic practice.

In the essay in question, Habermas doesn't say anything explicit about the status and function of his theory in further inquiry. But even if one were to point to passages in *Between Facts and Norms*[107] or elsewhere where he does so, the point remains: the conception is here presented as though it is *not* "dependent on the virtues of citizens devoted to the public weal," directing our attention away from the ways in which it apparently is so.[108] Accordingly, the theory is not presented as a resource that could assist us in conducting inquiry *into* those (or other) virtues, nor into the cultural practices that might promote them. And Habermas's focus on the presuppositions of action can arguably help to account for this. When we focus on deliberation *as an activity* in which we seek to realize certain *moral or ethical values*, we immediately recognize that for anything like genuine "deliberation" to occur, some people have to assume

certain responsibilities. This in turn directs our attention to the virtues and cultural practices that might promote their assumption and/or be necessary for such deliberation to occur. By contrast, when we speak of "*presuppositions … allow[ing] the better arguments to come into play in various forms of deliberation*" and of "*procedures … secur[ing] fair bargaining processes,*" our attention isn't directed to the relevant responsibilities with the same clarity, force, and urgency – nor, likewise, to the virtues and cultural practices that might promote their assumption and/or be necessary to the procedure's proper functioning. Indeed, we may not think of these responsibilities, virtues, and cultural practices at all.[109]

Finally, Cohen stresses that "[t]he notion of a deliberative democracy is rooted in the intuitive ideal of a democratic association in which the justification of the terms and conditions of association proceeds through public argument and reasoning among equal citizens."[110] Yet, again, he does not indicate why this ideal, or his own version of it, *is* "intuitive." Furthermore, his ability to do so is arguably undercut by the way in which he presents it as an "*independent* and expressly political ideal," which "treats democracy itself as a fundamental political ideal and not simply as a derivative ideal that can be explained in terms of the values of fairness or equality of respect."[111] For this undercuts his ability to defend the conception by explicitly referencing the other, already-broadly-held values that may be thought to stand in support of it – that, based on their own lived experiences, many people *do* regard as standing in support of democratic decision-making through public argument and reasoning among equals.[112] For instance, it is arguably easier to defend the "intuitive" appeal of his ideal by referencing the values of treating persons as

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[105] Habermas, "Three Normative Models," 4. See also note 138 below and, again, the index entry for "Pragmatic presuppositions of argumentation" in Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 622.

[106] See Bernstein, "Retrieval," esp. 3-6, 11.

[107] See note 23.

[108] Habermas, "Three Normative Models," 4.

[109] For such talk may have a bewitching effect, encouraging us to ascribe agency to the procedures or institutions in which people act, rather than to the people themselves. Likewise with talk of "procedures" granting "opportunities" (Dahl, *Democracy*, 112) and "institutions" "determin[ing]" whether "deliberation is free and reasoned" (Cohen, "Deliberation," 29). In each case, there is a risk of reification.

[110] Cohen, "Deliberation," 21.

[111] Cohen, "Deliberation," 16, 21; emphasis added.

[112] See note 123.

"free" *and "*equal," equally *deserving* of "fair treatment" and "equality of respect."[113] But Cohen's presentation pushes us away from this response, both because the ideal is characterized as an "independent" one and because, relatedly, he distances himself from an appeal to "fairness" and "equality of respect" too.[114]

Again, this is relevant to how the theory is presented – and not presented – in relation to democratic practice. Cohen does not say how, if at all, he regards his theory as emerging out of empirical inquiry. But what he does say has implications for how it is positioned in relation to such inquiry. By itself, the suggestion that the theory is based on, or perhaps articulates, an "intuitive" ideal places it in an ambiguous position in relation to *previous* empirical inquiry. Some things are "intuitive" precisely because they comport with our lived experiences – with our observations of, and reflections on, those experiences. But other things are regarded as "intuitive" quite apart from "experience." In any case, the way in which he distances himself from an appeal to "fairness" and "equality of respect" means that the theory is clearly *not* presented as emerging out of observations of, and reflections on, *lived experience with these values*. Correspondingly, it is not presented as an articulation of the responsibilities that participants assume when they (try to) instantiate these values – or as a resource that could guide inquiry into the virtues and cultural practices that might promote their assumption. Furthermore, in considering certain problems with the "mirror" metaphor, we saw how, especially when combined with talk of "institutions" "determin[ing]" certain outcomes, that metaphor can direct attention away from the need to inquire into the specific virtues and cultural practices that, in some particular context, are apt to promote meaningful deliberation there.[115] Hence, for this reason too, we cannot say that the presentation brings atten-

tion to the idea of using the ideal deliberative procedure as a resource for guiding such inquiry.

II. Toward an Alternative, Anthropological-Interpretive Approach

Taken together, these comments point toward an attractive account of the status and function of normative democratic theory in democratic practice. Again, there are two Deweyan suggestions about moral or ethical theory that can help us to sketch that approach: briefly, that the theory in question should offer an interpretation of relevant aspects of "moral or ethical experience"; and that we should treat it as a "tool" for practical reasoning, which can help us to extend the goods that inhere in the relevant kinds of experience. Correspondingly, my suggestion is that normative democratic theory should *emerge out of lived experience with the values of treating persons as "free" and "equal"* and should *guide inquiry into the procedures, virtues, and cultural practices* that, in some particular context, are most apt to promote the realization of those values. In this sense, normative democratic theory should be "doubly empirical": self-consciously empirical in its origins (based on observation of humans *as* they pursue certain moral or ethical values *in* their actions); and self-consciously used to guide further such inquiries. That none of the three theories discussed in section 1 is explicitly and consistently so presented and developed is one way of crystallizing the criticisms summarized in section 1.4.[116]

2.1 Normative Democratic Theory as Empirical Inquiry
Broadly speaking, my suggestion is that we can profitably understand normative democratic theory as an anthropological-interpretive enterprise – as a species of cultural self-reflection that *begins* with an interpretation of the linguistic *and* non-linguistic behavior of those who are to be addressed by the theory and which aims to

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[113] We needn't, however, thereby commit ourselves to defending (deliberative) democracy as being "s*imply … a derivative ideal*" (Cohen, "Deliberation," 16; emphasis added).
[114] See note 74.
[115] Cohen, "Deliberation," 21, 29.

[116] See note 137 for an elaboration of this claim with respect to Habermas.

reveal the patterns that structure certain kinds of "moral or ethical experience."[117]

Now, by "moral or ethical experience," I refer broadly to our lived experiences with whatever moral or ethical values are in question. And like Dahl, Habermas, Cohen, and indeed most other democratic theorists, I proceed from a fundamental commitment to treating persons as free and equal; I presume that, as democrats, we *should* proceed from this commitment, for it is arguably what justifies the adoption of a democratic process in the first place. Or, to make a weaker claim that serves the same purpose here, the presumption could be that the values of "free" and "equal" treatment are two values without which it is hard to justify the adoption of such a process.[118] So, the appeal to "moral or ethical experience" refers here to lived experience with the values of "free" and "equal" treatment in joint or collective decision-making. Correspondingly, our question is: what does reflection on such treatment indicate, or, what are our "shared understandings" of what it *means* to treat each other this way?

Here, I won't answer this question directly; doing so would amount to an effort to articulate my own normative democratic theory, while I aim only to sketch a philosophic method for developing such a theory,[119]

thereby clarifying its status and function in democratic practice. So, let me stay at a high level of abstraction and just indicate what, at a minimum, I think such a theory *should* articulate.

The first thing to say is that in lived experience with the values in question, we evidently recognize[120] the need to grant certain opportunities to one another *and* to assume certain (corollary positive and negative) responsibilities in relation to one another. A brief illustration will indicate the contours of my thinking here.

When, for instance, friends aim to treat each other as free and equal in joint or collective decision-making, they recognize the need to grant each other equal and adequate *opportunities*[121] to express their reasons for endorsing some particular outcome among an array of alternatives. For they recognize that their doing so is a necessary[122] *means* toward the end of giving equal consideration to, and showing equal concern and respect for, the good or interests of each such person; and, in the context of joint or collective decision-making, they regard each other – qua free and equal persons – as

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[117] On the broad, cultural-anthropological sense in which I intend "experience," see Dewey, *LW* 1; Michele Moody-Adams, *Fieldwork in Familiar Places: Morality, Culture, and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 169-172; Loren Goldman, "Dewey's Pragmatism from an Anthropological Point of View," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 48, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 1-30.

[118] Dahl, *Democracy*, chaps. 6-9.

[119] More accurately, it would amount to an effort to articulate a generic normative theory for *any* "democratic process" (not just state decision-making processes), and I aim only to sketch *a philosophic method for developing such a generic theory*. (Dahl's theory is also of this kind; see Dahl, 107.) Such a generic theory puts aside questions of membership and of the proper scope of "democratic decision-making." For answers to these questions will, and should, vary depending on the type of association. Furthermore, notice that the analogy with friendship (see notes 5 and 120) wouldn't help much, if at all, with either of these questions. For the criteria governing "friendship" are, and should be, different from those governing whether individuals are, say, citizens of a "democratic" state or members of a "democratic" workers' cooperative. And the kinds of matters that friends decide, and should decide, together are different from those that other "associations" decide, and should decide, "democratically."

[120] This and similar phrases should be taken as invitations and hypotheses: *if* one reflects on one's own experience with "free and equal treatment" in joint or collective decision-making, or whatever comes closest to it, one is likely to realize the plausibility of the pertinent claim. And again, I take friendship to offer paradigmatic examples of such treatment (see notes 5 and 123) – as, perhaps, Dewey himself did: "To take as far as possible every conflict which arises … out of the atmosphere and medium of force, of violence as a means of settlement into that of discussion and of intelligence is to treat those who disagree – even profoundly – with us as those from whom we may learn, and in so far, as friends" (*LW* 14: 228).

[121] "Equal opportunities" can, of course, be inadequate for the purposes they are meant to serve. If, say, each person only had one second to "express her reasons," surely we wouldn't think that the purpose of each person having that "opportunity" was well served. Hence, though we often do speak simply of "equal opportunities," we are tacitly endorsing the idea of "equal *and* adequate opportunities" when we do so.

[122] More accurately, it is *presumptively* "necessary": there may be cases when it is not so, as when one such person is incapacitated, hence literally incapable of "expressing her reasons." Still, highlighting this "presumptive necessity" points to the need to craft case-appropriate approximations of, or stand-ins for, the aforementioned opportunity – e.g., allowing someone else to represent, and so offer reasons on behalf of, the party in question. The point generalizes to whatever other "opportunities" a theory indicates that citizens, members, representatives and/or participants should have, where the *literal* granting of those "opportunities" isn't practically feasible.

equally *deserving* of such opportunities.[123] Furthermore, they recognize that in order for each participant to have this opportunity, the others[124] have to assume *responsibility* for granting it to them. For they recognize that part of the purpose of having this opportunity is to bring the others to understand and to take into account one's perspective. And to do so, the others need to assume

certain responsibilities, both "negative" and "positive" in character.[125] On the negative side, they need, say, to refrain from certain kinds of interruption when others are trying to communicate. On the positive side, they need, say, to make *a sincere effort* to understand and to take into account the perspective that the communicator is trying to convey in offering her reasons. Otherwise, she may not have a meaningful opportunity "to express her reasons for endorsing some particular outcome among an array of alternatives." Indeed, she may not have that "opportunity" at all.

Now, this much already suggests that in a decision-making process that exhibits equal consideration, concern, and respect for the good or interests of the participants, those persons grant certain (equal and adequate) opportunities to one another *and* assume certain (corollary positive and negative) responsibilities in relation to one another. More specifically, it suggests that they grant such (equal and adequate) opportunities, and assume such (positive and negative) responsibilities, as (they understand) are presumptively necessary to the aim of giving equal consideration to, and showing equal concern and respect for, the good or interests of each of them. My suggestion, then, is that we articulate these opportunities and responsibilities[126] in our own "ideal procedural criteria."[127] Furthermore, I propose that we, again, explicitly and consistently: present these criteria as having *emerged out of empirical inquiry*; and use the criteria to *guide further such inquiry*.

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[123] Moreover, these values are often accompanied by claims to "fairness." On friendship as a relationship that characteristically embodies these values, see Edward Deci et al., "On the Benefits of Giving as Well as Receiving Autonomy Support: Mutuality in Close Friendships," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 32, no. 3 (March 2006): 313–327; Hruschka, *Friendship*, esp. 17-75, 121-135; James Youniss and Jacqueline Smollar, *Adolescent Relations with Mothers, Fathers and Friends* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), esp. chaps. 1, 6-8, 10; Andrew F. Newcomb and Catherine L. Bagwell, "Children's Friendship Relations: A Meta-Analytic Review," *Psychological Bulletin* 117, no. 2 (March 1995): 306-347; William Rawlins, *The Compass of Friendship*: *Narratives, Identities, and Dialogues* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009), esp. chaps. 3, 7; William Rawlins, *Friendship Matters: Communication, Dialectics, and the Life Course* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2008), esp. chaps. 1-3; William Bukowski, Clairneige Motzoi, and Felicia Meyer, "Friendship as Process, Function, and Outcome," in *Handbook of Peer Interactions, Relationships and Groups*, ed. Kenneth Rubin, William Bukowski, and Brett Laursen (New York: Guilford Press, 2009); Netta Weinstein, ed., *Human Motivation and Interpersonal Relationships: Theory, Research, and Applications* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014), esp. chaps. 1-4; Valery I. Chirkov, Richard M. Ryan, and Kennon M. Sheldon, eds., *Human Autonomy in Cross-Cultural Context: Perspectives on the Psychology of Agency, Freedom, and Well-Being* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), esp. chaps. 3, 5, 11. On the ubiquity of "fairness" appeals in social life generally, see Nicolas Baumard, *The Origins of Fairness: How Evolution Explains Our Moral Nature*, trans. Paul Reeve (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Marc D. Hauser, *Moral Minds: The Nature of Right and Wrong* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007), esp. chap. 2; Joseph Henrich et al., eds., *Foundations of Human Sociality: Economic Experiments and Ethnographic Evidence from Fifteen Small-Scale Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). On the relevance of "fairness" appeals to support for democratic decision-making, see Marcia Grimes, "Procedural Fairness and Political Trust," in *Handbook on Political Trust,* ed. Sonja Zmerli and Tom W.G. van der Meer (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2017), 256-269; Rainer Forst, *The Right to Justification: Elements of a Constructivist Theory of Justice*, trans. Jeffrey Flynn (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), esp. chap. 7. On the link between free and equal personhood and norms of equal consideration, concern, and respect, see Stefan Gosepath, "On the (Re)Construction and Basic Concepts of the Morality of Equal Respect," in *Do All Persons Have Equal Moral Worth? On "Basic Equality" and Equal Respect and Concern,* ed. Uwe Steinhoff (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 124-141.

[124] As a regulative ideal, the phrase is appropriate: at times (as when there are two participants), it is the case that for *each* to have some opportunity, *all* must assume certain responsibilities. But this isn't always so; it may just be that some do. But, for simplicity, I will use "the others" and equivalent phrases.

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[125] See notes 32 and 35 on "negative" and "positive" responsibilities, respectively. I do not intend a sharp distinction between "negative" and "positive" responsibilities here. The terms are heuristics; "responsibilities" may have "negative" *and* "positive" aspects.

[126] More accurately, *some* of them: abstract "opportunities" and "responsibilities" always entail *more specific* "opportunities" and "responsibilities" in practice, which cannot be fully articulated in advance. Moreover, parsimony is to be valued in the criteria.

[127] I leave open whether there are responsibilities to be included which are not, or not primarily, "corollaries" to the "opportunities" that citizens, members, representatives and/or participants should have.

2.2 Normative Democratic Theory as Guiding Further Empirical Inquiry

Here my argument dovetails with the way in which John Dewey and Nelson Goodman conceive of theories as articulating "standards" that are "internal" to practices. In Hilary Putnam's summary:

> What we have … are practices, which are right or wrong [or more or less adequate] depending on how they square with our standards. And our standards are right or wrong [or more or less justifiable] depending on how they square with our practices. This is a circle, or better, a spiral, but one that Goodman, like John Dewey, regards as virtuous.[128]

Treating our ideal procedural criteria in this way, the view I am sketching may be summarized as follows.

We can treat our ideal procedural criteria as "standards" that are "internal" to certain of our moral or ethical practices, namely, those that our shared understandings indicate are presumptively necessary to the aim of giving equal consideration to, and showing equal concern and respect for, the good or interests of the persons in question. Moreover, we can treat these criteria *hypothetically*. This means treating them not as articulating strict rules or principles, or laws or categorical imperatives, but rather as statements of the conditions in which certain results are apt to eventuate – as revisable statements about the conditions in which certain human goods (moral, ethical, cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, and others) are apt to be realized.[129] (Think of cookbooks; or, replacing the reference to "statements" with "representations," maps.) Or, to make the same point in the language of problem-solving, it means treating our criteria as articulating hypothetical solutions to a problem of a specific kind: giving equal consideration to, and showing equal concern and respect for, the good or interests of the persons in question. "The introduction"

of *these* "social conditions," those articulated or entailed by the criteria, is presumptively necessary to resolve or to mitigate *this* problem.

Broadly, then, this is how the criteria can be understood as "guiding further empirical inquiry": they are summaries of observations about past experiences with certain practices, which direct us, in analogous circumstances, to pursue similar activities in the tentative expectation that (we will observe that) similar goods will result in similar ways.[130] Treating the criteria in this way, more can be said now about the moral or ethical practices in question and about how the criteria are to "guide inquiry" into such practices.

Now, again, when we aim to treat one another as free and equal, we recognize the need to grant one another certain (equal and adequate) opportunities; say, to express our respective reasons for endorsing some particular outcome among an array of alternatives. And we recognize that to do so, we need to assume certain (corollary positive and negative) responsibilities in relation to one another, such as those mentioned: refraining from certain kinds of interruption when others are trying to communicate and making a sincere effort to understand and to take into account the perspective that the communicator is trying to convey in offering her reasons. Hence my suggestion that our ideal procedural criteria specify certain opportunities *and* responsibilities. Yet, I think that we recognize a number of further things as well, which, taken together, explain my additional suggestion that we use the criteria to reason about procedures, virtues, and cultural practices in conjunction.

First, friends recognize that to effectively grant one another, say, the *opportunity* to express their respective reasons for endorsing some particular outcome and to assume, say, *responsibility* for making a sincere attempt to understand and to take into account one another's perspectives, they typically (need to) adopt a *procedure* for doing so. ("It's good always to talk about these things

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[128] Hilary Putnam, *Realism with a Human Face*, ed. James Conant (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 304. Hence Dewey affirms that "common experience is capable of developing from within itself methods which will secure direction for itself and will create inherent standards of judgment and value" (*LW* 1: 41).
[129] See Dewey, *LW* 1: 10-41, 295-326.

[130] So treated, they become "tools" for practical reasoning. See Dewey, *LW* 7: 278-283.

first"; "Everyone should have a fair chance to say their piece"; "We should talk about whatever people want to talk about"; etc.) But they also recognize that no *one* "procedure," considered in all its details, is best suited to their doing so. Where, say, the stakes are low and in-person communication is difficult, they might have a quick exchange over email, even delegate the decision to just one person. Where the stakes are high and in-person communication is easy, they might deliberate for "however long it is necessary," even insist on consensus.[131]

Second, friends recognize that there are certain moral, ethical, and intellectual *virtues* that can assist them in, say, granting the above opportunity and in assuming the above responsibility. Virtues like "patience," "kindness," and "tolerance" can help them to grant each other opportunities to express their respective reasons for endorsing some particular outcome, just as virtues like "self-awareness," "humility," and "open-mindedness" can help them to assume responsibility for making a sincere attempt to understand and to take into account each other's perspectives. But friends also recognize that, in different contexts, different virtues are more and less important to their ability to grant the above opportunity, just as they recognize that different virtues are more and less important to their ability to assume the above responsibility. Where, say, it is difficult for some to express their considered views (perhaps they simply struggle with articulating them verbally), but those views are quite uncontroversial, the virtue of "patience" is likely to be very important for participants' respective capacities to grant each other equal and adequate opportunities to express their reasons in support of some particular outcome, while the virtue of

"open-mindedness" is likely to be less so. By contrast, where, say, participants find their respective views easy to articulate but have highly controversial views, the virtues of "patience" *and* "open-mindedness" are both likely to be very important to their respective capacities to grant the aforementioned opportunity and to assume the aforementioned responsibility.

Third, friends recognize that there are certain *cultural practices*[132] that can promote a social environment that is conducive to, say, the effective granting of the above opportunity and the effective assumption of the above responsibility – and so also to the exhibition of the moral, ethical, and intellectual virtues that they would necessarily exhibit were they to grant that opportunity/assume that responsibility. For instance, friends sometimes recognize that other friends tend not to verbally participate in an "equal" fashion when their friendship circle "makes a decision." Perhaps the latter individuals are shy and deferential, or have a history of conflict with others from the group who are more assertive, and so are timid about expressing their opinions. Thus, the former individuals sometimes consult the latter individuals *in advance of the discussion that will decide the matter* to see what their opinions are and to ensure that they get a "fair hearing." This practice can promote, say, the effective granting of the aforementioned opportunity and the effective assumption of the aforementioned responsibility, hence also the exhibition of such virtues as "patience," "toleration," "self-awareness," and "open-mindedness." Friends also recognize, however, that, in different contexts, different cultural practices are more and less important to their ability to grant that opportunity and to promote the assumption of that responsibility. In one context, time set aside for relevant storytelling might be most useful. In another, the practice mentioned above might be so: selective consultation in advance of the discussion that will decide the matter.

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[131] In a group of friends, of course, much of the "work" involved in collective decision-making may well be highly informal, spontaneous, and fluid in character. However, we are not surprised if/when more "routinized" and "explicit" decision-making practices emerge, indeed, of the kind that start to look like "procedures." In fact, if equal consideration, concern, and respect are to be maintained, surely such "procedures" will develop, even if they remain largely tacit, and all the more so as the "stakes" involved in the friends' decisions rise and the size of the group increases.

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[132] See note 18.

Fourth, as friends recognize that different proce-dures, virtues, and cultural practices are more and less suited to different contexts in this way, so they recognize the need to *inquire* into what specific procedures, vir-tues, and cultural practices are most suited to those contexts. Often, this "inquiry" may be quite informal, indeed, semi- or perhaps even unconscious. Still, the same social goal isn't, they recognize, always pursued with the same exact "social means." And this produces a conscious need to inquire, at least occasionally, into "the conditions" that *are* apt to promote "equal considera-tion, concern, and respect" in different circumstances, including different procedures, virtues, and cultural practices.

So, taking these considerations together and treating the ideal procedural criteria as hypotheticals in the way suggested, we can summarize the function – or, at any rate, part of the function – of normative democratic theory in democratic practice as helping us to judge the rightness or wrongness, or adequacy or inadequacy, of the *specific* procedures,[133] the *specific* virtues, and the *specific* cultural practices that, in this or that particular context, are deployed or on exhibition, or that are pro-posed for deployment or exhibition, in pursuit of the aim of giving equal consideration to, and showing equal concern and respect for, the good or interests of the persons in question. Or, more succinctly, we can treat the criteria as offering a "tool" for practical reasoning about procedures, virtues, and cultural practices in conjunction.

Crucially, this framing can accommodate the concern for pluralism, while avoiding the discussed problems with the three proceduralisms. For in clarifying that the criteria are to be used as a "tool" in this way, we clarify that we are not offering specific procedures for specific cases, based on strict rules or prescriptions. Further-more, we clarify that we are not recommending exact

means (still less specific "coercive" ones) for granting relevant opportunities or for promoting the assumption of relevant responsibilities. Yet, we *are* recommending that the criteria *include* certain "opportunities" and "responsibilities," thereby avoiding the discussed prob-lems with excluding, or at least leaving entirely tacit our conception of, relevant responsibilities. And we are, of course, clarifying the general relevance of procedures, virtues, and cultural practices *to* the granting of those "opportunities" and the assumption of those "responsi-bilities," thereby avoiding the discussed problems with treating "procedures" as our primary or exclusive focus.

Conclusion

Aletta Norval has remarked that "it is characteristic of much political theory, and democratic theory in particu-lar, to distance itself from the ordinary practices, com-mitments and concerns of democratic life."[134] "At best," such distancing "may provide us with the requisite imag-ination to sustain and deepen democratic life. At worst, it can prevent us from engaging with democratic theory in a way that addresses practical needs."[135]

Now, it would be quite unreasonable to say that Dahl, or Habermas, or Cohen engages in democratic theory in a way that "*prevents us*" from "addressing practical needs." And in each of their theories, I, at least, do find resources to stimulate our democratic imagi-naries, as I presume many others do too. Nevertheless, each of their theories does, in its own way, distance itself from "the ordinary practices, commitments and concerns of democratic life." For none of them explicitly and consistently emerges out of – and is presented as emerging out of – observation of humans *as* they pursue certain moral or ethical values *in* their actions. And so none of them leads directly to the recognition that our ideal procedural criteria can and should: articulate op-

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[133] This should be understood to encompass questions of mem-bership and of the proper scope of collective decision-making in the specific (kind of) association in question. But I put these matters aside here; see note 119. Correspondingly, I leave open who "the persons in question" are.

[134] Aletta J. Norval, *Aversive Democracy: Inheritance and Origi-nality in the Democratic Tradition* (New York: Cambridge Uni-versity Press, 2007), 2-3.
[135] Norval, 2-3.

portunities and responsibilities; and help us to reason about procedures, virtues, and cultural practices in conjunction. Indeed, each has features (related to the pursuit of procedural minimalism) that push us away from that recognition.

Of course, in each author's corpus, one can identify passages in which the author emphasizes, or at least intimates, the direct relevance of virtues and cultural practices to the instantiation of certain procedures.[136] Indeed, each author's normative democratic theory can be *conceived* as offering rich resources for reasoning about the procedures that can deepen and sustain democracy, the virtues that citizens might ideally display when participating in them (or in the broader public sphere), and the cultural practices that could promote those virtues and the instantiation of those procedures.[137] The critical point, in this connection, concerns the way in which *in presenting his own normative democratic theory*, each author distances himself – in subtle but critical ways – from *lived* experience with the values in question. That is, in his own way, each author distances himself from observation of paradigmatic moments in which, in everyday life, free and equal treatment *is* instantiated.[138] For the reasons indicated, this shared

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[136] See, e.g., Dahl, *Democracy*, chap. 20, esp. 294-298; Cohen, "Procedure and Substance," esp. 172-80; and Jürgen Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion: Philosophical Essays*, trans. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), chap. 5. Regarding Habermas, however, Bernstein's observation is apt: "Sometimes, Habermas comes very close to admitting that 'the core of a genuinely proceduralist understanding of democracy' presupposes a democratic ethos. But more frequently he appears to deny this, and suggests that a discourse-theoretical understanding of democracy is superior to its alternatives precisely because it doesn't make any presuppositions about the democratic virtues of citizens" (Bernstein, "Retrieval," 4).

[137] Regarding Habermas, for instance, see Jeffrey Epstein, "Habermas, Virtue Epistemology, and Religious Justifications in the Public Sphere," *Hypatia* 29, no. 2 (Spring 2014): 422-439.

[138] The point is perhaps most subtle in relation to Habermas. Habermas's "normative model" is, in its own way, based on lived experience with the values of "free" and "equal" treatment. His "proceduralist" conception of democracy is grounded on a theory of communicative action which reconstructs the first- and second-person standpoints of persons who coordinate their actions through norms whose rightness is presumed to be redeemable in a mutual (free and equal) exchange of reasons (Jürgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action, vol. 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy [Boston: Beacon Press, 1984],

esp. chaps. 1, 3); Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*; Habermas, "Three Normative Models"; James Bohman and William Rehg, "Jürgen Habermas," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [Fall 2017 Edition], ed. Edward N. Zalta). However, in presenting his proceduralist conception, Habermas drifts away from *a faithful observation of* lived experience with "free and equal treatment."

The point is subtle, but critical. As emphasized, when we focus on deliberation *as an activity* in which we seek to realize certain *moral or ethical values*, we immediately recognize that for anything like genuine "deliberation" to occur, some people have to assume certain responsibilities. This in turn directs our attention to the virtues and cultural practices that might promote their assumption and/or be necessary to their proper functioning. By contrast, Habermas speaks of democratic processes being legitimated by "presuppositions" and "procedures" – not, crucially, by *action* in accord with them: the "discourse-theoretic interpretation insists on the fact that democratic will-formation does *not* draw its legitimating force from a previous convergence of settled ethical convictions, but from both *the communicative presuppositions* that allow the better arguments to come into play in various forms of deliberation, and from *the procedures* that secure fair bargaining processes" ("Three Normative Models," 3-4; emphasis added). The issue here can't simply be written off as "unclear wording": for, taken in context, such phrasings are precisely what promote the idea that the processes in question aren't – apparently in any way – "dependent on the virtues of citizens devoted to the public weal" (4). (Recall also Habermas's strong criticism of a "deliberative politics" which "depend[s] on the virtues of citizens oriented to the common good" [*Between Facts and Norms*, 277].)

In actual life-contexts, however, we easily recognize that any "procedure" can go awry, and that participants can always remain unmotivated to follow (or motivated not to follow) its normative "presuppositions." This is one reason why ethnomethodologists emphasize how "rationality," "legitimacy," "fairness," and so forth are *produced* "in action" (see, e.g., Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* [Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984]). Moreover, to follow a procedure (to act in accord with its normative presuppositions and to know one is doing so) and perhaps even to be motivated to do so, one has to have a knowledge of relevant moral or ethical values; one can't be "reasonable," "rational," "respectful," "sincere," "fair," "open-minded" or what have you, and "know" that one is being so, *without knowing what generally counts as an instance of such moral or ethical behavior in a given community* (see Hilary Putnam, *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy and Other Essays* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002]; John McDowell, "Virtue and Reason," *The Monist* 62, no. 3 [July 1979]: 331-350; John McDowell, "Non-Cognitivism and Rule-Following," in *Wittgenstein: To Follow a Rule*, ed. Steven H. Holtzman and Christopher M. Leich [New York: Routledge, 2006], 141-62; Charles Taylor, "Language and Society," in *Communicative Action: Essays on Jürgen Habermas's* The Theory of Communicative Action, ed. Axel Honneth and Hans Joas, trans. Jeremy Gaines and Doris L. Jones [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991], 23-35; Charles Taylor, "Cross-Purposes: The Liberal-Communitarian Debate," in *Philosophical Arguments* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995], 181-203; Charles Taylor, "The Diversity of Goods," in *Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers, Vol. 2* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985], 230-247). For such reasons, the appeal to the legitimating force of "presuppositions" and "procedures" is problematic: to *some* degree, Habermas's proceduralist conception would seem dependent on "*a previous convergence of settled ethical convictions*" as well (see Bernstein, "Retriev-

feature of the three normative theories *obscures* the various ways in which particular virtues and cultural practices *are* relevant, or even necessary to, particular procedures: to the effective granting of the opportunities that (at a minimum) participants ought to grant one another; and to the assumption of the responsibilities that (at a minimum) they ought to assume in relation to one another. In this way, all three presentations, once more, push us away from the recognition that our ideal procedural criteria can and should: articulate opportunities and responsibilities; and help us to reason

about procedures, virtues, and cultural practices in conjunction. Accordingly, I have briefly sketched an alternative, anthropological-interpretive approach, which clarifies the basis for saying that our criteria can and should be so characterized and used. Such an approach, I submit, provides a firmer, more robust basis for addressing the "practical needs" of democratic life.

Declaration of Interest Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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al"; Mara, "After Virtue, Autonomy"; Taylor, "Language and Society"). But Habermas's formulations push us away from – obscure – these everyday observations (see section 2) about when free and equal treatment is instantiated. Hence my claim that in presenting his own normative democratic theory, Habermas distances himself – in subtle but critical ways – from *lived* experience with the values in question.

BOOK REVIEWS

PRAGMATIST TOOLS FOR EXPLORING THE "FABRIC OF EXPERIENCE".
JOHN RYDER'S *KNOWLEDGE, ART, AND POWER. AN OUTLINE OF A THEORY OF EXPERIENCE.*
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John Ryder's latest book, *Knowledge, Art, and Power*, represents a stimulating attempt to outline a theory of experience, as is openly declared in the subtitle. The main purpose of the book is to develop a richer and more multifaceted idea of experience, capable of taking into account the plurality and complexity of human interactions with the world. The project has a strong systematic character and purpose, aiming as it does to develop an exhaustive conceptual framework for dealing with experience along two main axes. The horizontal axis is represented by what Ryder regards as three basic "dimensions" of experience – the cognitive, the aesthetic, and the political. The vertical axis reflects three basic modes of "making our ways" into the world (Ryder 2020, 1), namely three modes of "judgment" that John Ryder draws from Justus Buchler – the assertive, the exhibitive, and the active.

The volume could be considered the result of Ryder's enduring engagement with John Dewey's legacy as regards the concept of experience, integrated and corrected through Justus Buchler's theory of judgment. The whole project is enriched and given topical relevance through constant comparisons with some interesting trends in current philosophical debate – from the field of embodied, embedded, enactive, and extended mind theories to naturalization in philosophy, from some intriguing investigations about the similarities between classical pragmatism and modernist literature to rival theories of democracy.

For sure, readers of this volume will appreciate the clarity of John Ryder's style, which seems to be pursued as an explicit goal by the author. Ryder constantly stands on the side of the reader – whether she be a beginner in pragmatist studies or an expert – who expects that each step of an argument be duly considered. Readers will also perceive a certain taste for systematic balance in the articulation of the various issues at stake, almost an old-fashioned love for symmetry and completeness that characterizes Ryder's book.

I will begin my reading by offering an overview of the main theses and contents of the book, devoting the second part to some partially critical but constructive remarks grounded in the common naturalistic and pragmatist framework I share with John Ryder.

I.

The premises of John Ryder's threefold approach to experience are presented in the first and second chapters, representing a *trait d'union* with his previous book, *The Things on Heaven and Earth* (Ryder 2013). Two basic assumptions inform his further investigations, namely a naturalistic, emergentist, and relational conception of ontology and a structurally interactive or transactional idea of experience.

For Ryder, endorsing a naturalistic ontology means accepting the pluralistic view of nature as consisting "of whatever there is" (Ryder 2020, 2), while at the same time excluding anything supernatural, transcendental, or ontologically alien to nature. This means that Ryder's naturalistic ontology is essentially open to the many ways of being real characterizing the wide range of entities we usually engage with in our ordinary life. It also means that Ryder is explicitly committed to a form of emergentism: "the full range of human actions and products" (Ryder 2020, 24), namely human experience itself, is an emergent process, exclusively based on the previous natural order but involving novel properties. There is no need to espouse the form of physical reductionism that is still assumed by some trends in the philosophy of mind and in the cognitive science; rather, Ryder assumes that emergent naturalism is the most coherent option to guarantee a degree of continuity in nature as well as a non-reductive conception of the constitution of more complex orders of being out of simpler ones. Ryder's ontology is further characterized by a strong adoption of a relational conception of what it

means to be an entity, which the author explicitly derives from Justus Buchler. By rejecting the traditional Aristotelian idea of things as constituted by substances and properties that can or cannot be attributed to them, a relational and ordinal ontology considers things as peculiar complexes of relations, where different modes of being are connected with the ways those relations are ordered and are more or less relevant to one another. Given this ontological background, the traditional question whether an entity is real or unreal changes into an investigation on the specific order in which some relations prevail on others and make a difference.

The second basic assumption of the whole discourse is represented by the pragmatist conception of experience as the process whereby both active and passive transactions take place between a person and her environment, whose relations are mutually constitutive. By emphasizing his dependence on Dewey's conception of experience, Ryder develops its anti-mentalistic and anti-reductionist potential as well as its convergence with more or less recent inquiries into the embodied, embedded, extended and enactive status of the mind and cognition. Experience cannot be reduced either to a set of mental processes enclosed in the alleged interior theater of the mind or to neural processing and computing. Of course, neurological features are an important part of the process of thinking and acting, but they play this role together with other bodily features (such as arms and legs and lungs) as well as other environmental resources (such as the ground sustaining our steps and the air we breathe as well as any hindrances impeding our actions). Furthermore, we have no need to distinguish the outside from the inside by means of an ontological gap, if we assume that both the mind and the environment consist in complex webs of relations that are mutually intertwined and that experience consists in fully embodied interactions between human living beings and their environment.

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The second chapter completes this picture of experience as a transaction between an individual and her environ-

ment by examining it in light of some of the main conceptions of experience developed in the history of modern philosophy. One of the most interesting aspects highlighted by the author is that a transactional conception of experience leads to the dissolution of the standard opposition between the inner and the outer usually pervading traditional conceptions of experience. Differently from Kant's transcendental revolution, a real Copernican revolution could be represented by the rejection of the idea that the self and the environment are two independent entities, which are supposed to be already and completely defined before any interaction between them takes place. We no longer need to tackle philosophical cramps such as solipsism, mentalism, and the idea of a noumenal reality, if we assume that the self and its mind are configured by the complex web of constitutive relations with one's environment – with an emphasis on the claim that the environment itself is relationally constituted and that selves are both active and passive ingredients of its configuration.

Another cornerstone of Ryder's philosophical proposal is Buchler's theory of judgment. Within the overall architecture of the book, it represents a further central prerequisite for gaining a richer and more complex idea of experience, capable of considering not only the cognitive dimension but also the aesthetic and the political ones. In spite of his apparently idiosyncratic conception of judgment, Ryder decides to make use of Buchler's term to emphasize the fact that human experience is constituted by our tendency to selectively intervene within the world, constructively making our way through it by means of conscious or unconscious discriminations. Buchler extends the usual term beyond its traditional boundaries to characterize the varieties of human selective, active, creative, constructive or manipulating explorations of the environment. This shift allows him to go beyond assertion as the standard mode of discernment and to claim that humans' selective engagement with their world occurs in various ways – human beings usually assert and manipulate propositions, and organize materials by attributing some properties to a subject,

but they also show natural materials through a form of "exhibitive" judgment, while at the same time making things and actively tackling situations and problems through "active judgments". At this stage, the ground has been set for John Ryder's philosophical inquiries into the cognitive, aesthetic, and political dimensions of experience. Readers already have a transactional idea of experience, a relational ontology, and a theory of judgment as a theoretical framework for gaining a more pluralistic characterization of experience.

The following three chapters respectively deal with the cognitive character of experience, the aesthetic in experience and the political as structural dimensions of experience.

…

Ryder's treatment of cognition in the third chapter of his book is rich and complex. Very briefly, three features of his approach prove particularly important.

The first aspect concerns a basic revision of traditional inquiries about the relations between experience and cognition. Both classical empiricism and rationalistic philosophy pose the problem whether experience could be considered the first reliable or deceptive ground for cognition, famously providing opposite answers to this question. On the contrary, John Ryder reverses the question: we have to ask about the role of cognition in experience, by assuming that experience is a wider concept than cognition and that cognition is only one (if crucial) component or phase of experience. Explicitly supported by the classical Pragmatists' legacy, Ryder's basic assumption is that human experience is wider and richer than cognition and that thinking of humans as exclusively cognitive animals is misleading. Cognition is not the process of familiarizing ourselves with something outside of us; on the contrary, knowing consists in the creation of further relations with the environment in which we, the knowers, are deeply embedded, and create new relations in order to solve banal or complex problems arising in the course of our interactions with the world.

A second interesting feature characterizing Ryder's approach to cognition is his argument against the professional over-intellectualization of knowledge produced by philosophers: cognition arises within experience every time we have to solve a problem in our ordinary experience, whether the problem is that there is no milk for having breakfast at home or having to find a more coherent explication in quantum physics. Consequently, specific knowledge resulting from a cognitive inquiry is primarily true when it is able to solve a specific problem, rather than when it corresponds to a predetermined reality. Speaking of cognition only in terms of true propositions, epistemic justifications, giving reasons and truth values can conceal the essential roots of cognition in ordinary experience. Cognition happens primarily 'in the wild' and formalistic approaches to knowledge should not be considered the paradigmatic feature of cognition: on the contrary, they are abstraction derived from those everyday "queries" – in Buchler's terms – through which we try to respond to the hesitations and uncertainties lying at the core of experience.

A third important point I would emphasize is the pluralistic and broad-minded idea of truth emerging from Ryder's investigations into the cognitive dimension of experience. If cognition involves the capacity to tackle problems in more or less ordinary experience, we need a wider, more Jamesian conception of truth than correspondentism: truth is the condition in which an idea finds itself when – and only when – it works in a specific complex of relations. This means that truth is not guaranteed forever and everywhere but can be fragile and exposed to change. Nonetheless, Ryder acknowledges that there are cases where a correspondentistic notion of truth is more useful because of some specific transactions between the different elements that are at stake. In other contexts, such as when reading an inspiring novel or watching a drama film, truth can also mean the experience of a deep meaning, capable of having an effect on our life and re-orienting it, as highlighted by Gadamer and the hermeneutic tradition. The point is, according to Ryder, that we have to understand what

idea of truth is more suitable for each situation, meaning that each time we have to discriminate what the specific constitutive relations are in a particular context, as well as their order and the stronger or weaker level of reference they have to us.

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When dealing with the aesthetic dimension of experience, John Ryder emphasizes an important distinction between the aesthetic experience and the aesthetic dimension in experience. The notion of aesthetic experience has been used since the 18th-century philosophy to define some common features characterizing the experience of artworks: from reading a novel to appreciating a painting and attending a theatrical performance. Differently, Ryder claims that "the aesthetic is a definitive feature of the very fabric of experience" (Ryder 2020, 117) and that, following Dewey, we should approach art as an enhancement of aesthetic features that are already present within experience. According to Dewey's continuistic stance, we should consider art a refinement of materials coming from our ordinary transactions with our environment – that is, features which are already there, in experience, before they are developed into a properly artistic form.

Ryder speaks of the aesthetic within experience as something which concerns harmony, unity or dissonance as experiential components. Far from supporting a return to formalism, these expressions are grounded in Ryder's reading of Dewey's naturalistic aesthetics. Harmony, unity, and dissonance concern the interactions rhythmically taking place between an individual and her own environment, which is to say that they pertain to experience as a dynamic process of tension and balance, disrupting and searching for new integrations between the individual and the environmental resources in nature. From this perspective, the artistic form, rhythm, and harmony in a work of art seem rooted in the very structure of experience, as is the case with artistic creativity, which seems to derive from the productive effort in experience to create new forms of balance between individual and environmental energies.

A second important aspect in Ryder's treatment of the aesthetic in experience is represented by its frequent (although not necessary) connections with exhibitive judgments. An exhibitive judgment consists in a manipulation or re-organization of previous elements into a new assemblage that is able to display something new or previously unnoticed. It involves an active intervention on the environment and a creative activity producing a result that can elicit a meaningful answer from other people. This typical connection between the aesthetic dimension and the exhibitive judgment is the reason why works of art usually show or exhibit something rather than describing a state of things, making an assertion about it, arguing or making an inference. This preeminence of exhibition over assertion and inference can often take place by means of linguistic utterances, as is the case with poetry and literature.

In fact, there is one last point I wish to mention briefly with regard to Ryder's investigations in the aesthetic dimension of experience, namely the wider consequences for a philosophy of literature deriving from an interactionist conception of experience and from a non-exclusively propositional epistemology. The analytic philosophy of literature tends to assume that linguistic utterances are eminently propositions with a truth value and that literature has nothing to do with truth because it is mainly fictional. This approach could be misleading because it involves a narrow conception of language, as consisting only in propositional utterances – and not, as is often the case in poetry, in exhibitive and creative utterances – as well as a too limited idea of truth as consisting only in the correspondence between words and objects. Based on this, Ryder develops an interesting comparison between classical pragmatism and modernist literature through which he focuses on both their convergences and some ambiguities with reference to the concept of experience as pure experience and as an intimately relational experience.

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Experience, according to John Ryder, also has an intrinsically political dimension because it carries a power to

change the environment, to transform it actively as a way to solve the problems and difficulties arising in the processes of interaction with the environment. This means that power, in this basic sense, has no negative connotations. The political within experience has to do with our capacity to actively engage and solve problems and with the properly human attitude to configure one's own life. Consequently, Ryder has to distinguish between the political as a basic feature of experience and political experience, just as he suggests a distinction between the aesthetic dimension of experience and aesthetic experience. This means that for Ryder every experience is potentially political, because experience involves an essential attitude to solving problems by actively engaging with environmental conditions and changing them, if required. Differently, political experience is defined as the systematic exercising of public authority – including processes of political competition – as far as shared interests are concerned. This is a crucial difference because the public use of power can be – and often is – coercive because my individual interests and those of my community can differ and be in opposition to the interests of others. Hence, Ryder identifies three categories – interest, the individual and the community – as the basic elements shaping our political life. They form complex webs of mutual connections, which can help us explain different forms of political power and political phenomena more generally – from conflict to exploitation, from agreement to revolution and political reform.

The author develops an interesting comparison between Dewey's idea of democracy and the rival conception of democracy developed by Chantal Mouffe. Ryder responds to Talisse's crucial objection – is a Deweyan democracy capable of managing pluralism or even conflict? – by arguing that in Dewey's normative conception of democracy "the co-existence of common interests and antagonistic disagreement is not only possible, but probably the normal state of affairs". In a democracy, individual disagreement and common interest necessarily coexist because experience is potentially political, meaning that it always involves mutual and asymmetric references to

interests, the individual and the community. However, as Ryder explicitly states, this means that a Deweyan idea of democracy differs from the deliberative-consensual conception of democracy illustrated by Rawls and Habermas. The use of intelligence advocated by Dewey as a major political tool can make divergences and conflict even more evident. Moreover, sharing common ends does not mean pursuing any consensual agreement, but rather trying to identify and reach similar goals while responding to different needs and interests.

<div style="text-align:center">II</div>

John Ryder's book has many merits. One of the most significant, to my eyes, is his careful attention to the multifaceted character of human experience – the variety of modes of experience, the complexity of its features, the overlapping and intertwining of the earliest and the latest. He is alien to any residual form of reductionism with reference to experience: there is no paradigmatic model of experience – cognition – and no eminent form of judgment – assertion – in comparison to which the other modes should be considered defective. Hence, among other things, the aesthetic appears to be a central issue in human experience, which is not inferior, as such, to scientific enterprises and political engagement. Its consequences on the ways we live are constitutive parts, e.g., of the political institutions with which we identify ourselves (or not). On the other hand, truth can be pursued in multiple ways, each deserving respect with reference to a specific context – e.g. searching for a political or historical truth as well as testing the truth of a scientific hypothesis. Another major quality of this volume is Ryder's capacity to look at cognition, artistic practice and political action as deeply rooted in the human form of life, i.e. as basically connected to the circumstance that humans are living beings interacting with and within the world they are part of. This means enlarging the conception of cognition far beyond representation as well as beyond merely intellectual practices. It even means assuming that the human search for unity in the diversity of experience, while energetically expen-

sive (Tooby & Cosmides 2001, 10), is rooted in the phenomenon of life. Thirdly, a broadly anthropological view of power as a constitutive feature of human experience can produce a fruitful revision of bad stereotypes about power as well as a more critical awareness of the ineliminability of this feature from the human world.

In certain respects, I think that Ryder's book could be integrated or re-directed, in order to better pursue the goal he has set himself – namely, to understand the complex variety of ways in which human beings "make their way" in the world or "get organized" in it (Noë 2015, 3 and ff.).

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One first point is that there is the risk of underestimating sensibility or affectivity in experience and its role in the aesthetic. The author claims that emotion, together with language and imagination, is "profoundly important" as a "constituent" of experience; however, it cannot be assigned the status of one of the three main "dimensions" of experience because "it is not pervasive and ubiquitous as the three dimensions of experience are" (Ryder 2020, 61). Emotions are denied a necessary role within experiences, whether at the beginning or in their fulfilment; "Not every reaction of judgment" – in the broad sense of the term assumed by Ryder – "is an emotional one" (Ryder 2020, 61). This is true of emotions considered as specific episodes that often have a tendency to break the course of habitual interactions (Dewey 1971, 139). However, it could be a misleading statement if it involves a disregard for the felt meanings and qualities characterizing our "primary experience", to use Dewey's words.

"Empirically", he claims, "the existence of objects of direct grasp and possession, use and enjoyment cannot be denied. Empirically, things are poignant, tragic, beautiful, humorous, settled, disturbed, comfortable, annoying, barren, harsh, consoling, splendid, fearful; are such immediately and in their own right and behalf" (Dewey 1981, 82). First, we experience things, other persons and events as characterized by affective or qualitative significances (Dewey 1984 and Dewey 1988), by meanings that

are "felt or directly had" (Dewey 1981, 200). They are pervasive in experience because humans are living organisms, whose lives are structurally exposed to the environment – a natural and naturally social one – they interact with and depend on in order to be what they are (Dreon 2013, 80, Dreon 2019, 17 and 24). Moreover, it is precisely with reference to the felt qualities of a situation that Dewey mentions the word "aesthetic", or better "esthetic": "If we take advantage of the word esthetic in a wider sense than that of application to the beautiful and the ugly, esthetic quality, immediate, final or self-enclosed, indubitably characterizes natural situations as they empirically occur" (Dewey 1981, 82). Consequently, it makes sense to characterizing the aesthetic in experience as connected to the attempt to recover unity and harmony within organic-environmental interactions and to consider it as a precursor, so to say, of artistic practices – as John Ryder does. However, this characterization of the aesthetic should be explicitly connected with affective, qualitative or "esthetic" significances as pervasive features of experienced situations, grounded in the bio-social dependence of human life on the environment it is embedded in.

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A further possible integration to John Ryder's inquiry regards his conception of the political as a basic feature of experience. I think that this idea could be strengthened through an explicit emphasis on the Pragmatists' thesis of the essentially social character of human life and, more specifically, the high degree of interdependence, which characterizes it. Ryder is right to connect political experience with the human power to act and transform current circumstances into opportunities for further purposes. However, the natural human ability to face problems actively and productively is not enough to characterize the political as an essential feature of human experience. To put it very briefly, our experience is basically political also because we always find ourselves in a complex web of interpersonal relations of dependence, care, belonging, subordination, affiliation, and so on. In other words, human social relations are often

asymmetric power relations: they often involve relations of power that can have a negative characterization and mean coercion (although this is not always the case). Human relations cannot be reduced to a matter of power and this, to me, is the strength of the pragmatist heritage in comparison to critical theory, Foucault, Bourdieu and, before them, Nietzsche, whose lesson is valued by John Ryder. Nonetheless, power in human interactions should be thematically brought into focus, explicating its roots in human structural interdependence. The issue of interest, which the author considers in relation to the individual and the community, could be further developed against this background, so as to give an account of the often competing dynamics of human relations and their frequently, although not invariably, hierarchical structure (see Santarelli 2019 on interest).

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Finally, yet very importantly, the issue of language in experience deserves some words. John Ryder prefers not to engage with the issue of the language-experience debate that marked the confrontation between classical pragmatism and contemporary pragmatists, who returned to Pragmatism after the linguistic turn in analytic philosophy.[1] Differently, he adopts a deflating strategy, by acknowledging the role played by language in experience but scaling it down. Ryder's position is to assume that language is a constitutive feature of experience, together with emotions and the imagination, while denying it the role of a dimension of experience: as we have seen, the only dimensions of experience are the cognitive, the aesthetic, and the political. The argument he gives in support of this position is that the cognitive, the aesthetic, and the political are pervasive traits in experience – at least potentially – while the linguistic is not: "while all experience can, depending on the case, have cognitive, aesthetic, or political traits, not all experience can be linguistic, emotional, or imaginative" (Ryder 2020, 207). If speaking about possibilities, I honestly

have difficulties understanding why a specific experience – there is no milk for breakfast, I go and buy it at the supermarket – could be considered potentially political, but not imaginative and linguistic. For sure, it involves the power to transform and manipulate existent materials to tackle a problem by performing more or less habitual actions, but it also cannot occur outside a context of shared practices that are linguistically and culturally scaffolded. It is probably true that sometimes we should extend the concepts of the linguistic or the affective in order to apply them to each human experience, but the same happens with the political, the aesthetic, and the cognitive. In other words, even in these cases, we have to extend the significance of the terms. I am not arguing in favor of language as a quasi-transcendental condition of human experience, namely the space of reasons, as happens in McDowell's and Brandom's philosophies. With Dewey and Mead, I think that we should adopt a more empirical attitude toward language and consider its natural history, as it has occurred within a specific form of organic life and has contributed to re-shaping it from the inside (Margolis 2017). In other terms, by adopting an emergentist (but not teleologically compromised) view of human experience, I think we should consider the consequences of the completely contingent but irreversible advent of language, in comparison to previous animal forms of interaction, for the configuration of specifically human forms of interaction with the environment, both along an ontogenetic line and a phylogenetic one. Among other things, this means focusing on the role of linguistic practices in supporting the emergence of a specific form of cognition in humans, different from other forms of organic intelligence (Lorimer 1929). This does not involve supporting the claim that each human practice is strictly linguistic or can be translated into language, but considering that the environment where human experiences take place is a pervasively linguistic environmental niche, characterized by complex communicative and meaningful practices, it is clear that each young individual of our species finds herself embedded in it from birth.

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1 For an insightful overview of this discontinuity see Cometti 2010; an interesting balance on the language-experience debate is drawn by Hildebrand 2014.

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In conclusion, instead of emphasizing the distinction between the dimensions and the constituents of experience, it might be more advantageous to leave open the list of features characterizing experience as human and to consider the transformations this experience undergoes in the environment. Differently from other kinds of *Umwelt*, the human environment has become – and still continues to be – pervasively linguistic and charged with shared meanings, as well as increasingly characterized by very complex forms of sociality and conjoined action. This point is simply intended as a critical suggestion to carry on and further develop John Ryder's brilliant project of exploring the multifaceted "fabric of experience" through Pragmatist tools.

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ROBERT SCHWARTZ, *PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVES: CONSTRUCTIVISM BEYOND TRUTH AND REALISM*[1]
John Ryder

Robert Schwartz has gathered together a number of papers he has published over the years that deal with the issues of inquiry, truth, constructivism, normativity, and perception. The common theme of these papers, as the title of the work indicates, is that Schwartz addresses the topics from a pragmatist point of view. The essays are uniformly interesting and useful, two good reasons to recommend the book to any interested reader.

Schwartz deals with his themes with an analytic philosopher in mind, though he does so in ways that are a bit unusual and, I would say, successful. The first relevant point is that unlike many contemporary analytic philosophers who are interested in pragmatism, Schwartz draws not on recent debates in what is sometimes called 'analytic pragmatism', but on the classical pragmatists, primarily James and Dewey, but Peirce as well. His intent is to demonstrate 1) that much of the standard criticisms of the classical pragmatists, from Russell et al. to the present, have misunderstood the pragmatists' positions and arguments, 2) that the classical pragmatists themselves, or someone like himself who is thinking in their terms, can handle the criticisms even when they are more carefully stated, and 3) that classical pragmatism already had the conceptual resources to address satisfactorily many of the issues that still bedevil analytic philosophers. Schwartz accomplishes these ends admirably, though I am a sympathetic reader and predisposed to agree with him. One might wonder at various points how a less sympathetic, analytically inclined reader might respond, and one would get a sense of how Schwartz might handle such responses because at various points his own analysis takes the form of responses to objections that he has received along the way. It all makes for a philosophically satisfying read.

Another reason the book is worth reading and can be recommended without hesitation is the way it is written. I was once told by a Polish friend and colleague that a book of mine that was recently published was, and I paraphrase a bit, a good book but would never be popular in Poland because it was too clearly written. I apologize to Polish philosophers if this attribution to them of a predilection for obscurity is misplaced, but if my friend's comment was accurate, then Schwartz's book will have no chance in Poland because it is written clearly, without philosophical jargon, and the analyses are organized such that the reader can follow and appreciate them without difficulty or confusion. Again, I am admittedly a sympathetic reader, but in the end it all seems like sweet reason, and that is a testament to the clarity of Schwartz's analyses and to his rhetorical skills. The quality of the writing and presentation is yet another reason to read the book even if you are already well-versed in the pragmatist take on the issues. I know this material fairly well, and still found it valuable to follow Schwartz's well developed analyses.

The book is organized into four parts that deal with inquiry and knowledge, constructivism and world-making, ethics and normativity, and perception. There are one or two central ideas that run through all the papers, each having to do with a critical difference between the traditional pragmatist and analytic assumptions, and in drawing on them Schwartz can make his arguments with respect to each of the general topics.

The first of the relevant differences between the two traditions concerns epistemology. As Schwartz puts it, the analytic approach to epistemological questions has been to ask after the necessary and sufficient conditions that a proposition or belief must meet to count as knowledge, and the presumption has been, loosely put, that a proposition or belief counts as knowledge when it accords with a state of affairs to which it refers. One of the reasons analytic philosophers have tended to dismiss or reject pragmatism is that they do not see how pragmatists in their epistemology address these matters. And they are right that pragmatists do not address these questions, and they do not do so because they tend to regard the analytic points of departure as misguided

from the start. As Schwartz puts it, if we want to understand the cognitive then we need to begin not with formal accounts of propositions such that they count as knowledge, but rather with an examination of the process of inquiry itself. Schwartz addresses many of the detailed issues that this quick description elides, but even the quick and general account of the difference indicates the gulf between the two approaches. Not surprisingly, Schwartz argues that analytic philosophers have tended to miss this point in their criticisms of pragmatism, and furthermore, that pragmatism has very good reason to approach the whole epistemological issue the way it does.

The second general point is related to the first, and that is that analytic philosophers tend to assume that there is such a thing as reality entirely or largely independent of us, which is to say that they generally reject the idea that people play a centrally constructive role in what reality is and how we understand it. Analytic philosophers tend to be 'realists' in this sense, and the pragmatists are in their view 'anti-realists'. For Schwartz, though, pragmatists are neither realists nor anti-realists, but constructivists. Again, pragmatism rejects the initial terms in which the analytic issue is framed, which not surprisingly contributes to a tendency for the two traditions to talk past one another. In Schwartz's hands, however, the two engage directly, and pragmatism emerges as the conceptually stronger position.

These two philosophic perspectives – an inquiry-based epistemology and constructivism – inform Schwartz's discussion throughout the book. With respect to knowledge, for example, the analytic assumption is that there is an independent reality, a state of affairs, to which a proposition refers, and the proposition counts as knowledge if and only if it accords with that independent reality. There are of course other conditions that a proposition must meet on this view, but for our purposes we can focus on this one. If, however, it is more reasonable to take a constructivist approach to our conception of reality, then as a general understanding of knowledge, the analytic approach does not work. Arguably, or so the

classical pragmatists and Schwartz argue, approaching the whole matter from the point of view of inquiry, and the constructive role people have in it, gives us a much more satisfactory and useful understanding of knowledge and the instrumental role ideas play in the process, not to mention of the nature of truth.

In part, it should be pointed out, what makes the pragmatist approach in epistemology preferable to the traditional analytic way of considering knowledge is that many of the so-called epistemological problems that arise in the analytic tradition simply do not come up for the pragmatists. Solipsism is an example, as is skepticism. For his part, Schwartz pays attention to three other problems that he calls the Pessimistic Induction Puzzle, the Preface Puzzle, and the Lottery Puzzle. These are 'problems' that arise in the context of the role of probability in knowledge, and Schwartz argues, convincingly I would say, that they are in fact pseudo-problems. On pragmatist grounds, the probability involved in each of these puzzles does not undermine the legitimacy of accepting theories if those theories prove useful to accept, and no more than this is or should be required of us to justify accepting a theory. In other words, pragmatism can handle these issues successfully, and in ways that the analytic assumptions do not enable.

The same general points apply to normativity and ethics, which Schwartz takes up in Part III of the book. If we look not at the formal traits we expect or want a normative judgment to have, but instead at the actual role ethical judgments play in our lives and interactions with one another, then we avoid many of the conundrums that analytic approaches to ethics find themselves mired in, as in the case of epistemology, and we can achieve a more satisfactory understanding of ethical judgment and normativity generally. One problem for analytic philosophers in taking up pragmatist constructivism in ethics, as we pointed out above, is that the pragmatists simply do not accept many of the dualistic alternatives in which the analytic debates are framed. In the case of ethics, these would include such dualisms as fact and value, reason and desire, thought and action, is

and ought, means and ends, the individual and society, and others.

Ethical norms, we may say, are not facts of the world to discover, as analytic ethics and metaethics tend to have it, but principles that arise in the interaction between individuals and their environments. For Schwartz, here, as in the case of epistemology, the distinguishing feature of the pragmatist approach is its treatment of inquiry. As with knowledge generally, we do not start from a 'beginning', and we do not aim for the ideal. We start in the middle of things, re-evaluate when the need arises, and stop when we think we have reached the better of available alternatives in the way of thinking and acting. In this respect at least, the pursuit of ethical norms is no different than the pursuit of scientific of philosophical understanding. And by going through the dualisms and dichotomies, we reach an understanding that is not only useful in ethical practice, but that demonstrates conceptually the unnecessary nature of the dualisms from the start.

The constructivism that is explicit throughout the book is considerably reinforced in Schwartz's analysis of perception. In what may be the most original contribution to pragmatist thinking on these questions, Schwartz argues that the traditional assumptions many of us make when we talk about perception, specifically that sensory experience often is illusory, is misguided and unsustainable. His point is that when we say, for example, that we are mistaken when we see two lines as different in length when in fact their measurement is equivalent, we are illegitimately positing one relational context – measurement - as 'reality', and the other – in this case the phenomenal – as illusory. But there is no good reason to say that one set of relations, and the property that two lines have in it, is any more 'real' than the other.They differ, and they function differently, and our understanding of ourselves, perception, knowledge, and reality will

be greatly enhanced by understanding this. Points like these have been made before by James, Dewey, Buchler, and others, and Schwartz has advanced the issue by addressing the problems in the context of contemporary literature on perception more carefully and thoroughly than anyone else of whom I am aware. In this regard, Schwartz makes a genuine contribution to pragmatist thinking.

As is always the case, there are points here and there that I wish Schwartz had handled differently, which is a way of saying that I disagree with what he has said. To give one example, in a discussion of art, one that is admirably lucid and insightful, it is unfortunate that Schwartz follows some other philosophers of art and uses the term 'lying' to describe the fact that art does not reproduce nature. His whole point in this discussion (Chapter 8) is that in not representing nature, art in fact adds to it in a way that can be called constructive. I think he is right about that, but letting this be called lying makes it less plausible. Furthermore, it can easily obscure the important fact that art can be and often is cognitive in the sense that it contributes to our understanding of its subjects, which would be odd at best if we also want to say that what art does is a lie. On a more positive note, in the same chapter Schwartz takes up the question of the relation of art and science, and interestingly makes the important point that science asserts, but art typically does not. In this respect, though he may not realize it, he shares an insight with Justus Buchler's theory of judgment.

As many of us have been aware all along, pragmatism more than holds its own in the understanding of fundamental and profound aspects of the world and of the many dimensions of human life and experience. Schwartz has gone a long way in helping us understand even better than we might have why and how that is the case.

BODIES IN THE STREETS: THE SOMAESTHETICS OF CITY LIFE [1]
STUDIES IN SOMAESTHETICS ED. BY RICHARD SHUSTERMAN

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What is a city? The answer depends on the interpreter's angle. For a modern politician, a city is a place where he can get more votes and form people's lives. For a criminal, a city is a place of goods and people that can be stolen or robed. For a businessman, the city can be a place of abundant financial opportunities. For urban planners, the city is a large human settlement, where they try to create the so-called "smart city." On the most general level, taking into account these and similar opportunities, we can say that the city is the most crucial artificial space of living in humankind's history. If we focus on a particular level, it is to recognize that there are as many different approaches as many central values and interests are connected to city life.

One of these possible approaches is the aesthetic view of street life and the city. Richard Shusterman and his colleagues approach the city-phenomenon from a somaesthetic point of view. They created an excellent volume of essays that describe the extremely diverse somaesthetic qualities of city life. As Shusterman wrote it,

> Somaesthetics, then, can be defined as the critical study and meliorative cultivation of the body as the site not only of experienced subjectivity and sensory appreciation (aesthesis) that guides our action and performance but also of our creative self-fashioning through the ways we use, groom, and adorn our physical bodies to express our values and stylize ourselves. To realize its aims of improving somatic experience and expression, somaesthetics advocates integrating theory and practice. (p. 15)

The soma-centered approach of city life results – at least – in two consequences. On the one hand, somaesthetics is multidimensional; on the other hand, it is all-embracing. The multifaceted approach follows from the fact that our soma as "the tool of tools" takes part in the most diverse relationships, from the aesthetic to the moral, legal, criminal, gender, financial, cultural, and the political, etc. connections. This side of the topic is represented in the main parts of the volume: Part 2, "Festival, Revolution, Death;" Part 3, "Performances of Resistance, Gender, and Crime;" and Part 4, "Bodies in the Streets of Literature and Art." However, Part 1 ("The Soma, the City, and the Weather") explains some general somatic connections, and in this way, it belongs to the all-embracing dimension.

The multidimensional Somaesthetics
"Bodies in the Streets of Literature and Art" (Part 4)

If we break with the standard reading tradition and start from the back (Part 4), it is an obvious starting point that most of the artworks in the field of literature and art, in general, connected to cities since the majority of humankind lives in the cities. The leading paper of Evy Varsamopoulou ("Terrae Incognitae": The Somaesthetics of Thomas De Quincey's Psychogeography) is a fantastic realization of the somaesthetic analysis of the city through De Quincey's main text, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*. Focusing on this "extraordinary Romantic text of analytic, pragmatic, and performative somaesthetics, the author shows that the everyday experience of the opium-habit is [...] turned into a compelling and sophisticated literary work of art" (p. 254). Varsamopoulou emphasizes not only De Quincey's merit to make "London the first city where the interface of body and urban space redefines modern subjectivity in literature" (p. 255), but she also shows the rich connections between De Quincey's works and the 20th-century artistic method and group, Psychogeography and the Situationist International (1957-72). – The next paper was written by an expert on William S. Burroughs's life and ideas ("The Empty Spaces You Run Into: The City as Character and Background in William S. Burroughs's *Junky, Queer, and Naked Lunch*"). Robert W. Jones II considers "the links between the evolution of Burroughs's thoughts on the body-mind problem and the roots of somaesthetics." He states that "one of the strongest points of connec-

tion between Burroughs's somatic philosophy and Shusterman's somaesthetics is the relation of Feldenkrais with the work of Korzybski" (p. 275). Otherwise, it becomes clear that the heroin addict Burroughs was a lover of cities since he spent most of his life in New York, Mexico City, London, Paris, and the Tangier International Zone close to Morocco. Having befriended Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, he created and exhibited hundreds of paintings and visual artworks and wrote plenty of essays and novels. In some of these novels, William Lee (Burroughs's pen name) not only describes the cities of New Orleans (*Junky*), Mexico City (*Queer*), and Interzone (*Naked Lunch*) in somatic terms, but it is proved that Burroughs also used the "practice of self-writing" that "provides the foundation for his own personal transformation" (p. 288). Bodies, urban settings, and the cities themselves are narratives of Burroughs's self, and it means that self-transforming writing was for him both a form of therapy and an art of living. – The final paper of this part, "The Somaesthetic Sublime: Varanasi in Modern and Contemporary Indian Art," deals with sublime in the modern Indian Art. Pradeep A. Dhillon examines "the ways in which three leading Indian modern artists – Ram Kumar (1924–2018), M.F. Hussain (1915–2011), and Paresh Amity (1965-) – represent bodies, dead, decaying and living, in the streets of the sacred city of Banaras" (p. 297). Dhillon is convinced that through representations of the city of Varanasi (it is also called Banaras or Kashi) "by these three artists, we see a shift away from a modernistic notion of the city to one that signals a turn to a postmodern sublime – one that is embodied and not merely representational" (p. 297). She argues that "taking a somaesthetic view of the notion of the sublime in representations of Varanasi enables us to not only obtain a deeper appreciation of the sublime as articulated by Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant but also of thinkers of the postmodern sublime like Jean-Francois Lyotard" (pp. 297-298).

"Performances of Resistance, Gender, and Crime" (Part 3)

This part of the volume characterizes mostly a feminist approach to city life. Although the basic essence of feminism is right that women should have equal rights to men, feminism, at the same time, is a collection of movements. These ideologies include everything from classical liberal feminism to radical and Marxist feminism, Black and Postcolonial feminism, to Postmodern feminism. These movements and theories aim at establishing and defending equal political, cultural, economic, and social rights for women, and they fight with very different tools and methods. From a historical perspective, feminism had three" waves." Each has dealt with various aspects of the same feminist issues. The first wave refers to the movement of the later 19th through the early 20th century, when women fought mostly for suffrage, working, and educational possibilities. The second wave (the 1960s-1980s) fought against the political, legal, and cultural inequalities and the oppressed social role of women in the patriarchal society. The third wave of feminism (from the 1990s to early 2000s) is a continuation of the second wave and a response to perceived failures. Ilaria Serra's paper ("Street" is Feminine in Italian: Feminine Bodies and Street Spaces) deals mostly with the second wave of Italian feminism. After collecting the similarities of somaesthetics and feminism, Serra describes the birth of Italian feminism in three steps. First, we can see the traditional Italian tension between the male-dominated streets and the female-dominated homes. Second, she shows the feminist marches, the female occupation of the streets in the main cities in the 1970s. In the third step, after emphasizing the symbolic meaning of these feminist actions, Serra underlines that their fight is continuing. "The feminist movement symbolically redesigned and re-gendered city spaces through their specific behavior. Protests and marches took place mainly in the big cities like Rome, Milan, Bologna, Padua, Mestre, and Trieste – because the city is the traditional public arena for body politics" (p. 167). Then she shows the third wave of Italian femi-

nism during the power of Berlusconi (cf. p. 172) and lays stress on the present, saying that "In Italy, the fighting to appropriate the streets is still not over. It has moved from the realm of somaesthetics to the realm of toponomastics" (p. 174). – The second article of this part ("Bodies in Alliance and New Sites of Resistance: Performing the Political in Neoliberal Public Spaces") causes another type of joy. Having emphasized the most important similarities of somaesthetics and feminist theory (rejection of body-mind dichotomy, embodiment, contingency, interdependence, etc.) systematically, Federica Castelli refuses the absolute subjectivity of the Neoliberal approaches. "That absolute, sovereign subject, in which philosophy has made many of us believe, does not exist" (p. 182). She says that subjectivities "are embodied, sexualized and gendered, exposed, relational, and situated" (p. 183). In her somaesthetically strengthened feminist opinion, *bodies are ab ovo political* since "they relate subjects to the world around them and make the relationship between humans possible" (p. 183). It is clear for her that this standpoint is in harmony not only with P. Bourdieu's view (cf. p. 185) but also with Shusterman" s claim:

> Our bodies, moreover, provide an essential medium or tool through which social norms and political power are transmitted, inscribed, and preserved in society. Ethical codes, social and political institutions, and even laws are mere abstractions until they are given life through incorporation into bodily dispositions and actions. (Shusterman, "Somaesthetics and Politics," p. 9)

Castelli accentuates that

> Neoliberal policies and functionalism in urban planning have come together in the reshaping of the modern city, giving rise to a number of deurbanizing and desubjectivating processes, including fragmentation, the crisis of cohabitation, isolation, segregation, and the desiccation of public space. (p. 184)

It follows for her from the situation mentioned above that we have to put "bodies back into the very center of the political scene" (p. 183) if we want to re-think contemporary democracy. Namely, it is bright for her as the sun that

> new practices and spaces of resistance have arisen, rooted in embodied subjectivities and urban

everyday practices, all different from one another yet in alliance. These alliances are not idealistic, nor carried on in the name of universal and abstract goals, but are rooted in material situations, volatile, and bound to the contingency of bodies (p. 188)

It is especially true since 2011, which was the "year of global revolts" or with Žižek's words, the year "of dreaming dangerously" (p.188). Today, in 2020, during the American and worldwide protests, it is much more real. Two other eminent articles about London and Tehran complete this radical feminist approach of city life. Chung-Jen Chen ("East End Prostitution and the Fear of Contagion: On Body Consciousness of the Ripper Case") is the expert of Victorian Great Britain, and he shows the contemporary London through the still famous and infamous story of Jack the Ripper. As long as the West End of the modern metropolis was the manifestation of well-being, richness, and decency, the East End embodied poverty, misery, filth, and crime. Prostitutes were counted as embodiments of sin, and people disapproved as much the murdered prostitute as the serial killer. Alireza Fakhrkonandeh ("Towards a Somaesthetic Conception of Culture in Iran: Somaesthetic Performance as Cultural Praxis in Tehran") creates the atmosphere of Tehran after Revolution (1979) for the reader and describes the instrumental role of the bodies in Iranian history. He planned and realized a multimedia somaesthetic work of performance art in the Vali Asr Boulevard of the capital to show the possible new use of bodies in the streets:

> Vali Asr Boulevard is the longest and most beautiful boulevard in Tehran. We sought to foreground the spatial, social, aesthetic, affecttive, and psychosomatic differences between boulevards and highways, and the adverse effects that the latter has had on city life. It was also a performative tactic adopted to creatively counter the psychosomatic grid of the normalized discursive space, but also to retrieve long repressed practices and modes of bodily presence and relationship in Tehran's streets, in particular along the exemplary street of Vali-Asr. As such, this performance was not only a site-specific performance and a site-situational intervention but also one intended to be extendable to most urban places in Iran. It was largely inspired by Certeau's

idea of the act of transversal walking as an act of anamnesis. (p. 241).

"Festival, Revolution, and Death" (Part 2)

Foucault's analysis of biopower is well-known, and we have also seen from the feminist articles that our soma is always political. The abstract subjectivity does not exist since our soma permanently "creates" an intersectional, embodied subjectivity. It is intersectional because we are determined by gender, race, class, economic, political, etc. These factors are embodied since, without real behaviors and actions, values, norms, and institutions remain mere abstractions. It is the basis of Shusterman's somapower. As long as Foucault's biopower expresses the relationships of oppression, Shusterman's somapower prefers emancipation. This is, what L. Koczanowicz also emphasized in his article, "Toward a democratic Utopia of everydayness: microphysics of emancipation and somapower," speaking about the emancipation in everyday life:

> Emancipation must be understood not only as an overall movement towards greater freedom and/or equality but also as an ensemble of everyday activities that enable people to accomplish a greater autonomy in their actual social relations. I refer to the latter aspect of the social and political life as the 'microphysics of emancipation' (L. Koczanowicz, 2020, p. 7-8.)

He states that beside Merleau-Ponty's and Foucault's conceptualization of the body, Shusterman's somaesthetics is the third most important theory of the body in contemporary humanities and social sciences (cf. p. 8-9.). Koczanowicz also declares that "bodily practices claim a very special position among the multiple forms of micro-emancipation" (p. 8.). Somaesthetics emphasizes the emancipatory potential of the body, and its manifesttation is the somapower. In Koczanowicz's opinion, the emancipatory

> possibilities arise when bodily activity collides with oppressive power, and somatic practices become emblems of emancipation. The special place of somapower among other emancipatory practices of everyday life is guaranteed by its tangibility and its opposition to all forms of abstract ideology. This property of bodily experience has already been examined in terms of its

utility in the critique of oppression-justifying ideologies and of its function as a trigger of transition from abstract social constructs to rudimentary, palpable elements of social life. (L. Koczanowicz, 2020, p. 9.)

Somapower, the emancipatory and political application of somaesthetics, has got an extraordinary emphasis in this part of the volume. These contributions clearly show that, in Shusterman's words, "as bodies shape city life, so the city's spaces, structures, economies, politics, rhythms, and atmospheres reciprocally shape the urban soma" (p. 1.). The goal of Matthew Crippen's article ("Body Politics: Revolt and City Celebration") is

> to articulate somaesthetic forms of expression occurring irrespective of knowledge of the philosophical movement. To this end, it focuses on Mandalay's Water Festival and Tahrir Square during the Arab Spring, which stand as illustrations. These events do so, first, because they exemplify bodily and therewith experiential coordination around urban structures; second, because they are instances of somatic refashioning, for example, through creative conversion of injuries into celebratory badges of dissent; and, third, because they organize around cultural and political concerns, giving them emotional and hence visceral dimensions. Directed almost therapeutically towards life-improvement – whether implicitly or explicitly – these celebrations and protests also have meliorative aspects that mark the somaesthetic movement. (p. 89.)

Noemi Marin, in her article ("Bodies in the Streets of Eastern Europe: Rhetorical Space and the Somaesthetics of Revolution"), concentrates mostly on the Romanian Revolution within the Eastern European framework:

> Somaesthetics and rhetorical studies can provide converging interdisciplinary approaches to examine such discursive and somaesthetic loci of political action. The events of totalitarian Romania in December 1989 engage both rhetorical and somaesthetic dimensions as powerful dynamics that first empty the streets of the past and then open novel public spaces for discourses of freedom. I contend that the rhetorical space created by emptying the Romanian official political arena in December 1989 should be examined from a somaesthetic perspective. For, it is in the 'doing' (acting/engaging/embodying the revolution) that Romanian bodies in and of the streets perform politically, culturally, and somaesthetically, reconstituting the nation as a "political populous" in ways never seen or experienced for half a century of communist regime. (p. 126.)

Marilyn Miller's essay ("From Dancing to Dying in the Streets: Somaesthetics of the Cuban Revolution in Memories of Underdevelopment and Juan of the Dead"), as Shusterman puts it, "continues the theme of communist regulation and surveillance of bodies, streets, and public spaces by examining how Castro's revolutionary government repurposed Havana's streets and neighborhoods to serve the sociopolitical and cultural aims of its political regime" (p. 5.). She uses two Cuban films to demonstrate the tense relationship between communist expectations and the real somatic needs of the citizens:

> Films depicting quotidian experience in Cuba after 1959 frequently reference the unique relationship between the individual human body and the body politic outlined above, highlighting the imbrication of somaesthetics in political rhetoric in the island. Each of the films studied here features the physical body as a vehicle for accepting or rejecting political engagement, and as a terrain in which to exercise or relinquish personal control of the self. The 1968 masterpiece *Memories of Underdevelopment*, by the late Cuban filmmaker Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, takes us back to the first decade of the new revolutionary government. […] Nearly a half-century later, the Argentine-born director Alejandro Brugués returns to the scene of the Cuban crisis of identity within the Revolution with the 2011 film *Juan de los Muertos* (*Juan of the Dead*), a satire that infuses the zombie genre with the irreverent humor characteristic of Cuban choteo. (p. 136, and 140.)

The all-embracing Somaesthetics
"The Soma, the City, and the Weather" (Part 1)

As I have mentioned, somaesthetics has not only a multidimensional but also an all-embracing character. Our soma is our "tool of tools," and we can enjoy those contributions in the first part of the volume emphasizing this side of somaesthetics. First of all, Richard Shusterman's profound article ("Bodies in the Streets: The Soma, the City, and the Art of Living") offers a careful introduction to and general framework for the relationships between somaesthetics and city life. Shusterman, like a jeweler, holds in his hands the concepts of the "body," "streets," and "soma" and cuts the shape of these intellectual diamonds. As we know, jewelers pay incredibly great attention for the cut from the four C-s (carat, cut, color, clarity)

since it determines mostly the quality of the proportions and symmetry of the diamond. So does Shusterman, when he starts with "Ambiguities and Ambivalence," analyzing every important side of the concepts mentioned above. He observes the intellectual refraction and equilibrium of these concepts while giving a definition of somaesthetics ("Somaesthetics can be defined as the critical study and meliorative cultivation of the body as the site not only of experienced subjectivity and sensory appreciation (aesthesis) that guides our action and performance but also of our creative self-fashioning through the ways we use, groom, and adorn our physical bodies to express our values and stylize ourselves" (p. 15).), and preparing the "Analogies of Soma and City" part of his text. "Elaborating the analogy of soma and city could provide a useful background for exploring the somaesthetics of city life",- Shusterman says. On the one hand, he connects in this way to those significant philosophers who wrote about the relationship between the city and the human being (Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Nietzsche, etc.). On the other hand, enumerating several common features of soma and city, he shows us the richness of somaesthetics and ultimately that of human life. This part of his article manifests for me that Shusterman's somaesthetics is not only aesthetics but instead a philosophy.

In the next three parts of his article, Shusterman examines the *crowd*. He relies here mostly on philosophers, aestheticians, and poets (G. Simmel, F. Engels, Ch. Baudelaire, E. A. Poe, H. Plessner, and W. Benjamin) since he wants to shed light first of all on the tensions between the crowd and the individual ("The Crowd and the Individual on the Street"). After criticizing Engels since he seems to reject the analogy of "the crowd as a collective, summative body or super-soma," Shusterman shows Poe's and Baudelaire's description of the individual's immersion into the crowd, and Benjamin's summary:

> Walter Benjamin, the Jewish literary theorist born and raised in Berlin, further explores the notion of crowds by highlighting the differences between Poe's gloomier, terror-tinted depiction of the city "masses" and Baudelaire's bright vi-

sion of the urban crowd "in all its splendor and majesty [with]… the eternal beauty and the amazing harmony of life in the capital cities". Benjamin is more careful than Baudelaire to distinguish the *flâneur* from the man of the crowd. Resisting the "manic behavior" of the metropolitan masses hurrying to satisfy their needs, the *flâneur* distances himself from the crowd by his lack of practical purpose or urgency. He demands his "leisure" and "elbow room" so as not to be jostled or overwhelmed by the crowd. But in contrast to aristocrats and country yokels, the *flâneur* could also enjoy "the temptation to lose himself" in the crowd, to savor a delicious moment of self-abandon, a moment of freedom from the pressures of maintaining a distinctive selfhood, a qualitative uniqueness. (pp. 28-29)

From the somaesthetic point of view, I understand the priority of the poetic narratives. Nevertheless, it would have been worth mentioning David Riesman's famous book, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (1969). After a half-century, this text has lost nothing from its clarifying capacity if we want to understand the crowd in the world's biggest cities. It shows how the traditional, inner-directed social character turned into an other-directed one. Although it describes American society after World War II, this book could help us understand much better the psychological, political, economic, and even the somaesthetic features of the crowd in present metropoles.

In part four ("Intoxication and Alienation from the City Streets"), Shusterman continues the philosophical analysis of the somaesthetic dimensions of city life and crowd with the help of Benjamin and Wittgenstein. Big cities have always "served as homes for the homeless." It is true from the "presence of strangers or foreigners together with their feelings of alienation," through ghettos of Jews, to the refugees and migrants both in Europe and in the U. S. today. The crowd might offer shelter for strangers and can cause intoxication for those who lost their homeland. Strangers and foreigners can hide in the throng of the crowd, but the Benjamin-like refugees can also get "drunk" from the long and aimless walks through the streets. What is more, people can also create ghettos, as Wittgenstein notes this possible political and somaesthetic side of the polis, evoking antisemitism and genocide:

> Within the history of the peoples of Europe …the Jews… are experienced as a sort of disease, and anomaly, and no one wants to put a disease on the same level as normal life [and no one wants to speak of a disease as if it had the same rights as healthy bodily processes (even painful ones)]. (p. 31)

Fortunately, the polis can also provide the opposite since "the city streets can provide a cultural education for the crowd that, as a human collective, holds the promise of political transformation from an amorphous mass toward an effective public sphere" (p. 30). Nevertheless, we should accept that change and diversity belong to the normal dynamism of city life, and we are lucky if it happens in a peaceful and harmonious form.

In the last part of his well-structured paper ("Drama, the Art of Living, and Somaesthetic Self-Fashioning"), Shusterman works out a philosophical and poetical summary of the somaesthetic appropriation of the city life. "If Benjamin likens the city streets to a home," he says, "Lewis Mumford instead highlights their role as theatre" (p. 32). The crowd and streets provide the environment and medium for the social drama, where "people find rich resources for somaesthetically expressing and stylizing themselves as distinctive, creative characters, as unique individuals consciously engaged in the art of living" (p. 32). Crowds can help establish the theatre of this social drama at least in four ways, and streets can contribute to it "as physical space, as structured social space, and as narrative space" (p. 33). Unlike Dewey, Shusterman mostly analyzes real artworks to support his general aesthetic views. Thus, the poetic peak of the summary was created by the help of Benjamin's interpretation of Baudelaire's famous sonnet, "À une passante." Having quoted the poem, Shusterman analyzes it, illustrating the possible contribution of the crowd and the streets. For getting an impression, it is worth mentioning some sentences:

> This bewitching meeting of eyes on the street, Benjamin argues, is not really love "at first sight, but at last sight," indicating "a farewell forever" and thus a "catastrophe" (SM 169). But the lines strike me as more ambiguous, as expressive also of the positive possibilities of passage through

the city streets. Like the openness of streets, a second meeting with the enchanting lady is left an open possibility, as we see through the question mark and the "*peut-être*" ("Maybe")" (p. 35).

As Shusterman closes his article, it is beyond question that "bodies in the streets still matter, aesthetically and politically" (p. 35).

Mădălina Diaconu's article ("The Weather-Worlds of Urban Bodies") emphasizes the weather's somatic and psychosomatic effects and connections with impressive knowledge and elaboration. Weather is one of those general phenomena which influence can be found in the life of every human being. She mentions that urban studies concentrated for a long time "on the psychology and ethos of urbanity" (from Georg Simmel, Walter Benjamin, Robert Parks, and Louis Wirth to Jane Jacobs and Marc Augé), but recently the focus has changed to "urban' sensescapes'" and to the special practices through which we experience and handle these natural circumstances:

> At present, there is scientific evidence that atmospheric factors influence in a positive or negative way and in various degrees our human well-being, behavior and performance. Whether protected indoors from the weather or exposed to it while walking, cycling, sunbathing, or painting *en plein air*, city dwellers are living bodies who belong to nature and interact with the weather more than we like to admit. In this respect, somaesthetics is a promising approach for giving an account of this universal form of experience" (p. 39).

Henrik Reeh's article ("White on Black: Snow in the City, Skiing in Copenhagen") continues with one form of manifestation of the weather: snowing. He, who is also a photographer, shows us the picturesque and moving effects of snowing in Kierkegaard's city, Copenhagen. After getting completely altered experiences of this city by the help of late-night skiing, Reeh used his digital camera to study and capture the "urban snowscape" and then created an artistic montage from the notes of his skiing observations, his photographs, and Benjamin's descriptions of the snowy Moscow and Berlin. Thus, he has created "a dialog on urban snow and skiing as a somaesthetic environment" (p. 62).

Summary

Shusterman and his colleagues launched a significant volume of essays about a new dimension of somaesthetics: bodies in the street. It shows somaesthetics' usefulness and ability to interpret every dimension of human life. Unfortunately, Georg Floyd's violent death and the American protest movements against racism gave a sad actuality of the volume's essential political content. Although later criminals and provocateurs also joined the happenings, it is beyond question that the start of the protests against racism was merely political, and these movements not only spread all over the world, but they will also merge with the presidential election campaign 2020 of the U. S. A.

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