Personalized Somaesthetics: An Actress' Explorations for the Stage and Life
An interview with Roberta Carreri

Falk Heinrich

Department of Culture and Communication, Aalborg University, Denmark, ORCID: 0000-0001-7000-0362

Abstract: *This interview with Roberta Carreri, former actress of Odin Teatret/Nordic Theatre Laboratory, explores the interplay between professional actor training and personal life. The conversation traces Carreri's journey from her initial fascination with theatre and dance to five decades of rigorous body-based practice. She reflects on the transformative power of physical training, intercultural techniques, and lifelong artistic discipline—framing them as both professional necessity and a form of self-cultivation. Key themes include embodied awareness, freedom through mastery of technique, and the integration of artistic inspiration into everyday life. Carreri's experiences reveal how somatic practices shape identity, resilience, and a philosophy of living, culminating in an acceptance of aging and mortality as part of a fulfilled existence.*

Keywords: *Theatre, Acting, Body Technique, Awareness, Training, Skill*

1. Introduction

This interview was conducted on 22 August 2025 in the living room of Roberta Carreri's home in Holstebro, Denmark. The interviewee is Roberta Carreri, a former actress with the Odin Theatre[1] /Nordic Theatre Laboratory, Denmark. Today, she is partly retired and partly engaged in conducting seminars and directing theatre productions. The interview followed a semi-structured guide that had been sent to the interviewee beforehand.

This article presents a transcript of selected parts of the interview. The criterion for selection was relevance to my investigatory focus, which I will outline later in this introduction. As both the interviewer and the interviewee are non-native English speakers, the transcript was copy-edited for grammar, readability, and style.

As part of the introduction, I would like to briefly introduce myself and my relationship with Roberta Carreri. I began one of my professional careers as a theatre actor, first in Germany and later in Denmark. In the early 1990s, my path as an actor led me to the Odin Theatre in Denmark, where RC was one of the company's actors. She became my teacher when she invited me to a three-month seminar. After that seminar, I took over a role in one of Odin Theatre's ensemble performances and another in their street parades. At that time, my relationship with

1 Odin Teatret is an internationally renowned theatre group founded in 1964 by Eugenio Barba in Oslo, later relocating to Holstebro, Denmark. Known for its experimental and intercultural approach, Odin Teatret combines rigorous actor training with research into performance traditions from around the world. The company has developed a distinctive style that blends physical theatre, music, and storytelling, often exploring themes of identity, memory, and cultural exchange. Beyond performances, Odin Teatret is a hub for workshops, publications, and the development of theatre anthropology.

RC was that of master and student. RC worked at the Odin Theatre/Nordic Theatre Laboratory throughout her entire professional career, which lasted approximately 50 years. I left the theatre some years later to pursue my own path—first as an actor and theatre director, and later as a researcher and professor of performative and participatory aesthetics at Aalborg University, Denmark.

My academic interest in interviewing her grew out of my awareness that she had worked intensively with her body (including her voice) as an artistic medium. One of the defining characteristics of the Odin Theatre is its highly body-based approach to acting and training. Its declared ambition was that continuous body and voice training should constitute the actors' daily practice, serving both the deepening and broadening of expressive proficiency and the cultivation of a discipline that enables the transgression of subjective limits which might otherwise hinder the full development of a theatrical figure. In my view, lifelong work with one's embodied mind and mindful body must also be a form of self-cultivation—one that serves not only the theatre but also the understanding and acceptance of one's personal life. In that sense, actor training may imply an art of living.

But what does it mean to train one's body as a tool for self-cultivation? What is the relationship between work on acting techniques—aimed at creating theatrical figures and performances—and one's personal life? Is the motivation to explore numerous body techniques found solely in an actor's professional ambitions, or does it also stem from a desire to gain insights and develop practices as a means towards a fulfilling life?

The term *fulfilling* encompasses a multitude of meanings depending on one's perspective and ambitions. However, it primarily expresses a hope and a vague vision of a life in harmony with the contextual conditions of our particular existence. Evidently, working as a professional actor or actress differs from participating in yoga or Tai Chi workshops or other somatic and mindfulness practices, which widely promise a better, healthier, and happier life. This is not necessarily the case for actors, for whom other criteria—such as creating high-quality artworks—may be more important. Yet, I assume that even this ambition must be motivated by the wish to experience moments of fulfilment.

Thus, my overall strategy for this interview was to encourage Roberta Carreri to reflect on and articulate the significance of her professional work for her personal life, whatever that may entail. Furthermore, I aim to refrain from theoretical interpretations or forcing her words into a philosophical straitjacket, because I want to give readers the opportunity to sense what is described in their own bodies. Many of Roberta Carreri's reflections employ a professional discourse on acting and its various techniques. However, their content can readily be applied to other somatic practices involving body techniques.

To get to know her a little, let us begin with the beginning of her professional life as an actress.

2. The interview

Falk Heinrich (FH): What drew you to acting as a profession and a lifestyle? How did you get started in theatre?

Roberta Carreri (RC): I started studying at university. I chose history of art, but I also decided to take exams in the history of music, theatre, and cinema – and I was fascinated by architecture as well. In a way, I was pursuing beauty. Another thing I was doing at that time was dancing – not professionally, not even as an amateur. I was dancing in discotheques, and I loved it. When I danced, I felt good. Apart from drawing, dancing was my first real perception of my

body in a pleasant way. I felt my body was free to do what it wanted, and I felt good doing what it wanted. I wasn't thinking; it wasn't about seduction. I danced because I liked it.

While preparing for my theatre history exam, I was working on sacred theatre – texts by Grotowski and Eugenio Barba. Then, in 1973, Odin Teatret came to Bergamo, a city near Milan. I saw their performance, *Min fars hus (My Father's House)*. There were only about 60 spectators sitting on benches without backs, framing a rectangular wooden floor. They had asked for a wooden floor for the performers. I remember entering, sitting down, crossing my legs – and then the performance began. It unfolded not only in the centre of the space but also in the passages between the benches. The actors moved behind us, singing behind us. When they sang behind the benches, I could see the spectators opposite me. It felt like being embraced by the performers.

They performed in a language no one understood – Danish actors speaking invented Russian, gibberish – except for the first phrase: "For you, Fodor Dostoevsky." Their bodies were beautiful, moving with an energy as strong as Dostoevsky's writing – passionate yet precise. I was never afraid they'd hurt themselves. It was what I would call perfect bodies in motion, giving us energy and astonishing us. But not because they were virtuosos – that only stimulates the brain. No, they affected me existentially. For the entire hour, I didn't move. When the performance ended and everyone left, I was the last one sitting, my legs still crossed as when I arrived. That had never happened to me in theatre before; I was usually shifting about. Here, I was hypnotised – like a rabbit caught in headlights. It was so powerful that when everyone left, I felt at home in that space because I knew the people working there. Then I started crying – a real outburst of emotion.

The next day, I returned to see a demonstration of actor training by two actors, Iben Nagel Rasmussen and Jan Christensen. They showed the training while Eugenio Barba explained what they were doing. I was amazed at how hard it was to perform. It looked like improvisation, but it wasn't – everything was fixed. Two things struck me: first, these people did what they said, unlike those who say one thing and do another. Second, I wanted to write my thesis about them. I even had a title: *From the Body as a Statue to the Body as Music*. Once again, these bodies were beautiful – young men and two women, all between 25 and 30. They were also very… how can I say… free, though that's an imprecise word. I could feel they were completely in their bodies. They weren't just doing something; they were what they were doing. They *were*. And that fascinated me.

> [At this point, RC recalled that Eugenio Barba agreed Roberta could follow the theatre to write her university thesis, on the condition that she took part in the actor's training and the development of a performance as an actress – a process that would take two years. She accepted these conditions.]

RC: So, one year later, I joined the group. Mm. And the first thing, I was feeling the enormous resistance of my body. Doing acrobatics, running in the mornings. It was so hard working with a *bushman* – this piece of wood you're meant to use for exercises. I was hitting myself all the time. For two years, I really suffered. I cried from frustration and pain every day. Those first two years were extremely hard for me; painful on different levels. They were like the Sun Dance of the North American Indians – that ritual, that painful ritual of transforming from an adolescent into an adult.

But then what happened was that life at Odin Theatre was so intense and so painful that I didn't really have time to study much. During the first six months, I managed to pass one exam.

Slowly, slowly, I realised it was no longer a thesis I was writing. I was writing my life.

And then, slowly, slowly, after two and a half years, I started to feel much better in my body. I began not only doing the exercises I was told to do, but also creating exercises inspired by performances I saw– for instance, one by Bob Wilson. What inspired me most was seeing the dancer, Lucinda Childs. Lucinda Childs crossed the space in a performance called *Einstein on the Beach* in a way that really fascinated me, on a sensory level. When I came back to Holstebro, I started using Philip Glass's music in my training, and I began imitating her walk and all the small changes. It was a repetitive walk with subtle variations, like Philip Glass's music – repetitive, but never the same. And that is the miracle; that's what fascinated me.

So, I must say that over time, my training has been inspired by performances, by dance forms I've seen and that have affected me. I've tried to translate them, make them my own movements, make them part of my body through daily work.

RC: And of course, meeting masters through ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology), where I was introduced to the different inner tensions of the *tribhanga*[2] and of Balinese dance – using the tension between shoulders, toes and back – and all these strategies: the gliding on the floor of Noh theatre, Kabuki, all these different ways to make the body extra-ordinary. One has to embody these strategies and, when you've got the technique, then… then you can feel very well inside it.

One of the strongest experiences I had was working with Katsuko Azuma in 1980 in Bonn, Germany. Eugenio had decided that I should learn the "lion dance" from Kabuki theatre because he wanted to include it in a performance called *The Million*. For two weeks, I worked with Katsuko Azuma, who was a teacher of Nihon-Buyō. The first thing she asked me was to take the basic position. When you think about a position, you imagine something static. But this position was very complex. You had to place your heels one fist apart, then stand and bend your knees slightly, and feel that your coccyx – your tailbone – was being pulled down to the centre of the earth by a wire. Then imagine another wire starting from the top of your head and going up to the sky. And you had to feel a bowl of steel covered with velvet in your belly.

All these words meant nothing to me at first, because I was looking for a position – and it didn't work the first day, nor the second. I was very frustrated until I understood that it wasn't a position. I had to be in action. It was an action, then another action, then a third action; only then did I get the action inside me. And this action was wrapped around my axis. After six years at Odin Theatre, I knew how to work with my arms, legs, hands, feet, torso – but I had never felt my body from inside. It was like having one of those poles, dancers swing around inside you; a kind of internal pole dance of intention.

FH: May I just ask a question? So, you were fascinated by other dances, other actresses, other forms of theatre and acting on stage. And you decided to experiment with them and copy them. But what was the reason for that? Was it because you wanted to do the same thing and affect the audience in the same way you were affected when you saw them the first time? Or did something else happen as well – something inside you that made you more content, surprised, happy, astonished? Something you didn't expect? Because – now I'm interpreting you, or what actors do – you want to be on stage in a certain way that affects people.

RC: No. That would be a result, but no. When I saw Lucinda Childs and said, "I want to do the same," it was for my own pleasure.

FH: Okay.

RC: It was because I wanted to feel what I imagined she was feeling there. Because she was

2 *Tribhanga* is is a standing body position or stance used in traditional Indian art and Indian classical dance forms like the Odissi.

free in a very structural way. And the only way you can be free – really free – is if you know the technique. Only if you know how to play the piano, like Glenn Gould, can you break free when you play Bach. If you don't master the technique, you don't master what's beyond the technique. You have to learn the technique in order to forget it. And that's what I saw in Lucinda Childs. She had it so much, she could forget it and be well in her body and shine – and make us spectators dance, sitting in our chairs. So, it's because I wanted to be like her. Of course, another result could be that I'd be more efficient as an actress. But the first step was to feel as good as she felt.

FH: Okay.

RC: And the same when I saw the performance of Natsu Nakajima, the Butoh dancer. Torgeir[3] and I went to see the performance. We sat down, and then it started with two dancers barely moving. It was very slow. And I was completely hypnotised. At a certain moment, I heard (she makes snoring noises) – Torgeir was sleeping, and I was fascinated. She took me with her on this trip. And three years later, I went to Japan and worked with her for five weeks – with her and with Kazuo Ohno. And there, I went even deeper into this work on the axis, which I ended up calling the Snake, just because it's long.

FH: …and it's also moving.

RC: Yes, that's it. Because then I transformed the axis from Kabuki, which is straight and kept all the time. Working with Butoh, it started to move. Working with Kazuo Ohno was fantastic because he said: "For you in the Western world, dance is what the body is doing. But the real dance is what happens within, inside the body of the actor." And this inside, what he called *kokoro*, means heart, centre, soul – all three words in one. *Kokoro*. When he made us dance, he wanted us to dance with our *kokoro*, not with our limbs.

And this was another trip. After my experience with Natsu and Kazuo Ohno, I transformed this axis into the Snake, because it was moving – but it wasn't the spine. It was an invisible muscle parallel to the spine, but from inside the body, not outside. I decided that the eyes are the head of the snake. And this finding has been crucial for me as an actress.

FH: As an actress or as a person experimenting, a person trying to discover something?

RC: Yes, of course. Yes. Yes, of course. Okay. Of course…

FH: So being an actress – or rather working as an actress – means discovering things or searching for things you didn't know existed, but which you were searching for. For example, trying to find an embodied type of inner energy.

RC: Yes. Also later, I started to learn from flamenco. I wanted to learn flamenco, not because I wanted to become a flamenco dancer, but because I was fascinated by it and wanted to feel what they were feeling when they danced: where the feet do something completely different from the hands, and where there is also exactly the same inner tension between the lower part of the body going down to the earth and the upper going up to the sky, like in Nihon Buyo.

It fascinated me to continue that line of work with these two energies in the body – to feel that one part of you is grounded and another part is flying. Yin, yang – call it what you want. I'm a woman, but I've always considered myself a person before a woman, which entails this composition of yin and yang. What you feel working with Butoh – this energy of the bodies – they were unisex. The same score I was doing, a man could do, because it goes deeper than muscles and bones; it unfolds inside you.

FH: I have two questions now – actually three. The first one: Have you ever had the feeling, the experience, that it's not you doing the action on stage or while training, but that something else – another force, another thing – does the action, and you're simply partaking in it? Meaning

3 Torgeir Wethal was a founding actor of the Odin theatre and worked with the theatre until his death. He also was Roberta Carreri's life partner.

you have time to do something else, for example, to be aware of what you're doing, because you don't need to do it yourself. I know Odin Theatre performs plays for many years – some for decades. You played your solo performance *Judith*, I think for… I don't know how many years?

RC: Thirty-five years.

FH: And you're still doing it?

RC: No, I closed it down in '22. I said, now it's enough – I don't have *le physique du rôle* any more.

FH: Okay. So you were showing this performance from the year I left the theatre – that's a long time. I guess some movements were just so incorporated, so automatic, so much part of your nervous system, that you could do it sleeping, actually. But then, one challenge is, of course, not to do it automatically, not to do it in your sleep, but to be present. This, I guess, is also an opportunity – because you don't need to spend energy to do the movements and actions, they're done by themselves, so to speak.

RC: There was one moment, during the rehearsal of *Brecht's Ashes* – it must have been in '79 or '80. We were rehearsing a scene – Tage, Francis and I – with Eugenio. And we were repeating and repeating it, over and over. And at a certain moment, during one repetition, something happened to me: I felt that I was not doing, but I was being. And that surprised me. It was like I… and then we repeated the scene and I found it again. It was as if I'd found a switch inside myself. Click – pong – my presence was different. I was totally present. I wasn't doing what I was asked to do. I wasn't doing the movement – I was doing the action, because the action has an intention, and the intention has something to do with your body and mind. This switch, that I found then, I've been using ever since. And because, as you say, when you've rehearsed a performance for so many months, you internalise all the movements – and the risk of doing them mechanically is very big. But on the other hand, if you know them, if your body knows them so well, you have the time to enjoy doing them.

Once again, take Rubinstein playing Chopin's *Nocturne*. One thing is if you've just learned to play the *Nocturne*, like my daughter did at a certain moment in her life – listening to her and then listening to a record of Rubinstein playing it was completely different. Rubinstein was free: free because he didn't need to think about where to put his fingers. He was free to pour his flow into it, to mould it.

It's been the same for me performing *Judith* for 35 years. Over the years, the performance became more and more like a song I was singing. What does that mean? It means the words are the same, the melody is the same, but you have to sing it each time. And that implies, once again, enjoying the moment and filling the moment. It's always been a great pleasure for me to perform *Judith*, or *Salt*, or *Flowers for Torgeir* – these solo performances where I'm… where I'm moulding my energy in there.

But sometimes, in group performances, I had moments where I was sitting down, looking at the other actors, doing small actions – because another actor was in the middle of the scene and five of us were sitting around – and then I started thinking: "I should buy some milk tonight because I don't have any milk for my tea." And this annoyed me a lot. So that's why I was very happy in performances where I was very little on stage, or where I wasn't on stage all the time – when I was outside the stage, I had technical things to do, like we always had. In *Oxyrhynchus*, we had to change costume or pull the curtains so the others could come out. And this kept me in the flow.

FH: Good. Very interesting indeed. Another question: all those experiences you recall and recount now – the ones you had on stage, while training, or working with other masters – all those revelations… have they had any consequences for your personal life? For how you live

your everyday life? Or is that totally separate? Stage and the training space are part of your work, your professional life. And when you come home, you lie on the sofa watching television series or do something else?

RC: Of course, I also lie on my sofa. I also watch *Morse*. But I am me – this kind of work affects my body and my mind. It's not mechanical work, like putting tissues into a box, like I did when I was 18 years old to earn money for a holiday. Our work is work with our body and body-mind.

And there's the constant reading too – it could be art books, it could be novels. That's a big freedom after I stopped at the university: I can read all the novels I want. I don't have to read only academic books.

FH: I've hardly read novels for 35 years – or poems – just academic stuff.

RC: And it's so nice to read novels, because there's so much life in it. There's so much life. Authors like Philip Roth, like Elizabeth Strout – they really have this capacity to distil life with their words. And that's something I find very inspiring, as a person but also as an artist, because there's a wealth of images, a wealth of… yes… stories that suddenly pop up when I direct, or when I work for myself.

For instance, when we were working on *Salt*, a performance we made in 2002, Jan and I worked for five years before it was finished. We worked four years alone, and only the last year with Eugenio – which spanned just 17 weeks, you know, but that doesn't matter. What matters is that when the training started for me to become my garden – my actor's garden – which means I was starting to find texts I wanted to use and explore and work on, to put actions to these texts. I started to find paintings I wanted to give life to through my actions, and then put the text on top of the acts. This work is an osmosis of my passion as a private person and my work as an actress. If I didn't read, if I didn't look at art books, I wouldn't be inspired to do what I was doing. Do you follow me? So it's…

FH: But I guess you're also reading the books with all your experience as an actress?

RC: As a woman. As a woman. As a person.

FH: Yes, but also as an actress, I guess?

RC: No. I don't know… maybe, maybe. Maybe, for sure – because I am me. […] I can't escape that. Even if sometimes – I must confess – I'd like to divorce myself. Well, for instance, I went to Copenhagen and forgot my phone at home in Holstebro. Yeah. And then it was beautiful. Three days without a phone. Fantastic.

FH: Let's get back to theatre. Were there any scenes or actions you hated – things you had to do because your director told you so? When you thought: "Oh no, I won't, I can't." But maybe those scenes turned out to be transformative – or not?

RC: Yes. Yes. The biggest example is a performance called *The Tree*. I even wrote an article for the programme of that performance where I gave air to my frustrations. Eugenio wanted me in this performance. It started with the idea that I should be Snow White. And he gave me the DVD of Walt Disney's *Snow White* and said: "Do something with that." The only thing I found dramatic, that I found interesting, was when Snow White runs away into the woods, where she eventually finds the dwarfs' house. That runaway scene – with all the thorn bushes pulling at her – I found fascinating. So, I put on Mozart's *Lacrimosa* and started to work on that.

Then Eugenio saw it, and after a while – which means six months later – he came and said: "You, in this performance, are going to be…" He gave me a book entitled *Half of A Yellow Sun*[4] and said: "You have to find your character in this book. I know which one it is." It turned out to

4 Adichie, C. N. (2014). *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Fourth Estate, London.

be a woman who runs away from a massacre in Africa with a calabash – a kind of big pumpkin, emptied and dried. Inside this calabash is the head of her dead daughter. The head has been chopped off, and she takes it and runs away through a train. And then Eugenio said: "You have to be that woman." And I said: "Okay." I created scores, and then he said: "But you have to be angry, the whole time. You have to speak with this voice the whole time" (Roberta speaks with a harsh, angry voice). I said okay, but I didn't like it at all, because my preferred figure was very soft, a little bit Butoh-like. But no – he wanted me violent and angry. We worked a lot with the voice. I lost my voice because it never sounded angry enough for him. I hated the character. I had to be mean, and I had to have very strong, bad energy. I really didn't like it.

Then he said: "But your costume is going to be white. You're going to be white and beautiful to make the contrast." I made a kind of sponge in the shape of small children's hands, which I stamped on my face and body with white paint. So I had these small white children's hands on me, a big white 'thing' on my head, white clothes, and I was barefoot. And this anger I had to have the whole time – barking almost.

There's a moment in the performance when I'm very still, just going around the space while something else happens in the middle of the stage. I'm like a ghost, a ghost going around without any inner life. But I have all these pictures in my mind – of the massacre, of horrible things seen and lived. It was so dark, this character, so angry. It was hard for me to enter it and painful, and I think I never really enjoyed that performance fully.

FH: But did you take something with you from that fight and that anger – the fight against this figure, but also the physical, emotional anger you had to display, or had to be?

RC: Yes. Well, now I know I'm able to express it – but I'd try to avoid it in my daily life, because it doesn't give anything good. Yes, of course, it was an experience. And each experience, each performance brought with it a grain of sand that made me what I am today.

Also *The Chronic Life* was a very strong performance for me, where I tried to create a character that was the opposite of myself. What I am not. What is not Roberta? Roberta is not a bimbo. So I found a platinum blonde wig, put in green contact lenses, found a very feminine dress and apron, and shoes with big butterflies on top. So one can say that through the years, the work on new performances has been, for me, a fight against myself – not to repeat, trying not to repeat myself. I had to find something completely different. And Eugenio helped me with that. It was also his request for some performances. When you work for many years, you have the tendency to find strategies, to find the switch, and you know what works on stage. And you start to repeat yourself. That's what I didn't want to do – and what Eugenio didn't want me to do. So this angry woman was part of the process of doing something I hadn't done before.

The last two years at the Nordic Theatre Laboratory, I was asked to write down every day how many hours I'd been working. The administrator said this was a request from the European Union; something everybody has to do, no matter the kind of work. Bah – ridiculous, because this is my life, not only my work. Sometimes I wake up at three in the morning because I get an idea and write it down. It's not that I'm only at work from eight to four. My work is my life. And this relates to your question about me as an actress and me as a person – it's impossible for me to cut this relationship. It's a constant osmosis.

FH: Looking back at your life – or rather, looking from your life's history towards the next years, the next ten, twenty years, until your death – did the work with your body, with your bodily energies, and through that also with your mind (and vice versa), make you more satisfied, more happy, more relaxed about what will come in the future?

RC: Oh yes. I think it's both that – and having a garden.

FH: Mm.

RC: Being aware that this is the moment of the roses, and this is the moment of the anemones, and this is the moment for… Two things. First, having lived my life fully at all levels – having experienced being a child, a daughter, a lover, a fiancée, a married woman, a divorced woman, a mother, then again, a married woman, a widow, an orphan. I've experienced it all – and now a grandmother. Grandmother: the best in life. So, by experiencing the whole spectrum, and by living a work that has been a continuous work on myself, I must say: I've lived my life fully. Which means that if I die tonight, it's okay. I have no regrets. I have, yes, no more wishes in a way. So everything from now on is a gift.

I'm aware that I'm slower now than before. I'm aware that my hands hurt because arthrosis is deforming them. But that doesn't mean I can't be happy. And I'm grateful that it's only this and not worse at my age […]. In a way, I have a sense of great gratitude. As I had when Torgeir died – I was so, so sorry, so desperate – but at the same time, I could see the great chance I was given: living 28 years with the big love of my life. Sharing every moment with him, 24 hours a day – work and home and holidays and everything. That's a great privilege.

When I look at my life, exactly because of the work I've been doing and because of the love for the garden that Torgeir introduced me to, I accept. I don't need to be forever young. I accept and I enjoy the stages. I enjoy being retired – even if I now have my own homepage, even if I still travel and work, even direct. But this is something I choose to do. It's not something I have to do. That's another feeling. And that is also part of freedom.

FH: This is a good ending. I think I want to conclude the interview here.

3. Epilogue

Evidently, the somatic practices described by Roberta Carreri in this interview is not the identical to the practice themselves. The apparent incommensurability between somatic practice and linguistic description touches on one of somaesthetics' foundational aspects: the relationship (and distinction) between practice and analysis (Shusterman, 2000). Although somaesthetics is a philosophical discipline, it claims a practical dimension: engaging one's own body in somatic practice—whether dancing, walking, hiking, practicing yoga, or playing a musical instrument. I have been working with and writing about this problem in my recent and forthcoming publications (Heinrich, 2023, 2026).[5] In my view, this is not only a challenge for philosophers of aesthetics; actors (and other practitioners) also read and listen to other masters' theoretical, descriptive, and methodological explanations and instructions. Practitioners face the same dualistic problem: how to embody concepts, make them fruitful in practice, and describe them for others.

My answer to this problem simply is somatic awareness. Both somaesthetic practices, acts of recounting important life-shaping experiences, and analytical endeavours are grounded in awareness as a basic aesthetic faculty. Awareness—arising from attention directed at details: here, the spoken or the read, the relationships between words and actions (whether remembered or imagined), and feelings as our embodied reaction to stories—is the basis for both aesthetic practice and philosophical aesthetics. Embodied awareness lies at the core of Roberta Carreri's work with actor training: with her inner "snake" (the energetic dance of tension between the upper and lower body), with the creation of a theatrical figure and its actions, and with the task of being alive on stage when not at the centre of audience attention. Furthermore, her awareness of the seasons for various flowers underpins her pleasure in gardening. And, of course, everyone

5 How can we integrate the embodied (always already past) experience of practice into (philosophical) thinking, narrating, and writing? And how can we incorporate questions and reflection into our own practice without destroying that practice through theoretical concerns while engaged in it?

needs pauses from (self-)awareness; everyone needs relaxation on the sofa.

Awareness seems a simple concept, but in fact it is an extremely vague and complex notion, spanning many meanings depending on the discursive context. Phenomenology understands it differently from pragmatism. Even in everyday language, we use the term in many ways: awareness as consciousness, as realisation, as alertness, embodiment, love, concentration, focus, and so forth. Nonetheless, in my view, awareness always situates the aware person and establishes a sensory and agentive entanglement with their specific surroundings. Awareness lets us inhabit this world. Awareness-in-action creates worlds, be it on a theatre stage or in our lives.

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