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Introduction to Volume 3, Numbers 1 and 2 (2017)
Bodies of Belief / Bodies of Care

This double-issue on Bodies of Belief and Bodies of Care originated in two conferences held at the Center for Body, Mind, and Culture, respectively January 2015 and January 2016. Only a few papers from those conferences, however, have found their way into this volume; the others collected here came from independent submissions to the Journal. We should begin by explaining the underlying logic that motivated the topics of these conferences and the papers of this double issue?

With respect to the question of belief, human bodies are shaped not only by their genetic endowment but also by the belief systems of the cultures in which they develop and function. Such belief systems vary from unarticulated background assumptions to ritualized practices and explicit doctrines or even to formulated laws enacted and enforced by social institutions. The beliefs that the human soma embodies and expresses are not confined to established social norms; they also include items of faith and commitment that are individualistic, nonconformist, or even antagonistic to the cultural mainstream. More than a mere instrument of compliance or worship, the soma is also a site and weapon of protest against beliefs we reject and find oppressive.

As to the issue of care, bodies are obviously the targets of one's daily care in terms of personal hygiene, grooming, exercise, and proper nourishment. They are also objects of care in the sense of worry or concern, since we all suffer illness and death through our bodies. However, the sentient, purposive, active body or soma is also a subjectivity that examines and cares for the body as object, whether it be one's own body or the bodies of others who one wants to help or comfort. We all need such curative help or comfort at some point in our lives; and some people devote their professional and personal lives to giving such care. Bodies need and give care in many ways and for many reasons: to overcome illness and disability, to address and alleviate dependence, to learn new skills and remedy bad habits, to inspire greater confidence for personal flourishing and greater social betterment.

Initially, it might seem surprising to group the topics of bodies of belief and care together. However, if we consider the matter more closely, we see a deep and substantive connection between them. In the first place, beliefs are what make care possible. Because beliefs are our essential guides of action, they are therefore indispensable for guiding our actions of caring for ourselves and others. Beliefs about the body – for example, beliefs about what foods, medicines, habits, exercises, etc. promote somatic health, well-being, and pleasure -- thus govern our practices of care for the body. Issues of belief and care are also linked in the reverse direction. The fact that we care for our bodies, both in the sense of practically acting to care for them and in the sense of worrying about how to care for them, prompts us to search for the best beliefs to guide such care. As the pragmatist C.S. Peirce argued, inquiry is inspired by the irritation of doubt, and it seeks to remove such doubt by establishing beliefs that resolve the particular doubt in question. Our doubts and worries about somatic health and various problems in the functioning and appearances of our bodies promote countless inquiries to attain beliefs that will guide practices to remove or at least mitigate those worries. The things that we care for thus

inspire more attention and efforts to acquire correct and helpful beliefs. Although most of our beliefs are items that we simply take for granted and that guide our actions without our giving explicit focused attention to these beliefs, we tend to give more explicit attention to beliefs about things we care about most. Our bodily condition – how we feel, look, and function somatically – is an abiding center of care and concern and thus forms the focus of some of our most explicit and critically examined beliefs.

The following papers examine diverse issues of bodily belief and care from different perspectives. Topics range from autoimmunity and psychological therapy to religious belief, tattoos, and neoliberal institutions of health care. Most of the papers adopt an artistic somaesthetic perspective, examining their topics through the methods of literary theory, art history, and theatre studies. The present issue continues the Journal's tradition of including an interview with a distinguished specialist whose expertise relates to the issue's topic. On this occasion we are very happy to include an interview with ORLAN, specially commissioned for this issue and introduced by Else Marie Bukdahl. The interview was conducted in French, and we provide an English translation along with the original French.

Richard Shusterman

ORLAN
Hybridity, Creativity, and Emancipatory Critique in the Somaesthetic Art of ORLAN
In dialog with Else Marie Bukdahl

> "Invention is the only true intellectual act, the only action of intelligence.
> Only invention proves that we can really think."[1]

Introduction

ORLAN is renowned world wide for her astonishing original ways of developing new genres, projects and performances. They have been presented–often with her body as the privileged instrument–in countless museums, galleries, universities and other places both in the West and the East. From the early sixties to the present day impressive new interpretations of the body's relation between the Self, the Other and the society have appeared in different shapes in her artistic universe:

> Real body and imaginary body, lived body and emotional body, mystic body and social body, diffuse body and hybrid body, all merge together in the ceaseless flow of references in ORLAN's work. [2]

Since 1965 she has been active in photography, video, sculpture, installation and performance. She has created the so-called *Carnal Art,* and was the first artist to use plastic surgery as an art form to explore new aspects of the fields of art and science, engaging the viewer in unexpected ways. She used surgery-performance from 1990 to 1993. In *Manifesto of Carnal Art* (1989), she emphasised that her uncovering of hidden and often grotesque aspects of our world is related to the Baroque's artistic renewals. *Carnal Art* "swings from "defiguration" to "refiguration," and its inscription in the flesh calls on our age," and this art "loves parody and the baroque, the grotesque and disconsidered styles." It also "opposes the conventions that put pressure on the human body and the appearance of the work of art. Carnal art is anti-formalist and anti-conformist."[3]

ORLAN has many times stressed that she always has created her works "at the crossroads of two stories: my personal story, my private novel, and another history that of western or non-western art." And in relation to this statement she quotes the following sentence by Walter Benjamin: "The actualization of former contexts puts the truth of all present action to test."[4] This statement

1 This quotation was etched on the walls of the library of the Ecole Centrale in Lyon by Michel Serres in 2006.

2 Eugenio Viola, "The Narrative" in *Orlan. Le récit. The narrative.* This book was published in connection with the exhibition of the same name in Musée d'art moderne de Saint-Étienne Métropole, May 29 – August 2007, p. 123.

3 *Manifesto of Carnal Art* is the English version of *Manifeste de l'art charnel* (1984). Both versions have been reissued in ORLAN: *Le récit / the narrativ*, p. 123.

4 *ORLAN: A Hybrid body of Artsworks*, editet by Simon Donger with Simon Shepherd, and ORLAN, Routledge, London and New York, 2010, p. 36.

is interpreted in her self-contained body of work—especially *Documentary Study*: *Drapery - The Baroque or Saint ORLAN* (1979-1986)—which has become particularly famous. These are her visual reinterpretations of some of the main figures of Christianity, first and foremost the Virgin Mary and different female saints. They are visualised through herself and the figure of Saint ORLAN and contain a re-creation of Baroque art - especially Bernini's. For her it was an intense and rich experience "to be a saint without being a virgin or martyr: saint, yes—but with humour."[5]

Since 1994 she has created a digital photographic series *Self-Hybridisation*—"a post-surgery series"—with past facial representations (masks, sculptures, paintings) from the West and the East, from Pre-Columbian, African and American-Indian Culture. There is, for example, ORLAN American Indian Self-Hybridization #7: *Painting portrait Tís-Se-Wóo-Na-Tís, She Who Bathes Her Knees, Wife Of The Chief,* with ORLAN's photographic portrait (2005) (figure 1). In 2007 she has—in collaboration with the Symbiotic laboratory in Australia—produced a bio-art installation called *"the Harlequin Coa*t," where Harlequin figures as a metaphor for multiculturalism.

Lóránd Hegyi highlights the essence in ORLAN´s artistic activities by stressing that it is "marked by a consistenly compelling, intellectual, ethically and emotionally based intrinsic coherence legitimized by the radicalism of personal commitment."[6]

Figure 1: ORLAN. *American Indian Self-Hybridization #7: painting portrait Tís-Se-Wóo-Na-Tís, She Who Bathes Her Knees, Wife Of the Chief, with ORLAN's photographic portrait.* 2005, Fine art print. 152.5 x 124.5 cm.

5 *ORLAN: A Hybrid Body of Artworks*, p. 39.

6 Lóránd Hegyi, "An Oeuvre positioned between the Modern Demiurge and Postmodern Referentiality," in ORLAN: *Le récit/the narrative*, p. 11.

ORLAN
A dialog with Else Marie Bukdahl
Un dialogue avec Else Marie Bukdahl

Abstract: *After a brief introduction to ORLAN's art, Else Marie Bukdahl engages the artist in a dialogue about the richly diverse ways she uses the body as her primary artistic medium. The dialogue explores her work on hybridity, creativity, performance, and the emancipatory critique of oppressively entrenched social conventions and beliefs (including those of institutional religion), while also touching on topics as different as biological art, digital technology, and the Baroque.*

Keywords: *Body, somaesthetics, creativity, hybridity, performance, liberty, critique, surgery, baroque.*

10/03/2015

"Liberty is about our right to question everything," Ai Weiwei, 2009.[7]
« La liberté, c'est notre droit de tout remettre en question. »

Else Marie Bukdahl (EMB): Increasing interest in your projects is undoubtedly due to the fact that they are extremely radical as well as highly original. You have always set out to explore new boundaries in the fields of both art and science. Without preconceived ideas, deliberately provocative, and with astonishing energy, you have never stopped coming up with personal ideas about how to tackle the many questions that arise in philosophy, science, aesthetics and art.

Do you think that this lack of preconceived ideas is the key to your works and your life?

L'intérêt croissant porté à vos projets est sans aucun doute lié au fait qu'ils sont à la fois extrêmement radicaux et profondément originaux. Vous avez sans cesse cherché à révéler de nouvelles limites dans le domaine de l'art et de la science. Libre de tout préjugé, volontiers provocatrice, vous n'avez cessé, avec une énergie étonnante, d'apporter des réponses personnelles à beaucoup de questions qui apparaissaient dans la philosophie, les sciences de la nature, l'esthétique et l'art.

Pensez-vous que l'absence de préjugés soit la clef de vos œuvres et de votre vie ?

ORLAN: No one is ever entirely free of preconceived ideas. We are constantly confronted with preconceptions and my work is situated in this endless process of redefinition.

I've always sought to break down barriers and avoid preconceived ideas. Like my name, "ORLAN," which is always written in capital letters so that it jumps out of a line of text. Like I do in my life. In one of my series, *Attempting to escape the Frame* (1965) (figure 2), I explore how we represent space by pushing at its very limits, by playing with the idea of the frame as a symbol of

7 See *So Sorry*, Prestel Verlag, Munich, Berlin, London, New York, 2009.

something that both encloses us and formats us.

More recently, in my experimentation with new media, I try to outrun the limits of reality using augmented reality software. In the series called *Self-Hybridizations* (1998-2005), created using Peking Opera masks, I emerge from the piece as a 3D avatar. At the same time I am disrupting the Peking Opera codes, which traditionally forbid women to play female roles, by making my avatar perform acrobatics that are usually done by male actors of the Peking Opera (figure 3).

Figure 2: ORLAN. *Attempting to Escape the Frame. No 3*, 1966. The Frame series.

Nous ne sommes jamais totalement libres de tous préjugés, nous sommes incessamment confrontés à eux et c'est dans cette redéfinition perpétuelle que se situe mon travail.

J'ai toujours souhaité repousser les frontières et déjouer les idées préconçues, comme mon nom « ORLAN », qui s'écrit toujours en majuscule, pour sortir de la ligne, des rangs, comme je le fais dans ma vie. Dans une de mes séries, *Tentative de sortir du cadre* (figure 2*)*, je joue avec la représentation de l'espace et j'en repousse ses limites, mais surtout je désigne et joue avec le cadre qui symbolise ce qui nous enferme, ce qui nous formate.

Plus récemment, à travers mes expérimentations des nouveaux médias, je distance les limites du réel à travers un logiciel de réalité augmentée. Dans la série des *Self-hybridizations*, réalisée à partir des masques de l'Opéra de Pékin, je sors de l'œuvre en apparaissant sur les supports visuels au travers d'un avatar 3D. Ici aussi, je dérègle les codes de l'Opéra de Pékin, qui interdisaient aux femmes de jouer leurs rôles et je fais faire à mon avatar les acrobaties effectuées par les acteurs dans les Opéras de Pékin.

Figure 3: ORLAN, *Bejing Opera Self Hybridization n°1,* ORLAN, Augmented Reality, Beijing Opera, Augmented Reality, 120 x 120cm, 2014.

EMB: It can also be important to mention the impressive digital photographs *Native-American Self-Hybridizations* (2004) (figure 1). They are made from portraits of North American Indians painted by George Catlin, and visualize again your fight against the pressure society has made on our body.

Your installations, along with your plastic surgery and performances, use relentless surprise attacks to keep viewers from adhering to rigid positions, instead encouraging them to engage with new ways of thinking. Your tireless willingness to search for new solutions to established problems and your inspired imagination undoubtedly explain how you have been so effective in presenting such original contributions to the art world and engaging the viewer in unexpected ways. To what extent does the viewer engage actively in the enactment of your projects? The active role of the viewer is very important for Richard Shusterman. Is this also the case with your work?

C'est aussi important de mentionner les photographies digitales intitulées *Native-American Self-Hybridizations* (2005) (figure 2) où vous avez aussi dénoncée les pressions sociales que notre société inflige au corps.

Vos installations - opérations de chirurgie esthétique et performances - recourent sans relâche à l'attaque-surprise, afin d'empêcher le spectateur d'en rester à des positions figées et de l'encourager à adopter une manière nouvelle de penser. C'est indubitablement votre volonté infatigable de chercher de nouvelles solutions à des problèmes connus et votre imagination créatrice qui expliquent justement que vous avez réussi à apporter des contributions très nouvelles à la vie artistique et à faire participer le spectateur d'une façon surprenante.

Dans quelle mesure le spectateur est-il parti prenante de la représentation de vos projets? Le rôle actif du spectateur est très important pour Richard Shusterman. Est-ce également le cas pour vous?

ORLAN: The viewer has several possible roles, all very different, depending on the type of performance being enacted. In my surgical operation performances, the viewer is primarily a spectator, whilst also being a witness to exterior actions effected on and within my body. The role of the viewer is important and taken into account, but it remains limited.

Participation can appear at first glance to be passive but in the end it is extremely self-reflexive, and thus inwardly active. During one of these surgical operations, *Omnipresence - Surgery* (1993) (figure 4), the viewer, who was watching from the Pompidou Centre, was able to ask me questions, which I answered in real time, via a satellite transcription of the performance.

In my series *MesuRages* (1980) (figure 5), the viewer is an active witness of the measuring of spaces in the street and in the museum. It is my own body that measures the spaces in front of their eyes, and the viewers participate in the final counting of the number of ORLAN-BODIES contained within that space, which they do out loud, before signing a statement attesting to the final tally.

In my most recent exhibition in Enghien-les-Bains, *ORLAN Strip tease des cellules jusqu'à l'os (ORLAN Stripteases her cells all the way down to the bone)* (2015), I projected a Harlequin suit onto the staircase linking the two levels of the exhibition, so that when the viewer goes either upstairs or downstairs they become Harlequins themselves, becoming covered in projections made of my cells as well as of other humans and animals.

Le spectateur a des rôles possibles très différents, suivant le type de performance à l'œuvre. Dans mes opérations-chirurgicales-performances, le spectateur est avant tout spectateur, mais il est

aussi témoin des actions extérieures provoquées sur et dans mon corps. Le rôle du spectateur est important et pris en compte, mais il est restreint.

La participation peut paraître à première vue passive et au final être extrêmement réflexive, donc active intérieurement. Dans une des opérations, *Omniprésence* (fig. 4), le spectateur, au centre Pompidou, pouvait me poser des questions auxquelles je répondais simultanément (retranscription par satellite de la performance).

Fig 4: ORLAN. ORLAN 7th Surgery-Performance. Titled *Omnipresence*, New York, 1993. Cibachrome in Diasec mount. 165 x 110.

Cependant, dans ma série des *MesuRages* (figure 5), le spectateur est témoin actif de la mesure des espaces de rues ou des musées. C'est mon propre corps qui prend la mesure des lieux sous leurs yeux. Ils participent au comptage final du nombre d'ORLAN-CORPS contenu dans l'espace, ils le font à haute voix et viennent publiquement signer le constat.

Dans ma dernière exposition au centre des Arts d'Enghien-les-Bains, « ORLAN Strip tease des cellules jusqu'à l'os » (2015), je fais projeter un manteau d'Arlequin sur l'escalier reliant les deux étages d'expositions et, lorsque les spectateurs montent et/ou descendent, ils deviennent eux-mêmes des Arlequins, car ils sont recouverts des projections faites avec mes propres cellules et des cellules animales et humaines.

***EMB*:** In Shusterman's somaesthetics it is the body that sees and walks, offering us an understanding of the outside world and acting as its intermediary. Your installations and performances grab us by all our senses. The body's epistemology, it seems to me, occupies a dominant place in your art works—that is to say the sentient body that determines our whole experience.

Do you agree?

Dans la soma-esthétique de Richard Shusterman, c'est le corps qui voit et qui marche, qui permet

l'appréhension du monde extérieur et lui sert d'intermédiaire. Vos installations et performances s'emparent de tous nos sens. L'épistémologie du corps occupe selon moi une place prépondérante dans votre œuvre - à savoir celle d'un corps conscient//sensible qui conditionne toute notre expérience.

Êtes-vous, madame, d'accord avec cela? Avez-vous des commentaires?

Figure 5: ORLAN. *Performance ORLAN MesuRage du Musee St Pierre Lyon (5)*. Appartient à la série *MesuRages* (1974-2011).

ORLAN: I would say that my approach has a great deal in common with Richard Shusterman's, bearing in mind the significant difference which is that I invite the viewer to see me intrinsically and in every format (live, or through my DNA sequencing, or by scanner) in images and

sculptures. Of course I'm talking about Shusterman's philosophy, his theoretical work, as the founder of somaesthetics, which is the most important thing for me. I'm not talking about the practical aspects—therapeutic and artistic—of his work with somaesthetics, which I don't know very well.

It is undeniable that my body has always been the principle raw material in my work. I take risks, treating my body no less as an object than as the subject. This risk taking is also a journey during which I invite the viewer to experience feelings (it is always a body encountering another body).

In one of my recent works, *Harlequin's Coat* (2007-2008), I reached a new level. I invited the viewer to look at cells that have been integrated into a coloured plexiglas coat. Going as deeply as possible into my being becomes also about removing the barriers that separate us from one another; we're all made from the same matter, with just a few tiny differences.

My body as an experience is more about being the representative, the binding medium that allows the other body to gain awareness. It's a personal journey that allows me observe microscopically in order to see universally.

Je dirais que ma démarche a beaucoup de similarités avec celle de Richard Shusterman. A une différence près, j'invite le spectateur à me voir intrinsèquement et sous toutes les formes (à vif, par mon séquençage ADN, ou par scanner, par exemple) et ce en images et en sculptures: Je parle bien sûr ici de la philosophie de Shusterman, de son travail théorique comme fondateur de la somaesthétique, qui est le principal pour moi. Je ne parle pas du côté pratique (thérapeutique ou artistique) de son travail en somaesthétique, que je ne connais pas très bien.»

Il est indéniable que mon corps a toujours été la matière première de mon œuvre. C'est moi qui prends les risques, traitant mon corps tantôt comme objet tantôt comme sujet. Cette prise de risques est aussi un voyage où j'invite le spectateur à avoir des affects (c'est toujours un corps qui rencontre un autre corps).

Dans une de mes dernières œuvres, *Le Manteau d'Arlequin* (2007-2008), j'ai atteint un nouveau palier, je donne à voir des cellules de peau intégrées à un manteau de plexiglas coloré. Aller au plus profond de moi, c'est aussi désamorcer les barrières qui nous séparent des autres, nous sommes faits de la même matière à quelques petites différences près.

Mon corps comme expérience est plutôt le relais, le liant qui permet à l'autre corps de prendre conscience. C'est un parcours personnel qui permet de voir microscopiquement, afin d'observer universellement.

***EMB**:* When I study your installations, I think about the relationship between art and life, as established by Richard Shusterman. His notion of somaesthetics "argues against the traditional Western division between art and life that has led to art's marginalization from ethical self-cultivation and political praxis; it instead urges more continuity between art and life by refining life aesthetically with artistic skill to make one's life a work of art [8]. But Shusterman also stresses that "pragmatist aesthetics, as I conceive and practice it, recognizes that art is different from ordinary, everyday life in the sense that it involves an intensification or framing of life [9]."

What is your interpretation of this and how do you think about the relation between life and art?

En ce qui me concerne, quand j'étudie vos installations, je pense à la relation entre l'art et la vie que Richard Shusterman a établie. La somaesthétique de Richard Shusterman « s'oppose à la séparation occidentale traditionnelle entre l'art et la vie, qui a conduit à la marginalisation

de l'art par rapport à la culture autodidacte et aux pratiques sociales; il exhorte, au contraire, à davantage de continuité entre l'art et la vie, en apportant du raffinement esthétique dans la vie par le biais de compétences artistiques qui permettent de faire de sa vie une œuvre d'art. »[8] Mais Shusterman souligne aussi que « l'esthétique pragmatique, telle qu'(il) la comprend et la pratique, reconnaît que l'art est différent de la vie, en ce sens qu'il implique une intensification ou un cadrage de la vie. »[9]

Quelle interprétation donnez-vous de cette relation entre la vie et l'art et quel jugement portez-vous sur elle?

ORLAN: Let me give you an example that highlights the point where my work intersects with the ideas of Richard Shusterman and somaesthetics.

Some time before I began my series of surgical operation-performances, I organised a symposium of performance and video art in Lyons, during which I had to have an urgent operation for a life-threatening problem. I literally had 40 minutes to act, and I immediately thought of archiving and documenting the operation from the operating theatre by means of video and photography. As soon as the cassette was full, I asked for it to be taken to the Fnac (which was one of the participants in our symposium), so that it could be broadcast, as though it were a performance on the programme of the symposium. It was about thinking about life as a retrievable aesthetic phenomenon.

In the surgical operations performances that came after, which were actually programmed, I transformed my face so that later I would be able to produce new images with a face that had been etched into my flesh. Removing the mask of the innate to put in place others created by my "self. " The point was to overlay the figure on my face, in other words the representation, by creating a sfumato between presentation and representation.

Je peux donner un exemple qui met en évidence nos points de rencontre avec la pensée de Richard Shusterman et la soma-esthétique.

Bien avant les séries d'opérations-chirurgicales-performances, j'ai organisé un symposium de performance et de vidéo à Lyon et, pendant un de ces symposiums, j'ai dû me faire opérer en très grande urgence, car il y avait un risque vital. J'avais quarante minutes pour agir et j'ai tout de suite pensé à archiver et à documenter cette opération par la vidéo et la photographie, au sein même du bloc opératoire. Dès qu'une cassette était pleine, je la faisais porter à la Fnac (qui participait à notre symposium), afin qu'elle soit diffusée, comme si c'était une performance programmée par mon symposium. Il s'agissait donc de considérer la vie comme un phénomène esthétique récupérable.

Dans les opérations-chirurgicales-performances suivantes, celles réellement programmées, j'ai transformé mon visage pour pouvoir produire plus tard de nouvelles images avec un visage inscrit dans ma chair. En enlevant le masque de l'inné pour en mettre d'autres créés par moi "m'aime." Il s'agissait de mettre de la figure sur mon visage, c'est-à-dire de la représentation, en créant un sfumato entre présentation et représentation.

EMB: A central theme in Richard Shusterman's aesthetics is that art is a central part of our lives. He has described this point of view in the following way: "If life ultimately survives because we living creatures want to continue to live, then art, in its multiple forms and styles, high and low,

8 Richard Shusterman, *Chemins de l'art, transfigurations, du pragmatisme au zen*, Al DanteAkav, collection Cahiers du Midi, traduction de l'anglais, 2013, par Raphael Cuir. C'est une très belle traduction, p. 67.

9 Richard Shusterman, *Chemins de l'art*, p. 70.

helps make us feel that life is truly worth living, by giving us experiences of deep meaning, value and pleasure" (10). But it is important that the ethical and social goals are interpreted as being ultimately satisfying on an artistic level so that they can be imprinted in the viewer's memory and call on their engagement.

Do you believe that art can enrich our experiences and improve our quality of life? Do you agree with Richard Shusterman?

Un thème central dans la somaesthétique de Richard Shusterman est que l'art tient une place très importante dans notre vie. Il a décrit cette conception de la façon suivante: « Si la vie survit finalement, parce que nous, créatures vivantes, voulons continuer à vivre, alors l'art (dans ses formes et styles multiples, grand et bas) nous aide à avoir le sentiment que la vie vaut vraiment la peine d'être vécue en nous procurant des expériences de plaisir, de valeur et de significations profondes. »[10] Mais il est indispensable que l'objectif éthique ou social soit interprété de manière pleinement satisfaisante sur le plan artistique, afin qu'il puisse se graver dans la mémoire du spectateur et faire appel à son engagement.

ORLAN: Art develops a sensibility, a critical sense, and when it is a kind of art that speaks both through and with the body, it makes the idea that the body of the viewer identifies with that of the protagonist even more visible.

Of course art can enrich our experiences, but for that to be the case one has to be aware of frameworks, of cultural and social contexts. These are things that the artist must tackle before starting work on a piece.

It is in this sense that I consider a phenomenon such as digital technology to be important, and something that must be questioned.

In several of my pieces I deal with social phenomena, positioning myself in relation to those that have been problematic for me. First off, plastic surgery and its insidious normalising effect.

I have also dealt with football harassment, which is overwhelming and invasive, creating a certain kind of howling masculinity—primitive, nationalistic and limited to a single practice—that takes up all available time.

Recently, my target has been video games, games based on massive stereotypes, in which the aim of the game is to kill the largest possible number of people. In *Experimental Face Off*, the main character resembles my interactive light sculpture "Bump Load." It is a representation of a woman who has a strong, solid body. To make her go forward the player has to engage his whole body with Myo armbands.

Little by little, by reconstructing broken works of art that are scattered around everywhere, the main character becomes human, so that as the player advances the ruined landscape is gradually remade.

Each of my works is a way of reflecting on the world and how to approach it in order for it to evolve and change and for us to progress.

L'art développe une sensibilité, un sens critique, et lorsque c'est un art qui parle à partir du corps et par le corps, c'est d'autant plus évident, le corps du spectateur s'identifie à l'acteur.

Bien sûr que l'art peut enrichir nos expériences, mais pour cela, il faut être conscient des cadres, des référencements culturels et sociaux de notre société. C'est là l'un des travaux auxquels doit s'atteler l'artiste avant même d'entreprendre une œuvre.

10 Richard Shusterman, *Chemins de l'art*, p. 70.

C'est aussi dans ce sens que j'accorde une place prépondérante aujourd'hui à des éléments tels que le numérique dont on ne peut plus nier l'importance et qu'il nous faut questionner.

Dans plusieurs de mes œuvres, je me suis attaquée à des phénomènes sociaux et je me suis positionnée par rapport à ceux qui me posaient problème. En premier lieu, la chirurgie esthétique et ses mauvaises habitudes de normalisation.

Puis j'ai travaillé contre le harcèlement du football, qui est envahissant et qui fabrique une certaine sorte de masculin hurlant, primitif, nationaliste et limité à une seule pratique qui occupe tout le temps disponible.

Dernièrement, les jeux vidéo ont été ma cible, jeux dans lesquels les stéréotypes sont énormes et où tuer le plus possible est le jeu. Dans *Expérimentale mise en jeu*, le personnage principal ressemble à ma sculpture lumineuse interactive « Bump Load. » C'est la représentation d'une femme avec un corps fort et solide. Pour le faire avancer, il faut engager tout le corps (celui du joueur) avec les bracelets Myo.

Petit à petit, le personnage central s'humanise en reconstruisant des œuvres d'art cassées autour, le paysage qui est alors en ruine se reconstruit à mesure que l'on avance.

Chacune de mes œuvres est une réflexion sur le monde et la manière de l'aborder pour qu'il évolue, qu'il change et que nous, nous améliorons.

***EMB*:** Studying your works, it is clear that you are well aware of the significant power of the language of art. I am sure that you are also convinced that the vocabulary of form and performance can perceive nuances or wider perspectives in our lives that verbal language cannot grasp. Do you agree with this?

Quand on étudie vos œuvres, il est évident que vous avez conscience de l'importance qu'ont les procédés artistiques. Je crois en outre que vous êtes également persuadée que le langage des formes ou celui des performances peut interpréter certaines nuances et certaines grandes perspectives dans notre vie, que le langage verbal ne peut pas saisir. Pensez-vous que j'ai raison?

ORLAN: The baroque introduces us to Saint Theresa (figure 6),[11] who gets erotic, ecstatic pleasure from the angel's arrow. When someone looks at my work, they must always think of this "and" rather than this "or" in culture, which insists that we choose between good and evil, that we diabolise one or the other.

Speech can have a role beyond images or in conjunction with them.

In one of my series of reliquaries made from my own flesh, I turned the Christian principle of the Word that becomes flesh into the flesh that becomes Word.

Le baroque nous montre la Sainte Thérèse qui jouit de la flèche de l'ange dans une extase érotique et extatique. Quand on voit mes œuvres, il faut toujours penser à ce « et », et non pas au « ou » de la culture, qui nous demande de choisir entre le bien ou le mal, de sataniser une des parties.

La parole peut avoir un rôle en dehors des images ou avec elles.

Dans une de mes séries de reliquaires avec ma chair, j'ai retourné le principe chrétien du Verbe qui s'est fait chair en chair qui se fait Verbe.

11 ORLAN is thinking of *The Ecstasy of Teresa (1647-1652)* by Bernini.

Figure 6: Bernini. *The Ecstasy of St. Teresa.* 1647-52. Sculpture. Marble. Life-size. Cornaro Chapel in Santa Maria della Victoria, Rome.

EMB: "Three philosophers in particular—Christine Buci-Gluckmann, Mario Perniola and Gilles Deleuze—formulated a modern analysis of the pictorial figuration of the Baroque that is capable of uncovering new principles for artistic creation in late modernity." Between 1970 and 1990 you visualised and explored the aesthetics and art of the Baroque in a stunning and original way. When I was rector of The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen I invited Christine Buci-Glucksmann to be a visiting professor. She talked about you in a fascinating way and gave me her book *ORLAN: Triumph of the Baroque* (2000), which contains a nuanced analysis of your series of photographs *The Drapery - the Baroque* (1979-1986) and your video, which deals with the same theme (figure 7).[12]

I am sure that you have had many inspiring discussions with Christine Buci-Glucksmann?

«Ce sont en particulier trois philosophes—Christine Buci-Glucksmann, Mario Perniola et Gilles Deleuze—qui ont apporté à la théorie des images du baroque une formulation actualisante, permettant de dégager de nouveaux aspects de la création des images dans la modernité tardive.»[13] Entre 1970 et 1990, vous avez visualisé et exploré d'une façon surprenante et originale l'esthétique et les artistes du baroque. Quand j'étais recteur à L'Académie Royale des Beaux Arts de Copenhague, j'ai reçu Christine Buci-Glucksman comme professeur invité. Elle a parlé de façon tout à fait passionnante de vos œuvres et m'a donné son livre ORLAN. *Triomphe du baroque* (2000), qui présentait des analyses extrêmement nuancées de votre série de photographies, *Le Drapé-le Baroque* (1979-1986), et de vos performances et vidéos sur le même sujet (figure 7).

Vous avez sûrement eu beaucoup de discussions inspirées avec Christine Buci-Glucksmann?

ORLAN: Christine Buci-Glucksman is a great friend, both in terms of her theory and in terms of affection. We have had a huge number of discussions and have taken part in several conferences together.

The essays that she has written about my work are the best that have been written by anyone and she has introduced me to writings that I didn't know, including those by Quevedo.

> There is a marvellous piece by Quevedo, whose writings were outlawed by the Inquisition for two centuries of Christianity, called *L'*œil *du cul*. *Sortir le feu de son cul* is the title of one of ORLAN's pieces, her famous performance where fire takes flight. There, one is in an ascension, but from below, from the *l'œil du cul*. And Quevedo sings the praises of the *l'œil du cul* for being solitary. It is the arsehole, fundamentally, which Bataille, who didn't know Quevedo's text, would later discover, which is the eye of the matter, this black matter, which is faecal and abject, in the purest sense of the term....

Christine Buci-Glucksman est une grande amie de théorie et de cœur. Nous avons eu énormément de discussions et participé à plusieurs conférences ensemble.

Les textes qu'elle a écrits au sujet de mes œuvres sont les meilleurs que l'on ait écrits sur le sujet et elle m'a fait découvrir des textes que je ne connaissais pas, tels que ceux de Quevedo.

> *Il y a un texte tout à fait génial, de Quevedo, qui a été interdit par l'Inquisition pendant deux siècles de christianisme, qui s'intitule* «L'œil du cul». «Sortir le feu de son cul» *est le titre*

12 *Saint ORLAN with Flowers against a Background of Clouds* (1983) is an example of her photographs in the series *The Drapery - the Baroque*. See also Else Marie Bukdahl , "ORLAN and 'the Triumph of the Baroque'" in *The Recurrent Actuality of the Baroque, Controluce, Copenhagen 2017, III. 9, pp. 111 - 117, figs. 32-33.*

13 Else Marie Bukdahl, «Vers un post-baroque,» *Puissance du Baroque. Les forces, les formes, les rationalités*, Galilée, Paris 1996, pp. 130-143.

> *d'un travail d'ORLAN, de cette fameuse performance où le feu s'envole. Là, on est dans une ascension, mais par le bas, par l'œil du cul. Et Quevedo loue l'œil du cul d'être seul. C'est l'œil anal, au fond, que retrouvera Bataille qui ne connaissait pas ce texte de Quevedo, et l'œil de la matière, cette matière qui est noire, qui est fécale et abjecte au sens fort...*[14]

EMB. When one examines the amazing figures in the performance "Saint ORLAN" and especially the complexity of the folds, one cannot help thinking of the book *The Fold* (1998) by Gilles Deleuze: "The Baroque refers not to an essence but rather to an operative function, to a trait. It endlessly produces folds. (...) The baroque fold unfurls all the way to infinity." It is the relationship between body and soul that characterises the folds in Bernini's sculpture - especially in *Saint Theresa*. The folds are in the matter and the matter has become spiritual. It is this type of fold that interested you most when you created "Saint ORLAN" (figure 7). Your concept of the body is very close to Shusterman's when he writes that "the term 'soma' signifies the living, sentient body rather than a merely physical body without life and sensation," and he adds that "the aesthetics of art is closely related to the question of the soma's role in the social field." Do you agree with that?

Quand on examine les figures surprenantes présentées dans la performance de « la sainte ORLAN « et surtout le bouillonnement des plis, on ne peut s'empêcher de penser au livre intitulé *Le pli* (1998) de Gilles Deleuze : « Le baroque ne renvoie pas à une essence, mais plutôt à une fonction opératoire. (...) Le trait du Baroque, c'est le pli qui va à l'infini. (...) « Ce qui caractérise les plis dans les sculptures du Bernin - par exemple dans La Sainte Thérèse - ce sont les relations de l'âme et du corps. Les plis sont dans la matière, mais la matière devient spirituelle. C'est, je crois, ce type de pli qui vous a intéressé prioritairement, quand vous avez créé « la sainte ORLAN ». Votre conception du corps est d'ailleurs proche de celle de Richard Shusterman, quand il dit que

« le terme ' soma ' indique un corps vivant et sensible plutôt qu'un simple corps physique privé de vie et de sensation « et quand il ajoute que

« l'esthétique de l'art est intimement liée à la question du soma dans le champ social.»[15] Êtes-vous d'accord avec cela?

ORLAN: When I try to answer that question, I immediately think of another contemporary philosopher, Jean-Luc Nancy, who tells us: "We do not *have* bodies, we *are* bodies." This is his way of confirming the need for an identity conceived through the body.

The idea of the fold in this context is that as ORLAN, I am everything that I decide to be, or almost, and what I am doing is inventing myself, displacing myself, recreating myself, questioning myself, unfolding myself. But I am also a "we," I unfold, displace, make happen, retain, re-illuminate, copy. The entrails, the folds that I show, are simultaneously the echo of a relationship to the subject in its entirety and a reference to multiple bodies. I am multitudes.

Pour répondre à cette question, je pense tout de suite à un autre philosophe contemporain, Jean-Luc Nancy, qui nous dit : « Nous n'avons pas des corps, nous sommes des corps ». Il confirme par là le besoin d'identité conçu à partir du corps.
L'idée dans ce pli qui est là est, qu'en tant qu'ORLAN, je suis tout ce que je décide ou presque, et

14 Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *ORLAN, Triomphe du baroque*, Images en œuvres, Marseille, 2000, p. 26.

15 Gilles Voir Deleuze, *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque* (1993), foreword and translation by Tom Conley, London, reprinted 2006, p. 3, and *Le pli. Leibniz et le baroque*, Les Editions de Minuit, Paris 1988, p. 5. Voir aussi «Du pluralisme au méliorisme, de l'expérience au corps» interview avec Shusterman par Juliette Soulez. Voir www.tales-magazine.fr/files/articles/pdf_fr_204.pdf.

ce que je fais, je m'invente, me déplace, me recrée, me questionne, me déplie, mais je suis aussi ce que je « sommes «, je déplie, je déplace, je fais advenir, je retiens, je rééclaire, je trace. Les viscères, les plis de ce que je montre sont en même temps l'écho d'une relation au sujet dans son unité et une référence aux corps multiples, je suis plusieurs.

Fig. 7: ORLAN. *Saint ORLAN with Flowers against a Background of Clouds.* 1983. Cibachrome photograph. 160×120 cm.

EMB: Christine Buci-Gluckman has said that your work is very much part of a movement that

she terms the "feminising of culture." She describes it as follows:

> "This feminising of culture implies the creation of a third sex. That is to say, a transgression of boundaries and established norms, the construction of the female sex with its attributes and the construction of the male sex" (16). How do you respond to that?

Christine Buci-Glucksman a déclaré que votre travail relève pleinement d'un concept qu'elle a intitulé « la féminisation de la culture «. Elle la décrit de la façon suivante : « Cette féminisation de la culture implique l'invention d'un troisième sexe. C'est-à-dire la transgression des frontières, des normes établies, la construction du sexe féminin avec ses attributs et la construction du sexe masculin.»[16]

ORLAN: I have performed several interventions where I wore a placard proclaiming "I am a woman and a man."

Throughout the history of art, which has been dominated by men, the female body stripped bare has been overrepresented by men, for men and for the pleasure of men.

I added male genitals to the figure in the painting that is the counterpart to Courbet's "The Origin of the World," which I called "The Origin of War," to show the other side of humanity and of art, in order for us to be conscious of what it means to mutilate the body, to cut off arms, legs or the head. The serial killer of the world...

J'ai réalisé plusieurs interventions où je portais une pancarte proclamant: « Je suis un femme et une homme ».

Le corps féminin dénudé a été surreprésenté dans l'histoire de l'art par les hommes et pour leur plaisir, car cette dernière est dominée par les hommes.

J'ai mis un sexe masculin au personnage du tableau faisant pendant à *l'Origine du monde,* intitulé « L'*Origine de la guerre* «, pour montrer l'autre versant de l'humanité et de l'art, et pour que l'on prenne conscience de ce que cela veut dire de mutiler un corps, en coupant les bras, les jambes, la tête. Serial killer du monde...

EMB: You have explored the use of new technologies in artistic projects like *Self-Hybridizations*, and you have worked with innovative photographic techniques. In the multimedia installation *Harlequin's Coat* (2007) (figure 8) you used biotechnologies, alluding to Michel Serre's books, particularly *Le Tiers-Instruit* (1991), where Harlequin is "one of the figures of knowledge." "I was interested in Harlequin," Michael Serres has said, "because of his composite coat, made of different sized and different coloured pieces of fabric. As though he has assimilated many other people into himself. All learning processes imply the inclusion, the reception or the admission of the other, and what I am describing is simply the ideal of education as a state of openness to all possible alterities. Somewhere in my book I said that a miracle happened to Harlequin: he became Pierrot. Which means that by assimilating all colours onto his coat he became white [play on "candidus" in the word "candidate"]. For white is a complete integration of the totality of colours. It is an entire universe that is not opposed to individuality" (17).

Is it true to say that one of the central elements in your work is to use new technologies and scientific strategies combined with texts that establish an important dialogue between science and culture - for example those by Michel Serres – to push beyond established boundaries in art? Vous avez exploré l'utilisation de nouvelles technologies dans la création de vos projets

16 Christine Buci-Glucksmann, et Michel Enrici, *ORLAN. Triomphe du baroque*, Marseille 2000, p. 12.

artistiques, par exemple dans les *Self-Hybridizations,* et vous avez utilisé de nouvelles techniques photographiques. Dans l'installation multimédia Le *Manteau d'Arlequin* (2007) (fig. 8), vous avez utilisé les biotechnologies, en faisant allusion aux œuvres de Michel Serres, surtout *au Tiers-Instruit* (1991), où Arlequin est «une des figures du savoir». «Je me suis attaché à Arlequin,» dit Michel Serres, «parce qu'il possède un manteau composite, entièrement formé de morceaux de tailles et de couleurs diverses. C'est-à-dire qu'il a assimilé en soi beaucoup d'autres. Tout apprentissage suppose une inclusion, un accueil, et je décris simplement l'idéal de l'éducation comme l'ouverture à toutes les altérités possibles. A un certain moment, je dis dans mon livre qu'il est arrivé un miracle à Arlequin: il est devenu Pierrot. C'est-à-dire qu'à force de mettre des morceaux de toutes les couleurs sur son manteau, il est devenu blanc. Parce que le blanc est un accueil complet de la totalité des couleurs. C'est un univers qui ne s'oppose pas aux singularités.»[17]

Est ce-que l'un des éléments centraux de vos projets est d'élargir les frontières de l'art à l'aide de nouvelles technologies ou de stratégies scientifiques combinées avec des textes, comme ceux de Michel Serres, qui présentent un dialogue important entre la science et la culture?

Figure 8: ORLAN. *Le Manteau d'Arlequin.* Fact (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology). Sigma. 2007.

ORLAN: Many of my works have been created from texts, "From reading to acting out." One of the axes of my work has always been to question and, further, to reverse established roles. To throw thoughts into turmoil. Because art, for me, is not interior decoration – we already have furnishings, furniture and curtains for that.

17 Voir «Rencontre avec Michel Serres» à propos de la parution de *La légende des anges* en 1993. *L'Hebdo*, magazine suisse romand, avait interviewé Michel Serres. http://wwwedu.ge.ch/cptic/publications/formntic/vert08.html. Voir aussi «D'Hermès à la petite Poucette, le théâtre de la pensée selon Michel Serre», entretien dans *Le Temps*, par M.-C. M., samedi 09 avril 2011.

I have said, and I repeat, that questioning contemporary subjects must be done through the body. With the idea of the "emancipated body" introduced by the Deleuze-Guattari duo and their wild nuptials, as well as through the augmented and reinvented body.

Today the physical limitations of the body as a subject can be surmounted through the creation of digital identities.

The avant-garde is no longer found in art. Today it is found in science, medicine, genetics, in alliances with prosthetics and with machines, which, for me, are not our enemies but our allies.

My work is immersed in these worlds, for these are the worlds that are going to transform our lives and our ways of life.

Like Stelarc, I think that the body in its current form is completely obsolete – it is no longer capable of confronting our situation.

I am reasonably optimistic, in terms of these means, these tools that alter our ways of thinking and our relationship with the world and with the self, even if I know that one can use a hammer both to build a house and to kill someone – it just depends on who is wielding the hammer.

Beaucoup de mes œuvres ont été créées à partir du texte « De la lecture au passage à l'acte «. Un des axes de mon travail a toujours été de questionner et plus loin encore de renverser les rôles préétablis. Bousculer les pensées, car l'art n'est pas pour moi de la décoration d'intérieur - nous avons déjà les fournitures, les rideaux et les meubles pour ce faire.

J'ai pu dire, et je réitère, que questionner les sujets contemporains passe inévitablement par les corps. Avec l'idée du « corps émancipé » amenée par le binôme Deleuze-Guattari et leurs noces barbares, mais aussi celle du corps augmenté et réinventé.

Les limites physiques du corps – comme sujet – peuvent aujourd'hui être dépassées et plus encore élargies grâce à la création d'un « être identitaire » digital.

L'avant-garde n'est plus dans l'art, elle est dans les sciences, le médical, la génétique, les alliances avec les prothèses, les machines qui, pour moi, ne sont pas nos ennemies, mais nos alliées.

Mon œuvre baigne dans ces univers, car ce sont eux qui vont transformer nos vies et nos manières de vivre.

Comme Stelarc, je pense que le corps est dans sa forme actuelle complètement obsolète - il ne fait plus face à la situation.

Je suis assez optimiste, par rapport à ces moyens, ces outils qui changent nos pensées, notre rapport au monde, à l'être, même si je sais qu'avec un marteau, on peut construire une maison ou tuer; cela dépend juste de l'être humain qui tient le marteau.

ORLAN PARIS 31st OCTOBER 2015

Notes

A special thanks to ORLAN Studio for allowing me to publish their photos.

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Art and Religious Belief: Lessons for Contemporary Theory from Renaissance and Baroque Painting

Else Marie Bukdahl

Abstract: *The purpose of this paper is to address the relationship between art and religious belief in the Middle Ages, and particularly during the Renaissance and the Baroque. There is special focus on the themes of art as religion and embodied belief in Christian art in the Renaissance and the Baroque viewed in a somaesthetic perspective. These themes are analysed primarily through interpretations of the works by artists including Raphael, Veronese, Titian, and Caravaggio.*

Keywords: *somaesthetics, embodied creation and perception, simulacre, transfiguation, meliorist goal, sacred and profan love, embodied experience, Eros and Agape, the active viewer.*

In the Baroque, we encounter a new notion of an independent artistic space of cognition and experience, and the notion of an embodied creation and perception that is much stronger than in the art of the Renaissance. We also encounter new connections between art and life. These interpretations can be charted through many aspects of somaesthetics, which specifically profiles these connections. Somaesthetics can also create nuances in the understanding of the relationship between faith and visual art, which Danto espoused, and which Shusterman has examined more critically. The Italian philosopher Mario Perniola's interpretation of Ignatius Loyola's image theory demonstrates that Loyola's work constitutes a precursor – in a different way and with another aim – of the aesthetics of the phenomenon and the body. This aesthetic mindset, which is particularly apparent in the visualization apparent in Caravaggio's paintings, is connected to a concept of viewers' involvement in the artistic process, in which an awareness of their own presence and their relationship with the environment arises. This relation between perception and bodily behaviour and the viewer's involvement in the artwork also anticipates some of the main themes in somaesthetics.

Introduction

All known cultures, even the most primitive, have had some form of artistic activity occupying a central place in society. This activity was often a visualization of their faith and was regarded in prehistoric times as important for the survival of society. Cave paintings, for example, date back some 40,000 years and may have had a powerful ritual function. Hunters probably believed that drawing animals on the dark cave walls would cause real animals out on the tundra to become spellbound, making them easier to kill.

In historic times, religious systems emerged, both as major, a very complex religion, and minor, a less complicated religion. In their respective ways, these systems created the spiritual base and values that became the foundation of the systems of faith and understandings of the meaning of life and interpretations of death as a condition of life in their societies, based on the

sensory experiences present in the culture.

Christianity, despite all its internal conflicts in the theological realm and on the battlefield, formed many of our values and our faith in the West from after the fall of the Roman Empire and until the Age of Enlightenment. Particularly in France the Enlightenment created opportunities for science, art, and other disciplines to become independent. A process of liberation from the church began to prevail in society. Secularization did generate a new understanding of art, which sidelined Christianity, other religions and different philosophical systems. However, although secularization became increasingly dominant and also very fruitful in society, there were still many connections between first, and foremost, Christianity and other fields of knowledge and the arts.

"Art as Religion," "Art as Transfiguration," and the Teachings of Zen

With the increasing dominance of Symbolism at the end of the 19th century, and Modernism at the beginning of the 20th century, a new understanding of art started to prevail in cultural life. Stephan Mallarmé was very significant in the poetic interpretation of this concept. He tried - with great difficulty - to make of the poem a religion of the future.[1] This view achieved new manifestations with the birth of abstract art and in the work of artists like Kandinsky, who created theories derived from the devoted spiritual study of Theosophy, and who was informed by an intense relationship between music and color.

A significant tendency in the art, aesthetics and philosophy of the 20th century, the new millennium thus became artistic interpretations and analyses of how the arts assumed the role of religion in revealing the general conditions and true essence of life. The various art forms were considered to have broader, more intense, and more convincing interpretations of our lives and the world than traditional religions. And in contrast to traditional religions, the visual arts and other arts have not been involved in persecution and warfare, and when they have been intolerant, it has only been in an intellectual context. It is, however, important to bear in mind that religions like Christianity have also been central culture bearers. The Christian message of love is there to suffuse our world and enshrine human rights in the many layers of society. However, human beings have frequently failed to fulfill these claims appropriately. Christianity has undergone many developments and also many sorely needed purification processes, and this is an ongoing development.

The question is how can art bear this cultural inheritance into the future in an innovative way? With this question, it is also important to get a more nuanced understanding of how artists have interpreted religions and what place they have occupied, not only in a religious context, but also in society as a whole.

The arguments for art replacing religion were very influential, but were naturally also hotly debated. Richard Shusterman has in a very loyal, and in several instances, very unexpected way, both analysed and criticised this in a somaesthetic perspective. He wants

> to explore the idea that art provides a useful, even superior, substitute for religion, one that is free from the latter's many disadvantages and that should be vigorously championed as an alternative that could eventually free our transcultural world from the hostile divisiveness and backward-looking attitudes that religions have inspired and instead lead us toward greater understanding, peace, and harmony.[2]

1 See Bertrand, Marchal, *La religion de Mallarmé: poésie, mythology et religion,* 1998, pp. 14-16.

2 Richard Shusterman, "Art and Religion," *Journal of Aesthetics Education,* Fall, 2008, vol. 42, No 3, pp. 1 - 18. This essay was originally written and delivered as a plenary lecture for the 17th International Congress of Aesthetics, held in Ankara, Turkey, on July 9-13, 2007, and devoted to the theme of "Aesthetics Bridging Cultures." See http://www.deweycenter.uj.edu.pl/tekst_shusterman.html.

He points out that "art sustains the valuable features of religion while minimizing or refining out the bad."[3] But he is also aware that art has not been allocated an easy task. His own aim is to formulate an aesthetic in which experience occupies a central position. Experience has always had an important place in his own life and work. He describes it as follows:

> Experience forms the generating core of my pragmatist philosophy, in theory and in practice. Most of my philosophical views derive from experiences outside the library, seminar room and the philosophical texts I've read. Those valuable and cherished texts have served me principally as a source of scholarly encouragement, argument and useful terminology for what I have learned from adventures of living and from reflecting on such experience. Experience, for me, implies experimentation, creative exploration and involvement rather than mere passive reception, mechanical habit or distanced observation. [4]

Other philosophers have transferred the role of religion to art before Shusterman, but have posed few critical questions. The founder of analytical philosophy, G.E. Moore, and the pragmatist Richard Rorty are cases in point. John Dewey, one of the primary figures associated with the philosophy of pragmatism, maintains that "the moral function of art itself is to remove prejudice, do away with the scales that keep the eye from seeing, tear away the veils due to wont and custom, perfect the power to perceive."[5] He also points out that the arts have the power to improve, beautify and intensify social and public life. Like Shusterman, Dewey "holds the pragmatist ideal that the highest art is the art of living with the goal of salvation in *this* world rather than the heaven of an afterlife." [6] Shusterman, however, adds, that when Dewey rejects institutional religion, he "seems strangely unpragmatic in advocating ideal ends while regarding the concrete cultural means—our institutional practices—as irrelevant." [7] If we look closely at contemporary society we will see that under the secular fields of aesthetics and philosophy there are clear and less clear connections to religion. Analysing the relationship between art and religion or art and faith is a major project. To clarify aspects of this in a more succinct manner, Shusterman refers to Arthur Danto's notion of "transfiguration."

Arthur Danto, one of the most renowned contemporary aestheticians, has developed an interpretation of art's almost sacred role in an impressive, original and very influential way. Danto agrees with Hegel that philosophy is capable of a greater universality than art, which must always embody its meanings in particular works, but it is not cognitively or spiritually superior to art. Danto is convinced that "philosophy is simply hopeless in dealing with large human issues."[8] The core of his notion of "transfiguration" is that in works of art our world is transformed - or transfigured - into a higher, almost sacred, ontological status, which is entirely different from our world's domain of ordinary things. As an example of this kind of "transfiguration," he mentions *The Transfiguration* (1518-29) (figure 1), which was Raphael's last work.[9] It was left unfinished at his death, but his pupil Giulio Romano put the finishing touches to it. In this monumental painting, the perfectly proportioned, sensual and harmonious style of the High Renaissance, which focused on beauty, worldly love and the soft light of Christ's

3 Shusterman, *"Art and Religion,"* p. 5.

4 "A Philosopher in Darkness and Light," and in French translation, "Un Philosophe en ombre et en lumière," in *Lucidité: Vues de l'intérieur/ Lucidity: Inward Views,* ed. Anne-Marie Ninacs (Montreal: Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal, 2011), p. 280.

5 John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (1934), Perigee trade Paperback edition, August 2005, p. 338.

6 Shusterman, "Art and Religion," p. 6.

7 Shusterman, "Art and Religion," p. 7.

8 Arthur Danto, *The Abuse of Beauty*, 2003, p. 137.

9 Danto, 2003, p. 89.

love for us, was replaced by a new style in the dramatic expressive style of Mannerism. Here, the transfiguration represents a prefiguration of the Last Judgment and a vision of the hereafter. Shusterman highlights the fact that this work "wonderfully conveys the alleged truth of classical Christian transcendentalism (just as Hegel's philosophical idealism does) while just as superbly implying its artistic analogue—that art's transfiguration is an 'elevation and separation' into some higher otherworldliness."[10]

Figure 1: Raphaël. *The Transfiguration*. 1518-1520. Tempera on wood. 159 x 109. Pinacoteca Apostolica, Vatican, Rome.

Shusterman notes that Danto's conception of art contains traces of the Catholic faith. Because "if the religious tenor of transfiguration did not still somehow resonate with our religious sensibility, with our religious experience, faith, or imagination," then Danto's aesthetic would not have had as much influence as it has achieved. But even if Shusterman admires Danto's "religious mission of transforming and re-enchanting life," he is unable to accept its "transcendental Catholic imagery."[11]

10 Shusterman, "Art and Religion", p. 11.

11 Richard Shusterman, "Art as religion. Transfigurations of Danto's Dao," in *Danto and his Critics* , second edition, ed. by Mark Rollins, Wiley- Blackwell 2012, p. 258.

Vlad Morariu aptly points out that:

> Richard Shusterman tried to show that Danto's attempt to increase the number of types of ontological entities was unnecessary. His alternative is a deflationist approach, although it also parallels a religious model—that of Zen. However, I believe that it is worth paying further attention to Shusterman's idea that art's transfiguration is reduced to a "suffusion of ordinary objects and events with intensified meaning and value through heightened attention, care, and insight.[12]

Shusterman is, however, most interested in the tenets of "Upper West Side Buddhism," where Danto points out, that "the beauty of Zen was that there were no sacred texts and no special practice. One could practice it as writer or a painter, but also as a butcher." [13]

Zen has a central place in somaesthetics, because it has a pragmatist notion of immanent transfiguration of ordinary objects and a close relationship between art and life. When Zen principles are practiced, art can be a peaceful journey and a path to self-realization to achieve calmness, serenity and concentration. The arts focus on the importance of the unity of the mind and the body. And this unity is also very important for the creation and perception of art. Garden art has a central place in Zen philosophy and practice. Zen-gardens like *Ryōan-ji* in Kyoto, Japan (figure 2) "take our mind away from the paltry cares of the day and serve to open us to take another look at our lives from a wider perspective." There are two fundamental principles in the creation of a Zen-garden, "one, the recreation of natural habitat and, two, the attempt to appeal to the less rational and more intuitive sense of the viewer."[14] Both principles are embodied in the Zen-garden. *Ryōan-ji* is adjoined to a sub-temple of the Daitoku-ji Buddhist complex, which was constructed in 1502. The garden was rebuilt in the Showa period (1926-89).

General Reflections on Embodied Belief in Christian Art in a Somaesthetic

Prominent interpretations of the relationship between religion and art from a somaesthetic view in the art and aesthetics of the Renaissance, the Baroque and its roots will be highlighted and put into perspective. These are perceptions that are in many respects an extension of somaesthetics and can be clarified through aspects of this aesthetic. But they can also contribute to broadening the understanding of the connection between religion, art and embodied belief.

In Christian art, interpretations of the relations between art, life and embodied belief have also occupied a fairly central place. Artists have frequently worked at activating the feelings, senses, thoughts and imaginations of the viewer to help to improve living conditions for human beings and to create a greater space for experience and cognition. It is precisely these characteristics that are highlighted in the analyses of art in somaesthetics, but seldom in a Christian context. Somaesthetics has some reservations—but always in a tolerant optic—towards Christianity, because it is "based on a transcendental theology with an eternal, unchanging, disembodied God existing apart from the world" and is characterized by "an elevated distance from the ordinary material world."[15] Christianity is based on a transcendental theology, but, particularly after the Reformation in the North and the Counter-Reformation in the South, has been dominated by the concept of an embodied God with more focus on this world than the

12 Vlad Morairu, "Transfiguration," *Atlas of transformation*, 28.2. 1989. See http://monumenttotransformation.org/atlas-of-transformation/html/t/transfiguration/transfiguration-vlad-morariu.html

13 Shusterman, "Art as religion. Transfigurations of Danto's Dao," *Danto and his critics,* p. 258.

14 Tom Wright, *Zen Gardens text,* in *Zen Gardens* by Tom Wright and Mizuno Katsuhiko, Suiko Books, 1990, p.68. *Ryogen-in* is a Zen Rock Garden or a dry landscape garden from the Showa periode - Kyoto, Japan.

15 Shusterman, "Art and religion," p. 9.

hereafter. Christianity is not—in contrast to religions like Islam—a static entity. In the modern era, it has mostly been very open to critique, undergone many changes and been characterized by ongoing purifications.

Figure 2: *Ryōan-ji* Zen-garden. Showa period. Late 15th century. Zen garden. Kyoto, Japan.

Finally, not only the artists working with Christian motifs, like Leonardo da Vinci, but also many other artists and aestheticians, have repeatedly asserted that art is more open than the disciplines in which concepts and categories have prevalence. And visual art may also contain a freer view than even its "sister genre"—poetry—can communicate. In addition, visual art has a unique expressive power. The French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty has explained in an original and clear manner how visual artists communicate an understanding of reality that verbal language cannot express in the same way, and in certain instances, is unable to encompass at all. Leonardo da Vinci wrote of the knowledge expressed in what he called a "pictorial science":

> [This science] "does not speak with words [and still less with numbers] but with *oeuvres* which exist in the visible just as natural things do and which nevertheless communicate through those things to all the generations of the universe." This silent science, says Rilke [apropos of Rodin], brings into *oeuvre* the forms of things "whose seal has not been broken"; it comes from the eye and addresses itself to the eye. We must understand the eye as the "window of the soul."[16]

16 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *op. cit.*, 1964, p. 186. Merleau-Ponty has found the quotations from Leonardo da Vinci's texts in Robert Delaunay's book, *Du cubisme à l'art abstrait,* Paris, 1957, p. 175. See also Rilke, *Auguste Rodin*, Paris, 1928, p. 150.

Theologians and philosophers have endeavored to reconcile Christianity with the dominant beliefs of the periods, just as they have highlighted the role of the Christian message in this world. These endeavors have often resulted in church artists visualizing this message in an open and transparent manner. How has the verbal and visual dialogue between Christianity and philosophy been characterized, particularly in the Renaissance and the Baroque periods and in their origins in the Islamic Golden Age and in the Middle Ages? And how have these dialogues gained significance for the attempts to improve living conditions, stimulate art and science, and connect the body and mind?

The Dialogue between Christianity, Philosophy, and Art in The Golden Islamic Age and the Middle Ages

The great Arab Andalusian philosopher Averroes lived in the *Islamic Golden Age* in the rather tolerant Caliphate in Spain, where Jews, Christians, and Muslims coexisted and worked together peacefully in the fields of art, philology, philosophy and science. Averroes lived in a time particularly suited to combining a broad understanding of philosophy, sciences and religion. His "dialectical treatment of the role of religion and philosophy in human affairs and his theory of knowledge remain relevant to the contemporary science and religion discourse."[17]

The relationship between philosophy, science and religion was always in focus in his works. He was particularly admired for his commentaries of Aristotle's works, which were largely forgotten in Western Europe at the time. Latin translations of Averroes' works made Aristotle very well known outside Spain. He had a great influence on Christian Europe and has been described as the creator of secular thought in Western Europe. He opened channels both in the Islamic and the Christian world, inspired new dialogues between religion and philosophy, and highlighted the importance of finding fresh solutions to the problems and challenges of our world.

Thomism dominated church life in the West during the Middle Ages. It was founded by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and consisted of a combination of Christian theology and the philosophy of Aristotle. His studies of Aristotle's epistemology and ethics were inspired by Averroes' works and created fertile dialogues in the beginning, but he ended up constructing a firmly established theological system that culminated in the *Summa Theologica* (1265-1274). Aristotle's approach was used to comprehend and substantiate a Christian worldview, not as a guideline for open epistemological discussion. He was convinced that the arguments and concepts from the pagan Aristotle and Muslim Averroes were too controversial in the Catholic Church of his day. However, Thomas Aquinas also argues for tolerance, not only of culturally different people (such as Jews and Muslims), but also of their public rituals.

Bertrand Russell has described the essence of the critique—from the Middle Ages and in the centuries that followed—of the final versions of Thomism as follows:

> He does not, like the Platonic Socrates, set out to follow wherever the argument may lead. He is not engaged in an inquiry, the result of which it is impossible to know in advance. Before he begins to philosophize, he already knows the truth; it is declared in the Catholic faith.[18]

It became the task of art to visualise and bring alive the evangelical message, everyday life and

17 Muzaffar Qbal, "*Averroës*," *Encyclopedia of Science and Religion*, 2003.

18 Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy,* Ch. 34, "St. Thomas Aquinas," Allen & Unwin, London; Simon & Schuster, New York 194. See ed. from 1967, p. 463.

the wonders of nature. For people in the Middle Ages, the world was a whole created by God, with large and small perspectives. According to Thomas, God reveals himself through nature, so to study nature is to study God. Medieval people, who were often illiterate, encountered aspects of both the Christian universe and their own world in a sensuous way.

They met stories from the Bible (figure 3), but also impressive pictures of scenes of courtly love and romantic adventures (figs. 4 and 5). Stories of this kind were very popular at this time. These love scenes were often used as decorations in upper class homes, on their mirrors and later visualised in more accessible media. They represented an often-unattainable dream of fantastic encounters with love, which were seldom played out in real life.

Figure 3: *The Mother of God Enthroned with the Christ Child Amidst Angels and Saints.* 1308-1311.Tempera and gold on wood. 213 x 396. The central panel of Duccio's huge Maestà altarpiece for Siena Cathedral. Museo dell'Opera Metropolitana del Duomo, Siena.

Figure 4: Scenes of courtly love on a lady's ivory mirror-case. Paris, 1300–1330.

Figure 5: *The Assault on the Castle of Love*, attacked by knights and defended by ladies, was a popular subject for Gothic ivory mirror-cases. Louvre. About 1350-1370. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

It was not only visual art in the form of paintings and sculpture, which had a central function in transmitting the Christian message to ordinary illiterate people in the Middle Ages. There were also rituals, such as burial rites and various objects, which appealed to both sight and the sense of feel, and which generally provided a variety of opportunities for corporal experiences. These objects visualise different forms of "embodied beliefs." Examples of these could be brooches with Christian symbols and motifs. They became increasingly popular in North Western Europe in the 8th to 10th centuries: "These objects, in being worn, held, and touched, were used by individuals in their everyday experience and expression of Christianity." The common use of these brooches created community and "religious identities within the context of the changing socio-political landscape of early medieval Europe."[19]

In the Islamic Golden Age and in the Middle Ages, we find traces of the beginning at times fierce, but also rewarding debates about the relationship between theology and philosophy, or belief and knowledge, which led to taking up the changing challenges that came from the society surrounding it. Furthermore, we encounter a closing down of fruitful dialogues inside and outside the Church.

Religious art of the Renaissance - the Marriage between Christianity, Neo-Platonism, and the Influence of the Art and Culture of the Ancient Greeks and Romans

In the Renaissance, the philosophy and art of the Ancients conquered cultural life and opened up new dialogues with Christianity, which was still the most important value system of the era. Christianity underwent a process of purification and a powerful dialogue between the philosophies of Antiquity—Plato's, in particular—was established. The art and literature of the Ancients were studied with great enthusiasm and rapidly made its mark on the art and literature of the time.

In *The School of Athens* (figure 6), Raphael provides a monumental interpretation of

19 Rosie Weetch, "Embodied Belief: Wearing Brooches and Being Christian in Early Medieval Europe," paper given at the International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, July 2, 2013. See http://www.academia.edu/2241604/Embodied_Belief_Wearing_Brooches_and_Being_Christian_in_Early_Medieval_Europe.

the renewal of great interest in the art and culture of antiquity and thereby also a consistent preoccupation with how it is possible—both artistically, scientifically, and philosophically—to interpret the world that we live in. The building is in the shape of a Greek cross, which some have suggested was intended to show a harmony between pagan philosophy and Christian theology.[20]

Almost every figure in the painting can be identified as a Greek philosopher, rather than a religious character. The two main figures at the center of the fresco, at its architecture's central vanishing point, are: Plato on the left and Aristotle, his student, on the right. They are engaged in a deep dialogue. Socrates is present—debating passionately. Plotinus, the creator of Neo-Platonism, is also there on the right close to the corner, dressed in a red gown. Raphael has even painted Michelangelo as the philosopher Heraclitus, Plato as Leonardo da Vinci, Plotinus as Donatello, and himself as the Greek painter Apelles. Through this he wanted again to create relations between Greek philosophy and Christianity, symbolized by the Christian artists. And he has not neglected to visualize Fornarina, his mistress and model, as the personification of Love.

Figure 6: Raphael. *The School of Athens.* 1509 - 1511. Fresco. 500 x 770 cm. Stanza della Segnatura. Vatican. Rome.

In contrast to the artists of the Middle Ages, who preferred an abstract, two-dimensional linear style, Renaissance artists emulated the body-conscious quality of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture, drawing inspiration from the extensive depiction of nudity and the use of drapery as a means of articulating the body. And the gods and goddesses of antiquity are often resurrected as holy persons from the Bible. It is precisely because the artists of the Renaissance period strove for mastery of the physical world that they preferred to transpose biblical episodes to their own time. Through those free interpretations, they wanted to visualize the stories in the Bible to

20 Horst Voldemar Janson and Anthony F. Janson, *History of Art: The Western Tradition*, see the section about *The School of Athens.*

appeal powerfully to viewers of their own era, and to create new orientations and meanings in their own life. With a masterly freedom of interpretation, Veronese transposed the biblical story of *The Wedding Feast at Cana* (1561) (figure 7) into the sumptuous, joyful setting of a Venetian wedding. The colors—the yellow-oranges, vivid reds, and lapis lazuli—create an intense impression of vibrant life.

At the Venice Biennale in 2009, Peter Greenaway transformed Veronese's W*edding at Cana* into an impressive video installation. He highlighted the more worldly aspects of the work: the gossip amongst guests, servants fretting about food supplies, the soaring music. The continued popularity of this sixteenth-century painting clearly indicates that Veronese's work speaks to viewers in the twenty-first century as well as its original Renaissance audience. Veronese's aim resembles some of the basic ideas about visual art in somaesthetics, with his focus on how a piece resonates with viewers and captivates their senses. Veronese wants to incorporate viewers actively, to give them a sense of being a part of the scene in the painting, to provide them with an opportunity to meditate, and to deepen their understanding of the significance of the message in the stories from the New Testament for *this* world. Somaesthetics can deepen our understanding of Veronese's art, because it establishes a theory about the relationship between the viewer and the artwork. In relation to the artist and the viewer, somaesthetics aims for a fully embodied experience, creation, perception and a meliorist goal.

Figure 7: Paolo Veronese. *The Wedding at Cana*. 1563. Oil on canvas. 677 x 994. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

But how did the philosophers and artists of the Renaissance connect the new interpretations of the philosophy of antiquity with Christianity? They did so in several ways. Their overall aim was to combine the claims for the enforcement of the rights of the individual and improvements to society as a whole, which both the philosophers of antiquity and the New Testament put forward in their respective ways.

One of the people who took on this demanding work, was Marsilio Ficino (1433-99), the great Florentine scholar, philosopher, priest and the architect of Renaissance Platonism. His enduring influence on philosophy, love, music theory, medicine, and magic extended across Europe. He tried to create a new kind of synthesis between Christianity and Classical Antiquity. He translated the most important works of Plato and other ancient philosophers. And "Plato was introduced as a gateway to St. Paul: Christianity became the crown of human dignity, the source and culmination of inner tranquility"[21] and harmony. His most important book *De religione Christiana et fidei pietate* (1475-6*)* was an apology for Christianity, but it also dealt with the problems in other monotheistic religions, particularly Judaism and Islam. Ficino analyzes in a new optic the connections between Plato and Christianity in a series of letters to his colleagues. The same connection was also described in a collection of sermons and commentaries on St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Paul. The parallel between Ficino and St. Paul can be interpreted as a parallel between Ficino's conception of *Eros* and St Paul's concept of *Agape.*[22] He had worked hard to convince the leaders of the Catholic Church to create a new and fruitful relationship between reason and faith and to improve the relationship between the art of living and religion:

> Marsilio Ficino was more than a philosopher with powerful intellectual and spiritual ideas. He was a *Magnus*, a unique type of philosopher that brings spirituality into the heart by making it part of the total environment and culture of society. Ficino knew that there was no other way for human institutions and society to live and prosper. Ficino, while wholeheartedly devoted to philosophy, was immensely practical. He brought about cultural change by continually encouraging leaders to maintain their health in body and mind, to keep good company, and to live and work in an environment that was harmonious and uplifting. He also insisted that leaders become examples of the highest qualities and only focus on activities and actions that bring out the best in human nature.[23]

Ficino's medical works, for example *De vita libri tres* (*Three Books on Life*),[24] exerted considerable influence on Renaissance physicians such as Paracelsus. Both of them were keen on analyzing the unity of the microcosm and macrocosm and their interactions through somatic and psychological manifestations with the aim of investigating and curing diseases.

Ficino's desire to establish a better relationship between the art of living, religion, and philosophy is a Renaissance forerunner of one of the main aims of somaesthetics, which is that philosophy and aesthetics should not merely be considered a purely intellectual body of doctrines, but more. Later, in somaesthetics, it is called an "art of living"[25] which also focuses on health.[26]

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21 Dermot Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy: Cardinal Pole and the Counter Reformation*, 1972, p. 2. On Ficino's theology generally see: Marsilio Ficino: *His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy,* ed. M. J.B. Allen and V. R. Rees, Leiden - Boston - Cologne 202. It contains an ample bibliography.

22 *Eros* is the love that can exist between man and woman, and *Agape*, the distinctly Christian love of God and of neighbor.

23 Ron Cacioppe, "Marsilio Ficino: Magnus of the Renaissance, Shaper of Leaders." *Integral Leadership Review*, March 2007. See http://integralleadershipreview.com/5397-feature-article-marsilio-ficino-magnus-of-the-renaissance-shaper-of-leaders/.

24 *Three Books on Life*, 1489, translated by Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clarke, Tempe, Arizona: *The Renaissance Society of America*, 2002. With notes, commentaries and Latin text.

25 Richard Shusterman, "Somaesthetic Awakening and the Art of Living," *Thinking through the body. Essays in Somaesthetics,* 2012, pp. 302-307.

26 Richard Shusterman, "A Disciplinary Proposal." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 57, No. 3 (Summer, 1999), pp. 306-307.

Ficino's words and actions convinced his contemporaries to treat others with dignity and respect because the human soul was an expression of the divine.[27] His conception of the soul does not indicate the dualism of Descartes, because Ficino regarded the soul as one of the elements with the capacity to bind human beings, heaven, and earth to one another. For him, love linked all things together as well and flowed first from God, also called The One, into all existing things, which, consequently, shared the property of similarity; however different they appeared from the outside. The soul has, so to speak, a material effect on the phenomenological world. The duality between body and mind, introduced by among others Thomas Aquinas, was beginning to lose its position. Carl Henrik Koch explains Ficino's unity of the earthly world and spiritual divinity:

> Plotinus had taught Ficino to conquer the duality between soul and body by understanding Being as an outflow of the creative force, or God. Just as the rays of the sun spread out and light up the darkness, so Being streams out of God. And just as the light of the sun gives the perceived world the character that it has, it also creates a likeness of the source. This earthly, sensual beauty is thus an afterglow of heavenly, spiritual beauty. It thus provides greater continuity between the earthly and the heavenly. With Plotinus and Ficino, the earthly is analogous with the sun's halo, and ideal beauty is the sun itself.[28]

In the Renaissance both artists and aestheticians believed that art could broaden, develop, and deepen our understanding of the other, our world, and ourselves. But art can also have a transformative force in making human life more harmonious and beautiful, and connecting sacred and profane love. It was a widely held view both in the artistic world as well as that of the church, that art and culture could elevate and cultivate people so that the destructive forces of evil and sin could be pushed to the periphery and gradually lose their power. This idea was later called the "Golden dream of the Renaissance." According to Ficino, "this century, like a golden age, has restored to light the liberal arts...poetry, rhetoric, sculpture, architecture, music...and all this in Florence."[29]

In 1693 Titian created his famous painting entitled *Amor Divino e Amor Profano* (Sacred Love and Profane Love). There have since been many interpretations of it. Most scholars are now convinced that the title is correct and that Erwin Panofsky's interpretation of it is convincing. In a very long and detailed article, he posits that the two female figures are personifications of the platonic concept of sacred and profane love (figure 8). In his book *De amore* (1484), Ficino calls the personification of the two kinds of love "The Double Venus" (*Venus Duplex)*. Panofsky interpreted the two figures in Titian's painting as "*The Double Venus*," because "the Neoplatonic doctrine of love and beauty filled the very air which Titian breathed (..) he was no less responsive

27 "Even though Ficino generally marks a distinction between being and becoming, or between the incorporeal and corporeal, he is no simple dualist. His view of soul, and the role that it plays in the material world, is fundamentally different from, for example, the strict dualism of the seventeenth-century philosopher René Descartes. Matter and soul are entirely distinct from one another, according to Descartes, and these two basic substances share no qualities in common. In his treatise on physics, *The World*, Descartes distinguishes himself from earlier approaches to natural philosophy when he explains that he uses the word "nature" to "signify matter itself," and not "some goddess or any other sort of imaginary power" (AT XI 37). According to Descartes, a natural philosopher does not need to appeal to anything other than matter in order to properly explain the natural world. On the contrary, according to Ficino, the material world is not something that can be adequately explained by turning to matter and motion alone; nature is an active power that suffuses matter and provides it with its life, activity, and order. On this account, nature is a dynamic force operating on material things from within, and this is the proper or genuine cause of things changing, as well as their generation and corruption. Soul, therefore, has a paramount role to play in Ficino's natural philosophy." *Marsilio Ficino*. *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. See http://www.iep.utm.edu/ficino/

28 Carl Henrik Koch, "Kunsten, kunstneren, skønheden og kærligheden," Kunst og æstetik, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen, 1996, p. 85.

29 Ficino Marsilio, 1492 (Severy, 1970: 43).

than Michelangelo to the new gospel of Neo-Platonism." [30] There is little doubt that he believed that contemplating the beauty of the Creation led to an awareness of the divine perfection of the order of the cosmos.

Figure 8: Titian. *Sacred and Profane Love.* 1513-1514. Oil on canvas. 118 x 279 cm, Borghese Gallery, Rome.

The clothed woman in Titian's painting is seated *below* and closer to the ground than her nude counterpart. She is wearing crimson gloves and holding a case of jewels, both signs of worldly interests. And she is dressed very elegantly in white silk with crimson sleeves and rich fabrics. She is the Venus that is a symbol of profane love.

The nude figure symbolizes sacred or divine love. She carries a flaming chalice in her hands, which is an attribute of Christian Charity. She is placed at the same level as her twin sister, but occupying a higher position. So they are twins, but on a different level. And this means—as Panofsky has formulated it—that they do

> not express a contrast between good and evil, but symbolize one principle in two modes of existence and two grades of perfection. The lofty-minded nude does not despise the worldly creature whose seat she condescends to share, but with a gently persuasive glance seems to impart to her the secrets of a higher realm; and no one can overlook the more than sisterly resemblance between the two figures.[31]

The two Venuses are seated on a Roman sarcophagus filled with water. A little Cupid—another symbol of love—stirs the water, and may suggest the "Neoplatonic belief that love, a principle of cosmic 'mixture' acts as an intermediary between heaven and earth."[32] On the sarcophagus is a relief with the wild horse and the flaying of the Phrygian satyr Marsyas. The depiction of the gruesome and uncontrolled sides of the human being are thus placed on the very sarcophagus that the two Venuses are seated upon, and are without direct visual connection to them and the sun-drenched landscape. This depiction seems very self-contained. Titian probably wanted to visualize his dream that humanity's dark side could be conquered through the powerful influence of culture and love.

30 Erwin Panofsky, "Reflections on Love and Beauty," *Problems in Titian. Mostly iconographic,*" London, 1969, pp. 109-110.

31 Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology. Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (1939) Torchbook edition, 1962, pp.151-152

32 Panofsky, 1962, p. 152.

The New Theory of Images in the Baroque and a New Conception of Art and Life

In the Baroque, we encounter a new notion of an independent artistic space of cognition and experience, and the notion of an embodied creation and perception that is much stronger than in the art of the Renaissance. We also encounter new connections between art and life. These interpretations can be charted through many aspects of somaesthetics, which profiles precisely these connections. However, it can also create nuances in the understanding of the relationship between faith and visual art, which Danto espoused, and which Shusterman more critically examined.

The Italian philosopher and aesthetician Mario Perniola, in particular, takes this new trans-historical approach to the Italian Baroque. This is an approach that humanists have not been able to provide until now. Perniola started his analyses referring to the conflict between iconolaters, the worshippers of icons and images, and iconoclasts, breakers or destroyers of images, which has surfaced repeatedly since the beginning of the Byzantine Empire in the 7th century. This debate has always created new orientations in the aesthetic debate and in the visual arts. But between the Scylla and the Charybdis of these two positions, Perniola created the idea of the "image as simulacrum" that is "neither icon nor vision."[33] He found the source of this third standpoint in the aesthetics of the Baroque and of the Counter-Reformation, including in Roberto Bellarmino's theory of images. Perniola sums up this theory as follows:

> (He) destroyed the direct connection between the image and its model, the foundation of iconophilia, yet nonetheless without falling into iconoclasis, nor even into devaluation of the image. The essential is that the validity of images is no longer due to the reality and the dignity of the metaphysical prototype, but rather depends on their intrinsic, concrete, and *historical* qualities.[34]

Ignacio de Loyola's *Exercitia spiritualia* (1548) was one of the most important sources of inspiration for the aesthetics of the Baroque and for the Counter-Reformation, influencing, for instance, both Bernini and Caravaggio. In this book, Perniola uncovers the theoretical premises on which the conception of images as simulacra rests.[35] He proposes that Loyola's writings on images dissolve the dispute between the attribution of a transcendental value to icons and the denial of the role of images in spiritual life and introduce a third possibility: the image as simulacrum that satisfies a necessary condition for spiritual life even though it is only an appearance that signals the absence of the sacred being.[36] Ignacio de Loyola's approach to images is based on two irreconcilable attitudes "disinterest" and "application of the senses." In *Exercitia spiritualia*, he emphasizes that it is important to "to see with the sight of the imagination the corporeal place where the thing is found which I want to contemplate" e.g. the temple where Jesus has been (1. Exercise 47) and also to use the senses in order to approach reality as concretely as possible, because there is no spiritual progress if things are not felt and acknowledged internally. This method involves the four senses: "The sight, the hearing, the smell and the touch."[37] The

33 The following quotes from "Icons, visions, simulacra" are English translations from the French version of Perniola's article, published in *Traverses*, no. 10, 1978, pp. 39-48. The abovementioned quotation can be found on p. 45. See also R. Bellarmino, *De controversiis christianae fidei* 1986-93, Quarta Controversia, Liber II, cap. XX, sq.

34 Perniola, p. 45.

35 Perniola, pp. 45-46.

36 See *Baroque Garden Cultures: Emulation, Sublimation, Subversion,* ed. Michel Conan, vol. 25, 2005, p. 12 and Else Marie Bukdahl, "Vers un post-baroque?," *Puissance du Baroque. Les forces, les formes, les rationalités*, ed. by Carsten Juhl and E. M. Bukdahl, Éditions Galilée, Paris 1996, pp. 135-138.

37 See *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, 1548, translated by Mullan, Father Elder, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1914, p. 31 and p. 46.

conditions necessary for the appearance of the simulacrum are thus present, inasmuch as the metaphysical legitimization of the identity between things and the world has disappeared and consequently their historical status has become a reality. No image constitutes *a revelation*, and yet all images become "a necessary condition of a 'spiritual exercise', e.g. the formation of experiences. Images of Hell, just like those of Christ, contribute toward this end as well."[38] The simulacrum draws attention away from the imitated object and towards the image as an image and is therefore able to activate the senses. It thus succeeds in evoking an image that is larger, more unexpected, and more sensual than that which our usual viewpoint is able to produce. By being active participants in the completion of the artistic process, our senses are also provided with a more in-depth view of the process of artistic creation. They are, in essence, a very integral part of the work.

In Caravaggio's monumental church art, we encounter the most original and most innovative visualization of an understanding of the image, which is a parallel to Perniola's interpretation of the picture theory of the Baroque. His depictions of the stories of the New Testament are so realistic that the church often disliked them. He did not—like the artists of the Renaissance—portray the human individual as sublime, beautiful, and heroic. No artist before him depicted the entombment in such a radically naturalistic format, very foreign to the grand manner. And nobody before him dared to hire common people as models for saints and apostles. His figures are bowed, bent, cowering, reclining, or stooped.

One of the main characteristics of Baroque art is the breakdown in the divisions between our space, the space of the painting, and the opening out to infinite space. The result is that we feel much more a part of the painting than we do viewing a Renaissance painting. We are simply drawn into the pictorial universe. This effect is extremely visible and intense in the paintings of Caravaggio. Experiencing something with your body has a much more powerful effect than knowing it in your mind. Baroque art, Caravaggio's paintings in particular, often impel you to have an experience that is situated in your body. This means that Baroque art is even closer to the concept of the active viewer and of the notion of the embodied perception of somaesthetics than Renaissance art. These characteristics are particularly evident in *The Entombment of Christ* (figure 9), which was painted for the second chapel on the right of Santa Maria in Vallicella, also called Chiesa Nuova, a church built for the Oratory of Saint Philip Neri. The Oratory regarded his realism as too intense and asked him to tone it down.

This large painting, dominated by a very dramatic diagonal spiral of mourners and cadaver bearers, which point at the dead Christ and the bare stone, is not a scene of transfiguration, but of deep mourning. At the top of the painting is the figure of Mary of Cleophas, the sister of the Virgin Mary. She raises her outstretched arms to the sky, in a gesture of inconsolable grief, bereft of hope. Beneath her is Mary Magdalene, drying her tears with a white handkerchief. On her left, the head of the Virgin Mary, covered in a nun's habit, is visible. Her extended hand is also a sign of intense sorrow, and is in close proximity to the shadowed face of John, which is also marked by deep sadness.[39] Beside him emerges Nicodemus, helping to bury Christ and one of the key figures of the painting. He is modeled as a thick-limbed laborer, and looks directly and intensely at the viewers, establishing a psychological bond with them, and drawing them into this drama of life and death. His elbow and the edge of the lid of the tomb—which is not parallel to the picture plane, but is positioned obliquely—also invite the viewers to enter into the burial scene. Or as Giorgio Bonsanti points out:

38 Perniola, p. 46.

39 This figure can be identified as either John, the writer of the Gospel, or Joseph of Arimathea, who obtained Christ's body from the Romans. Here, we will just call him John.

The scene is viewed as from the tomb; the impression is almost as if the figures are about to surrender the body of Christ, if not to the observer, at least to someone standing in the same place. The identification is therefore complete, the involvement inescapable. The way the painting affected nineteenth-century artists is understandable. It combines a structural classicism that is timeless (Cézanne) with an extremely strong sense of drama (Géricault).[40]

Figure 9: Caravaggio. *The Entombment of Christ*. 1603-1604. Oil on canvas. 300 x 203 cm. *Pinacoteca Apostolica,* Vatican, Rome.

The diagonal placement of John, Nicodemus, and the dead Christ on the picture plane is connected to the dramatic spiral line. This compositional strategy intensifies the overall impression.

40 Giorgio Bonsanti, *Caravaggio*, Scala, 1984, p. 50.

Caravaggio created a very complex, intense, and tightly organized figure composition, viewed against an endless, absolute, black space, dominated by an experience of death, suffering, deep loss, and hopelessness. But the deep darkness is pushed aside by the powerful light surrounding the thin body of the dead Christ, which in one diagonal movement, forces its way up to the head of the sister of the Virgin Mary. There is no doubt that this light symbolizes Christ's messages of love, which create new meanings and orientations in our life. Or as John expresses it, he is "the light of the world" and so he that follows Him "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John, 8.12).

Conclusion

The aestheticians and artists of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Baroque were aware, in their respective ways, that concepts and verbal language never entirely correspond with artistic expression. Visual art is, therefore, capable of grasping perspectives or revealing traces and significances of belief that philosophers and scientists cannot grasp with their tools alone. The artists of these three periods transformed and applied new strategies in their artistic production in a variety of imaginative ways.

The artists and artworks here discussed illuminate somaesthetic ideas because they focus on embodied creation and perception, full-bodied, sensuous aesthetic experience, the establishment of a bridge between art, real life and praxis, and the interactive dialogue with the viewer and their surroundings. The artists engage viewers by drawing them into an impressive artistic space of experience, inspiring them to think and create in new ways, stimulating them to positive action. Although these artists perceive and work within a Christian context, they address their—often open—visual message to *this* world.

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Occupy your Body: Activating 21st-Century Tattoo Culture

Karen J. Leader

Abstract: *To consider body modification, in this case tattooing, in the 21st century, opens new paths of inquiry about body and identity. In the context of Stories on the Skin: Tattoo Culture at FAU, a long-term, multi-disciplinary creative and research collaboration, this paper will consider several questions about its scholarly import. First, the phenomenon of the widespread, mainstream popularity of tattoo is occurring at the precise moment when our lives are becoming more virtual. What is the significance of this profoundly bodily performance of self in a world where bodies are being left behind for avatars? If tattooing offers a positive value to individual subjectivity, can this significant embodiment of self offer an ethical model for that affirms our lived experience, on an increasingly endangered planet? Analyses from art history, sociology, anthropology, and pragmatist philosophy offer tattoo culture as a touchstone for 21st-century body politics.*

Keywords: *art, body, bodying, culture, embodiment, humanities, occupy, tattoo, tattoos.*

In the course of a years-long creative and research collaboration called *Stories on the Skin: Tattoo Culture at FAU*, hundreds of tattoos have been photographed and stories have been gathered and interpreted in numerous art forms, both for their artful content, and to explore the promising implications of reconnecting body and mind, ink and story, through the creative process. The focus of this essay is to describe and define the ways in which tattoos and the stories associated with them offer fruitful ground for experiences of embodied subjectivity, in the virtual age. I will argue for the merits of such bodily commitment. Tattoos don't merely "mean" something. Rather, they "do" things.

If a person inscribes part of their memoir—picture, text, or symbol—permanently in their skin, it is formative of their identity. What then is the significance of the recent expansion of this particularly embodied form? A 2016 Harris Poll estimated that "about three in ten Americans (29%) have at least one tattoo, up from roughly two in ten (21%) just four years ago. What's more, few inked Americans stop at one; among those with any tattoos, seven in ten (69%) have two or more."[1] The astonishing rise to mainstream popularity—hardly a sitcom or talk show today fails to make a few tattoo references—indicates a distinctive zeitgeist, or, to borrow Susan Bordo's apt phrase, a "crystallization of culture" that invites a closer look.[2] Rather than simply a trend or fad, the permanence of tattoo lends itself to more sustained study as aspects of the practice weave through other areas of interest in the present age.

Using John Dewey's concept of art as experience rather than discrete object as a baseline, and integrating scholarship that undergirds a pragmatist proposal that such experience-based interactivity promotes a social good, I argue that this potential resides in the connecting tissue of

1 Larry Shannon-Missal, "Tattoo Takeover: Three in Ten Americans Have Tattoos, and Most Don't Stop at Just One." *The Harris Poll* (Feb. 10, 2016.) http://www.theharrispoll.com/health-and-life/Tattoo_Takeover.html Accessed March 8, 2017.

2 Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 139.

body and mind. When set in motion through ink and story, the reanimated energies of original motivation, creative presentation, and social interaction are where art resides, and does its work in the world. With tattoo as an exemplary (but not the only possible) case study, this essay situates the above specifically within the political ramifications of such a project in the 21st century. Is actively bodying a self in pictorial, textual and symbolic permanence of specific relevance in the virtual age?

If hypothetically we determine that today's tattoo phenomenon is period specific in its significance, then can we argue that it can be a positive phenomenon? Can embodiment be empowering in the age of avatars? And can the active quality of stories and storytelling activate the aspirations embedded in tattoos, connecting body and mind toward a more authentic rather than contingent subjectivity?[3]

What then is the political dimension of such bodying of self, and of society? The use of the term Occupy is provocative and strategic. "Occupy Your Body" marshals the powerful image of Zuccotti Park and other sites around the U.S. and the world, where the virtual, in the form of social media, produced the corporeal, thousands of peaceful protestors, refusing to give ground. If their name, Occupy Wall Street, conjured images of military occupations, their actions produced something quite different. Once occupied, their means of communication was physical, in the form of the "human megaphone." The assertion of human presence in the political realm, literally the "body politic" changed the conversation, inserting the phrase "We are the 99%" into the lexicon, and forcing wealth and income inequality into the public dialogue, where it remains. As Rebecca Solnit observed on the one-year anniversary: "Wily Occupy brought a Trojan horse loaded with truth to the citadel of Wall Street. Even the bronze bull couldn't face that down."[4]

Thus from the theoretical we move to the practical. Admittedly, asserting a positive value to an embodied existence, a committed physical presence, in an increasingly virtual world places a heavy onus on the kinds of meanings the body can carry, so marked is it by regimes of power. Deploying methods from various disciplines, including art history, feminist theory, narrative studies, philosophy and sociology, this argument proposes the frame of "tattoo culture" and the metaphor/agent of occupation as a melding of mind and body, in order to turn those meanings into a confrontation with power, in the context of the facing down the global challenges of the twenty-first century.

Ask any person to tell you about their tattoo (s) and you will get a story. Such stories are not uncommon, and when repeated in response to the vaguely hostile queries the tattooed often experience, can seem boilerplate; what Louise Woodstock calls dismissively "therapeutic narratives."[5] However, approaching with a genuine sense of curiosity will yield a remarkable range of experiences, interpretations, and opinions. The "tattoo culture" in the title of this article refers to ways my collaborators and I developed the stories we collected into other visual and performing arts (figure 1).[6] The intricate connection between ink and story can be articulated through art, which can move audiences beyond shallow preconceptions, to more deeply appreciate the multiplicity of tattoo cultures.

3 Arthur F. Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe: A Socio-Narrative* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

4 Rebecca Solnit, "Occupy Your Victories," *Guernica* (September 17, 2012): http://www.guernicamag.com/daily/rebecca-solnit-occupy-your-victories/ Accessed May 24, 2017.

5 Louise Woodstock, "Tattoo Therapy: Storying the Self on Reality TV in Neoliberal Times." *Journal of Popular Culture* online early view, 2011: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-5931.2011.00814.x/abstract.

6 For details of the various phases of this project and initial analysis see Leader, Karen. "Stories on the Skin: Tattoo Culture at a South Florida University." *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* 14.4 (March, 2015): 426-446.

DOI: 10.1177/1474022215575162. More about the project can be found at storiesontheskin.org, and Facebook.com/storiesontheskinatfau.

Figure 1: Alex Catalano, "Phoenix-Toranika Washington" from Skin Full of Stories, choreography by Clarence Brooks and dancers, 2014. The dancer expresses abstractly student Jesse's story of a phoenix tattoo, a symbolic rebirth from the crippling self-destruction of addiction. (Reproduced with the artist's permission)

Surface and depth

The interpretive anchor for this project has been the body. The skin is not a canvas to be framed and hung on a wall. And the story is not found in a journal or book. Tattoos are living, breathing, embodied autobiographies, ink and story acquired through considerable pain and expense. When someone tells you about their tattoo, they are not describing something that happened to them, but something that is them. Interpretation considers the pain, the permanence, and the ongoing influence of the ink.

From the beginning of human existence, in candlelit caves or nomadic caravans, tattoos have been a living art, and a lived art form. They are part of elaborate ceremonies, they carry profound aesthetic, religious, and socio-political meanings. And they are often performed, meaning that they are hidden or revealed as part of a strategy of self-presentation. In addition, their interpretations change not only with the circumstances of the bodies that wear them but also with/in the societies that read them. Of course tattoos are a form of creative expression, but they are also keepers of memory, celebrations and commemorations, affirmations and decorations. They are, in short, complex cultural interventions.

Asking a tattooed person about their ink can be a fraught interchange, and people have relayed extraordinary examples of rudeness. Instead, starting from a position of curiosity and interest, and wanting to draw out the complexities, a dialogical model emphasizes the importance of telling but also of listening. This forecloses the unsatisfying "defensive mode" and turns the narratives away from narcissistic self-storying. It is here that the emphasis on what tattoos "do" rather than "mean" or "diagnose" becomes most fruitful. "Tattoo culture" insists that the story is for the listener as much as for the teller.

Mary Kosut posits an embodied storytelling (after Arthur Frank), made significant

specifically through social interactions. The tattooed body is, Kosut argues: "a conceptual latchkey— a tool that may enable researchers to begin to unlock the complicated relationship between the body, self-identity and society."[7] This approach takes tattoo as an opportunity for discovery and understanding of humanity in general, rather than as something in itself to be investigated in order to be diagnosed.

Arthur Frank has focused in his most recent book on stories as "companions" or agents that offer possible outcomes. In an interview he explains: "Stories teach us what sort of consequences follow from what sort of action; that's their narrative logic. We then perceive moments in our own lives as fitting that narrative logic, and we act as if in the story."[8] In *Letting Stories Breathe*, Frank offers from the beginning, in the title, that there is a bodily component: "Stories are material-semiotic in their double embodiment." (Frank, 44) Referencing Donna Haraway, Frank continues: "there is no existing as a human outside a companionship with stories that are semiotic in their being and material in the effects they bring about. The capacity of stories is to allow us humans to be" (Frank, 44, the Haraway cite is "How Like a Leaf"). Tattoos are often (though not always) a literal embodiment of a story, a partnership between mind and body.

Paul Sweetman argues depth over surface: "In this sense, the modified body produces itself. A pair of jeans, or a new pair of training shoes, can be consumed and displayed as 'pure sign', in ignorance of the conditions under which the material product was fabricated. Tattoos and piercings, in contrast, *demand* one's presence as producer, consumer and living frame for the corporeal artefact thus acquired."[9] Sweetman's argument is against fashion, trend or commodity, but also emphasizes the active body politics in "an attempt to lend corporeal solidity to expressions of individuality." Sweetman is not arguing that tattoo shapes a fixed identity, but that it is a more committed expression of self.

Kosut, Frank and Sweetman provide interpretive threads that tie the permanence, the pain, and the reanimation of the tattoo's agency, into a pragmatist proposition about the possible consequences of such a model. Identity, life choices, and social interaction, fundamental aspects of humanity, are woven together.

Embodiment in a Virtual Age

> While Plato could dismiss the body as too ephemeral to be real and valuable, today the body seems more stable, durable, and real than the rest of the world we experience. It certainly seems much more familiar and easier to grasp, survey, and control. The media's unmanageable overload of unintegrated information is a strongly decentering force, turning consciousness into a flux of swirling, disconnected ephemeral elements.[10]

Returning to the question of the period specificity of the current global expansion of tattooing, questions arise about the distinct physical commitment of the practice of getting tattooed, in an increasingly virtual world. A few years ago, a study of tattoos and public opinion was conducted not through interviews, a survey, or a questionnaire, but using avatars, a simulation model.[11] One

7 Mary Kosut, "Tattoo Narratives: The Intersection of the Body, Self-identity and Society," *Visual Sociology*. 15.1 (2000): 79.

8 Quoted in Caren Schnur Neile, "Our Stories, Our Companions: A Conversation with Arthur W. Frank," *Storytelling, Self, Society* 9.2 (Fall 2013): 264.

9 Paul Sweetman, "Anchoring the (Postmodern) Self? Body Modification, Fashion and Identity" *Body and Society* 5.2-3 (1999): 64.

10 Richard Shusterman, *Performing Live: Aesthetic Alternatives For the Ends of Art* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 148.

11 S. Wohlrab, B. Fink, P.M. Kappeler, and G. Brewer. "Differences in personality attributions toward tattooed and non-tattooed virtual human characters." *Journal of Individual Differences* 30 (2009): 1-5.

wonders if the data was more or less reliable than had there been actual flesh and blood, skin and bones, involved. Did the virtual presence, by its disembodiment, remove the very material essence that was at the heart of those opinions to start with? From the loftiest cerebrations of the philosophers from Plato to present, to the jeering taunts of 7th-grade mean girls at their early-developing classmates, to the multi-billion dollar diet/exercise/liposuction industries, bodies are under constant scrutiny. And we increasingly love our virtualities: our profile pics and selfies, second lives and emojis.

The phenomenon of the widespread, mainstream popularity of tattoo is occurring at the precise moment when our lived experience is increasingly detached from the physical realm. What is the significance of this distinctly bodily performance of self in a world where bodies are being left behind for avatars? What does a tattoo do in the world?

The stories can be surprising in their complexity, encompassing initial motivations but also accrued values through lived experiences. The telling reanimates these embedded meanings. Tattooing is a way of marking important memories and life events. The passage from child to adult, graduation from college, birth of children, these and many other transitions are commemorated with a practice far more permanent than a photo. Memorial tattoos commemorate a lost loved-one, survival tattoos, for instance on the site of a mastectomy scar reclaim the body from disease; shield tattoos are external reminders of the need to protect one's body and one's subjectivity from external violence (figure 2).

Figure 2: Z. Koppisch, Eddie, Inshallah, 2011. This tattoo represents a pact made between friends, one stateside, one deployed, then re-deployed to Iraq. Eddie explains Inshallah (If Allah Wills it) as inspirational, a tattoo they would both get, in the script the soldier learned while serving, should he return home safely. (Reproduced with the artist's permission)

Anthropologist Susan Benson describes the transit between inside and outside:

> Again, what is external is transformed into something internal to the subject; and memory, a critical property of contemporary self-identity, is externalized and fixed upon the skin... And such practices may do more than merely 'remind' or 'reinforce'; they may, as [tattoo artist Vyvyn] Lazonga puts it, also elicit 'who the person is or is becoming'. In this sense they evoke not the registration of external events but internal depth...[12] (Benson, 246)

That depth marks the connection between past and present, memory and the constant process of becoming. It is significant that while the image is fixed if never altered (as tattoos sometimes are), its meaning is mutable.

Inscription is often invoked to emphasize how power colonizes the body, through self-surveillance, the policing of social norms, or worse.[13] The "counter-inscription" of extreme body modification projects can constitute active resistance to social oppression, but showing and telling tattoo stories offers a more subtle recalibration of the body's active role in subject formation. It is not simply a visual cue sparking a memory, but sensory experience embodying emotion.

Sociologists Atte Oksanen and Jussi Turtiainen contextualize contemporary tattoo practice in relation to subjectivity, deftly approaching the topic from multiple perspectives. Rather than just narrating life stories, the authors propose numerous active functions:

> The sociology of the body has recently started to approach tattooing as a form of self-expression and body politics, hence opening the way to a positive diagnosis of tattooing... It is shown here that tattoos are used by subjects in order to control their lives when faced with the chaos of late modern society. A tattoo engraved into the skin represents a link to personal life history, as well as an opportunity for subjective security.[14]

Just what is that chaos, which destabilizes our sense of self, creating a capitalistic paradise of putting on and taking off consumable subjectivities like so many Halloween costumes? It is, at least in part, the chaos of the very information age virtuality that is separating identity from physicality, creating a burgeoning research focus on the problematics of virtual identity, such that you can earn an advanced degree studying it. It is that "flux of swirling, disconnected ephemeral elements" described by Richard Shusterman in the excerpt that began this section. There is obvious appeal to presenting oneself in a social space as an avatar. You absent yourself from the embedded preconceptions of corporal presence: weight, disability, class, gender, race, age, any number of external signifiers; each of them invitations to discrimination and prejudice. This disembodiment, however, has serious ramifications.

The permanence of the tattoo resists the disembodiment of virtuality. Sweetman's postmodern metaphor of "anchoring the self" leads to the more active metaphor of occupation, which is rooted in the body politic. Sweetman argues convincingly that the combination of permanence, pain, and the narrow gap between producer and consumer (tattoo artist, tattoo customer) helps to move the practice beyond fashion.

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12 Susan Benson, "Inscriptions of the Self: Reflections on Tattooing and Piercing in Contemporary Euro-America." *Written on the Body: The Tattoo in European and American History*. Ed. Jane Caplan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 246.

13 See Margo DeMello, *Bodies of Inscription: A Cultural History of the Modern Tattoo Community* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000). Also DeMello, *Body Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2014).

14 Atte Oksanen and Jussi Turtiainen, "A Life Told in Ink: Tattoo Narratives and the Problem of the Self in Late Modern Society," *Auto/Biography* 13 (2005): 112.

Despite the commodification of tattoos, to the point where tattooed celebrities or models are now used to sell products, the "product" of the tattoo is difficult to quantify. The practice is widespread and popular, and particular artists are sought after by collectors, who have to book months in advance. Yet there is no, in Marxist terms, alienation, between producer and consumer. There is no resale market, no futures, the original owner/collector retains full possession. The continuing guild-like apprentice system of the tattoo shop resists co-optation by capitalism, or mass production. Getting a tattoo is, as repeated by scores of our interlocutors, a singular, memorable experience resulting in a permanent change to the self (figure 3). Rarely does anyone say that about a pair of jeans.

Figure 3: Z. Koppisch, Arely, Forever Strong 2014. In our questionnaire, Arely wrote: "...for me, the tattoos are even more than aesthetic visual ways of representing my life: they are in fact, part of me, of who I am. Each one of them has become an integral part of me and my identity. That, as much as I originally created them, they create me as well." (Reproduced with the artist's permission)

What is tattoo doing now, in the 21st-century western world, that is needed for the body? Has it replaced a previous somatic experience? The postmodern answer is the floating signifier, all skin no depth. But Oksanen and Turtiainen refer to the concept of "visualized subjectivity," the active choice of externalizing a visible self with tattoos. Their study is based, significantly, on narratives, in particular those found in the back of *Tattoo* magazine. These serve as validation or defense, (often their original meaning) but also navigate a circuit between mind and body, word and image, and self and other. Approaching the narrative as specifically mutable, adaptable, and active, the authors draw on various analyses to clarify that: "the narrative feature of tattoos should not be reduced to the symbolic level alone, for the tattooed body is more adaptive than static by nature. In other words, although the picture on the skin has a relative permanence, the affects connected to it change with the flow of life" (Oksanen and Turtiainen, 122).

Shannon Sullivan's preference of the term "bodying" over embodied, for its active construction serves to describe the ways in which tattoos and their stories activate the subject in her encounters with the world.[15] Tattoo narratives are no more the full story of a life than is the memoir, or autobiography. They are selective, strategic, and communicative in ways that the tattoo alone can never be. Oksanen and Turtiainen firmly reply to critics asserting versions of a pathological model with experiential and ameliorative counter-arguments, affirming the mind/body connection: "The subject tells his or her life story in relation to them, situates pain and charts life experiences...The tattoo narratives are construed as powerful existential experiences, where life events are integrated into a narrative form via the body."[16] (Oksanen and Turtiainen, 127) To borrow Wolfgang Kraus' phrase from narrative studies, "the telling is the 'doing' of identity."[17] This aspect is also addressed by Kosut who arrives at a nuanced reading of the narratives not as definitive but rather: "[T]hey describe modern subjects whose selves and bodies are *in praxis*. Within these stories there is a continuous reflexive dialogue between the body, self-identity and society. Through interpreting tattoo narratives we can begin to decipher the intricacies of this communication." (Kosut, 99, emphasis added) Kosut interprets as a sociologist, observing through her field work the active quality of this "doing" or praxis of a storied tattoo identity.

Occupy Your Body

> Any body politics, therefore, must speak *about* the body, stressing its materiality and its social and discursive construction, at the same time as disrupting and subverting existing regimes of representation.[18]

What are the ramifications of a theory and praxis that proposes empowerment through embodied subjectivity? Contemporary media portrayals of tattoo split into the vaguely positive (hip, edgy, artsy) and decidedly negative (tattoos as a barrier to employment, as ill-conceived, as signs of deviance.) Such mixed messages are legion, and can't keep up with what is in or out. The first model is to be welcomed, since some tattooing is superb art indeed. But more important is to recognize the second for the strategy it reinforces, of reading in to all tattoos a psychopathology.[19] As Victoria Pitts observes, pathologization, most often inflicted on already marginalized communities: women, people of color, sexual minorities, "is never politically neutral."[20]

The body is, and indeed always has been marked, inscribed, continually colonized by power. The best countervailing force, demonstrated throughout history, is taking ownership of the body, and hence, the body politic, physically embodying it. Storm the Bastille, March on Washington, sit in, stare down the tank in Tiananmen Square, populate Tahrir Square, Occupy Wall Street. Perhaps the most significant act of the political body in Western history was to separate the head of King Louis XVI from the body of France, symbolically severing state rule from "divine right" in all its abuses. "Bodily power or movement" writes Shusterman, "is perhaps the elemental root

15 Shannon Sullivan, *Living Across and Through Skins: Transactional Bodies, Pragmatism, and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.) This concept is explored in more detail in Karen Leader, "On the book of my body: "Women, Power, and Tattoo Culture," Feminist Formations 28.3 (Winter 2016): 174-195.

16 There is no doubt that there is a negative side to this where tattoo traditions inscribe antisocial behaviors, gang markings, prison iconography etc. Nevertheless, taking ownership of the inscription through narrative is at least an act of honesty.

17 Wolfgang Kraus, "The Narrative Negotiation of Identity and Belonging" *Narrative Inquiry* 16.1 (2006): 107.

18 Amelia Jones, ed. *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader* (London: Routledge, 2003), 424.

19 Nikki Sullivan, *Tattooed Bodies: Subjectivity, Textuality, Ethics, and Pleasure* (Westport CT: Praeger, 2001).

20 Victoria L. Pitts, *In the Flesh: The Cultural Politics of Body Modification* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 18.

of our concept of freedom."[21]

Can what I'm arguing as a culturally and historically significant bodying of self, tattoo, enhanced as I've described, through "tattoo culture," offer an ethical model that affirms our lived experience, on an increasingly endangered and politically polarized planet? The metaphor of "Occupy" entered the lexicon powerfully as a result of committed, bodily, political activism. Body politics in raced, classed and gendered terms is in full-on war mode at the moment, with civilian middle-Eastern bodies being blown up by "un-manned," that is disembodied American drones. #BlackLivesMatter arose from the continual savaging of black bodies (and minds, and hearts) by police, the prison industrial complex, and domestic terrorism.[22] Laborers are treated as dehumanized working units, as evidenced for example by the atrocities of the Chinese factories making i-phones. The "war on women" (note the martial label) has forced terms like trans-vaginal probe and "legitimate rape" into public discourse. Full body scans at airports implicate all bodies as potential lethal weapons, no longer afforded privacy or the presumption of innocence.

And yet postmodernism has disembodied the subject, separating agency from corporeality beyond the wildest Cartesian dream. Post-human cyborgs compete in cyberspace with Bodies without Organs. Floating signifiers and bricolaged appropriations ironically circulate in the society of the spectacle. But wait, the agency of my embodied subjectivity just got here. How can the author be dead? My sarcastic tone reproduces the distanced ironic stance so pervasive in the information age. Mascia-Lees and Sharpe pose the question dramatically: "But where do we turn when the body, the very place where social anxiety is traditionally concretized, has been abstracted into theory? Where can we find the living, breathing, secreting, sensing, reacting, weeping body on which today's concerns can be read?"[23] While the body has taken center stage in numerous disciplines and interdisciplinary studies, theory dominates over praxis, mind over material. As Kathy Davis articulates the situation:

> Postmodernism, with its critical demolition of dichotomies like mind/body, nature/culture and emotionality/rationality has certainly helped to make the body a popular topic. However, postmodern perspectives on the body have not been unproblematic. Postmodern theorizing about the body has all too often been a cerebral, esoteric and, ultimately, disembodied activity.[24]

Richard Shusterman's "freedom" quote above positions this paper within a philosophical context that insists on an ethics of lived experience. Philosophy, Shusterman argues:

> should be transformational instead of foundational. Rather than a meta-science for grounding and justifying our current cognitive and cultural activities, it should be a form of cultural criticism which aims to redescribe our experienced world and reconstruct our practices and institutions so as to improve the quality of our lives. Improved experience, not originary truth, is the ultimate philosophical goal and criterion.[25]

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21 Richard Shusterman, *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 78 n. 5.

22 Black Lives Matter, the movement was founded by the activists Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi. http://blacklivesmatter.com/.

23 Frances E. Mascia-Lees and Patricia Sharpe, *Tattoo, Torture, Mutilation, and Adornment: The Denaturalization of the Body in Culture and Text* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 146.

24 Kathy Davis, ed. *Embodied Practices: Feminist Perspectives on the Body* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 14.

25 Richard Shusterman, "Dewey on Experience: Foundation or Reconstruction," *The Philosophical Forum* XXVI.2 (Winter, 1994): 127-148; revised and reprinted in his *Practicing Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 127-128.

Somaesthetics, Shusterman's body-centered, interdisciplinary philosophical practice is a progressive and transformational approach, which if pursued in each of the three branches enumerated (analytic, pragmatic and experiential) will produce outcomes that are concrete, earthbound, and somatic. The ethical dimensions of body studies must treat the body as an active agent rather than a passive vessel through which the mind enacts its will. *Thinking Through the Body*, the title of a recent book of Shusterman's essays (2012), insists on just that, not what our bodies should do, but what we can do through our bodies. Somaesthetics, rooted in the pragmatist philosophy of Peirce, James and Dewey, invites, even insists on, tracing concrete consequences of adopting particular positions. The third, experiential category of somaesthetics is where the theory of Occupation intersects with Shusterman's philosophy: "This dimension, not of saying but of doing, is the most neglected by academic body philosophers, whose commitment to the logos of discourse typically ends in textualizing the body. About practical somaesthetics, the less said the better, *if* this means the more done."[26]

What others have integrated into somaesthetics as it has expanded internationally enriches its potential. In particular, feminist theory and praxis, already grounded by necessity in the body and its potentialities, has much to offer a philosophy which seeks a way out of dualistic thinking. Judy Whipps explains,

> Both pragmatism and feminism are more likely to bring social context to the forefront of philosophy, allowing for realities that are in flux and that are always being shaped and reconstructed by their context. Pragmatists emphasize that we must include particular and individual experiences in a pluralistic discussion of multiple realities, and that all parties involved in the issue be involved in any creation of a solution.[27]

Of particular promise in the context of this article is the narrative-somaesthetics proposed by Marjorie Jolles. Centered around Cressida Heyes' interrogations of bodily "normalization" in the Foucauldian sense as disciplinary and self-policing, Jolles argues "that a deliberate, collective practice of telling and contesting narratives of embodiment can disrupt the dualistic logic of norm/anti-norm that keeps normalization intact."[28] As a feminist, Jolles embraces the active aspects of somaesthetics: "Going beyond analytic somaesthetics—which emphasizes the intellectual work of tracing the intersection of bodies, culture, and discourse—pragmatic somaesthetics entails seeking out those somatic practices that might produce meaningful anti-normalizing effects on our bodies and lives" (Jolles, 306).

Tattoos operate precisely in that realm, at "normalization's edge" in Heyes's terms. In the shallowest terms merely fashion or self-infliction, tattoos are self-adornment, creative expression, and, for some, art collections built over a lifetime. But as we've seen, they are also identity scaffolding, buttressing, or in a phrase quoted above, providing "subjective security" in the flux of possibilities. The narratives are an agent that activates (referring back to the title of this paper) not only the original energies in the tattoo's history, but also the present self, bodying it in transaction with others.

Transaction, a Deweyan term elaborated upon by Shannon Sullivan, another pragmatist-

26 Richard Shusterman, *Performing Live: Aesthetic Alternatives For the Ends of Art* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 143.

27 Judy Whipps, "Pragmatist Feminism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2004, rev. 2016) http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/femapproach-pragmatism/ Accessed March 8, 2017. See also Janet Sarbanes, "Body Conscious: On Somaesthetics," *Los Angeles Review of Books* (August 16, 2013). https://lareviewofbooks.org/review/on-somaesthetics Accessed March 8, 2017.

28 Marjorie Jolles, "Between Embodied Subjects and Objects: Narrative Somaesthetics," *Hypatia* 27.2 (Spring 2012): 302-303. Also Cressida Heyes, "Somaesthetics for the Normalized Body" in *Self-Transformations: Foucault, Ethics, and Normalized Bodies (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

feminist, places our concerns firmly in the social context Whipps identifies above: "the notion of transaction focuses on the way in which humans and nature effect each other so that their relationship might be improved."[29] Thus "tattoo culture" presented through this lens offers the third term for image and story, the interpretive thread that operates in transaction, connecting people in an artful *experience*. Beyond "self-improvement" or narcissistic self-storying, "tattoo culture" enacts the work of art as affective, altering perception and eliciting response. Works of art do this on multiple levels, those works most likely to endure pack a bodily aesthetic jolt.

It is necessary to reiterate that theorizing "occupying your body" is not merely controlling its representation or using it to perform a self, but rather to privilege a body-mind subjectivity. Carrying that idea to its logical conclusion has enormous political ramifications.

The disembodiment of daily existence in social media, telecommuting, distance learning and online shopping, google glass and seductive Siri, offloads social existence to Second Life, where oxygen is superfluous and water an animator's abstraction. While islands of garbage the size of continents float on rising oceans, the trending top story is a U.S. President who tweets conspiracy theories. Cyber-trash leaves no mark, lost down the rabbit hole of endlessly consumable bytes of trivia.

So Occupy Your Body relates to the planet, and the body politic that must act in a physical sense to counteract the disembodiment, environmental destruction and a toxic trajectory driven by short-term domination models, and/or end of days ideology. Occupy recovers the word from its martial meaning of invade and occupy, while retaining the resistance to removal inherent in the word. We are staying— in this body, in this park, on this planet.

At precisely this moment of virtual ascendancy and planetary crisis, an art form as old as human culture itself explodes. Am I suggesting that tattooing is, or has the potential to be a persuasive political practice? No, not the practice itself, which is personal, and sometimes quite narcissistic. But the permanence undermines the faddishness, the narrative embeds the meaning as "material-semiotic," and "tattoo culture" externalizes and universalizes this corporeal presence by creating a space for communication, interpretation and interaction.

John Dewey helps further the proposal by foregrounding experience and communication in the social realm: "Such facts as these give convincing evidence that the medium of expression in art is neither objective nor subjective. It is the matter of a new experience in which subjective and objective have so coöperated that neither has any longer an existence by itself."[30] The quote is extracted from a longer discussion of different aesthetic theories, but gets at a key aspect in pragmatist aesthetics, which is its embeddedness in social interaction, which Dewey articulates further on: "ART is a quality that permeates an experience; it is not, save by a figure of speech, the experience itself.... Esthetic experience is a manifestation, a record and celebration of the life of a civilization, a means of promoting its development and is also the ultimate judgment upon the quality of a civilization."[31] Somaesthetics locates the essential role of the body in this philosophical proposal: "One answer, inspired by the pragmatist philosophy that shapes somaesthetics, is that if we truly care about the ends, we must care about the means necessary to realize those ends."[32] Tracing the practical consequences of philosophical disputes is central to pragmatism, thus recognizing the necessity of a healthy, empowered, communicative body for the realization of a functioning society is the ultimate goal; one in which *experience* plays a

29 S. Sullivan, *Living Across and Through Skins,* 3.

30 John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigee, 1934), 299.

31 John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 339.

32 Richard Shusterman, *Thinking Through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 37.

major role.

As in all other forms of creative production, not all tattoos are art, but the combination of the visual, the narrative, and the embodiment of that experience offers fertile ground for the rich somatic bodying of self that produces the most fully active person/citizen. Tattoos, to reiterate, are a touchstone in this project, not a symptom. "Tattoo culture" starts with the popularity, attends to the permanence that separates it from passing fashion, and unfolds its complexity outwardly through public exhibitions and performances. This paper offers a 21st-century intertwining of mind and body, story and ink, which can be brought into the conversation about what you can know about the tattooed person sitting before you. It is not just in the showing, but in the telling as well. What is proposed pushes away from the crippling duality of a wretched body at the service of the god-like mind, toward an embodied subjectivity that is present, expressive and empowered. "Tattoo Culture" is a vehicle, while "Occupy" is a potent, contemporarily resonant metaphor for active social change through corporeality, insisting on the value of this physical presence in human interaction, in communication, and in formulating a new body politic.

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Vulnerable from Within: Autoimmunity and Bodily Boundaries

Karmen MacKendrick

Abstract: *The vulnerability of bodies raises questions as to how to care for and protect our fragile, sensate flesh. Traditionally, we have focused on shoring up our bodily boundaries, making ourselves as nearly immune to outside harm as we can. The issue of autoimmunity, both medically and politically, problematizes this desire for impermeability: "danger" seems to come from inside as well as out. I argue in this essay that it may be our metaphors of immunity and danger themselves that are problematic. Recent scientific developments in immunology (including controversies around vaccination and the concept of the microbiome) and virology suggest that we might think of our vulnerability in terms other than the militaristic protection of borders. I argue that these changes can help us to rethink harmful approaches medically, interpersonally, politically, and ecologically.*

Keywords: *immunity, autoimmunity, metaphor, microbiome, Catherine Keller.*

Perhaps the most ethically loaded aspect of bodies is their extraordinarily wide-ranging vulnerability. Bodies are vulnerable to direct physical violence, of course, but also to words and discourses, economic deprivation, and environmental degradation. They are vulnerable to disease, which in turn makes them vulnerable to medical practices and discourses, iatrogenic ailments, and, in countries without health care provisions, bankruptcy and a still greater inability to care for themselves. A great deal of self-care is medical in some way; as bodies, we look after our health, whether we call that health mental or physical. Vulnerability calls to us to care, perhaps nowhere so obviously as here.

But what is it to care, besides to have a sort of feeling of concern, or perhaps affection; to be emotionally invested in some outcome? Care as an act seems, at least at first, to call upon us to protect, to surround the body with barriers against possible harms. It even tempts us to try to render bodies invulnerable, impermeable, even though we know better, know that there is too much to value within the vulnerable itself. Protection seems to appeal to our sense of boundary, and to call upon us to reinforce weak barriers between other and self. But those barriers are called into question by recent work in several disciplines. The distinctions between one entity and another turn out to be surprisingly untidy. We want to protect the vulnerable, but if we can't really set them apart from everyone and everything else, and if we aren't simply sealing off bodies, we don't really know how to set about protecting, either. While I cannot lay out a plan for protectiveness—if anything, I hope to blur the distinctions further—I do want to consider carefully the language we use about it. I want to mess with our metaphors, including those of care and protection, of beings and boundaries, of selves and self-care—metaphors by which we understand both the sensations and the actions of our flesh. More particularly, I want to explore the often peculiar metaphors of immunity and autoimmunity, which have undergone dramatic change in recent decades. Not only do these demand that we reconsider medical practice; they also turn out to be curiously intertwined with a much wider ethical sense

of care for what is vulnerable even beyond ourselves. This sounds fairly trivial until we realize how deeply metaphorical our thinking really is—and what the results of some of our metaphors for the protection of and against vulnerability have been, and what effects those have had upon our understandings of care.

I work primarily in philosophical theology, where vulnerability comes up fairly often—Christianity has long been divided on whether to acknowledge that its god is wounded, and just how to feel about that. I was inspired to reflect on the topic again by my recent reading of Catherine Keller's *Cloud of the Impossible: Negative Theology and Planetary Entanglement.* The book is complex, but there runs through it a line of thought that I can state fairly straightforwardly: that our boundaries are artificial, and dangerously so; that we separate both humanity and divinity from the rest of the animals, the rest of life, the rest of the world, at our peril. In other words, Keller has no big guy god hovering over and moving the chess pieces of the world, but a marvel of a thoroughly interrelated and vital world—a world that is deeply vulnerable.

When the whole world is vulnerable, the wounds cannot come only from without, and the threats will take a wide range of forms. Immediately, many of our models of safety and care are unsettled. Keller remarks upon the "multiple jeopardy" of the vulnerable subjects of liberation,[1] and upon the vulnerability of all flesh, ours and the world's.[2] There is a vulnerability particularly pronounced in affection—"the vulnerability of love" or "of hope."[3] In describing all of these, Keller holds to a central emphasis on the *mutuality* of vulnerability. We are vulnerable to one another, though unequally—"the separation of the over-resourced few from the vulnerable rest of us cannot hold," she writes.[4] The planet itself is vulnerable, not least to those of us who foolishly imagine ourselves invulnerable to the rest of it.[5] Even the divine is vulnerable; process theology, particularly, offers us "a contingent and vulnerable deity."[6] Keller's vivid reminders of entanglement, of the multiplicity and mutuality of vulnerability, can help us as we go about changing some of our dominant metaphors.

With this deep mutuality always in mind, let me focus more narrowly on human flesh. Our bodies are vulnerable to all manner of wounding and harm, to damage and to disease. This fact has been prominent recently in arguments over vaccination, where the language of parental rights and the vulnerability of individual children meets that of common good and herd immunity. Parents may misunderstand, and thus overestimate, risks associated with vaccinating; unless one faces an emergency directly (say, a wall of fire, or an knife wielding assailant), doing nothing will almost always feel safer than doing anything. Given the relatively low risk that first-world children have of coming down with many of the diseases against which they can be vaccinated, even a child's unhappiness and uncomfortableness with an injection may seem grounds enough for avoiding it. Parents can easily ignore the vulnerability of other children, who perhaps cannot be vaccinated effectively, and whose fragility their own children's vaccination is intended to protect.

The issues around vaccination are so difficult to understand not only because such deep emotions are involved, but because the boundaries of inside and out—my child, whole or invaded by germs; our children, clustered in classrooms—are not nearly so neat as we have thought.

1 Catherine Keller, *Cloud of the Impossible: Negative Theology and Planetary Entanglement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 32. Also see pages 37, 227, 301.

2 Keller, 53, 207.

3 Keller, 271, 282.

4 Keller, 282.

5 Keller, e.g., 269, 277.

6 Keller, 260.

Consider, first, that immunity itself is not individual. Herd immunity is, as Eula Biss notes in her work on innoculation, an observable phenomenon (indeed, it has been recognized since well before its naming in 1923) that is counterintuitive "only if we think of our bodies as inherently disconnected from other bodies. Which, of course, we do."[7] Herd immunity, requiring us to think of collective rather than individual resistance to disease, is essential to the effectiveness of vaccination, which depletes the population available to host a particular virus and carry it to others in the community. Thus it is that "the boundaries between our bodies begin to dissolve, [and]... immunity... is a common trust as much as it is a private account."[8] Bodily boundaries become unsettlingly fluid. Vulnerability and danger are redefined; those who are vulnerable—say, to measles—become those who are also dangerous, as hosts. But so are we all, after all, as embodied. To be vulnerable, then, is to share one's vulnerability. To be protected is to share one's protection with others.

To say that we are vulnerable is to say that we, like the unvaccinated, are not immune—a conception with a startling range of political, philosophical, and theological applications. Biological theories of immunity, which we might think are basic and foundational of other uses of the term, are already strikingly metaphorical. Sometimes, they are gastronomic: "cells '[eat]'... pathogens." At others, they are educational: cells "'instruct[]' other cells."[9] Biosemiotician Thure von Uexküll says that "immunologists use phrases like 'memory,' 'recognition,' 'interpretation,' 'individuality,' 'reading,' 'inner picture,' 'self,' [and] 'nonself....'"[10] Biss notes metaphors ranging "from a symphony to the solar system to a perpetual motion machine to the vigilance of a mother"[11]—in fact, she remarks, "the cells of the immune system lead lives in which they kiss, are naive, eat, purge, express, get turned on, are instructed, make presentations, mature, and have memories. 'They sound like my students,'" a friend of hers observes.[12] And it turns out that, just as it matters to those young students if they can *call* someone "my girlfriend," so too it matters how cellular relations are described.

Keller reminds us, "The other comes before us then in the alterity not of a discrete over-against, not in the bounded exteriority of some flat face to face, but as altering and as altered in the act of relation."[13] This is true at every scale, among all othernesses. For some time, though, the dominant metaphor of immunity's relationality has been hostile: self vs. non-self. In biology, as on the grander scale of politics, we can easily see with what eagerness variously identified "selves" have sought out "others." The most common description of the immune system's self/non-self relation has long been military. A system of immunity fights our alteration, recognizes the body's isolationist desires, and reacts aggressively against what is not-self, to kill it or to contain it within protective boundaries—to imprison it.[14] It is said to "tolerate" self. Against

7 Eula Biss, *On Immunity: An Inoculation* (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2014), Kindle location 244-246. The date for the use of the concept of herd immunity appears at location 1954. (All subsequent references to this text are Kindle location numbers.)

8 Biss, 232-36.

9 Biss, 656-61.

10 Biss, 637-44. Biss notes that the remark was made at a conference on immunosemiotics. This conference occurred in Tuscany in 1986, and the proceedings were published in 1988. Sercarz, E., F. Celada, N. Mitchison, and T. Tada, eds. *The Semiotics of Cellular Communication in the Immune System* (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1988).

11 Biss, 656-61.

12 Biss, 684-690.

13 Keller, 22.

14 Wilfried Allaerts, "The Biological Function Paradigm Applied to the Immunological Self-Non-Self Discrimination: Critique of Tauber's Phenomenological Analysis," in *Journal for General Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (1999): 155-171, at 158. Allaerts cites Alfred Tauber: "the Self has emerged in the 20th century as an operative metaphor for orienting immunity in terms of both the source of its activity and the object of its function. (...) The term Self is borrowed from the philosophical discourse to denote concerns about the source of immune activity, that is the identity problem." Alfred Tauber, *The Immune Self: Theory or Metaphor?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 141.

non-self, it guards—or, especially when the body's borders are breached, it wages war. And the non-self is a threat everywhere: think only of the incredible popularity of "detoxifying" regimens for everything from our intestines to our psyches. Fearful of impurity, by the contamination of what is not our own, we clean out ourselves. There is no negative capability here, no endurance at all of the unknown. What is not recognized must be annihilated.

Anthropologist Emily Martin notes, "Popular publications depict the body as the scene of total war between ruthless invaders and determined defenders."[15] Biss comments on this, "Our understanding of disease as something that we 'fight' invites an array of military metaphors for the immune system. ... the body employs some cells as 'infantry' and others as the 'armored unit,' and these troops deploy 'mines' to explode bacteria, while the immune response itself 'detonates like a bomb.'"[16] With these as the metaphors for protection of the most vulnerable, small wonder we create such disasters, trying to maintain an artificial purity. No bomb detonates altogether cleanly. On such an understanding of immunity, we imagine our bodies as highly individuated and constantly under siege, with germs and toxins sneakily seeking every possible mode of entry.

This is the sense of the immune central to Jacques Derrida's warning in *Faith and Knowledge* that autoimmunity is an inevitable outcome of violent protection, and that it is also at the intersection of politics with religion and science.[17] He has a political version of immunity in mind, in which whatever is meant to protect the state and its people—police, military, even ecclesiastical forces—turns on itself instead. "The perverse effect of the autoimmunitary itself," Derrida writes, is that "repression in both its psychoanalytical sense and its political sense—whether it be through the police, the military, or the economy—ends up producing, reproducing, and regenerating the very thing it seeks to disarm."[18] (Though that is how Derrida phrases it, it is more exact in both political and biological terms to say that the protectors turn on those they had claimed to protect, or were instituted to protect.) As much in the cared-for body as in the political state, autoimmunity appears as a particularly puzzling, often frightening, form of vulnerability. It is no longer enough to guard our borders, to protect against attacks from without: in autoimmunity, what "attacks" or "wounds" is the very system that otherwise "defends;" that is, that wards off harm and minimizes bodily vulnerability. (I have used the scare quotes to indicate not only the problematic boundaries of selfhood, but the problematic nature of metaphors of attack.) Like herd immunity, autoimmunity threatens our sense of wholly discrete human bodies, but in a different way: rather than those bodies together forming a sort of communal organism, we now realize that each "individual" body is enormously multiple.

Protection becomes problematic when we realize that not all danger is external—and not simply because, as I've already noted, we cannot always clearly bound our inside from out. The reaction that becomes "autoimmune" arises from the ever-present chance that we will fight against our own, and ignore the barbarian hordes, or deplete our forces' strength before they

15 Emily Martin, *Flexible Bodies: The Role of Immunity in American Culture from the Days of Polio to the Age of AIDS* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 53.

16 Biss, 646-54.

17 Jacques Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone," in *Acts of Relgion*, ed. Gil Anidjar, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 42-101, at 67 "We are here in a space where all self-protection of the unscathed, of the safe and sound, of the sacred (*heilig,* holy) must protect itself against its own protection, its own police, its own immunity. It is this terrifying but fatal logic of the *auto-immunity of the unscathed* that will always associate Science and Religion."

18 Jacques Derrida, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror*: *Dialogues with Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 99.

18 Derrida, Jacques. *Philosophy in a Time of Terror*: *Dialogues with Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida,* 2004. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 99.

attack us.[19] The standard language for understanding autoimmunity has been that the self is misrecognized as stranger or other; in fact, defining what is *self* has been crucial to the history of that understanding. Even the hopeful governing style that is democracy, says Derrida, always risks the democratic election of a government that suspends the democratic[20] (—a warning recently made uncomfortably prescient. On militaristic metaphors, the autoimmune danger is multiple: we risk attack from within, and because of this, we are ill-defended against attack from without. The body misrecognizes itself as a stranger, and fails to direct its forces to shoring up its barriers.

This metaphor of self attacking itself has been extended in odd ways. One is particularly popular among bloggers, where we find the logic that because the self is attacking itself, there is a clear causal self-hatred. "I believe that this subtle, relentless, uncontained self-hatred is at the root of the autoimmune disease epidemic in women. How else would you personify a body that's attacking itself as the enemy?" writes Habib Sadeghi, who has helped to popularize this argument through posts, a TED talk, and various publications. He declares, in a text reposted on Gwyneth Paltrow's popular site "Goop," "the uncontained self-hatred that gives rise to autoimmune disease needs to be contained with self-love."[21] Sarah Wilson, an admirer of Sadeghi's work, asks "Could female self-hatred be the real cause of autoimmune disease?" and her answer is affirmative.[22] Bryan Eden assures blog readers that he cured his ankylosing spondylitis with love for himself.[23] And Anne Merkel tells us that "where an individual's body is starting to work against itself, often there is a deep feeling of deserving to be hurt or abused – an unworthiness to be healthy."[24]

It must seem odd to position this demand for love and care—surely ethical responses to our vulnerability—within the discussion of militaristic metaphors of attack. But in fact the self-care demanded here is perceived as a response to attack: an attack by a self acting badly, a self with weapons that have been mis-directed, with hatred that needs to be put back in its imprisoning container. The demand may be that we fight back with love—but we are responding, nonetheless, to a violent attack: rejecting selfhood, the self has attacked what it really is. And we are *fighting* back, recognizing ourselves properly again as loveable.

The language of self and nonself—self to be tolerated, nonself to be met by aggression(—is first used in immunology in the 1940s.[25] (Interestingly, in this it precedes the use of "immune system," which appears in 1967).[26] In 1984, Antonio Coutinho argues that the immune system needs to "know" (in some non-cognitive way) what is "foreign," while imposing willful ignorance

19 Cf. Keller, 239f.

20 20 Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason,* trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 82f.

In an interesting political variation, philosopher Roberto Esposito argues that political immunity protects the individual from the excesses of the demands of community—not us versus them, then, but me versus us. In this case too, the self is both recognized and protected by the immunizing—though Esposito does not regard this positively; in fact, he sees in it a refusal of commonality and the risk of immunization turning upon itself, and he holds out the hope that we can change our biopolitics from its immunitary paradigm. A 2006 special issue of *diacritics* offers two useful summaries: Roberto Esposito, "The Immunization Paradigm," translated by Timothy Campbell, in *Bios, Immunity, Life: The Thought of Roberto Esposito,* special issue of *diacritics* Vol. 36 No. 2 (Summer 2006): 23-48, and Timothy Campbell, "*Bios*, Immunity, Life: The Thought of Roberto Esposito," in ibid.: 2–22.

21 Habib Sadeghi, "Emotional Erosion and Uncontained Anger," in *Goop*, undated, at http://goop.com/emotional-erosion-anduncontained-anger/, accessed November 4, 2016.

22 http://www.sarahwilson.com/2014/11/could-female-self-hatred-be-the-real-cause-of-autoimmune-disease/, accessed November 5, 2016.

23 http://kindnessblog.com/2015/01/29/how-i-cured-my-incurable-disease-with-love-by-bryan-eden/, accessed November 5, 2016.

24 http://www.thetappingsolution.com/eft-articles/clearing-early-abuse-issues-causing-autoimmune-disorders/, accessed November 5, 2016.

25 Allaerts, 157f.

26 Biss, location 652, citing Nobel winning biologist Niels Jerne. She does not offer a further reference; Jerne uses the term in a number of different essays and addresses.

of self, so that it will not attract attack.[27] In 1994, Alfred Tauber declares that "the Self has emerged in the 20th century as an operative metaphor for orienting immunity in terms of both the source of its activity and the object of its function,"[28] suggesting the persistence of the metaphor even when, as we shall shortly note, its terms stop meaning very clearly. Without the sense of self and an opposing stranger or foreignness, the language of attack is hard to motivate. But in fact, among physicians and medical researchers, the militaristic metaphor of immunity has already been supplanted several times.

One of the first changes is a shift from self versus nonself to infectious versus noninfectious, where what matters is the capacity for harm to the organism, rather than the firm maintenance of boundaries. Building on this, Polly Matzinger more recently proposed "the danger model," suggesting that the immune system responds to *danger* and not primarily to strangeness; when it mis-responds, the problem is not in the immune system itself, but in the signals sent out by the perceived hazard. "[T]he immune system," she writes, "is more concerned with damage than with foreignness, and is called into action by alarm signals from injured tissues, rather than by the recognition of non-self."[29]

This is a start, not automatically responding to every difference as a danger. In both of these variations, though, there remains a fairly clear distinction: that which is to be tolerated versus that which is to be annihilated, whether these sides are identified accurately or not. The body is vulnerable; there are dangers to it, and the immune system does violence to those dangers. Sometimes, it does violence elsewhere than it should have.

We move away from modes of protection in the next step, one that seems to me both unexpected and delightful: the shift toward biosemiotics. Biss recounts a fairly marvelous story:

> Three immunologists on a road trip in 1984 became excited about the possibility that the cells of our bodies might, like the humans they compose, use a system of signs and symbols—a kind of language—in their communication with each other. After traveling for seventeen hours in a VW bus with a ripe wheel of Taleggio cheese and an Italian edition of Umberto Eco's *A Theory of Semiotics*, they determined, through some rough translations performed by the Italian among them, that a better understanding of semiotics, the study of how signs and symbols are used and interpreted, might enhance their work in immunology.[30]

Alas, as she notes, the immunosemioticians did not get directly to work on theories of metaphor. But they did argue that bodily cells interpret, and they had a conference on the matter in 1986, where immunologist Franco Celada asked, "Does the Human Mind Use a Logic of Signs Developed by Lymphocytes 10 to the 8th Years Ago?," arguing that our "bodies" may have interpreted long before our "minds."[31] There is argument—justified, I think—as to what counts as "interpretation" here. But there is a huge value, too, in blurring the strict dichotomy between spirit and flesh, and in the recognition that metaphor cuts both ways. Changing our semiotics changes our metaphors by drawing attention to the very fact of reading them.

The most recent immunological metaphors take us even beyond these interpretive possibilities. Medical researches are now speculating that we don't need your war machines, after all. What we need is better gardens, happier inner ecosystems, and immigrant life forms.

27 Antonio Coutinho, L. Forni, D. Holmberg, F. Ivers, and N. Vaz, 1984, 152. Cited in Allaerts, 159.

28 Alfred Tauber, *The Immune Self: Theory or Metaphor?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 141. Cited in Allaerts, 158.

29 Polly Matzinger, "The Danger Model: A Renewed Sense of Self," in *Science*, Vol. 296 No. 5566 (April 2002): 301-305, at 301.

30 Biss, 630-35.

31 Biss, 637-44. Franco Celado, "Does the Human Mind Use a Logic of Signs Developed by Lymphocytes 10 to the 8th Years Ago?" in "The Semiotics of Cellular Communication in the Immune System" (see note 10): 71-79.

The boundaries between persons are not the only ones that we realize are far more fluid and strange than we'd thought. "Each" of us, each permeable being in its veil of skin, is a colony; even a colony of colonies. I have read repeatedly that we are more inhuman than not, meaning that our bodies host astonishing quantities of bacteria and viruses, but the claim seems odd to me;[32] rather, it seems that what it is to be human is to be multiple in this way. Perhaps the insistence on the inhumanity of our bacterial bodies is a trace of the ancient fear that Keller calls "ecophobia," a fear of human inseparability from the nonhuman universe,[33] a fear "carrying an ethos of conquest, control, commodification."[34]

But we could try, just for a bit, to be less fearful. Perhaps we might fearlessly think that we are symbiotes; that we *as human* are far more multiple than we thought, collectives within collectives. There are two important lines of contemporary scientific research suggesting some value to this way of thinking.

The first comes from research in paleovirology, research on ancient viruses, which indicates that our collective bodies are colonies that that have been *joined*, not just within one organism's lifetime, but throughout our evolutionary history. Scientists have been aware for a couple of decades that there are elements *in the human genome* from the DNA sequences of retroviruses that were originally sources of infection. Quite recently, researchers at Stanford "identified several noncoding RNA molecules of viral origins that are necessary for a fertilized human egg to acquire the ability in early development to become all the cells and tissues of the body," following a Stanford study earlier in the year "showing that early human embryos are packed full of what appear to be viral particles arising from similar left-behind genetic material." That is, "human embryos *need* ancient viral RNA, trapped in the non-protein-coding regions of our genomes, to grow. They are essential for our existence."[35]

What is the point of this claim about ancient viruses hanging out in human genetic material? "'We're starting to accumulate evidence that these viral sequences, which originally may have threatened the survival of our species, were co-opted by our genomes for their own benefit,' [says] Vittorio Sebastiano, an assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology. 'In this manner, they may even have contributed species-specific characteristics and fundamental cell processes, even in humans.'"[36] Our vulnerability, in other words—the fact that we can be diseased, that viruses enter into the ill-guarded colonies of ourselves—has *made us*. A "threat" became us, and we changed, and not for the worse. Our bodies are as they are by not always having been and not always being recognizably our own.

It is not only within what we think of as human genetic material that we find this

32 Even in arguing that the number of bacteria is not so overwhelming as we once thought, the distinction tends to remain. Consider as an example this abstract for "Revised Estimates for the Number of Human and Bacteria Cells in the Body." "Reported values in the literature on the number of cells in the body differ by orders of magnitude and are very seldom supported by any measurements or calculations. Here, we integrate the most up-to-date information on the number of human and bacterial cells in the body. We estimate the total number of bacteria in the 70 kg "reference man" to be $3.8 \cdot 10^{13}$. For human cells, we identify the dominant role of the hematopoietic lineage to the total count (≈90%) and revise past estimates to $3.0 \cdot 10^{13}$ human cells. Our analysis also updates the widely-cited 10:1 ratio, showing that the number of bacteria in the body is actually of the same order as the number of human cells, and their total mass is about 0.2 kg." Sender, Ron, Shai Fuchs, and Ron Milo. "Revised Estimates for the Number of Human and Bacteria Cells in the Body," in *PLOS Biology* (August 19, 2016), http://journals.plos.org/plosbiology/article?id=10.1371/journal.pbio.1002533, accessed November 5, 2016.

33 Keller, 268.

34 Keller, 276.

35 Cynthia Fox, "Symbiosis with Ancient Viruses Critical for Human Development," in *Bioscience* (December 3, 2015), Fox http://www.biosciencetechnology.com/news/2015/12/symbiosis-ancient-viruses-critical-human-development, accessed November 5, 2016. My italics. Fox also notes (ibid.), "In recent years humans have come to understand we are not just about Darwinian natural selection, but symbiosis. For two billion years, there were only bacteria and archaea. Then a single archaea swallowed a bacteria in such a way the bacteria became its powerpack. Complex life exploded out of this symbiosis. Remnants of that moment are alive in humans today: experimental and genetic analysis proves the power packs of our cells, mitochondria, are indeed ancestors of those ancient bacteria."

36 In Fox.

madmultiplicity, but also within the current colonies of us, beyond our germ cells. As I noted above, we are made of all manner of curious little beings. And it turns out, in the second important development, that immunity may be a matter not so much of killing off as of living further—cultivating not warriors, but tiny horticulturists and abundant flora, well managed gardens that form ecosystems layered one within the other.

The shifting sum of the bacteria, viruses, and fungi that are also us is called the microbiome, a term "proposed a decade ago by Nobel laureate Joshua Lederberg," which "identifies the totality of microbes..., their genomes..., and environmental interactions in a defined community or biological niche."[37] And so, says a *New York Times* article titled "Tending the Body's Microbial Garden," "Rather than conducting indiscriminate slaughter, ... scientists [at the National Human Genome Research Institute] want to be microbial wildlife managers."[38] As in other ecosystems, some elements must be nurtured to prevent radical, even fatal systemic imbalances. Gratifyingly for our metaphors, this approach has shown promise not only in responses to "invasive" bacteria, but to obesity, antibiotic induced ailments such as those caused by *Clostridium difficile* (treatable by the slightly infamous fecal transplant), and perhaps even disorders such as Type 1 diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis—precisely those autoimmunities so central to the Derridean analysis.[39] In fact, some researchers hypothesize, "Autoimmune diseases are more likely passed in families because of the inheritance of a familial microbiome, rather than Mendelian inheritance of genetic abnormalities."[40]

So at least three developments in our understanding require us to rethink the influential metaphor of autoimmunity as something other than an error in the identification of a protected, neatly bounded, self. The need for vaccination reminds us that immunity belongs to groups of human bodies; paleovirology reveals that an embodied human "self" can only be because what became human was long ago successfully "invaded;" and the emerging view of the microbiome keeps us from thinking of "a" body as if it were singular, a thing to be kept pure in its isolation. With the changes in the metaphors of immunity, we must also rethink the inevitability of the autoimmune as a misguided attack: if we shore up our "selves" with the cultivation of multiplicity, our relationality, even our vulnerability, becomes another strength.

All of this must remind us, to cite Keller once more, that "the boundary between inside and out is never more than an abstraction imposed—whether for care, for convenience, or for conquest."[41] Rather than thinking the body, personal or politic, in terms of repression and tolerance, guarding and attack, we may remind ourselves that protection of the vulnerable is protection of us all: tending to the microbial, not by blocking out but by building up, we cultivate life. There are no fully closed systems. A military force always prone to mutiny and self-destruction might be rethought both as a semiotic error—as misreading of a sign that was not danger, after all—and as a need for ecological cultivation. We might do well to hammer our microbial swords (and the big bombs of our immune systems) into miniscule plowshares. This is not to argue that Derrida is wrong in his implications—that what seeks violently to eradicate violence will turn against rather than protecting—but it is to suggest that we shift metaphors,

37 Jose U. Scher and Steven B. Abramson, "The Microbiome: A voyage to (our inner) Lilliput," in The Rheumatologist, November 2011, unpaginated. At http://www.the-rheumatologist.org/details/article/1386089/The_Microbiome.html, accessed November 5, 2016. See also Amy G. Proal, Paul J. Albert, and Trevor G. Marshall, "The human microbiome and autoimmunity," in *Current Opinion in Rheumatology* 25:2 (March 2013): 234-40.

38 Carl Zimmer, "Tending the Body's Microbial Garden," in *New York Times* (*Science Times*), June 18, 2012. At http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/19/science/studies-of-human-microbiome-yield-new-insights.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0, accessed November 5, 2016.

39 Zimmer.

40 Proal, Albert, and Marshall.

41 Keller, 165.

and in so doing, our focus; in that, our practices, to emphasize deep implication; to think not of what we can kill off, but what we might encourage to live.

"Even at the scale of the teeny tiny quantum," Keller points out, "we witness how the material effects of common belief and presumptive knowledge tangle with our ethics. Does that tissue structure or quantum field of infinitesimal relations begin to take on the feel of an infinite body?"[42] An infinite body, as the most macro of microbiomes, requires infinite care—requires, and gives, inseparable from itself. Keller's clarification from the introduction to her text takes on a still greater resonance in this way of thinking bodies: "if the boundary marking difference shows itself also as fold, membrane, or connection, alterity requires an alter-knowing of its others, an altered state of radical interlinkage: what you do to the least of these you do also to me."[43] The least—the virus, the microbe, the self as multiple other in "the ecologies of an unbounded relationalism."[44] Of course all relation is dangerous, every vulnerability also a risk. But not every risk is an evil, and perhaps our tendency to over-identify them thus is entangled in the vigilant violence of our response. Perhaps we can surpass some of our fear of the different, which has kept us so long shut outside of our own gardens. Perhaps we best care when we refuse to seal off borders, and allow instead the transfigurations of our vulnerable selves.

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42 Keller, 129.

43 Keller, 23.

44 Keller, 24.

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The Art of Being Elsewhere
Neoliberal Institutions of Care

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Abstract: *The being of human beings and, in particular, their wellbeing is profoundly spatial and temporal. We feel well in dramaturgically stimulating, sheltered, yet expansive spaces that lend themselves to daydreaming, much like we feel well in "thick" time that, like a complex melody, textures our existence aurally, kinesthetically, and propriocentrically (influencing our body's sense of balance). This existential relation is created through movement, sound, language, chronotypes, physical and symbolic objects, all of which weave bio-social matrixes, micro-cultural landscapes, even individual inscapes – internalized terrains of symbolic meaning. This essay offers a socio-phenomenological account of a medium-security forensic service unit River House, part of the Bethlem Royal hospital, a psychiatric hospital located in Bromley, south London. Its aim is to articulate the interdependence of practice, space, and inscape, while simultaneously shedding light on a very particular, emergent form of existential vulnerability caused by the increasing precarization, the reponsibilization of the individual, and the culture of blame.*

Keywords*: activated space, archive, gelassenheit, inscapes, parasites, precarization, risk management, vulnerability.*

A Spatial Transplant

On July 6th 2013 I visited Sunfayre, the annual open day at Bethlem Royal Hospital, a psychiatric hospital located in two hundred and seventy acres of land in Bromley, south London. Upon entering the immaculately kept hospital gardens, my attention was immediately drawn to a quizzical, wagon-like object made of cardboard, incongruously parked next to car. On closer inspection, the mobile object revealed a tiny door and a sunroof window, made of what resembled pink and blue plexiglass. An energetic middle-aged man, who was later introduced to me as patient[1] X, approached me, explained the purpose of the mobile object: to travel *through* the hospital and to be taken around the hospital grounds, and asked me if I'd like to have a go.

1 I use the word "patient" in its Latin meaning, to signify suffering and endurance, not passivity. Although the neoliberal "service user" can be seen as less stigmatizing, it also places the responsibility for recovery largely with the patient.

Figure 1. Patient X: Cardboard Mobile, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, July 2013. Photographer anonymous.

It was a warm sunny day and the inside of the cardboard mobile was inviting, bathed as it was in pink and blue light. At once reminiscent of early childhood spaces – tents improvised in the living room with a sheet and a couple of broomsticks – and a sophisticated rumination on the bio-social dimensions of human existence in the style of Alice Aycock or Krzysztof Wodiczko, the mobile exuded a sense of mystery. It was also an unmistakable critique of lived space. The shortest way to describe Alice Aycock's work is as a sustained engagement with collective memory and individual experience. Aycock's seminal 1975 *Simple Network of Underground Wells* consisted of an underground structure into which visitors crawled in the dark. At first, the configuration appeared to be simple and clear, geometric and rectilinear, resembling a staircase leading to a cellar. The actual experience of descending the staircase, however, was not at all clear or simple. As the visitors moved from light to dark they entered a much more mysterious place whose unexpectedly narrow confines they were forced to explore with their faces, bellies, knees, and elbows. Evoking memories of cozy hiding spots, fallout shelters, and nightmarish prisons, *Underground Wells* simultaneously instigated sensations of excitement, panic, and fear. Krzysztof Wodiczko's work, by contrast, situated at the interstice of sculpture, public art, and engineering, foregrounds the socio-political dimension of underprivileged human lives – those of the homeless and immigrants. His 1988-1989 *Homeless Vehicle Project,* a stylishly designed multifunctional vehicle, at once a suitcase, a trolley, a table, and a collapsible bed, was simultaneously an insightful rethinking of a homeless existence and a means of a dignified public appearance. It brought the physical existence of politically invisible citizens into view by exposing their spatial and temporal "being there," their *Dasein*[2]*,* and in this way

2 A term extensively used by Martin Heidegger. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time,* John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, tr. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1962).

staging an emphatic critique of what Achille Mbembe was later to call "necropolitics": a mode of government that makes and lets die through neglect and denigration[3].

In similar vein, patient X's mobile simultaneously disclosed and hid a very particular, existential form of vulnerability. Operated by patient X himself, the fragile vehicle excavated early-childhood feelings of sheer glee associated with being invisible to the outside world, while, at the same time, creating an unpredictable sense of space endlessly extended in time. When, at the end of the journey, I was told that I had spent no more than twenty minutes inside the vehicle I had a genuinely hard time believing my interlocutors. My kinesthetic and propriocentric memory was of a much longer and far more elaborate journey, with many stops, turns, crossings, and encounters with cars, vans, and bicycles. Lying flat on the vehicle floor I was much more "outside" than when walking outside; I viscerally felt every, even the most minute change in the texture of the ground – pavement, grass, pebbles – much like I felt every single stray stone that momentarily swerved the otherwise steady motion of the wheels. And yet, the mobile structure felt like a second skin in which my vertical, socialized self could be abandoned in favor of dissipating into an assemblage of tactile, kinesthetic, and aural sensations. It was a form of spatial surgery: a transplant whose topology exposed the passenger to the precariousness of chance as well as to introjection; traveling was here a form of a searching for a proper place, for lost time, for "thick" existence. The vehicle's slow, minutely textured motion afforded meditative rumination of a very specific kind: a Heideggerian *gelassenheit*, a "releasement towards things."[4] For Martin Heidegger, *gelassenheit* is an immersion in thick time cued by an existentially relevant relation to dwelling. Residing in a form of relationality he terms the fourfold – the earth, the sky, the mortals, and the divinities – dwelling involves one's physical, visceral existence, much like it involves rediscovering a sense of place, and a sense of belonging[5]. In this context, a log, a hut, or a bridge, none of which have a single, delimited, strictly utilitarian purpose, afford dwelling as a "way of staying with things."[6] They produce a form of thinking-feeling that is simultaneously alert and relaxed. *Gelassenheit* is, for this reason, also an antidote to goal-orientated, calculative thought associated with technology: *gestell* or enframing. However, in Heidegger's parlance, technology does not refer to gadgets or technicalities, but to a scientific, material, and social form of *ordering* as related to systems of knowledge, exchange structures, and means of production[7]. Enframing therefore refers primarily to emplacement, sequencing, and fixing; to a spatio-temporal organization that summons the forces of life into a set of manipulable reserves. Heidegger's example of such a "summoning" is that of coal: "[t]he coal that has been hauled out in some mining district has not been supplied in order that it may simply be present somewhere or other. It is stockpiled; that is, it is on call, ready to deliver the sun's warmth that is stored in it."[8] The problem here is not delivering coal where it is needed; it is robbing the world's resources of their present-ness and their futurity by organizing them according to a single, predetermined principle, that of extraction, stockpiling, and use.

Within the hospital context, enframing is, of course, not related to extraction or stockpiling. It is, however, related to predetermination, albeit of a different kind, one that concerns two

3 Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics" in *Public Culture* 15:1, 2003, 11-40.

4 Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*. John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund, tr. (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 54.

5 Martin Heidegger "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Albert Hofstadter, tr. (New York: Harper, 1971), 145-161, 153.

6 Ibid., 151.

7 Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, William Lovitt, tr. (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1977), 20.

8 Ibid., 15.

important socio-phenomenological registers: the custody-care continuum, and the index offence. As the modern matron suggests, many patients come to Bethlem "as very damaged people."[9] A forensic unit that houses patients who, apart from being ill, also have an index offence – the gravest of two or more offences committed in the moment of or *because* of their illness, ranging from homicide, attempted murder, and grave bodily harm, to arson or theft – will seek to provide custody as well as care. However, custody will organize the patients' time and movement into what may be experienced as repetitive, constraining patterns. The index offence, on the other hand – a moment of derailment that occurred years, or, in some cases, decades ago – is by many perceived as an inexorable force that continues to enframe their lives by sequencing their actions, and programming their reactions within the monitored recovery process, while also influencing the way they are perceived by others.

In contrast to such a sequenced, restrained, and potentially incriminating mode of existence, *gelassenheit* is focused on the here and now – the moment, the process, the sounds, the somatic-environmental sensations – all of which make the percipient dwell on "what is closest ... the here and now"[10] and, in so doing, activate space. "Activated space" is a concept derived from native Indian art. It makes the existential dimension of a physical-symbolic relation with elements similar to Heidegger's fourfold – explicit. Within this context, space is activated via a performed action whose primary purpose is restorative. For example, the color of the Plains Ojibwa's moccasin beads activates the wearer's existential relationship with the environment through the action of walking or running: white is here placed in relation to the light of day, red to the horizon and the limits of the world, blue to the sky, green to plant life on earth.[11] Similarly, Navajo sand paintings, made on the tamped floor of especially built "song houses" – altars upon which the song man, or shaman, performs the ritual connected with a particular petition – are restorative. If there is a persisting health problem (which is often the reason behind such rituals), the petitioner is placed in the center of the painting, so that the space activated through performed action may impregnate his/her body.[12]

In a sense, all space is active, as is all existence. As *Dasein*, we are always engaged in a transitive, dynamic activity of nearing and distancing. Our body is a matrix that "remembers" past configurations and orientations. Each local situation or experience within a specific environment becomes a part of the body's memory through repetition. The wearing of moccasins or the shaman's ritual only *amplifies* this relation by stimulating the flow of the vital energy, since, in native Indian cultures, like in Chinese medicine, illness is equated with the obstruction of the flow of the vital energy, often attributed to a lack of relationality with existentially relevant elements. Similar ideas have also been voiced by trauma theorists; for Jeffrey Prager, trauma is "a memory illness" that manifests "as a collapse of timeliness...The present is distorted to incorporate the memory of an un-metabolized, or unprocessed, past: a *then* folds in upon the *now* largely without awareness or distinction."[13]

It goes without saying that the Bethlem staff are abundantly aware of this. Not only does the units' and wards' spacious, open-plan design reflect this awareness, but the units' names – River

9 Interview with the Modern Matron, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 9 May 2014, np. Author's Private Archive.

10 Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*. John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund, tr. (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 47.

11 William Jones quoted in Ruth, B. Phillips, "Comments on Part II "Catching Symbolism" Studying Style and Meaning in Native American Art," *Arctic Anthropology*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 1991, *Art and Material Culture of the North American Subarctic and Adjacent Regions*, 92-100, 95.

12 Kenneth E. Foster, "Navajo Sand Paintings" in *Man*, Vol. 63 (Mar., 1963), 43-44, 43.

13 Jeffrey Prager, "Jump-starting Timeliness: Trauma, Temporality and the Redressive Community" in *Time and Memory.* Ed. Jo Alyson Parker, Michael Crawford and Paul Harris, eds. 229-245 (The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2006), 229, emphasis original.

House, for example – purposefully connote flow, recovery, and change, both in the qualitative and the demographic sense of the word.[14]

Figure 2. River House, Bethlem Royal Hospital, 2014. Photographer anonymous.

While some patients have been at Bethlem, albeit on different wards, for seven or eight years, others leave after only a few months, never to return again. Yet others return, once, twice, or several times, either because their condition worsens, or because "they feel vulnerable in the outside world" and yearn for the "predictability of the hospital routine."[15] Despite their length of stay, not a single patient, or staff member, out of the several dozen I interviewed during the four-month period of observation conducted in the spring and summer of 2014, underestimates the need for rules and fixed routines, in other words, for a certain degree of enframing. No patient underestimates the gravity of his/her condition, or the need for recovery, either. And yet, patient X's activated space where a restorative *gelassenheit* might take place is conspicuously constructed to *escape* the hospital space. Ambiguously situated between intimacy, exposure, and fantasy, the vehicle is a vociferous demand for a sheltered "elsewhere" that might act as "an instrument against chaos,"[16] a function Gaston Bachelard ascribed to all secluded spaces that order space, time, and existence. Among patients, the yearning for such a space is universal. Given this state of affairs, one may well ask: if most patients accept that a degree of enframing is both desirable and necessary, what is it that prevents Bethlem's units, equipped with such enviable facilities, full of committed and highly competent staff, from providing the much-needed combination of shelter and *gelassenheit*?

14 Interview with the Modern Matron, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 9 May 2014, np. Author's Private Archive.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., 136.

Figure 3. Bethlem Royal Hospital garden, London, 2014. Photographer anonymous.

Living in the Archive

At first glance, Bethlem looks like an ideal place to rest, not only on account of its beautiful grounds, but also because most units, River House included, foreground liminality: a space-time where "former [social] obligations are suspended"[17] and where experimentation with the "elements of the familiar"[18] is the order of the day. Apart from being a place where old, sometimes life-long ailments are cured, River House is also a place where new identities (are hoped to) emerge. It is therefore both a place and a non-place. The difference, according to Marc Augé, is that "place," is formed over time by "individual identities, through complicities of language, local references, the unformulated rules of living know-how," and repetition.[19] By contrast, "non-place" is temporary. It refers to places of transit, formed in relation to specific ends, and characterized by a projection forward. However, place and non-place are not mutually exclusive. They operate along a continuum, much like custody and care do. Place is "never completely erased." non-place is "never totally completed; they are like palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten."[20] A palimpsest is a paper that has been written upon and erased several times; it contains no original writing, but bears witness to the *process* of writing, erasure, and rewriting. It is simultaneously a site of novelty and repetition. This dual, inscriptive and erasing function is particularly important in the creation of lived space, which, to borrow from Michel de Certeau, is "practiced place."[21] Heavily patterned ground, characteristic of "place," that makes people move in one direction and not another,

17 Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1982), 27.

18 Ibid.

19 Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, John Howe, tr. (London: Verso, 1995), 101.

20 Ibid., 79.

21 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Steven Rendall, tr. (Berkley: University of California Press, 1988), 91-96.

would not be appropriate for an institution of care where the emphasis is on the restorative, stabilizing function of time and performed action, and where a degree of habit-formation is desirable but "institutionalization," a form of automatism, is frowned upon.[22]

Due to the fact that some patients' early life experiences are those of abuse and molestation of the extent that even the seasoned hospital staff dare not repeat, and that these experiences are often additionally aggravated by extremely difficult adult lives, security is, naturally, taken very seriously. Alongside physical security, such as fences, personal alarms, and locks, there is also relational security, which refers not only to the "knowledge and understanding staff have of a patient and of the environment" but, more importantly, to the "translation of that information into appropriate responses and care."[23] Relational security hinges on observation. As a clinical psychologist explains: "you want to know whether their [patient] interaction is usual or unusual for them; in a familiar environment people will observe that "you are not acting your usual self"[24]. Knowing what is likely to happen affords the delicate balance between pattern and novelty, since stabilizing new behaviors, and thus also habits and identities, is a crucial aspect of the recovery process. It converts the hospital into a "domesticated" ground, and creates navigable maps of the possible and the permissible. To an extent, repetition also affords freedom. It neutralizes demarcations and divisions, such as the ubiquitous CCTV cameras, or the procedural "no trespassing lines," those that separate the nursing station – an area only staff may enter – from the rest of the ward. Such lines of separation tend to disappear in a heavily patterned ground, and ground springs back as a space of multiple trajectories.

This balance is carefully monitored; stability is, of course, needed yet care is taken to avoid monotony. Settled rhythms are constantly altered by purposeful action, such as the quizzical objects placed in the hospital corridors by the occupational therapy staff. A cotton bag with mysterious, semi-visible content will thus unexpectedly appear on the edge of a corridor chair; a spatial intervention in the form of a mobile cardboard object such as that authored by patient X will be placed in the adjacent corridor (Figure 4). Intended as syncopal elements that break the usual spatio-temporal layout of the hospital, these sculptural provocations, and the ensuing debates, improvisations, and often, humorous remarks and excitement, *valance* the space as a space of inter-subjective co-creation, and thus also possibility and change. The ability to maintain this delicate balance between repetition and novelty, that serves the bigger goal of maintaining the balance between custody and care, is largely dependent on the number of available staff, however. As one nurse explains: "it looks like we're stepping back in time, we only have three nurses at night now, and nights can be very difficult."[25] A veteran nurse with more than thirty years of experience, she adds that: "patients are very complicated in hospital today, multiple axiologies, learning disabilities, obsessive behaviours, ritualistic behaviours, anger management problems, and a mental illness all rolled into one person."[26] Given this state of affairs, and the nurses' ambition to maintain the high standards crucial to the practice of their profession, encapsulated in the "six c's formula: being caring, compassionate, committed, courageous, communicative and competent,"[27] the neoliberal precarization of the workplace is decidedly not conducive to providing quality care.

22 Interview with Nurse D, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 7 May 2014, np.; Interview with Occupational Therapy Technician, Bethlem Royal Hospital, 8 July 2014, np. Author's Private Archive.

23 Interview with the Head of Security, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 6 May 2014, np. Author's private Archive.

24 Interview with Clinical Psychologist A, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 22 May 2014, np. Author's private Archive.

25 Interview with Nurse D, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 7 May 2014, np. Author's private Archive.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

Figure 4. Patient X's spatial intervention. River House, 2014. Photographer anonymous.

Consisting, among other factors, of temporal compression, cuts in staffing, and of increased worker responsibilization, precarization is, as Isabell Lorey has argued, neither an accident nor an exception. It is "a rule," an "instrument of government, social regulation, and control,"[28] It subjugates through frequent job cuts and the threat of economic ruin, and, in so doing, feeds into the dogma of the risk society. Narrowly related to the digital compression of space and time, which decouples the "here" from the "now," and stockpiles tasks beyond the possible, the risk society is, according to Ulrich Beck's prescient theorization, a "systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced ... by modernization itself."[29] It is characterized essentially by the impossibility of an external attribution of hazards and their dependence on "managerial decisions, which makes these decisions politically reflexive."[30] Added to this is the neoliberal intensification of moral regulation based on the withdrawal from government and the responsibilization of individuals through measures such as regulated choice making. Present in education, healthcare, and child rearing – to name but a few examples – regulated choice making transfers responsibility from the public institutions to the individual. It is no longer the institution, service, or the government that is responsible for any form of malfunctioning; it is the individual who, having made the wrong choice, only has itself to blame. Unsurprisingly, the one thing that neoliberal institutions provide in plentiful supplies is training in how to

28 Isabell Lorey, *State of Insecurity: Government of the Precarious (Futures)* (London: Verso Books, 2015), 1.

29 Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (New York: Sage, Publications, 1992), 21.

30 Ibid., 183.

make a supposedly informed choice. The hospital employees are thus tasked with attending all manner of workshops and courses that instruct them in how to climb ladders, move and handle objects, open and close windows without hurting themselves or others.[31] The purpose here is to assign predictable or potential accidents to the employee's erroneous choice, rather than to the decisions of the higher managerial echelons. Needless to say, such operational principles reinstate vulnerability and insecurity of a professional, moral, and financial kind. Several staff have had to repeatedly interview for their current post, not to mention the long periods of trepidation when the job cuts are announced but not confirmed, which can last for up to six months at a time.[32] Many staff are also painfully aware that staff shortage often makes it impossible to escort patients when they go on leave – leave being any time that a patient spends away from the ward, even if only fifteen minutes. This has a direct effect on the patient dynamic and on relational security, since, unsurprisingly, the patients' reactions to such curtailing are often violent.

There are, of course, entire rule structures designed to prevent peripheral problems from interfering with the projected hospital practice; they take the form of written, verbal, and agreed rules. Meal times, medication time, and rest time, as well as most staff-patient interactions – recovery team meetings, shift handovers, and the patient's leave – are regulated through scripts which specify precisely how, when, and where something is supposed to happen. Agreed rules are those created by ward staff and communicated to patients; for example, that staff will not accept patients passing remarks on their looks or clothes, as this may create a deceptive sense of familiarity.[33] Equally, if not more important, are the unwritten rules, such as the extra attention granted to all patients returning from a meeting with a relative, the recovery team – clinicians, nurses, and occupational therapy staff – or their lawyer, as the patient's mood might have changed during the meeting and could be the cause of a violent attack or verbal abuse. Staff shortage makes optimal alertness and the much-needed flexibility, which, as several nurses have explained, includes "bending the rules when a particular situation requires it,"[34] much more difficult to achieve, however.

Aware of the effects the neoliberal pressures to do more in a given unit of time with fewer resources have on patients, staff are adamant to create "open spaces;"[35] opportunities for recuperation and change. As a member of the occupational therapy staff in charge of River House's art classes explains: "[i]deally, I would like the room to change all the time – to be modular – I want it to feel free, like a place where anything can happen."[36] However, he also adds that many patients are "institutionalized"[37]: instead of doing what they want to do, they do what they think staff would like them to do. The reason behind this is simple; they are in pain and they want to make themselves as non-vulnerable as possible. But they are not the only ones. The same expression is also used for staff who are overly eager to label and tabulate according to pre-established norms so as to avoid any (extra) personal responsibility. As one nurse explains: "some staff are very punitive, very institutionalized."[38] The reason for over-zealous rule conformity is that staff, too, are subject to surveillance. While patients are observed

31 Interview with Occupational Therapist C, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 23 May 2014, np. Author's Private Archive.

32 Ibid.

33 Interview with Nurse D, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 7 May 2014, np. Author's private Archive.

34 Interview with Nurse J, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 7 May 2014, np. Author's Private Archive.

35 Interview with Occupational Therapy Technician, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 8 July 2014, np. Author's Private Archive.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Interview with Nurse D, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 7 May 2014, np. Author' private Archive.

through the CCTV cameras, special surveillance provisions, such as hidden monitoring rooms, and medical writing – notes written up to three times per shift, and made available to the entire recovery team – staff are observed through the now ubiquitous performance reviews. This means that both patients and staff live in the archive. They live with the certitude that some, if not all entries and/or recordings will be examined. Living in the archive is an abstract condition that renders the everyday transcendent: every action may at any point be interpreted as problematic, inappropriate or, worse still, dangerous. Depending on the interpretation, an utterly insignificant gesture may lead to long-term complications; in the case of patients, it can endlessly extend their sojourn at the hospital. In the case of staff, it can lead to self-doubt, lack of confidence, and the loss of employment security. In rendering the insignificant significant in an unfathomable way, the archive ceaselessly creates new, treacherous temporalities by organizing the smallest details into a temporal architecture that reverberates with ominous consequentiality. It also affirms the authority of the archivist (whether human or technological). The imaginary residence in such an archive – and it is worth remembering here that, according to Jacques Derrida, the word "archive" refers both to "*commencement* and to *commandment*" [39] – destroys stability. It also corrodes personal relationships and contaminates personal space. Its working is not solely destructive; it is also propelling: it forces the individual to perform. As Jon McKenzie suggests in *Perform of Else*, in the twenty-first century, performance is "an emergent stratum of power formation."[40] The performative subject has internalized discipline, not only because of the multiple surveillance mechanisms, but also because of the ubiquitous performance imperatives. Given that such a subject is "fragmented rather than unified, decentered, rather than centered, virtual as well as actual,"[41] and that the subject's personal, professional, medical, financial and legal records are "produced... through a variety of sociotechnical systems,"[42] the subject is in constant need of *optimization*. This requires a very particular, dispersed form of sensitivity to an ever-growing multitude of requirements, further aggravated by the quantitative demand – to do more in a given unit of time, such as peruse large documents with new regulations, or write more detailed reports, with hardly any time to do it in. One of the results of the conflict between what has to be done, what can be done, and what has to be *shown* as having been done, is compassion fatigue. Several nurses and an occupational therapist defined compassion fatigue as a combination of "exposure to trauma and frequent violent episodes,"[43] but also of "work overload, time famine, and the ever-increasing amount of unnerving surveillance mechanisms."[44] Unnerving not because there is an *actual* lack of competence but because the practice of constantly introducing new regulations and new methods for doing old things, creates a perceived lack of competence, which not only looks bad in the obligatory performance reviews, but also undermines interpersonal trust, a very important, if not *the* most important feature of the hospital employee's relationship to what is, without a doubt, a very dangerous work environment. Another unavoidable aspect of the hospital space is sound.

39 Jacques Derrida and Eric Prenowitz, "Archive Fever: a Freudian Impression," *Diacritics*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Summer 1995), 9-63, 9, emphasis original.

40 Jon McKenzie, *Perform of Else: From Discipline to Performance* (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), 18.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., 19.

43 Interview with Nurse D, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 7 May 2014, np; Author's Private Archive.

44 Interview with Nurse J, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 7 May 2014, np; Interview with Occupational Therapist C, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 23 May 2014, np. Author's Private Archive.

Sound as Parasite

Despite the fact that River House is known for its sound facilities where patients make – compose, improvise, play and produce – their own music, cuts in resources, mostly those related to maintenance, claim their due. Being empty, the hospital corridors through which trolleys with food, medication, cleaning products, and equipment are wheeled five times a day, have a resounding echo. Regardless of where you are, in the interview room, on the ward, in the communal areas, in the multi-faith room, in the gym, or in a patient's room, the sound of clunky steel trolleys whose steadily deteriorating wheels, although mostly with a 360 degree swivel, regularly get stuck in corners, lifts, and under stairs, is unavoidable as well as painful.

Painful not only because it prolongs the interminably long and far too frequent trolley diminuendo, but because the interminably long, and therefore irritating sound of the trolleys is, like all irritating sounds, anticipated. It is heard not only when it is actually taking place but every time a similar sound – and there are many – is heard. The nursing station is soundproofed, but as there are always many conversations going on simultaneously, accompanied by the not too intrusive but nevertheless incessant sound of the television coming from the communal living room, as well as, on occasion, screams and torrents of verbal abuse, the soundscape is dense, to say the least. This is complemented by loud music coming from the patients' private television sets, or from their headphones. The hospital does not use swipe cards but, instead, heavy keys, which continue to cause injuries to staff who lock and unlock up to fifty doors a day.[45] Needless to say, the sound of locking and unlocking doors echoes in the empty corridors thus undermining what the open-plan design has tried to bypass: signifiers of incarceration. When escorted outside, patients are taken through long corridors and sometimes up to twelve doors. The unavoidable agglomeration of parasitic sounds inculcates the body actionally and sensorially.

All parasites are colonizers that cannot be removed from the body, whether a house, a dwelling, or an institution. As Mark Wigley, re-interpreting Jacques Derrida, suggests: "the uncanniness of the parasite is that it is never simply alien to the body it haunts ... Rather, the body is haunted by that which exceeds it: para-site, that which is supplementary (para) to the site."[46] As a figure of excess, located neither inside nor outside, the parasite is perversely violent, since it is never purely external. All aural violence is internal to the body; it creates affective residue through repetition. Shigenori Nagatomo has termed such calibrations of the body "attunement," although this word, in Nagatomo's parlance, has both a positive and a negative meaning. It refers to the "engagement that obtains actionally as well as epistemologically between a person and his/her living ambiance."[47] Otherwise put, attunement is a process by which "affective residue" sediments through the "experiential momentum"[48] – the repeated engagement in particular somatic structures as related to movement, sound, kinesthetics and proprioception. Given that attunement impregnates the body sensorially and configures future engagement with the living ambiance, the effect of the experienced aural intrusions is not merely cumulative; it creates unwanted kinesthetic matrixes: wincing, grimacing and the tensed shoulders, which many patients, as well as staff, exhibit at the very sight of trolleys or keys. Furthermore, the creation of somatic-affective paths is related to the passage from the hazy to the clear horizon of

45 Interview with Occupational Therapy Technician, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 8 July 2014, np. Author's Private Archive.

46 Mark Wigley, *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's Haunt* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 180.

47 Shigenori Nagatomo, *Attunement through the Body* (Albany: State University New York Press, 1992), 179.

48 Ibid., 198.

consciousness. The hidden, interoceptive, recessive part of the body, which we are often entirely unaware of, is continually in the process of passing from the hazy – or unconscious – to the clear horizon of consciousness. While the former is related to humoral events, the latter is related to clearly discerned emotions. Once a particular experiential engagement and affective path have, through affective residue, created emotions, these emotions *inform* future actions. The ambiental sound of the hospital is therefore far from innocuous. Even if not experienced as nerve-racking at first, it *shapes and orients* future experiences; it configures perception.

The monotonous trailing of the malfunctioning, and, on occasion, screeching wheels, the interminably long locking and unlocking of door after door are oppressive in their regularity, to say the least. If one closes one's eyes and merely listens to the sound one finds oneself in a (sonic) labyrinth since there is hardly a time when no sound of locking and unlocking doors is heard. When moving through the hospital, as staff do all the time, and as patients do when they go on leave, or for their numerous checkups, consultations and occupational therapy groups, one's ears are assaulted by yet another traumatizing sound, which forms part of the experiential momentum, and which, as both staff and patients report, has a highly irritating effect: the frequent alarms.[49] Triggered by perceived or actually dangerous situations, alarms produce a deeply disturbing, hurtful sound that causes panic and tumult in the less accustomed, and irritation in the accustomed. Like (a certain degree of) spatio-temporal enframing, alarms are, of course, necessary. What is not necessary, however, as well as directly counterproductive, is their shrillness. Despite numerous staff debates about the unnecessarily shrill sound of these alarms, nerve-racking alarms, like hand-hurting keys, do not seem to be a priority on the list of required changes[50] In the various hospital meetings, such concerns are overridden by more urgent concerns with risk management, and the steadily growing health and safety agenda, both of which are a direct consequence of the neoliberal litigation culture.

These unnecessarily aurally harsh working and living conditions have a lasting effect on the sensorimotor system, however. They cause an increased use of headphones in patients (which isolates them from their environment), and a less disposed, because irritated and exhausted attitude in staff.[51] More importantly perhaps, sound also marks and partitions time. The temporality produced by the ambiental hospital cacophony is not only that of incarceration, but almost one of aural torture, given the regularity of the various sounds and their anticipation. In addition, the echo of the long corridors amplifies repetition thus multiplying the partitioning of time. What such sound does is to disassemble the spatial perception of the hospital. The hospital space is no longer perceived as open. Rather, it is perceived as an overly dense, "swarming" temporal agglomerate, in which everything happens all at once. Such a temporal structure disables temporal succession, and thus also *resolution*. This has a mentally extremely taxing effect. As one patient put it, "if you aren't on heavy drugs the din wears you out, if you are, you're half dead anyway."[52] However, this particular aural-kinesthetic, highly noxious effect is, for organizationally mysterious reasons, impossible to rectify. Instead, preference is given to workshops that instruct staff in how to "manage" persistent problems in new ways, thus simultaneously de-materializing material problems, and turning them into the employees' own

49 Interview with Patient G, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 3 June 2014, np. Interview with Patient H, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 19, June 2014, np. Author's Private Archive.

50 Interview with Nurse J, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 7 May 2014, np. Interview with Occupational Therapist C, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 23 May 2014, np. Author's Private Archive.

51 Interview with Nurse D, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 7 May 2014, np. Author's Private Archive

52 Interview with Patient B, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 8 May 2014, np. Author's Private Archive.

problems. But where does that leave those who have lived in the hospital for months, perhaps even years?

Inscape Closure

In contrast to the shared cultural, narrative, physical and affective constructs or landscapes, inscapes are internalized terrains of symbolic meaning.[53] They are created through the individual's psychosomatic processing of the socially shared, symbolically charged spaces. A number of enabling devices, such as "the buddy" – a GPS that enables patients to leave the hospital premises unescorted – are, in fact, experienced as constraining objects. As one patient put it: "even when I'm away from the hospital, the hospital is all around me."[54] Instead of leaving the physical space of the hospital, the patient feels remotely controlled by the very space s/he is trying to leave. The reason for this is that s/he has internalized the buddy's symbolic connotations. However, there are many other reasons why the residual hospital inscapes are those of turmoil, or, worse still, fear. As one patient explains: "I'm looking forward to being discharged. I'm doing everything that's required, all the groups... I'm finding this very overwhelming, too many people. But I'm totally isolated. I have a shower and breakfast and I go to groups, I work in the library downstairs, it keeps me off the ward... Last year I was nearly strangled while doing laundry. I feel safer outside than I do here."[55]

There are also patients who, after a significant, or repeated period of incarceration, see themselves as fused with the hospital space. They get very angry about such things as rubbish not being taking off the ward as soon as it touches the ground, although, this, too, is by no means regular practice, but a direct consequence of staff shortage. As a female patient points out, "they're polluting the only space we have...the hospital corridor is not a street where you just leave your empty packet of crisps, or don't care if you spill coffee."[56] The theme of pollution, or defilement, is not surprising given the aural and relational density of the hospital space, and the ease with which affective contagion occurs in all social environments without exception. The particularity of the hospital environment, however, is that a person's jitteriness, caused by an inscape of fear, is often the reason why coffee or tea is inadvertently spilt on the floor. This feeds directly into another patient's affronts-and-insults-tinged inscape, and is the cause of violent arguments, which not only aggravate the already difficult situation, but also further "cement" the existing inscapes. The most accurate description of this process, which can be seen as one of deterioration, came from a patient who had spent many years on a number of different hospital wards; he called it "permanent desecration."[57] A sacred place – a church, a mosque, or a temple – can be desecrated only once: when pillaged, destroyed, or used to purposes such as torture or rape. The very occurrence of torture or rape robs the church, the mosque, or the temple of its sanctity. "Permanent desecration," by contrast, refers to a *perpetual worsening* of an already impossible or highly offensive situation; it refers to the violent imperative to make do with the unacceptable, until, finally, there is nothing left to protect.

The conflation of the physical space of the hospital, its practice, patterns, accidents, and one's identity, is not unusual, regardless of mental health, given that our existence is inseparable from

53 This is derived from Gerard Manley Hopkins's notion of inscapes. See W.H. Gardner "Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Poetry of Inscape" in *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, No. 33, October 1969, 1-16.

54 Interview with Patient G, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 3 June 2014, np. Author's Private Archive.

55 Interview with Patient K, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 21 May 2014, np. Author's Private Archive.

56 Interview with Patient L, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 21 May 2014, np. Author's Private Archive.

57 Patient Y quoted by Occupational Therapy Technician in Interview with Occupational Therapy Technician, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 8 July 2014, np. Author's Private Archive.

space and time. This is why some patients will purposefully try to bring disorder into the existing spatial arrangements when showing disagreement with a particular hospital practice, as was the case with a patient who tore up all his books and magazines in an act of protest. When asked to photograph their environment, and thus, also, indirectly, show their inscapes, many patients produced photographs of incarceration, peril, decay and oblivion.

Figure 5. Patient P's photograph of the hospital grounds. Bethlem Royal Hospital, 2014.

Figure 6. Patient R's photograph of the hospital grounds. Bethlem Royal Hospital, 2014.

One of the reasons for this may be that, in addition to the various actions, sound, physical and symbolic objects, inscapes are also formed by the *content* of the frequent torrents of verbal

abuse, or, more precisely, by their linguistic performativity. In discussing the constitutive function of language, and in reference to Toni Morrison, Judith Butler suggests that language is "an extended doing, a performance with effects."[58] This statement is indebted to J.L. Austin's theory of linguistic performativity, according to which words do not describe the world, but *do* things in the world, and to Louis Althusser's theory of interpellation, which suggests that the subject is formed as a consequence of social address. The difference here is one between recognition and constitution. The subject does not respond to a particular interpellation because it recognizes itself in it – Althusser's example is that of a policeman hailing the passerby with "hey, you there"[59] – but because the subject is *constituted* by that social address. It comes into being as an "obedient citizen," or, simply "the citizen" as a result of the interpellation. Likewise, the constitutive power of language resides in "the power to injure."[60] A name, whose key function is to "freeze, delimit, render substantial,"[61] can have an enabling, inaugurative function, as well as a disabling, denigrating one. Given that interpellation is a methodology by which "subjects are formed and reformulated,"[62] all subjects are vulnerable to it. Words are "threats to one's physical well-being" because "language sustains the body not by bringing it into being or feeding it in a literal way" but by granting it "a certain social existence."[63] This is why the address of the other both "constitutes a being within the possible circuit of recognition" and, "outside of it, in abjection."[64]

Within the hospital context, people, patients and staff, are often called the most offensive names imaginable. Some of these names constitute the person as stupid, immoral, ridiculous, ugly, irremediably ill, and generally worthless. Because of this, great pains are taken to elicit positive attitudes and to inaugurate positive roles. Patients will thus often be addressed as talented human beings, much like staff will be addressed as exceptionally committed and hardworking. A patient who has an interest in fashion will be addressed as Lady Gaga; a patient who is passionate about music making will be called Dr. Dre; a member of staff who works long hours in order to improve patient experience will be nicknamed "robot," the reference here being to the lack of need to rest. These linguistic devices are used to create a very specific form of order and conviviality that seeks to overcome the necessary enframing of the hospital, alleviate the suffering created by the clashing inscapes, and erase the boundary between the hospital and the outside world.

But the question remains: is this enough? With inscapes formed by countless somatic-affective paths that weave together place, daily practice, intended or unintended interpellations, accidents, and symbolic objects, it comes as little surprise that many patients feel the need to escape. For some patients, this means filling in a delineated stripe of paper in pencil – to physically *see* the time passing and to feel their approaching discharge. For others, it means playing imaginary chess with an imaginary opponent, in their rooms, with headphones on. There are also those, who, like patient X, construct vehicles and invent stratagems, such as diplomatic immunity, that, in addition to the transplanted space, where *gelassenheit* may take place, creates the status of intangibility. The crowning feature of patient X's copious production

58 Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 6.

59 Louis Althusser quoted in Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 3.

60 Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 2.

61 Ibid., 35.

62 Ibid., 160.

63 Ibid., 5.

64 Ibid.

of steadily more sophisticated cardboard vehicles, such as that depicted in Figure 7 was the invention of a miniature diplomatic passport. The purpose of the passport was to ensure that his movement through the hospital was circumscribed by diplomatic immunity, given that, in legal terms, diplomats reside on the soil of the *sending state*, not the receiving state, and are not subject to the jurisdiction of the local courts.[65]

Figure 7. Patient X's Yellow Cardboard Mobile at a petrol station, Bromley, London, 2014. Photographer anonymous.

Although such a stratagem could easily be dismissed as a fanciful illusion, play, a joke, or even delusion – after all, Bethlem is a psychiatric hospital – it is none of those things. It is a pragmatic way of "escaping the [lived] space of the hospital."[66] In this sense, patient X is already doing what the neoliberal responsibilization of the individual is asking everyone to do: take care of themselves. The only problem is that, as many have noted, Alain Ehrenberg,[67] and Byung-Chul Han[68] among them, mental illness is on an unprecedented rise. The multiple and steadily proliferating vulnerabilities created by the culture of misplaced personal responsibility and blame are claiming their due. In a unit like River House, in an institution like the Bethlem Royal Hospital, the assumption is that care-providers are less vulnerable than those in need of care. But how much longer will this be the case? Without wishing to equate indescribably difficult lives with professional hazards, the question that poses itself is not "who will take care of the care-seekers if the care-providers themselves become care-seekers on a mass scale?" but "what can replace the practice of care?" Much like the (embodied) subject is constituted in language, as well as through multiple, and increasingly impactful mnemotechnical processes, it is also constituted through relations of care or neglect. While self-care is, of course, important, the care, and, conversely, the neglect of others, has *constitutive effects*. At stake here is thus not a particular case, or a dozen cases, but the destruction of bio-social tissue on a grand scale, comparable to

65 Mitchell S. Ross, "Rethinking Diplomatic Immunity: A Review of Remedial Approaches to Adress the Abuses of Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities" in *American University International Law Review*, 4:1 (2016), 173-205.

66 Interview with Patient X, Bethlem Royal Hospital, London, 11 July 2014, np. Author's Private Archive.

67 See Alain Ehrenberg, *The Weariness of the Self: Diagnosing the Contemporary Age* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009).

68 See Byung-Chul Han, *The Agony of Eros* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017).

such "grand" necropolitical enterprises as colonization, ethnic cleansing, and covert forms of genocide.

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Lygia Clark's Practices of Care and Teaching:
Somaesthetic Contributions For Art Education

Luciana Mourão Arslan

Abstract: *This article examines the work of the Brazilian artist Lygia Clark through a somaesthetic perspective while highlighting the didactic and therapeutic aspects of her oeuvre. After thinking through the connections between Lygia Clark's art practices and somaesthetics, this article suggests some methods that could contribute to improving the contemporary field of art education.*

Keywords: *Lygia Clark, Art education, Somaesthetic, Brazilian art.*

Somaesthetics encompasses many studies suggesting new goals and methods in art education in the contemporary world: the improvement of sensory perception, the awareness and capacity to identify subtle relations between people and the world, and the identification of aesthetic experiences through the soma (living body). Here, I present an exemplary practice created by Lygia Clark, who predated and was never in contact with the new field of somaesthetics, but whose work displays how rich art education can be, if taken within a somaesthetic perspective.

This paper is organized in two parts. First, it will present a somaesthetic perspective on the practices of care and art education created by Lygia Clark, a Brazilian artist who developed a kind of therapy not rooted in psychology, but actually based on visual arts. The second part presents some contributions to art education based on my own ideas developed by means of a somaesthetic perspective.

I

Somaesthetic Practices of Care in Lygia Clark's Art

The Brazilian artist Lygia Clark was born in 1920. She developed her career in Brazil, but she also lived in France having moved to Paris to study in 1950. She later returned there to escape from the Brazilian political scene in the 1970s—when the government in Brazil was taken over by a military coup—and an intense period of censorship forced many artists to live abroad.

In many different activities within art and therapy, she built a controversial career as an artist, professor, and therapist. For example, without any formal education in psychology, she took care of people who suffered from borderline personality disorders. During different periods in her life, Clark created a set of artworks in order to activate soma-consciousness and self-improvement in patients and art participants. Clark made use of her knowledge about shapes, color, space, matter and surfaces to create specific situations that enhance what Richard Shusterman (2008) defines as somaesthetic perception and somaesthetic reflection.

Nowadays, her works are part of collections in many of the principal art museums around the world. She participated in the Venice Biennale twice (1958 and 1968), received the Guggenheim

International award in 1960 and her works have been shown in special expositions around the world, such as the recent exhibition named *The Abandonment of Art* in the New York Museum of Modern Art - MOMA.[1] In addition to those exhibitions, many studies have been made about her work.

Two examples of Clark's practices will be presented here. For a better understanding of these works, one should not be confined to an optical experience or a disengaged interpretation of them. Besides the fact that Clark created fascinating objects with very complex designs, these designs do not get their full sense on their own but instead depend on the participant's embodiments, because they intend to access a bodily memory through pre-verbal and non-verbal experience.

"*Stone and Air*" and "*Cannibalistic Slobber*": *propositions* created by Lygia Clark

Lygia Clark's artistic works or *propositions* were created to be assembled as replicas by anyone, even if they had no artistic skills, merely by following some simple rules. In the following I show two of those *propositions*: *Stone and Air* and *Cannibalistic Slobber*. As they were written in the form of a recipe, the readers are able to repeat the experience, which I strongly suggest they do.

Created by Clark in the 1970s, *Stone and Air* is one of her *Relational Objects*: a set of objects made of simple materials like shells, plastic bags, gloves, rubber bands and paper: all designed to heighten somatic experience. This can be identified as a sort of aesthetics of precarity, an art trend known for the use of simple skills and ordinary materials; or they can simply be understood as a "domestic technology" (the name given by the visual artist Ruben Gershman to describe the behavior of Clark in collecting materials in supermarkets, streets, and all different places).

Stone and Air is one of those works that Lygia Clark used to treat patients. This particular work increases self-awareness; it especially helps us to take a deep breath, to try different speeds of breathing, in order to identify the connection between the air and our body movements and to highlight the fact that we exchange the same air, which connects our bodies like invisible glue.

Follow the *Stone and Air* sequence of instructions and some pictures showing how it is being performed by art students:

- Observe the materials: transparent plastic bag, round stone, rubber band and air. First of all observe and touch the materials. Feel the stone, which is natural, with an irregular, hard and unchangeable surface, it is cold, heavy and opaque; feel the plastic bag with almost the opposite features: it is a soft, bright, translucent industrialized material, with a very rectangular and flexible shape. Next, observe the rubber band, which is a kind of transitional material, because it brings the opaqueness of the stone and the flexibility of the plastic bag together. And finally, another important material for *Stone and Air*, as the name suggests, is the air, which is bonding us, being exchanged, filling all spaces, outside and inside our bodies. Take a deep breath just to sense this last substance: the air.
- Take the plastic bag in both hands and fill the bag with your own breath. Inhale deeply to fill your lungs and then exhale into the bag's cavity to fill it up. Do not fill the bag completely as we need some space to move the stone later. Clasp the top of the bag and tie the opening with the rubber band.
- Take one of the corners and press the corner inwards as to create a concavity. Take your stone and place it in the pressed corner that we have just created.

1 This major retrospective devoted to the art of Lygia Clark in North America showed nearly 300 works done during the period between 1948 and 1988.

- The exciting part is to integrate oneself with the *Stone and Air*: move the stone by using your hands to press the bag, creating different rhythms to match your breathing.
- Try to feel the density of the bag containing your breath and the pressure of the stone floating in the air while you handle the bag.

Photos: Luciana Arslan. Title: Clark's "Stone and Air," with art students and professors, Federal University of Uberlandia, Brazil.

Stone and Air has an explicit goal to attain clearer body consciousness, which is one of the main principles and goals of somaesthetics; the work provides an experience in order to develop self-perception and self-improvement for the participant who performs it. In *Stone and Air* the participants have to match their breathing and body movements with the balancing of the stone. The air that goes inside the bag materializes the act of exhaling, suggesting a connection between the inner and outer spaces, which is an important dimension needed to feel the connection between our body and the environment.

It's difficult to define *Stone and Air* as an object of art, a sculpture, or even to define who the real artist is, since the air and the action only occur in the participant's body and the material

is shaped by the participant. That is why in *Stone and Air* the frontiers between artist, artwork, and spectator are completely blurred. The work only takes form in the soma of the participant. Although Clark created the "recipe," the participant defines all the rhythms of the action. The form of the bag, which is filled with the participant's air can be completely variable. The participant is always the central character in the *proposition*.

That explains why the art categories such as "happenings" or "performances" were entirely rejected by Clark, to define her *propositions*. Unlike some artworks created by Yoko Ono or Marina Abramovic, Clark never performed *propositions* as happenings. *Propositions* are wholly projected to be acted by others "to be carried out by a 'participant'" (Lepecki, 2014, p. 279), to be embodied in the participants' everyday actions. It provides the connection between an integrated aesthetic experience and everyday life, a good example of some of the principles affirmed by somaesthetics.

Like *Stone and Air*, the second work I present, namely *Cannibalistic Slobber*, also uses materials from everyday life: in this case, a spool of cotton thread. The sequence of this sensorial *proposition* needs at least 5 persons:

- One person has to lie down on the floor; preferably wearing only underclothes (because it allows the person to better feel the strings on their skin); in addition to that, the person has to close his or her eyes.
- About six people have to sit or kneel around the person lying down. They also have to put a spool of cotton thread into their mouths; slowly they should start to pull the thread from the spool in the direction of the person lying down.
- When all the cotton threads have come to the end of the spool, the participants can observe the new web formed by the thread and drops of saliva.
- Participants can gently remove the mass formed by the thread and saliva. The person lying down can now be informed that the *proposition* has been concluded.

Photos: Paulo Augusto Soares. Title: Clark's Cannibalistic Slobber, with art students and professors, Federal University of Uberlandia, Brazil.

By experiencing *propositions*, the participants can access body memory, discover new sensory aspects, feel the connection between their bodies and other bodies and the environment. Such art is a medium designed to develop self-awareness and social intuition simultaneously. Clark created gentle actions which not only involve the enrichment of everyone's perception while being executed, but may subsequently be reflected upon in other situations of everyday life.

The proposal *Cannibalistic Slobber* (1973) was initially suggested for a group of students in Sorbonne, Paris, France, where Clark gave a course named "gestural communication." Since then, it has been reinterpreted in many places, not only in art exhibitions. People reported having different sensations and feelings. In their experience of the work. Some participants relate it to a deeper perception of inner parts of the body, whilst others to the connection between different bodies or even a sensation of intimacy with strangers without any direct physical contact. As a matter of fact, we could go as far as saying that such experiences provide a kind of somatic self-awareness which englobes the consciousness of other surrounding bodies.

In my opinion, Clark's recognition in the art world is more linked to other aesthetic approaches than somaesthetics. For instance, her works have very elaborate forms, which allow formalistic appreciation. Yet, the relations between emptiness and fullness, balance and unbalance, and the use of contrasting materials and surfaces are, I believe, used by her not to enhance the language of art *per se*, but to enrich sensory somatic experience. However, Rolnik (2016) criticizes the fact that some *propositions* done by Clark, occasionally appear in exhibitions that provide an inadequate context for the visual appreciation of spectators (and not participants).

The art world sometimes overlooks the fact that the existence of these "artworks" had as the main goal the improvement of people. Clark, herself, insists, that the goal of these works is to make people feel the body. Repeating Lygia Clark's words: "(...) an art for the blind. Actually, it is no longer art, but a simple proposition to sense the body" (Butler, 2014: 243).

Clark's works show that visual art can expand the perception of our inner bodies, and enlarge our repertoire for using our bodies in our everyday life. That is the reason why somaesthetics and Clark's works seem to provide a perfect encounter or meeting place for advocating the deep relation between art and life. Both of these aesthetic approaches have roots in aesthetic

experiences and in somatic therapies, and both expand into interdisciplinary territories. In a theoretical, as well as in a practical way, they expose how aesthetic experience can provide more intensely meaningful life.

II
Somaesthetics, Lygia Clark and Art Education

The role of a professor was somewhat neutralized in Clarks's complex career. The exercise of highlighting the didactic features in Clark's work is not entirely new but needs more attention to be better understood. The film *Sur les traces de Lygia Clark: Souvenirs et évocations de ses années parisiennes*[2] presents the memories of five of Clark's students. This short movie suggests Clark's freedom of creating original strategies of teaching based on awareness, practices of self-care, meliorism, improvisation, and joy in the present moment. It also depicts how Clark blends traditional divisions between teacher, art components, and students. Another Brazilian researcher, Mirian Celeste Martins (2011), notes the procedures created by Clark to present the idea of an art teacher as a "proponent," an educator who reinforces the idea of someone who can promote aesthetic experiences by means of special situations. Martins (2011), whose discourse is clearly based on Dewey's theory, argues for the importance of developing sensory perception in art education, insisting that it is more important than to "present" art images or ideas to be exclusively perceived on a mental plane.

The improvement of the senses helps us to interact more intensively with the world, to live better. The senses allow the art teacher to derive more enjoyment from the class, to identify better ways to be in contact with students, to be more empathetic with them. Somaesthetics helps art teachers in their classrooms and beyond, including in their personal lives. It would be a good idea if preparatory courses, as much for teachers as for students, could include somaesthetic contents regarding self-care, self-awareness and sensorial perception.

The mainstream of contemporary art denies art any utility to life and society. It has to be autonomous This perspective has a terrible effect in art education. Some art curriculums are structured on this idea of an art detached from life, which valorizes art as language (pure language) and discussing art only in the theoretical context of a very traditional Western Culture. To bring the somaesthetics perspective to art education is to bring back the Deweyan perspective that affirms improved experience and sensorial perception as a main goal of art education. By defending the idea that aesthetic experiences and art can contribute to life's improvement, art education can gains more importance in the education curriculum.

Everyday life can be framed in aesthetic experiences, and even the art displayed in museums can become embodied in our lives. Many art works, and not just those from Clark, can be fully understood only through the body and through the vivid somatic experiences they can provide. By valorizing only visual perception and ideas, art education denies the embodiment, the pleasure, and the entertainment we can obtain through art and from aesthetical experiences. Somaesthetics goes beyond the classroom[3] and the university: the professor who embodies somaesthetics improves her sensitivity to the context, her empathy with others, her powers of focusing, all of which also produce better teaching, learning, and aesthetic experiences.

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2 *Sur les traces de Lygia Clark: Souvenirs et évocations de ses années parisiennes.* Director: Paola Anziché, Irene Dionisio, pro- duction Fluxlab,Torino, Itália , 2011. 26'. Dvd, color, sound, Hdv-super 8 film (available in https://vimeo.com/122889908).

3 After having studied for 13 months at the Center for Body Mind and Culture at Florida Atlantic University learning about somaesthetics, I realized that many changes took place, not only in my specific field of research in art education, but also in my everyday life. This experience was endowed by a postdoctoral scholarship from CAPES (Coordenação de Pessoal de Ensino Superior) and the support from Federal University of Uberlândia.

Finally, some guidelines can be designed for art educators who would like to pursue a somaesthetic perspective and follow the example of Clark as an art educator:

- To challenge the frontiers between art and life;
- To accept the idea that aesthetic experiences can occur outside the art world;
- To maintain the goal of meliorism, which includes the idea that art education can also improve the art of living;
- To treat the body, not as an instrument, but as a soma – a sentient, perceptive, integrated entity capable of understanding and generating ideas;
- To study and teach artists who challenge the traditional art world; to sustain a wide perspective on aesthetic experience (involving a multicultural repertoire);
- To have the courage to present new attitudes; to be vividly aware and to enjoy the classroom moment (which allows improvisations);
- Defend the use of everyday materials and everyday experiences;
- To be open to an empathetic relation with students.

The somaesthetics lens can help art educators to understand and convey to their students the powerful impact of aesthetic experience provided by art. Moreover, it can help them improve their lives and those of their students by transforming the classroom into a more enjoyable place. Lygia Clark embodies a wonderful example of this idea.

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The Painter's Knife
Representations of Fragmented Bodies in Painting

Prof. Efrat Biberman

Abstract: *Many artworks, historical as well as contemporary, represent fragmented bodies, detached organs or dissected corpses. How may we read art's intense attraction to images of body pieces? How did so many incidences of cuts and beheadings find their way into painting? Is it mere coincidence that the painter's essential tool, alongside his brushes, is none other than a painter's knife?*

These types of questions have provoked the attention of art theorists and scholars such as Linda Nochlin and Julia Kristeva. This essay offers a critical reading of the views of these two thinkers on the dissected body in art and suggests an alternative solution from a Lacanian perspective. Basing my thesis on Jacques Lacan's concept of the cedeable object, I argue that a painting is a product of an object that must be lost for representation to take place. Cutting away the object is exactly what makes painting possible, whether what is cut is manifested in the painting in the form of an image of a severed organ, or in any other way. It thus follows that the images of the fragmented body are intrinsic to painting.

Keywords: *Painting, Linda Nochlin, Julia Kristeva, George Bataille, Psychoanalysis, Jacques Lacan, Jacques Alain Miller, Desire, Cedable object.*

Decapitated heads, bodies without organs, eyes disjoined from their sockets – art history supplies countless examples of fragmented human bodies, bodies split into pieces, bodies missing organs, or bodies hollowed wide open. Each one of these cases seems to be justified by a certain narrative: martyrs like Saint Lucia or Saint Agatha, who lost body organs, protagonists and villains like John the Baptist, Holofernes or Louis XVI, whose heads have been decapitated, doctors providing anatomy lessons, and still life paintings with human skulls. In some cases, the narratives the paintings refer to do not involve a body being severed, yet the images in the painting still consist of a dismembered body or organs without a body, such as a head without a context as we may see in the copious images of Veronica's cloth imprinted with the portrait of suffering Jesus, or even in the broken classical sculptures and their drawings, which frequently appear on the art scene.

Yet, images of fragmented bodies are not the sole property of the past; contemporary art, after all, provides us with recurring and ample examples of encounters with dismembered and severed human bodies: Georg Baselitz's early paintings, Bruce Nauman's *From Hand to Mouth*, Maurizio Cattelan's *Spermini*, which consists of dozens of tiny portraits of the artist, are only a few in many more examples.

Francisco de Zurbarán. *Saint Agathe.* 1630-1633. 127 x 60 cm. Oil on canvas. Musée Fabre.

Surprisingly, in many cases throughout history and today the severed organ is none other than the artist's own body. Carravagio, for instance, paints his own head as Goliath's severed head, while Mark Quin casts his own blood into his self-portrait and then freezes it. How may we read art's intense attraction to images of the fragmented body? How did so many incidences of cuts and beheadings find their way into painting? Do the severed bodies necessarily signify horror, or is there another way to understand them? And finally, is it mere coincidence that the painter's essential tool, alongside his brushes, is none other than a painter's knife?

These types of questions have provoked other art theoreticians as well. In *The Body in Pieces: The Fragment as a Metaphor of Modernity*, for instance, Linda Nochlin, a feminist art historian, explores the representations of fragmented body parts in art.[1] Nochlin claims that the fragmented human body is a metaphor for modernity. She explores many instances in visual arts, from representations of severed heads during the French revolution, through the impressionist's trend to cut the picture frame in a snap shot manner, to artworks from the late twentieth century, which engage with fragmented body images such as the works of Cindy Sherman and Robert Mapplethorpe. Despite the various interpretations given to any cluster of artworks, all of these works are eventually subjected to the same heading. Thus, for example, Nochlin explains that the many representations of severed heads by the guillotine do not necessarily directly describe actual horrific scenes, but rather present an ideological point of view. According to this point

1 Linda Nochlin, *The Body in Pieces: The Fragment as a Metaphor of Modernity* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1994).

of view, states Nochlin, destroying the past or using its vandalized parts to recycle it, manifest revolutionary strategies: "the imagery – and the enactment – of destruction, dismemberment and fragmentation remained powerful elements of Revolutionary ideology."[2]

Nochlin offers another reference to dismembered body parts in her analysis of the paintings of Theodor Géricault. According to Nochlin, Géricault organizes severed body parts into an aesthetical composition, which he then dramatically lights, so that the final painting is simultaneously elegant and appalling.[3] This, claims Nochlin, is also the case with his paintings of severed heads. She states that very horizontal positioning of the head in the painting contributes to the objectifying attitude of the painter to the fragmented body organ, when he lays the most significant human body part as if it was a lifeless piece of meat on the butcher counter. Yet, she writes, "even more disturbingly, the heads have been arranged for maximum effect by the controlling artist: Géricault's project here is an aesthetic one, involving formal intervention."[4]

Théodore Géricault, *Severed Heads*, 1818.

Nochlin later discusses impressionist painting. These paintings, she argues, take on different levels of dismantling, from distinguished brush strokes to framing, like photographic images,

2 Ibid., 10.

3 Ibid., 18.

4 Ibid., 22.

which occasionally exclude parts of the body. In order to theorize the dismantling aspect of impressionist painting, Nochlin turns to Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, and Charles Baudelaire's *The Painter of Modern Life*. Marx, she claims, assumes that "dynamic destructiveness and self-disintegration [are] inherent in the capitalist system and bourgeois society."[5] Baudelaire perceives the painter of modern life as someone "who concentrates his energy on its fashions, its morals, its emotions, on 'the passing moment and all the suggestions of eternity that it contains.'"[6]

According to Baudelaire the modern life painter is situated in the crowed, in its constant yet transient movement. Nochlin uses Marx's and Baudelaire's theories, whose points of departure are radically antagonistic, to construct a thesis according to which the representation of the fragmented human body is interlaced with modernist conceptions. Nochlin turns to Van Gogh's paintings to explore another aspect in the conceptualization of the fragmented body. She opens with a painting from 1887 *Still Life with a Rose, Two Books and a Plaster Cast of a Female Torso* in which the statuette appears without arms and a head.[7] Nochlin presents the possibility to view his interest in the fragmented body as a metaphor for sacrifice, which preludes in two years the real dismemberment Van Gogh will conduct on his own body, when he will cut part of his ear. Nochlin refers to George Bataille's article about Van Gogh and other artists who have literally disfigured their body. She shows that while art historians tend to skip over Van Gogh's act, Bataille's interpretation considers this act of self-mutilation as an inspiring act, inseparable from his art.[8] According to Nochlin, Bataille bases his interpretation of Van Gogh on the supposition that "art is born of a wound that does not heal." Nochlin, then, refers to three manifestations of the fragmented body in art, which she knots together: fragmentation stemming from the pictorial narrative, such as the severed head of the king of France; fragmentation emanating from cutting the frame, like in the paintings of Manet and Degas; and a real dismemberment of a body part, such as the case of Van Gogh. May we indeed locate a common denominator for such different types of fragmented bodies? Although it seems that they are completely distinct forms of cutting, we can indeed mark a certain relation between them, albeit in a different manner.

Nochlin knots the representation of a dismembered body with an actual mutilation of the living body. Bataille's article, from which she quotes, revolves around real dismemberment and presents extremely gruesome clinical cases. These cases may teach us about psychosis, yet can we relate them to painting? Van Gogh, it seems, did not consider his act of self-mutilation as art, and indeed – his portrait with the bandaged ear outlines the veil, not the bleeding wound. In other words, artists such as Géricault, who fervently engaged with the representation of fragmented body parts, remained, despite their shocking paintings, within the safe and relaxing confines of representation. Van Gogh, on the other hand, who crossed this safe limit twice, both when he cut off part of his ear and when he committed suicide – veils this horror and represents the missing organ under a veil. In this sense, I would like to disagree with Nochlin and place a clear line of separation between representations of a mutilated body and an action beyond representations. Nevertheless, as I will later show, the psychoanalytic path to understanding the representations of a mutilated body brushes against this limit and challenges it. It seems as though there is no real relation between the other two aspects of cutting Nochlin ties together –a fragmented body and cutting the frame, a cut which we commonly ascribe to the birth of photography and the representational conventions, which literally derived from the photographic frame. For our

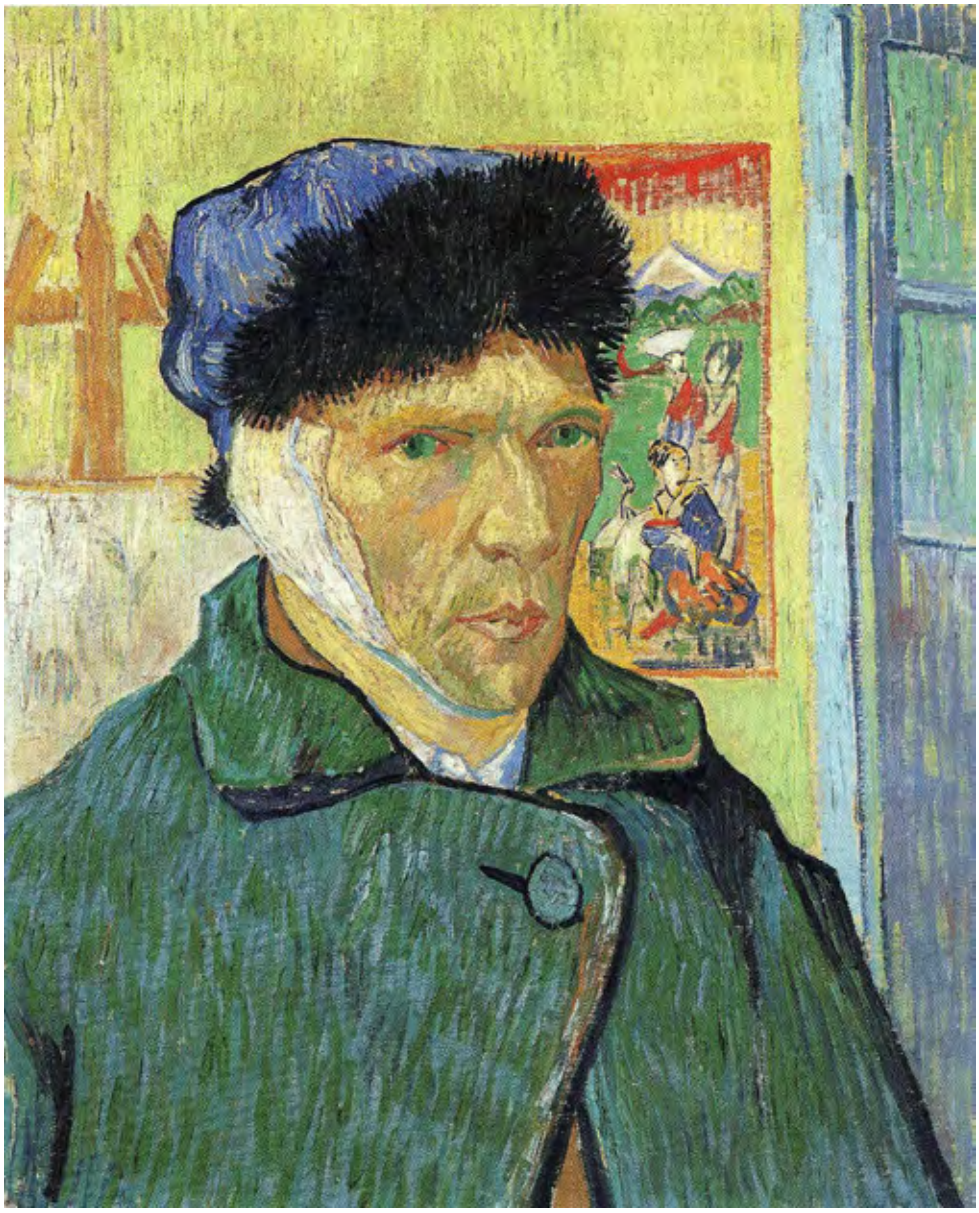
5 Ibid., 24.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., 47.

8 Ibid., 53.

eyes, which have become so accustomed to the cut of the frame, this is not dismemberment but a metonymic image, whose represented part assumes the whole body. Every painting, after all, cuts a certain, abstract or concrete piece of reality, even the ones which do not involve an actual cut in the body.



Vincent van Gogh, *Self-portrait with Bandaged Ear*, 1889.

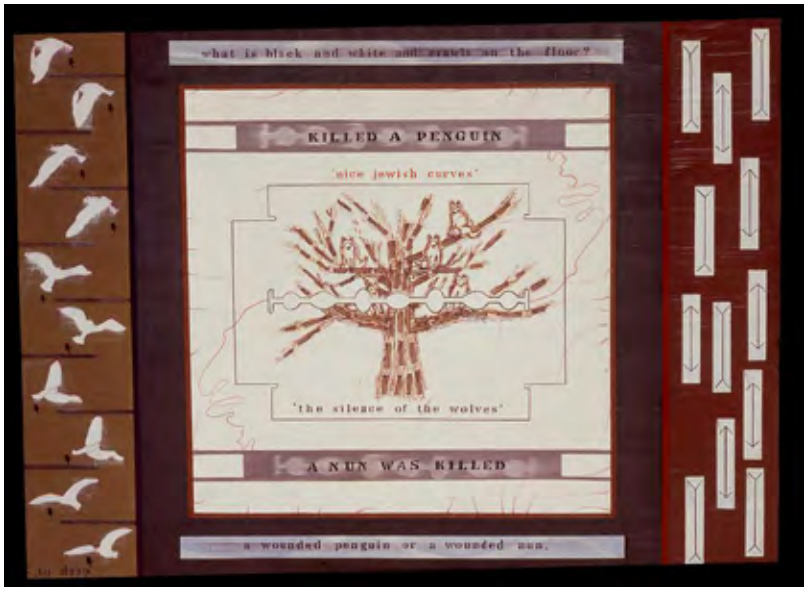
At this point, the paintings of two Israeli artists make it possible to illuminate from a different angle the somewhat haphazard connection Nochlin makes. The first artist, Yitzhak Livneh, engages with the intersection between representation of dismemberment, cutting the frame, and real cutting in his series of painting from recent years. Thus, the series visually embodies the relation between dismemberment and cuttings from different orders. These paintings were made on the bases of photographed images of pairs of lovers, whose organs are interlaced, yet the male figure was cut out from the shared photograph, and only parts of it, mainly arms and palms – appear in the picture. The act of cutting seemingly refers to a common place narrative of cutting

the lover, who has failed the woman, out of the family album; yet at the same time it also points towards an archaic belief that one can operate on the world through the image, or the thought of the magical power of the visual image. And here it seems that Nochlin's connection between the representation of a cut body, a cut of the body stemming from the cut of the frame, and real cutting now takes on meaning and validation: the cut at stake in Livneh's paintings can only be made on a photographic image, and the painterly repetition of the act of cutting constitutes a second generation of representation. The very act of painting emphasizes the pictorial past of the amputation, while turning both the act of cutting and the gap between photographic cutting and the actual cutting into the subject of the painting. Since the creation of the image is necessarily interlaced with an actual cut of a represented image, the painting conjugates these two distinct operations. And indeed, in one of the paintings from the series, the character in the painting, the one who supposedly cut the image of the lover who disappointed her out of the picture, holds a knife in her hand and cuts a salad. Furthermore, the series of paintings revolves around the relation between presence and absence, and the continuous visibility of the one who was banished from the photographs, while the palms of his hands continue to bustle within it, like bizarre creatures with a life of their own.

Yitzhak Livneh, 2009.

Yitzhak Livneh, 2009.

The second artist is Michal Na'aman, the most prominent artist of cutting, whose early works present an assortment of knifes, penknives, as well as cuts that generate impossible combinations. In one of her works from the nineties, she draws the outline of a shaving knife at the very center. She then draws the image of the Wolf Man's dream, as it was painted by Freud's famous patient into the outline of the shaving knife. Without dwelling on every detail of this complex painting, the detail that relates to our concern is the dual use Na'aman makes of the image of the knife: the one that appears in the painting as an image, and the one that cuts the frame and which reflects the scene of the tree with the wolves. That is, Na'aman shows how the cut of the frame and the cut of the knife are of the same order, while both are immanent to painting.



Michal N'aaman, 1991. *The Wolf man Tree with Jewish Profiles.*

While Nochlin's theoretical debate knots together three essentially distinct types of amputation in a contrived manner, Na'aman and Livneh's paintings show, albeit in extremely different ways, the complex relation between the three types but also their essential relation as it surfaces from the painting itself rather than from theory. This point, then, raises a question: how may we be able to conceptualize this relation? In what follows I will offer a theoretical conceptualization from a psychoanalytic position, which will explain both the ubiquitous manifestations of amputated bodies in art and the complex conjugation between different types of cutting.

However, before I turn to psychoanalysis, I would like to examine another theoretical discussion: Julia Kristeva's debate of the fragmented body and its manifestations, with an accent on the severed head.[9] Unlike Nochlin, who identifies the representations of the fragmented body with modernity, Kristeva claims that the fragmented body and its representations have circulated since the birth of culture.

Kristeva's point of departure for the severed head is not the horror it exudes, but rather a comforting memory: her mother's miraculous talent for drawing, which she used to demonstrate the possibility to transport an idea to its realization, in the speed of a blink of an eye. One drawing was etched in her memory. In this drawing her mother painted a snowman whose head was on the brink of toppling over because the sun had melted it. The drawing was meant to demonstrate the idea that "only speed of thought can exceed the speed of bodies."[10] This drawing, claims Kristeva, conjures the power and ability of thought and does not only visually demonstrate it.[11]

Kristeva states that there is a fundamental relation between the severed head in culture and the act of drawing. Drawing is "proof of a maximal concentration through which the most subjective intelligence, the most intense abstraction, makes something exterior visible... The drawing: crucial evidence of humanity's subtle mastery of the exterior and the other."[12] Kristeva supposes an imaginary moment in the history of visibility, a moment wherein human creatures were no longer satisfied in copying the world around them, and turned their attention and ability to think and represent the invisible, "make visible that subjective intimacy itself."[13] To reach this place, they had to begin by representing the loss of visibility, the loss of the physical framework. Assuming that the representation of thought is the fundamental image that humanity created for itself, may we not assume, asks Kristeva, that this representation would pass through "an obsession with the head as symbol of the thinking living being"?[14]

Kristeva, then, supposes that the act of drawing embodies a contemplative reflection, which it thinks and formalizes. The locus in which this observation takes place is the head. It is in this place that Kristeva locates the great interest of drawers and painters in the severed head, since it is a crystalized embodiment of human thought.

Kristeva follows with a survey which begins from archeological worship objects involving different types of skulls and cave paintings representing parts of the human body. According to her, worshiping skulls and devouring heads are two common phenomena in the dawn of human culture.[15] The severed head, she writes, is also present in modern social events, as the expression "to lose your head" during an especially good party reveals.[16]

9 Julia Kristeva, *The Severed Head: Capital Visions*. Translated by Jody Gladding (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

10 Ibid., 3.

11 Ibid., 1-2.

12 ibid., 1-2.

13 Ibid., 4.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid., 10.

16 Ibid., 20.

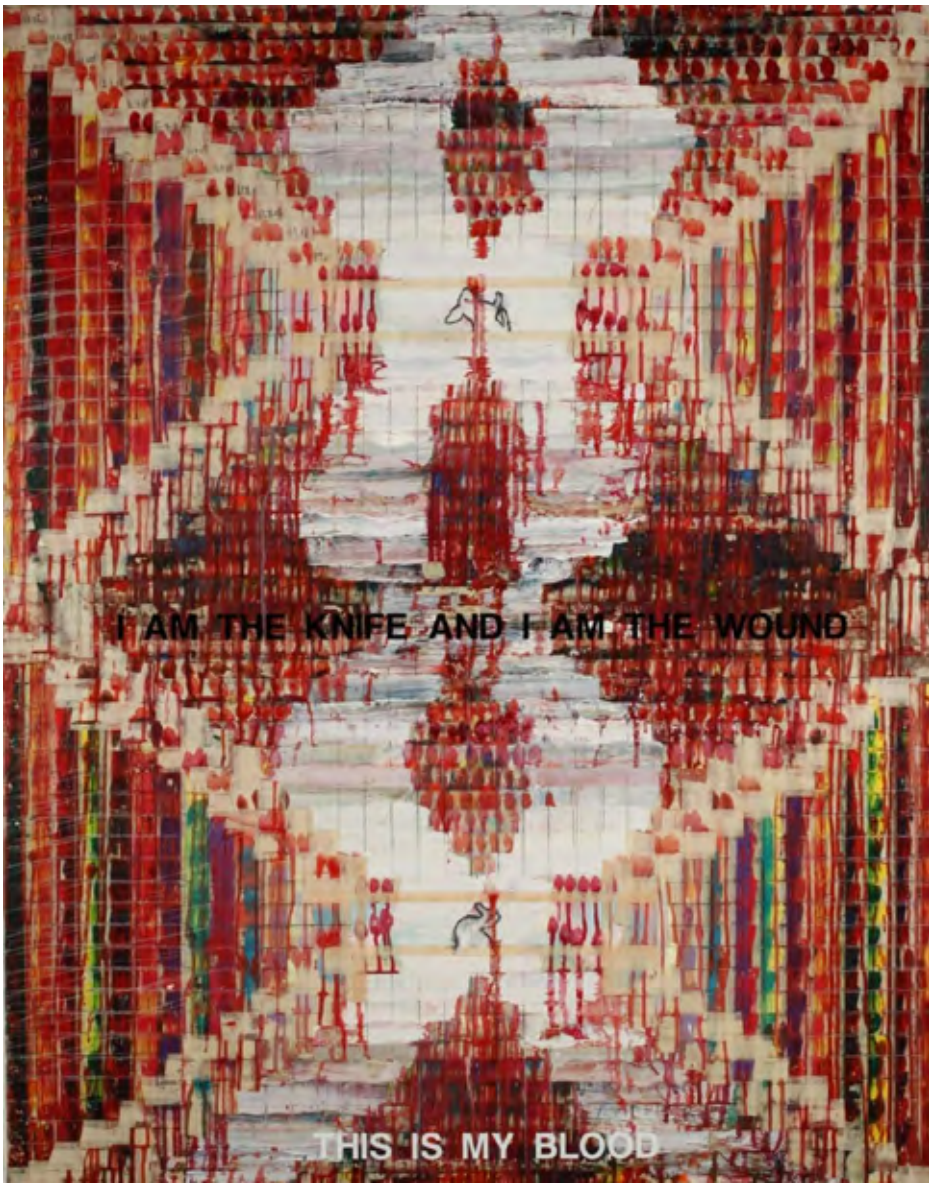
Like Nochlin, Kristeva also marks a transition from cutting to cutting on a different level, one which is not purely narratological or descriptive. This cut is immanent to painting; although it remains within the confines of art, it grazes the real cut. While Nochlin knots between two essentially antagonistic forms of cutting – Kristeva focuses on the one cut, on the cut that is not narratological, and does not represent, in the common sense of the word, even if its pictorial manifestation stems from the represented narrative. This cut originates from amputation or separation. This is not a cluster of random private cases, but rather an overall underlying form, immanent to the human being. The very cause of this representation touches upon the constitution of the subject.

Kristeva also points to the complexity of the relation between the dismembered organ and the whole: at first she relates to the severed head as a manifestation of the self-reflexive thought. This means that every drawing of a severed head necessarily relates to a thought or consciousness of the artist who draws himself, while the severed head is not distinguished from the one who draws or paints it. If in the beginning of this article I stated that quite a few artists painted their own decapitated head, Kristeva shows how this activity takes place even when the artist's features are not overtly identified in the severed head's face.

Another aspect of the complex relation between the representation of the severed organ and the artist who creates this representation surfaces later, when Kristeva uses Freud's *Totem and Taboo* to mark the ambivalent position in culture to the act of decapitation: on the one hand a violent and annihilating act, while on the other an internalization of the opponent's strength, for instance by eating the remains of his skull. Thus, she emphasizes anew that the severed head is both external and internal to the subject.

Who then, does the cutting, and who is being cut? I would like to suggest that a different painting by Michal Na'aman may direct us towards a possible answer. At the center of a painting from 2008 appear the words "I am the Knife and I am the Wound," and at the bottom the sentence "This is my blood." The words appear on a background, which has become the hallmark of her paintings from the last twenty years, of dripping paint dripping beyond layers of masking tape. The painting might not represent a decapitated organ on the register of the visual image, yet by fashioning the painting, the complexity of the layers of masking tape that cover the paint dripping through them, Na'aman explicitly refers to an act of cutting, whose result is melting, pasting, or bandaging over dripping paint. The combination between the way in which the painting is manufactured and the words on its surface, makes it possible to illuminate the conceptualization I wish to unfold.

The words themselves are borrowed from a poem by Baudelaire, with a small change. Baudelaire writes: "Je suis la plaie et le couteau!" (I am the wound and the knife). That is, the passive action, or result, precedes the causing action. These words echo the statement Nochlin attributes to Bataille, according to which the origin of art lies in a wound. For Baudelaire, who precedes Bataille, not only does art originate from a wound, but the artist is simultaneously the wound and the knife that inflicted the wound. For Na'aman the order is reverse: the cut is the primal act, the artistic object as its wound is its product – and they both emanate from the artist and constitute an inseparable part of her. And indeed, in a lecture she recently gave at an art-school, Michal Na'aman stated that the "history of the Western painting is invested in the theology of the wound (of the holy wounds), and each wound consists of a cut and bleeding, leaking." Hence the line and the stain: the two formal elements of painting, the line is the cut, the stain – the bleeding wound.



Michal N'aaman, *I am the Knife and I am the Wound,* 2008

Unlike Nochlin, who considers the fragmented body as a metaphor for modernity, or Kristeva, who reduces the fragmented body to the severed head, this formulation shows that the act of cutting is a necessary act for painting, whose manifestations are as versatile as the number of artists embodying it. Yet, how may we theorize the necessary relation between cutting, painting, and representations of the fragmented body?

Psychoanalysis allocates extensive space to the image of the body, as it is reflected for the subject through the mirror or the eyes of those surrounding him. This is the imaginary body: a supposed body image given to the subject from the exteriority, and yet, it is essential for the subject in order for him to grasp himself. As Lacan shows in his seminal article on the mirror stage, there is always a gap between the way in which the subject experiences his body and the body image as whole, which is given to her from the exteriority. This gap is a manifestation of the split of the subject, between an ego as an imaginary, coherent conception of the body, and the unknown unconscious.[17]

17 Jacques Lacan, "The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience." In *Écrits: A Selection*. Translated by A. Sheridan (New York and London: Norton and Company, 1977 [1949]), pp.1-7.

Later in his teaching, Lacan claims that alongside the reflections of the mirror, there is also something that can never be represented by it, which he calls *objet petit a*, object cause of desire. The concept of desire refers to the subject's driving force, which is libidinally charged yet distinguished from sexual passion. The object cause of desire is essentially an object of lack; it is not present in a concrete manner but rather appears at the moment of its loss, and is hence the cause of desire- that which in its lack drives desire. The *objet petit a* is a cedable object, and the way to grasp it, states Lacan, is as part of a body which is external and internal to the subject.[18] Unlike the common assumption that at the moment of birth the baby is completely separated from his mother and from hence forth functions as an independent creature, Lacan shows that the separation between the mother and the baby is not univocal, and does not necessarily take place at the moment of birth, that is, at the moment in which the umbilical cord is severed, it can, for instance, take place when the mother's breast falls out of the baby's mouth.[19] Beyond the implication that the boundaries of the body do not necessarily correspond with anatomy, this also means that the human creature sustains a complex relation with an object that is both external and internal to it. As Jacques Alain Miller states: "the *object petite a* is characterized by what is most myself from the outside, since it is cut from me."[20]

Lacan explains this relation, which is both internal and external, connected and disconnected, through the biblical significance of the Hebrew adjective "arel" (foreskin), during the circumcision. The word, says Lacan, does not concern the piece of skin that is removed, but signifies a separation from a part of the body, a sort of appendix, whose relation to the body is symbolic and alienating, and is essential to the subject.[21] The separation from the ceded object, such as the foreskin or the breast, operates as the condition for the possibility of representation in the unconscious, that is, for the constitution of the subject as a speaking or painting being.

The term "cedable object" receives an additional significance in light of one of Lacan's breathtaking insights regarding desire. In his seventh seminar on the *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan states that the only thing a subject may be guilty of is in ceding on his own desire. [22] The interesting point is that in both cases, both in relation to the cedability of the object and in relation to ceding on desire, Lacan makes use of the verb "to cede" (in French: céder). As Richard Boothby claims, the subject cedes on the object but does not cede on the empty space it leaves in its wake, that is, on desire. [23] These two Lacanian concepts of ceding, and the way Boothby interprets them, shed new light on the horrific paintings discussed so far, or at least on some of them. In terms of psychoanalysis, any object of art is in a way ceded from the body of the artist who had to renounce something in order to make representation happen. In other words, any representation of any sort necessarily involves departing from what precedes it, and it is this renunciation that guarantees desire, essential for any subjective activity such as art making.

The pictorial manifestation of the *objet petit a*, the object cause of desire, is the gaze, something present and absent that surfaces from the painting in it relation to the one looking at it, the one who seeks to locate in the painting what is held from him. At the same time, the painting makes present the desire of the painter, a desire particular to the painter, which drives him to keep painting, to invent the painting anew. The painting, then, is a product of an object

18 Jacques-Allain Miller. *Introduction to Reading Jacques Lacan's Seminar on Anxiety*. (In Hebrew, 2007 [2005].).

19 Jacques Lacan, *Seminar X: Anxiety*. Translated by A. R. Price. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014 [1962-1963]), pp. 233-234.

20 Miller, p. 94.

21 Lacan, *Seminar X*, p. 213.

22 Jacques Lacan, *Seminar VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*. Translated by Dennis Porter. (New York: Norton, 2014 [1962-1963]), p. 319.

23 Richard Boothby, *Freud as Philosopher*. (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), p. 248.

that must be ceded for representation to take place – and it is this object that drives a desire, which ethically cannot be ceded. Cutting the object is exactly what makes the painting possible, whether what is cut is manifested in the painting in the form of a severed organ or not, one cannot cede on this cut without also ceding on desire. It thus follows that the images of the fragmented body are intrinsic to painting, be it if they appear in it on the level of the pictorial image, or if they are present in it in the form of a stain or a line, or any other act of art.

In what sense then could one find any remedy for the act of ceding, and its consequences, if any? One of the early descriptions of the practice of psychoanalysis was "a talking cure."[24] In this sense, we can look at these severed bodies in terms of remedy and resolution; that is to say, psychoanalysis resists offering promises for harmony, salvation and integration, promises that in the psychoanalytic view are mere imaginary illusions. Yet, one of the ways in which the "talking cure" functions is by returning to the subject her own desire, and hence reduce her suffering. The fragmented body parts, perceived as embodiment of the essential act of the desiring subject in action, can be conceived as a subjective way of keeping up with desire, continuing to create, to reinvent art and to take part in its discourse.

Acknowledgments

I thank Wikimedia Commons (fig 1), Wikipedia Public domain (fig 2) National Museum, Stockholm (fig 3) and the artists Yitzhak Livneh (fig 4-5) and Michal N'aaman (fig 6-7) for having given me the permission to publish their photos.

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24 Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, 2001[1893-1895]. "Case Histories." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume II (1893-1895): Studies on Hysteria*, p. 30.

As Fragile as Tissue and as Strong:
Toward a Lacanian Somaesthetic Literary Theory

Diane Richard-Allerdyce

Abstract: *For many writers, self-care is closely linked to social justice issues and involves either telling the story of bodily violation and wounding or exposing it—often both. Drawing upon Alice Walker's metaphor of physical scars as "warrior marks"—the site and source of strength, this paper employs a Lacanian Somaesthetic lens to explore examples of feminist literature that thematize bodily vulnerability as a condition of human existence at the same time they also suggest a way of approaching this vulnerability as an opportunity for transformation. The first half of the paper investigates how Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, when conversant with a feminist Somaesthetic pragmatism, can help readers employ what Richard Shusterman has called "thinking through the body" to move beyond binary systems of oppression. The Lacanian idea that all human subjectivity is constructed on the brink of a loss is useful for re-imagining a way of working through one's own states of exile to achieve greater creativity, compassion, and community while avoiding the totalizing move of speaking for and about others as if culture were universal or homogeneously constructed. The second half of the paper provides a brief Lacanian Somaesthetic reading of a passage from Barbara Kingsolver's The Poisonwood Bible and a longer reading of Octavia Butler's Parable series to suggest that a body-based linguistic/literary approach to vulnerability may be potentially liberating for individual writers and readers as well as potentially transformative on a larger scale.*

Keywords: *Jouissance – joy that can easily tip over into pain; excess of feeling. Magnetism – the force literature has upon the human psyche. Primary narcissism – bodily sensations that evolve "into the meanings Lacan called 'letters' that connect the body to the outside world via the drives" (Ragland, EPD 34). Trieb – Freud's word for the psychic drives that make physical demands upon mental life.*

At the end of her essay "Beauty: When the Other Dancer is the Self," Pulitzer Prize winning author Alice Walker describes the moment when her small daughter stood up in her crib, took Walker's face in both hands and tipped it to the light, exclaiming, "Mommy, there's a *world* in your eye!" That "world" in Walker's eye was the scar tissue left by the childhood injury that permanently blinded her on that side when one of her brothers "accidentally" shot her with a BB gun. Walker dedicated the book in which this essay appeared to her daughter, Rebecca: "Who saw in me / what I considered / a scar / And redefined it / as / a world."[1]

Walker objects to the accidentality of the incident that blinded her, though. She employs a feminist perspective to call into question the different ethics of care that boys and girls were (and to some degree still are) taught by patriarchal systems founded on duality. Why did her brothers get BB guns and the girls other types of playthings? Why was she put in danger and her brother empowered to wound with a weapon? For me, her confronting the gendered binary of social

1 Alice Walker, "Beauty: When the Other Dancer is the Self," *in In Search of our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2004).

constructs resonates with Richard Shusterman's claim that cultivating somatic awareness can advance feminist goals by confronting dualities that perpetuate gender injustice. The ability for thoughts to produce physical changes in thinkers' bodies, Shusterman has argued, is evidence that the dualities between binary poles such as male and female, body and mind are misleading.[2] Similarly, when Walker calls into question the so-called "accidental" nature of her injury at the hand of her weapon-bearing male sibling, she draws upon the experience of vulnerability to confront binary systems of oppression from the personal and familial levels outward. Walker's subsequent activism against domestic abuse, war, and female genital mutilation speak to the potential transformation of one's own bodily vulnerability into an ethics of care beyond duality.

For many writers including Walker, self-care is closely linked to social justice issues and involves either telling the story of bodily violation and wounding or exposing it—often both. Drawing upon Walker's metaphor of physical scars as "warrior marks"—sites and sources of strength--in this paper I employ a Lacanian Somaesthetic lens to explore examples of feminist literature that thematize bodily vulnerability as a condition of human existence at the same time they also suggest a way of approaching this vulnerability as an opportunity for self-care and transformation.

To explore the relationship between Somaesthetic vulnerability as it appears in literature and the potential for greater awareness on both writers' and readers' parts as they confront their own vulnerabilities, the first section of this paper, "Toward a Lacanian Somaesthetic Literary Theory," uses the example of Walker's "warrior marks" as a jumping-off place. From there, I investigate how Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, when conversant with a feminist Somaesthetic pragmatism that includes reading and/or writing stories about healing places of woundedness into sites of strength, can help readers move beyond binary systems of oppression. The Lacanian idea that all human subjectivity is constructed on the brink of a loss is useful for re-imagining a way of working through one's own states of exile—a form of self-care--to achieve greater creativity, compassion, and community while avoiding the totalizing move of speaking for and about others as if culture were universal or homogeneously constructed. The second half of the paper, "Our Vulnerability is our Gift and our Hope: Two Literary Examples," provides two Lacanian Somaesthetic readings of feminist literature. The first examines a brief scene from Barbara Kingsolver's *The Poisonwood Bible* to illustrate a character's realization of her complicity in a colonizing project that wounds her and her family as much as it oppresses members of another culture. The second is a longer reading of Octavia Butler's *Parable* series. Drawing on the Lacanian metaphor of human subjectivity as a Mobius strip, my analysis of *Parable* suggests that a body-based linguistic/literary approach to vulnerability may be potentially liberating for individual writers and readers as well as potentially transformative on a larger scale.

Toward a Lacanian Somaesthetic Literary Theory

Somaesthetic philosophy recognizes the centrality of the body in human culture and consciousness. Lacanian psychoanalytic theory is useful in seeing how language derives from awareness of the body and how language is used to situate the body in a world where it is vulnerable. Literature, particularly that which evokes a sense of bodily nostalgia, offers an experience of physicality as well as emotional solutions for the perplexing paradox that all of us are negotiating life from within and through bodies that die. Humans' vulnerability is not merely physical, of course, but the physical body mitigates the losses that make consciousness

2 Richard Shusterman, *Thinking through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2012), p. 1.

possible, even more so when viewed through the lens of a Lacanian Somaesthetic literary theory such as that proposed in this paper.

One way of understanding the relationship between writing and the body is to look at literary form as analogous to bodily form. In addition, the psychological effect writing has on readers and writers may stem from an analogous relation between literary creation and the processes of the psyche's development in infancy and beyond. Most of us, I imagine, have noticed when one's heart starts racing faster when reading a particularly moving passage. I remember hearing that Emily Dickinson once described good writing's effect on her as causing the top of her scalp to go cold. Similarly, Lacan pointed to the uncanny sway that James Joyce's writing had on him and theorized how that happens.

Ellie Ragland calls this pull a kind of "magnetism" that from a Lacanian perspective is based upon literature's function as "an allegory of the psyche's fundamental structure."[3] Lacanian theory provides a framework for viewing how such networks form our identities through a process that is similar to the way formal aspects of narrative serve as construct for identification in the places in the texts that resonate with past trauma--the formal literary structures of literature provides a container for writer and reader to confront a psychic fragmentation born of a paradox. This paradox is that human consciousness comes into being in the wake of a loss. Lacan's reformulation of Freud's unconscious as structured as a language sheds light on the role between body and mind. What Lacanian theory adds to Somaesthetics is a way of seeing how language operates somatically in the body.

What Somaesthetic philosophy adds to the Lacanian account is a pragmatist application of theory to a real-life ethics of care. For example, Shusterman writes in response to a passage of Beauvoir's where she celebrates "a new aesthetics" in working women's dress that: "Clearly the message here is that a change of Somaesthetic representations cannot only help change the bodies of women but also improve their overall self-image and empower them toward greater transcendence."[4] From a Lacanian perspective, transcendence would not be the goal even if it were achievable; nevertheless, it is clear the practice of a Somaesthetics can be potentially liberating in much the same way that a Lacanian perspective of vulnerability moves beyond binary rigidities to increased empathy for those whose bodies are as mortally vulnerable as one's own. A Lacanian view would not support a belief in a "true transcendence of consciousness and action in the world that real freedom requires" (Shusterman 120); it posits, instead, a relative affective freedom that is possible through bringing into awareness one's own and others' vulnerability. Knowing that all human beings are "the same boat" in the sense of having bodies whose social meaning in linked up with formation of identities through awareness of loss and awareness of the fictional role of the self as analogous to the ego/psyche and aligned to the ultimate vulnerability of both ego and body (which are inextricably linked, for Lacan, in language) is what is liberating. Reworded to include the Lacanian component, Shusterman's response to Beauvoir that "Imagined mysteries are usually much more feared than the familiar realities one has explored for oneself" (125) might read as follows: Denied unconscious attachments are more dangerous than consciously acknowledged alignments about real, imaginary and symbolic elements of the psyche. That is, rather than walking around in a body-ego designed to project an image of invulnerability, it is by engaging in the world from a conscious awareness that we are

3 Ellie Ragland, "The Magnetism between Reader and Text: Prolegomena to a Lacanian Poetics," *Poetics* 13 (1984): 381-406.

4 Richard Shusterman, "Somaesthetics and *The Second Sex*: A Pragmatist Reading of a Feminist Classic," *Hypatia* 18.4 (2003): 106-136.

all temporary (rather than engaging in denial of unconscious "truth") that can allow an affective freedom and appreciation of the strength and health that are achievable. This is not exactly the true liberation Shusterman discusses *vis-à-vis* Beauvoir. But it is an affective awareness based on acceptance of the paradox that only by acknowledging one's own and others' vulnerability can one be strong. It is also an awareness that might be harnessed within networks of social power.

The impossibility of reconciling self and other, body and mind, male and female is served by the Somaesthetic enterprise of transcending dualities. And the impossibility of it can be liberating in that even gender categories do not have to be social prisons when the constructedness of gender identifications are seen through the lens, for example, of queer theory, such as in Judith Butler's challenge to a gender as binary and through the lens of Lacan's account of everyone's ascension to the social order through a non-biologically determined gender.[5] The account of that ascension, or at least entry, would not fit within the limits of this paper. But important to note is that for Lacan, categories of women and men exist only in their naming as such while emphasis is put on each subject's individuality. This is not to erase the usefulness of gender categories for forming bonds of solidarity on whose basis to exert political power. It is, though, to draw attention to the human psyche as linked to bodies through language that determines identity and, from that perspective, to make examining the physical responses to literature that individual readers feel a worthwhile subject of philosophical consideration.

More importantly, Lacan's work sheds a light on the psychological mechanisms that cause readers to experience somatic effects at the level of identity and desire. That is, the structural foundation of language (metaphor and metonymy) mimics the ways that humans develop consciousness in the first place. Delving into these in literature can aid a reader in identifying how she or he is organized as an individual within a social organization. In Lacan's teaching, "the body resides within the metaphorical field of *jouissance*, while representation elaborates the metaphorical field of substitutive meanings (the Other)."[6] Lacan used the word *jouissance*—a pleasure that can easily tip into its opposite—to refer to "the supposed consistency of being, body, or meaning that individuals seeks to attain and maintain" (Ragland, *Essays* 13).

Further connections between Somaesthetic philosophy and Lacan's ideas bear noticing. For instance, Lacan admired the work of Melanie Klein for drawing attention to the body in psychic life, and he reworked the theory Freud developed in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). There Freud defined *Trieb* or drives as "'somatic demands upon mental life'" (Ragland, *Essays* 33). The term "death drive" appeared here to account for human's tendency toward constancy, aggression, and destructiveness. These are important to an exploration of how fear of dissolution can lead some to oppress others in order to compensate. This passage from Ragland's *Essay on the Pleasures of Death* shows the connection between this fear, which in Lacan's thought is fundamental to all human consciousness, and the drives. It also points to the link between language and self-image as rooted in bodily sensations from the earliest stages of human development:

> In 1936 Lacan had proposed the ego as a strategy of defense for blocking the apprehension which comes from *situating* the infant body in the world. In the 1950s Lacan described the beyond in the pleasure principle as the principle of repetition whose modes are a few ego signifieds by which individuals try to guarantee their being at the level of their position in

5 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (*New York, NY: Routledge, 1999).

6 Ellie Ragland, *Essays on the Pleasures of Death: From Freud to Lacan (*New York, NY: Routledge, 1994).

a social signifying chain. (33)

"In Lacan's reformulation of Freud's concepts," Ragland continues, "primary narcissism becomes corporal sensations that involve into the meanings Lacan called 'letters' that connect the body to the outside world via the drives" (*Essays* 34). She explains the connection between the soma and language in this passage: "By the time most children begin to use language (the symbolic) coherently, language *functions* to tie the biological organism (the real) to images of the body (the imaginary) and to objects in the natural world by *naming* or evoking the *form* of an image that replaces and absence ... language enables most individuals to be 'human' by talking or writing about the world at one remove from it" (*Essays* 117-118).

Their use of language is steeped in images of the body that indicate how language is not just a medium for the telling of a story but also material out of which a writer constructs psychological boundaries to withstand and process the world's cruelties. That is, the narrative structure of these works of fiction mirrors that of the ego configurations of the human psyche, providing both writer and reader a place to confront and reorganize myriad elements of the world into a coherent form. Meaning-making is what humans do in order to live in the world. Literature represents and mirrors the process by which they do it, and a Lacanian Somaesthetic theory can help illuminate those processes toward the possibility of increased compassion for oneself and for others, that is, toward the possibility of transforming bodily sites of vulnerability into warrior marks—signs and sources of strength.

Our Vulnerability is our Gift and our Hope: Two Literary Examples

Complicity and Awareness in Barbara Kingsolver's The Poisonwood Bible

Literature such as that presented in this paper often points beyond the words to something that lay outside of conscious memory, inviting readers into a realm from which they may have been excluded before. These "rupture moments" operate in the body as well as the imagination.

Barbara Kingsolver's novel, *The Poisonwood Bible*, provides several such moments of rupture as readers enter the world of the Price family whose patriarch, Nathan, takes his wife Orleanna and four daughters in 1959 to the Belgian Congo where he has decided to serve as a Christian missionary.[7] Nathan is resolutely unconscious that he is replicating colonialism in dangerous and abusive ways. The narrative alternates in point of view among the female Prices; Orleanna learns through the materiality of grief over their youngest daughter's death by snake bite to see her husband as the ineffective dominator that he is, but only years later as she processes her experiences in retrospect. The novel's plentitude of somatic imagery provides a site for readers' identification, as when the Price women prepare Ruth May's small body for burial (454). Another is when one of the Price sisters says that exhilaration and fear feel the same in the body; only the naming of these emotions, she says, differentiates them (431), an observation reminiscent of-- and that problematizes--how language in Lacan's account is "always already" embedded in the flesh as traces that trigger certain emotions or sensations.

A full Somaesthetic reading of *Poisonwood*, although certainly worthwhile and fascinating, is beyond the scope of this paper; however, I want to turn now to one more passaging from Kingsolver's masterpiece as of the most compelling instances I have encountered of a somaesthetically haunting literary passage that highlights a character's realization of vulnerability on several levels, including the rawness that accompanies becoming suddenly aware of one's own

7 Barbara Kingsolver, *The Poisonwood Bible: A Novel* (New York, NY: HarperTorch, 1998).

unforeseen culpability. The scene in question illustrates what I wrote in the introduction above:

> The Lacanian idea that all human subjectivity is constructed on the brink of a loss is useful for re-imagining a way of working through one's own states of exile to achieve greater creativity, compassion, and community while avoiding the totalizing move of speaking for and about others as if culture were universal or homogeneously constructed.

In the following scene from *Poisonwood*, Orleanna Price, the mother of the four daughters, writing from the US years after she has left her husband and returned from the Congo, revisits a memory that disrupts her idea of a universal womanhood and provokes instead—and over time—her realization that others' culture may not be so easily appropriated as she'd been taught to believe:

> From everyone within walking distance, every fifth day, people with hands full or empty appeared in our village to saunter and haggle their way up and down the long rows where women laid out produce on mats on the ground. The vendor ladies squatted, scowling, resting their chins on their crossed arms behind fortresses of stacked kola nuts, bundles of fragrant sticks, piles of charcoal, salvaged bottled and cans or display of dried animal parts. They grumbled continually as they built and rebuilt with leathery, deliberate hands their pyramids of mottled greenish oranges and mangoes and curved embankments of hard green bananas. I took a deep breath and told myself that a woman anywhere on earth can understand another woman on a market day. (106)

The scene oscillates between the sensory textures, colorful imagery, and movement in Orleanna's description and her increasing awareness of an acute separation that is based in part, but only superficially, on her different color: "However I might pretend I was their neighbor, they knew better."

The next part of her narrated memory is palpably cringe-worthy as Orleanna tells the story of a cultural gaff she and one of her daughters made in a particularly striking way when twelve-year-old Leah made a seemingly innocent but culturally ignorant move and was aided by her mother in doing so. Finding themselves separated on either side of a display of goods without a visible path to rejoin each other in the same aisle, Leah reaches for her mother's hand for assistance in stepping over the mat of a vendor's wares between them. It seems a natural shortcut, but as soon as Leah has propped the large basket she is carrying on one hip and has started to step over the display, the young girl becomes stuck, unable somehow to complete the move she has initiated. Orleanna and Leah are mortified as Leah finds herself suspended over the piles of vegetables and fruit. Immediately there is a cessation of movement all around as the men on the sidelines cluck in disapproval and the women vendors rise in protest and indignation at the audacity of the white women to have violated the vendor's territory. Leah is wearing a pinafore-style dress; it occurs to Orleanna that the vendors are all imagining her daughter's genitals, "bare—for all anyone knew--," suspended over what Orleanna calls--in her recounting of the incident--the vendor woman's "market day wealth." The passage consolidates her and her daughters' vulnerability to being duped into complicity with her husband's colonizing project, which she later recognizes as the result of tremendous cultural conceit on all their parts. The passage is also memorable in its marking the daughter's genital-sexual vulnerability, pointing to the paradoxical absence of solidarity between the colonized and colonizers of the same physical gender:

> Until that moment I'd thought I could have it both ways: to be one of them, and also my husband's wife. What conceit! I was his instrument, his animal. Nothing more. How we wives and mothers do perish at the hands of our own righteousness. I was just one more of those women who clamp their mouths shut and wave the flag as their nation rolls off to conquer another in war... A wife is the earth itself, changing hands, bearing scars. (107-08)

The fictional Orleanna's scarring by her husband's colonization of her own family in addition to his shortsighted and failed attempts to convert the villagers to his worldview may serve as impetus for Kingsolver's readers to identify. Orleanna's willingness to change and to become aware may be an indication that she, like the real-life Walker, is using her scars as warrior marks, to tell a potentially liberatory story.

Her Greatest Weakness as her Greatest strength: Hyper-empathy in Octavia Butler's Parable series

In Octavia Butler's dystopian novels *Parable of the Sower* (1993) and *Parable of the Talents* (1998) protagonist Lauren Olamina, a hyper-empath who feels others' pain literally as her own, is the epitome of bodily vulnerability.[8] She is also, paradoxically, the epitome of strength in the sense of Walker's transformation of sites of physical woundedness into warrior marks—signifiers of strength and compassion. My reading of Lauren's thin-skinnedness (as a child she literarily bleeds through the skin when she sees someone else hurt) links a Somaesthetic lens to the Lacanian idea of selfhood as having the shape of a Mobius strip to suggest that the dystopian message of Butler's *Parable* series may have an inner lining of hope that is continuous with and emergent from despair.

"The Mobius strip," write Ragland and Dragan Milovanovic in *Topologically Speaking*, "enabled Lacan to demonstrate how 'that which is interpersonal (conscious and unspoken) is connected to that which is intrapsychic (unconscious and pre-spoken). Indeed this topological device was Lacan's way of indicating how an "inside" (the unconscious) has continuity with an "outside" (the conscious)."[9] In this section of this paper, I investigate how the Somaesthetic and Lacanian psychoanalytic goals of moving beyond oppressive binary systems-- inside/ outside, male/female, physical/spiritual, Black/white, vulnerable/strong, for instance--play out on the surface of human bodies. The novel's message of hope for a sustainable existence reads gender and race beyond individual bodies while also suggesting that it is through the living, breathing, conscious, individual somatic body from which intentional community may emerge.

In the *Parable* series, the body repeatedly appears as the site of suffering and oppression as well as potential instrument of connection to soften lines between self and other. The story opens in July of 2024 (less than a decade from now of course but over three decades from the time of publication). It is the eve of Lauren Olamina's 15th birthday and her father's 55th. They live with Lauren's step-mother, Corey, and Lauren's four younger half-brothers in a gated cul-de-sac neighborhood in suburban Los Angeles. Life outside the gate is dangerous and violent. Politics are extremist and leaning toward fascist. The newly elected P resident Donner has successfully campaigned on a platform very similar to that represented in the slogan "Make American Great again" and intends to do that by targeting minorities, the poor, the lower middle classes, and anyone else who threatens the social order his party envisions, including LGTB persons and

8 Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower* (Recorded Books, LLC, 2000); *Parable of the Talents* (Recorded Books, LLC, 2007).

9 Ellie Raglan and Dragan Milovanovic, eds., *Lacan: Topologically Speaking* (New York, NY: Other Press, 2004).

those with religious beliefs that run counter to the status quo. Food, water and jobs are scarce. Troops of renegades called "Paints" rove the land, addicted to a new street drug called "Flash" or "Pyro" that makes watching fire better than having sex and thus causes those who use it to become murderous arsonists. Corporate employers are reinstituting slavery by luring desperate families with abusive compensation packages that include housing and food sources for which employees are trapped into paying exorbitant amounts of their meager pay, often becoming indebted beyond remedy. There are rumors of new laws being passed that prevent employees from leaving the compounds where their jobs are based until their debts are paid. (An interesting twist is that Black and Latino families are not as sought-after by the corporations creating such systems, so that Whites are the most likely group to be enslaved—perhaps a projected kind of karmic pay-back). Patriarchal backlash against any possible progress made before the novel's opening is rampant and systemic.

Beyond the walls of the neighborhood, rape, murder, decapitation, and other forms of bodily dismemberment are the norm. When community organizers venture beyond the walls for gun practice—the kids are allowed to start accompanying the adults from the age of fifteen—they are met regularly with the site of sick, desperate beggars, hungry dogs, and decapitated human heads and other body parts, and corpses. It would be difficult to describe the extent of the horrific conditions the novel presents as a projected reality for the Western US in 2024, when robbers and arsonists have already begun making it over the walls despite the broken glass bottles and razor wire that have been installed on top of the wall.

Parable of the Sower opens with two scenes, written as a series of Lauren's journal entries, that are remarkable for their somatic themes. In the first, Lauren reports in her journal entry of July 2014 that she had a recurring dream the night before, the eve of the birthday she shares with her father. The dream, she writes, comes when she struggles to "be [her] father's daughter," signifying her grappling with traditional familial roles in a patriarchal system that has spiraled out of all control in the dismal and violent world that is the book's setting. We soon learn her rebellion is waged most overtly against his religion, which she says is "all a lie" although she loves the man her father is to her, "the best person [she] know[s]."

In the dream, she is learning to fly, which involves manipulating her body through the air. She is not able to completely control the direction she moves in as she projects herself, and sees that she will inevitably hit the jam of the door through which she is attempting to fly.

> It seems to be a long way from me, but I lean toward it, holding my body stiff and tense. I let go of whatever I'm grasping, whatever has kept me from rising or falling so far, and I lean into the air, straining upward, not moving upward but not quite falling down either. Then I do begin to move as though to slide on the air drifting a few feet above the floor, caught between terror and joy.

As in the other renditions of the dream, the walls begin to burn and she flies through the flames as if swimming, grabbing at handfuls of air in a futile attempt to escape. Then the scene goes dark and she awakes. The fire is reminiscent of the violent world outside as well as symbol of transformation. The dream also highlights the role of the body as an instrument as Lauren imagines traversing normative limits and defying rules of physics that may seem as inconvertible as social attitudes toward gender and race.

The second Somaesthetic theme appears shortly after that of the fire dream, as Lauren reflects on a childhood memory: at the age of seven she used to go outside just after dark with her stepmother, Corey, to take the laundry down off the line. In the relative coolness and safety from

the heat of the day they would marvel the star-filled sky as Corey handed Lauren armfuls of her little brothers' diapers. Speaking in her native Spanish, Corey told Lauren that they hadn't been able to see too many stars when Corey was small because the lights of the now-destroyed cities would block their being seen. Stars, she tells Lauren, were windows through which God could keep an eye on the people below—a story Lauren believed for about a year, already precociously developing her own theory of humans' relation to a larger order. While Corey preferred the city lights, ostensibly wishing for a return to normalcy to the time when cities' infrastructure provided convenience, comfort and structure, Lauren, who had never lived in a "functional" society, prefers the stars, even at her young age longing to be released from captivity on the small stamp of earth where her family lives behind a wall in what is left of their gated community.

This sky in the remembered scene appears as a kind of membrane, the skin of the universe's face. Here and throughout the narrative the universe itself is not a separate entity but more of a living body, a theme that is central to the novel's impulse toward an expanding sense of relationship between self and other, between individual and community, between inside and outside. Once again, I find the metaphor of the Mobius strip for representing the psyche an image applicable to Lauren's worldview as well as of the semi-permeable membrane-like quality characteristic of her perceptions. Even as a child her hyper-empathy puts her in the company those whose *jouissance*—Lacan's term for a capacity for overflowing of both pleasure and pain, or enjoyment that can easily tip over into its opposite—is characteristic of people whose ego boundaries are more fluid than normative. Lauren's is the *jouissance* of poets, mystics, and hysterics for their flexible sense of selfhood (as opposed to the more rigid egos of those who buy into patriarchal structures). I see Lauren as a mystic in this sense, someone who sees and feels beyond the surface of things, beyond the surface of her own skin. She is someone able to "think through the body" in ways that not everyone can do, at least without practice or a leap of faith (although others affected by the same condition appear as the story continues).

Hysteria manifests in bodily effect. In the *Parable* series, the body repeatedly appears as the site of suffering and oppression becomes an instrument of hope and connection that leans away from binaries between self and other. Lauren's dream about teaching herself how to fly signifies that thinking through the body, while easier perhaps for some who are predisposed to fluidity through hyper-empathy, is a learned skill. It is a skill Butler's novels suggest could become an antidote to oppressive colonization (later Lauren suggests that colonizing other planets, however, underlining the narrative's resistance to binaries including "good/bad" may be a key to a different kind of existence).

It is Earthseed, Lauren's own kind of religious philosophy that counters the norms upheld by her father's seemingly benign form of patriarchy and its dangerous inner surface that is continuous with its outer expression. Here the image of the Mobius strip, where there is only the illusion of inside and outside, is helpful in visualizing the relationship between the inner and outer surfaces of patriarchy as Lauren Olamina experiences and resists it. The Mobius strip may be an ideal metaphor for unveiling the insidious dangers of rigid binaries—as well as the danger in wholesale condemnation of either pole. In this regard, *Parable of the Sower*'s call for a nuanced reading of conventions and suggests that even in efforts to resist totalizing effects of polarity in psychic and social life, it may be advantageous to avoid wholesale rejection of the systems from which they stem. That "the baby shouldn't be thrown out with the bathwater is thematized when Lauren, having stopped believing in her community's God three years beforehand, allows herself to be baptized to keep the peace. In her journal, which is the book being read—there's no aesthetic distance between the two—Lauren sardonically remarks on the absurdity of "seven kids [getting] dunked in a big tub of expensive water." Yet she respects her father's sacrifice in

purchasing that water and decides to choose her battles carefully as she matures from the fifteen-year-old who opens the novel to the eighteen-year-old who, several chapters later, will present herself as a man when she takes to the road after her entire family is murdered and most of the community decimated in series of raids by rapist-thieves.

On their journey northward, the tendency to constantly weigh what is worth risking proves useful as she and a growing band of travelers make their way toward a hoped-for better life in the Pacific northwest and later, in the sequel, *Parable of the Talents*, as some members of their group seek that better future "among the stars," that is, in space.

Lauren's hyper-empathy, we learn, is an inherited condition caused by a drug called Paracetco that her mother took when she was pregnant. Labelled by doctors as a delusion, Lauren's hyper-empathy, is both a blessing and a curse, a form of "biological compassion" she calls it at one point in the narrative. Having to experience others' pain as her own leads her, several years later, to found an intentional community based on cooperation over competition for resources.

As a child, Lauren bleeds when others' skins are broken. Interestingly, after she begins menstruating, the bleeding through the skin stops although the pain she feels when she sees anyone else injured remains intense. The displacement of Lauren's bleeding from the surface of her skin to her menstrual flow seems significant, though I've struggled to make sense of it completely. For me, the shift from surface bleeding to uterine--external and visible to others to internal and concealed--draws attention to the novel's grappling with the relation between gendered biological reproductive functionality and the Somaesthetic--aspects of Lauren's condition. Also significant is that it is about the same time as she begins menstruating that Lauren also begins to develop her antireligious philosophy of "Earthseed," signaling a turn from the conventional expectations that her destiny is to marry young and bear children as several of the teens in her neighborhood have already begun to do.

The name of the new religion Lauren envisions, "Earthseed," comes to her as she works in the garden, pushing seeds below the crust of earth and dreaming of how the destiny she envisions for humankind is to "take root among the stars." We can see a parallel between this crust and the protective membrane around the body that is the skin, like the novel's playing with the idea of the sky as a living membrane. For at least three years, she says, her father's god has not been her own. Her journal becomes home to her own set of scripture-like messages, subtitled "The Books of the Living," which will become the basis for the intentional community she'll start a few years later after her family and most of her neighbors are killed during an invasion by the "Paints." Her father has been missing for weeks when this happens, disappeared while bicycling home from the college where he teaches outside the neighborhood (no one of modest means can afford to drive a car any longer; only arsonists and the very rich can afford to buy gasoline). He is suspected dead, considering the numerous corpses and charred body parts found when the community searches for him. In the immediate aftermath of the raid when their families, including children and elderly, are burned, raped and murdered, Lauren teams up with two other survivors: 1) Zahra Moss, a young African-American who has just had her baby ripped from her arms and thrown into the fire during the invasion, the third wife of a man scorned by his neighbors for bigamy but, it turns out much loved by the formerly homeless girl who found in the marriage the first home she ever had, and 2) Harry Balter, a member of one of the neighborhood's several white families who has barely survived after being attacked when he pulled a rapist off of Zahra. The three survivors find each other after Lauren ventures back to the neighborhood she has fled the night before to look for her stepmother and brothers and to retrieve supplies, money and guns from their hiding places at the house, which is being ransacked by scavenger-looters.

Lauren, Zahra and Harry hole up in a burned-out garage for a few days while Harry recovers and decide to start traveling together. Prevailing attitudes toward mixed-race groups lead Lauren, who is tall enough to pull it off, to travel as a man and thus to present as Zahra's partner—a Black couple traveling with Harry, whom they hope will tan enough to be believable as a cousin of theirs. Thus Lauren, the youngest of the group and perhaps the most headstrong, becomes, at 18, the leader of a growing troop of travelers trying to make their way north to a better life in Oregon. Neither of her companions knows about her "sharing"—another word for her hyper-empathy; she feels too vulnerable having anyone outside of her family realize that she can be disabled by pain at the mere sight of another's injury because if the knowledge spread to the wrong people it would give them power over her. Nor do they know that Lauren is writing the verses that will become the scriptures for her new religion, *Earthseed: The Books of the Living*. Earthseed is a philosophy based on the idea of an impersonal God that is essentially a law of physics. Lauren's god does not love or protect anyone personally nor require of them any form of obedience. Rather, "god is change" we are told multiple times, and "everything you touch changes you." What Lauren's philosophy is getting at, it seems to me, is the interconnectedness of all things and all life. Her words hint at a pliability and permeability of the membrane that separates God from people and/or the spirit from the body and where the skin separates the outside from the inside.

At times the point seems overwrought; the philosophy presented as controversial and potentially revolutionary is based on a theory that is as metaphorically as old as the stars themselves. Still, the story and especially its relational themes are compelling as the narrative follows Lauren and her fellow travelers many hundreds of miles on foot through a landscape ravaged by environmental destruction and undeclared civil war. Gradually Zahra, Harry and Lauren allow others, including a young family with a baby, to join their group. Bonds between some become romantic and sexual, and new families are forged from survivors of multiple forms of violence; Lauren finds love in the unlikely person of a much-older retired physician named Bankole whose destination is an expanse of land his family owns in Humbolt County, California. Over the ensuing chapters as their relationship develops, the plan evolves to settle on that land and create the intentional community Lauren has long envisioned, which Butler portrays as far from Utopian. Named Acorn, the community is based on the teachings of Lauren's Earthseed philosophy of change and cooperation. It is built on the ashes of Bankole's whole family whose charred remains they find upon arrival at the property.

Throughout the *Parable* series, the body repeatedly appears as the site of suffering and oppression. Yet the body also becomes an instrument of hope and connection that leans away from binaries between self and other. Lauren's dream about teaching herself how to fly—the scene with which *Parable of the Sower* opens--signifies that thinking through the body, while easier perhaps for some who are predisposed to fluidity through hyper-empathy, is a learned skill. It is a skill Butler's novels suggest could become an antidote to oppressive colonization.

While some critics have remarked on the lack of hope that Butler's dystopian novels portray—the utter sense of disillusion and despair brought on by human excess--I read them somewhat differently, seeing in the *Parable* series the possibility that what is good and noble might be retained and/or regained. For Lauren Olamina and her followers, hope of a better world may lie in outer space. But the story's embracing of a continuum rather than binary opposition between "inner" and "outer" realities, between "self " and "other," and between culturally prescribed gender identities (among other binary constructions that are oppressive) coincides with Walker's metaphor of scars as symbols of strength and resilience.

In conclusion, stories about the body's fragility can signify the possibility of compassion and

community beyond the surface of individuals' skins. As Kingsolver's character Orleanna Price embraces a wounding that leads to awareness and self-forgiveness, the Lacanian Somaesthetic approach to the feminist literature presented here indicates that the body's vulnerability may be seen as opportunity for furthering both psychoanalytic criticism's and Somaesthetic philosophy's meliatorive aims. Through their lenses, stories of wounding transformed become components within an ethics of care that can lead to healing on both individual levels (for writers and readers) and, potentially, on a larger social scale as individuals take that healing into the world.

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Somaesthetic Encounters with Socrates:
The Peaceful Warrior as *Yogi*

Dr. Vinod Balakrishnan, Swathi Elizabeth Kurian

Abstract: *The body perfects itself: It is the subjective site of personal transformation, hence, the somaesthetic Body. It is, simultaneously, the objective site of inspired transformation, hence, the Mentored Body, the cared-for Body. This thesis is examined through Peaceful Warrior: The Graphic Novel (2010), which is Dan Millman's autobiografiction, illustrated by Andrew Weingarner. The paper interprets Dan Millman's journey by employing Richard Shusterman's theory of somaesthetics as well as the classical Indian treatise of Patanjali called the Yoga Sūtra. The paper is built around the idea of the "Mentor"- here, Socrates - who must guide the disciple (Dan Millman) to "greater perceptual acuity." To this end, it reflects on: 1. "Socrates" as an idea; 2. The relationship between the Field (which is the classical image of the Body) and the Farmer (here, the Mentor); 3. The building of the Peaceful Warrior, and 4.The culmination of the journey when the Peaceful Warrior becomes the Yogi.*

The moment of awakening in the narrative is when Socrates declares to Dan that, "this world is a school" where one must discover his purpose. The Mentor guides the seeker towards his purpose. The seeker journeys towards the purpose by moving from the outermost somatic territory through routines called Bahiraṅga Sādhana into the inner territory of the mind involving routines called Antaraṅga Sādhana and, eventually, arrives at the innermost territory of the soul through routines called Antarātma Sādhana. The journey from the somatic territory towards the territory of the Soul takes the seeker through four degrees of wakefulness – sleep (Nidrāvasthā); dream (Svapnāvasthā); wakefulness (Jāgratāvasthā); eternal wakefulness (Turyāvasthā). The journey towards the Soul places somaesthetic demands that are satisfied by observing the eight aspects of Yoga: Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, Pratyāhāra, Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, Samādhi. In the process, the seeker traverses all the three domains of Yoga: Karmamārga (actions centred in the body); Jñānamārga (actions centred in the mind); Bhaktimārga (actions centred in the Soul). The seeker commits his body (the subjective site) to the purpose. The seeker is inspired by the Mentor to become a warrior as he battles the forces of inertia entrenched in him. When the peaceful warrior arrives at superconsciousness he completes the journey of the Yogi.

Keywords: *Peaceful Warrior, Body, Mentor, Sleep, Wakefulness.*

The Peaceful Warrior (1980) is Millman's autobiographical narrative about his spiritual-somaesthetic journey through modern dance and martial arts as well as his exploits on the trampoline and in gymnastics which bring him international attention. It is the account of an athlete's life which describes his commitment to the care of the body as the fine-tuned instrument for winning competitions involving somatic routines that demand aesthetic grace, hence, the rationale of reading Millman's journey as the road to somaesthetic perfection. The graphic novel, written 30 years after the book and four years after the film, departs from the suggestive

language of the earlier narratives to be more direct and immediate as when Socrates provides Dan with the foreknowledge about the impending "Test." It was what the wind whispered: "This world is a school. If you don't learn the easy lessons, they get harder" (50).[1] There comes a time in the life of Millman, as also in the narrative, when he realizes that the purpose of training and winning competitions within the confines of a stadium is not the end for which one must be on the road but to understand that life itself is the bigger stadium in which one has to win. It is a proposition that demands a greater magnitude of training and, as for winning, one has to discover the 'purpose.'

Unless one dedicates oneself totally – body, mind and soul – to the search, the 'purpose' would remain elusive, hence, the need to be spiritually committed to the quest. Ironically, that 'purpose' which lies buried within each one of us must be reached by a more arduous journey to far off lands where there are secrets waiting to be unraveled. During his discussion on the *Liezi*, which is a Daoist classic with lessons on somatic cultivation, Shusterman draws attention to the two journeys undertaken by the seeker– the "imperfect" outward travel and the "perfect" inward travel. The two travels are distinguished thus: "By outward travel we seek what we lack in things outside us, while by inward contemplation we find sufficiency in ourselves" (*TTB* 203).[2]And what would those journeys yield if one did not have the benefit of a map drawn up by a mentor who had travelled the road towards discovering the 'purpose' somaesthetically?

Millman's closing remarks in the *Introduction* to *Peaceful Warrior: The Graphic Novel* captures the storyline of the narrative thus:

> You are about to enter an adventure in which Socrates and Joy guide Dan along the peaceful warrior's path – a mysterious passage through valleys of shadow – as Dan searches for the gateway to a brighter reality. In the process, you may discover the peaceful heart and warrior spirit in each of us. (5)[3]

The testimony of Millman points to the role of the mentor in the life of the peaceful warrior; the role of the body that must be mentored with care and the wakefulness that ensures the keenness of vision so necessary in the journey towards enlightenment. Socrates, Dan's mentor, through care for the body transforms the latter into a "Peaceful Warrior" who must be sworn to the canon of "Excellence in the moment" (144). The path of the peaceful warrior must pass through the "valleys of shadow" that point to the phantoms of unrestrained consciousness that occlude mindfulness; one must quell these by conquering the monstrous wall of fear within. And, finally, there is the discovery of the warrior spirit, the potential energy which all of us possess at the time of our arrival and which must be realized through actions informed by body consciousness and mindfulness leading up to the vision of the continuum; of the here and the now, in which, each one of us is placed. In order to realize the continuum, one must necessarily be awake and watchful and not languish in illusions, dreams, delusions, and in the case of Dan, nightmares and night terrors.

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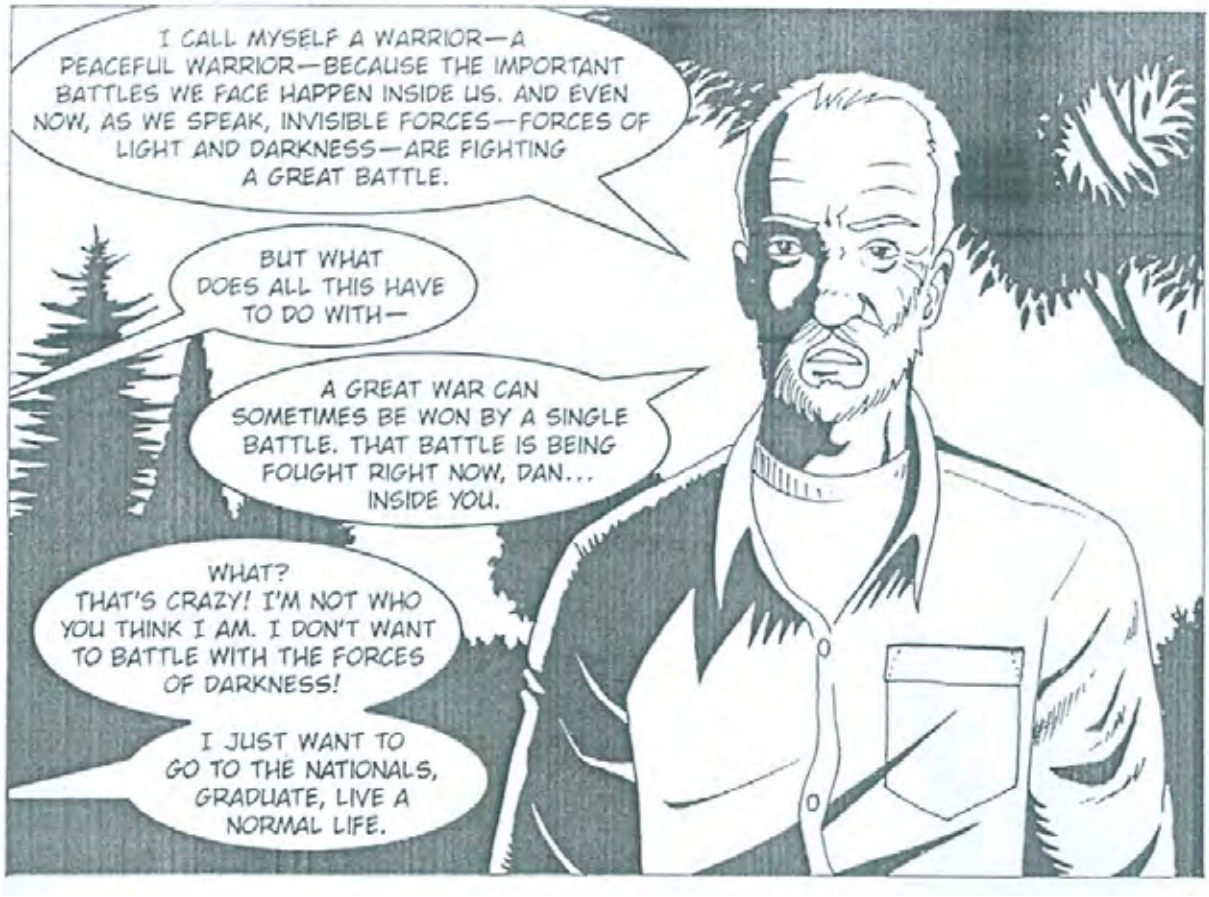
1 Dan Millman, *Peaceful Warrior* : The Graphic Novel. Tiburan: H.J. Kramer, Novato: New World, 2010.

Subsequent references to *Peaceful Warrior* is abbreviated, *PW*. The publishing notice of *Peaceful Warrior: The Graphic Novel* (2010) mentions that the text copyright is held by Dan Millman while the illustration copyright is held by Andrew Winegarner. Millman's personal attestation in the *Introduction* is that the Graphic Novel "contains many elements and scenes not found in either the original book or the movie. So, in collaboration with illustrator Andrew Winegarner, I've been able to show and tell the classic tale in a fresh way." When he adapted his book for film in 1990 with a screenplay reflecting his vision, he did manage to get the producer interested but *Peaceful Warrior* which, eventually released in 2006, was scripted by Kevin Bernhardt which left Millman feeling a little thwarted by the arm twisting ways of Hollywood. The partnership with Andrew is Millman's "opportunity to share the movie ...[he] had always envisioned up on the screen."

2 Richard Shusterman, *Thinking through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics*. Cambridge: Cambridge, 2012. Subsequent references to *Thinking through* the *Body* is abbreviated, *TTB*.

3 Millman, PW, 5.



The Peaceful Warrior

In the "Preface" to *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics*, Shusterman describes encounters with his Mentor, the Zen Master as "moments of struggle, frustration, failure, shame, and pain" which ultimately yielded "perfect happiness" (xiii). [4] While "perfect happiness." as a phrase, is abstract and vague, even subjective, his rephrasing of that intense personal experience is more illuminative – "greater perceptual acuity"- which suggests that the encounter with a truly evolved mentor enables a bioenergetic enhancement of the human capacity to see. Shusterman is not alone in proffering, first, the tentative phrase that becomes more clean-cut in the re-phrasing. Wordsworth on his return to Tintern Abbey after five long years, captures the evolution of the poet's "greater perceptual acuity," first, in an inexact phrase: "sensations sweet" which is then, tellingly and somaesthetically, rephrased: Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,/And passing even into my purer mind/ With tranquil restoration."

The third *sūtra* (aphorism) in *SamādhiPāda* (on true emancipation), the first chapter of the *Yoga Sūtra* of Patanjali, refers to "greater perceptual acuity" as a state of the seeker who has conquered the dissipations caused when consciousness (*citta*) is unbridled. The aphorism, first, spells out a cryptic phrase: *tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe avasthānam*.[5] It begins with the adverb, 'then' (*tadā*) which implies that the speaker refers to the stage in the development of the seeker when the distractions of the mind, caused by the ceaseless waves of consciousness, are, eventually, stilled to the supreme degree of concentration (*ekāgratā*). The adverb, 'then', points to the seeker

4 Richard Shusterman, *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics.* Cambridge: Cambridge, 2008. Subsequent references to *Body Consciousness* abbreviated, *BC*.

5 BKS Iyenger, *Light on the Yogasutra of Patanjali*. Delhi: Indus imprint of Harper Collins, 1993. Subsequent references to *Light on Yogasutra* is abbreviated, *LOY*.

as a warrior who gradually annexes the somatic territories from the outermost layer of the skin to the innermost self through the intervening territories of the muscles, the bones, the nerves, the mind, the intellect, the will and the consciousness. The true state (*svarūpe*, here the splendor of the soul) abides or radiates (*avasthānam*) and it is attained by the seeker who becomes the illumined soul or the all-seeing (*draṣṭuḥ)*.

The shortest road to the adverb, 'then' is the longest road informed by the discipline implicit in the verb "act" in accordance with the instructions laid out by the mentor, Patanjali. The second chapter of the *Yoga Sūtra* called, *Sādhana Pāda* (or the way of purposeful repetitious actions) commences with the three-fold commitment demanded of the seeker: *tapaḥ svādhyāya Īshwarapraṇidhānāni Kriyāyogaḥ*. The yoga of action, *Kriyāyoga*, insists that the seeker possesses an ardent desire like an unquenchable thirst (*tapaḥ*); the unflagging attention required by self-study (*svādhyāya*)[6]; the absolute faith in the Mentor's powers to inspire and move one towards perfection (*Īshwarapraṇidhānāni*).[7] The first of the 55 aphorisms of the second chapter of the *Yoga Sūtras*, crystales the three paths open to the seeker: the path of action implicit in the first commitment called *Karmamārga*; the path of knowledge implicit in the second commitment called *Jňānamārga*; the path of devotion implicit in the third commitment called *Bhaktimārga*.[8]

The three paths may very well be the three approaches open to the seeker but, in the map possessed by the peaceful warrior, the paths lead one to the other – from the outermost territories of the body to the innermost territory. The somaesthetic discipline of the external territories called *Bahiraṅga Sādhana*,[9] involves the first four aspects of Yoga: First, the disciplining of the body through vows of abstention, control and self-restraint (*Yama*); Second, the disciplining through a strict observance of the rules and precepts inscribed in the scriptures (*Niyama*); Third, the disciplining of the body by perfecting posture (*Āsana*); Fourth, the discipline of regulating and controlling of breath (*Prāṇāyāma*).

The subdual of the external territories leads the peaceful warrior to the inner territories. So, *Bahiraṅga Sādhana* must needs graduate towards *Antaraṅga Sādhana,* involving the next two levels of yogic discipline called *Pratyāhāra* when the seeker grapples with the five senses so as to draw them within facilitating the inward journey towards *Dhāraṇā* where the focus is on achieving equipoise and equanimity through rigorous concentration routines. *Antaraṅga Sādhana* begins externally where *Bahiraṅga Sādhana* leaves off and sets its course inward into the mind. This is the stage when *Karmamārga* leads to the stage of complete absorption in the quest for knowledge through self-study: *svādhyāya* which informs the path of knowledge implicit in the second commitment called *Jňānamārga*.

Walking the path of knowledge, it dawns on the seeker that the journey is complete only when it reaches the inner most territory of the soul. It is, in Wordsworthian terms, the "passing ... into the purer mind/ With tranquil restoration" or, in Shusterman's terms, the attainment of complete identification between the seeker and the seer (the soul) –the enlightenment that is tantamount to "greater perceptual acuity." [10]The passing "into the purer mind" requires an unalloyed faith in the spirit of the Mentor which is the path of devotion and complete self-abnegation: the *Bhaktimārga*. The path of devotion involves the last two aspects of yogic discipline: 1. *Dhyāna* and 2. *Samādhi*. It begins where the seeker achieves equipoise of mind (*Antaraṅga Sādhana*)

6 Iyengar, LOY, 344.

7 Ibid., 330.

8 Ibid., 108.

9 Ibid., 324.

10 Richard Shusterman, "Preface," BC, xiii.

but rises to levels of wakefulness and watchfulness (*Antarātma Sādhana*). The seventh aspect of Yoga, *Dhyāna* is the discipline when the seeker meditates and is attentive to the subtle impulses that cause the awakening from within. When the seeker, as peaceful warrior, watches the body as the medium that conducts these subtle impulses towards superconsciousness, the eighth and final aspect of the yogic discipline, *Samādhi*, is achieved.

Dan Millman and Richard Shusterman are kindred spirits as they undertake identical journeys: Dan's journey to San Francisco, Hawaii, India, Hong Kong and Japan through somaesthetic education in aikido and yoga is matched by Shusterman's journey to Jerusalem, Hiroshima, Beijing, and Shandong through somaesthetic education in the Feldenkrais method and Zen meditiation. The "larger lesson" to be learned from the peregrinations of these two seekers is that the self has an "essential dependence on environmental others" (*BC* 213).[11] Both Millman and Shusterman have acknowledged the role of mentors in their respective journeys of discovery: Shusterman provides a meditative account of his formation under the tutelage of Zen Master, Roshi Inoue Kido when he lived and trained in the Zen cloister, the Shorinkutsu-dojo (*TTB* 302-314). Millman narrates his encounters with a sage-like man, whom he first encounters in a dream before, actually, meeting him in the gas station; whom he 'nicknames', Socrates.

Socrates

'Socrates' is not the real name of the old man whom Dan meets in the gas station. Towards the end of the narrative, when the heart-monitor flatlines suggesting the passing away of Socrates, the caption reads: "And death. The passing of a sage, a warrior, a mentor, a friend" (152).[12] To Dan, Socrates was all these and much more. After all, it was the strange old man who first drew the restless Dan's attention to the irony of his life: "Young guy like you. In a hurry. Needs directions but isn't listening." Dan's naïve reply is that he, "Gotta go. Need to get some sleep." The old man is heard teasing: "Maybe you need to wake up." Dan's response to this series of repartees is by contriving a name to playfully dismiss the intriguing old man: "You're quite the philosopher, Socrates" (35).[13] Just then he realizes that by some mysterious prescience he got the appropriate name for the one who tells him that he "Wouldn't mind one last student" (37) who was "Obviously [in] need of a teacher" (37).

Listen: You are Asleep

11 Ibid., 213.

12 Millman, PW, 152.

13 Ibid., 22, 27, 29, 33, 34, 41, 79.

Socrates was not making a facetious comment when he picked Dan to be the "one last student." On the contrary, he was waiting like the "Gardner [who] plants the seeds" (159), in the most fertile soil so that the lessons of life can be conducted through the body and the mind of that impassioned seeker. Perhaps Dan had seen in Socrates the coming together of *sos* which is Greek for "whole, unwounded, safe" and *kratos* which is "power." So, "Socrates" is that continuum of enlightenment or Buddha-hood who appears, first, as the alternative to the "Dark Specter" (22) that terrifies Dan in his sleep; then, during his real encounter with the old man of his dream, Dan beholds Socrates perform an incredible and mystifying stunt to land on the roof of the gas station (29); later, the old man shocks Dan by narrating his own dream in which he saw the latter as a nine-year old on a roof top, too terrified to jump (33); also, Socrates lets Dan in on the secret to his ability to catch the "wrench" (34) flung at him even as his back was turned to the approaching tool or when he managed to lob the orange peel in the trash can without looking (41) as the result of "Body Wisdom" (41). As Dan is on, what the doctors feel, the long road to repair with his thigh bone shattered into 40 pieces after his motorbike rammed into a speeding car, Socrates puts him on the table to give him "A Jump Start" (79) by rubbing the damaged parts of the body with his hands that are bioenergetically charged; finally, after Dan survives the "Great Battle" in which "Invisible forces – forces of Light and Darkness- are fighting" (52) within and thus becomes "A Peaceful Warrior" he asks to see the real Socrates who reveals himself containing Whitmanesque "multitudes," described by the caption thus: "The next moment, fleeting images appear around Socrates – Identities from other times, places and cultures" (160).

Whitman: "I contain multitudes"

The Field and the Farmer

The Gardner plants the seeds only in fertile soil as his goal is to enable their germination that perpetuates vital life. The soil bears and enwraps the seed like the protective womb. It patiently presides over the gestation when potential vitality is transformed into active vitality. The soil holds the roots firmly so that the plant can stand even as it unfetters the shoots that break out of the subterranean darkness into the light of luxuriant growth. Dan Millman, as the fertile soil in whom Socrates plants the seeds must cling to the roots foregrounding the necessity for the body to remain ready, resilient and responsive. The body anchors us to the history of this world even as it conducts the spirit to germinate and flower into light and emancipation. In the context of "Body Consciousness and Performance," Shusterman refers to the *Guanzi*, a Dao text of the middle of the fourth century BC which insists on "inner cultivation" as a "method to grasp the Dao and thereby achieve the most effective perception and most successful manner of action" (*TTB* 203).[14] In order for the seed of the Dao to be perpetuated it must germinate in the body of the seeker as perfection in performance before it, spiritually, flowers into "the most effective perception."

The Gardener and the Seed

During the course of the 196 aphorisms in the *Yoga Sūtra*, the body of the seeker is named in four different ways: a. *Kṣetram* (*Sādhana Pāda*: 4);b. *Kāyā* (*SādhanaPāda*: 43;*VibhūtiPāda:* 21, 30, 46); c. *Śarīra* (*VibhūtiPāda*: 39); d. *Dehā* (*VibhūtiPāda*: 44). While all the four refer to the perishable body, it is the reference to the body as, *Kṣetram*, which is of the greatest significance because it metaphorizes the body as the fertile cultivable soil. *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (1890) by V.S. Apte[15] registers fourteen different but related meanings; a few of which are: i Place, abode, region, repository; ii. A sacred spot, a place of pilgrimage; iii. Place of origin; iv. The sphere of action, the body (regarded as the field for the working of the soul); v. The mind (388). As a root word, *Kṣetram* also takes the suffix *Pālaḥ* (*Kṣetrapālaḥ*) which has three different but related meanings: i. a man employed to guard a field; ii. a deity protecting fields; iii. an epithet of *Śiva* (the Supreme Yogi, the Supreme Dancer, the generative spirit which destroys in order to create, the Masculine Principle, the Supreme Warrior, the eternally awake). The

14 Shusterman, TTB, 203.

15 Vaman Shivram Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit- English Dictionary*. 3rd edition. Bombay: Gopal Narayen, 1924.

word, *Kṣetram* suffixed with the particle, *Jñā* (*Kṣetrajñā*) has three meanings: i. a husbandman; ii. a sage, one who has spiritual knowledge; iii. the soul. Apte also records the two earliest instances in Sanskrit literature where the body is likened to the fertile soil with its spiritual dimensions emphasized: first, the 4th BCE text, *the Bhagavad Gita*[16] and then the 5th CE play by Kalidasa, *Kumārasambhavam.* [17]

The *Bhagavad Gita,* believed to have been in existence 800 years before the *Yoga Sūtra,* must be the site of the earliest reference to the body as the cultivable field, *Kṣetram*. The 13th chapter, *Kṣetra-Kṣetrajñā Yoga*, which provides a comprehensive exposition of the meditation on the imperishable Universal Spirit, is translated by Swami Chinmayananda in his commentary as "The Field and Its Knower" (796). The chapter opens with Arjuna supplicating before Lord Krishna for the knowledge about Matter (*Prakriti*) and Spirit (*Purusha*) as also the Field and the Knower-of-the-Field. Lord Krishna replies in 34 *slokas*(couplets) beginning with the terms of reference: "This body, O Kaunteya [the epithet of Arjuna, as he is born to Kunti], is called the Field [*Kṣetram*], and he who knows it is called, *Kṣetrajñā* (the *Knower-of-the-Field*) by those who know them ... i.e., by the sages" (800). The seeker who identifies completely with the pluralistic world and its myriad entanglements is said to be asleep (*Nidrāvasthā*) and in a dream-state (*Svapnāvasthā*). When the individual realizes that the body as Matter does conduct the Spirit or Pure Consciousness, it begins to discriminate between that which imprisons the body and that which unshackles the body. The beginning of discrimination is the beginning of wakefulness (*Jāgratāvasthā*) that puts the seeker on the road to becoming the *Knower-of-the-Field* when it dawns that the seeker is "Pure Consciousness" which has freed itself from the attachment of knowing. This state of superconsciousness is a state of absolute emancipation called (*Turyāvasthā*). The Sixth Canto of Kalidasa's *Kumārasambhavam* (The birth of Kumara or Karthikeya to Shiva and Parvathi in order to slay the demon Tarakasura) reads: "*Yogino yam vichinvanthi Kṣetrābhyantaravarthinam*" (Canto VI: sloka 77). It means that evolved men and women (*Yogino*) seek out (*vichinvanthi*) those who have awoken from the stupor of worldly entanglements and who have cultivated the life of abiding within the body (*Kṣetrābhyantaravarthinam*).

Besides the reference to the body as the field, the Fourth Chapter of the *Yoga Sūtra* that maps the road towards complete emancipation, *KaivalyaPāda*, emphasizes the necessity for regulating one's energies so as to come into Pure Consciousness. It requires the seeker to be watchful of the ceaseless distractions, dissipations, and delusions in order to remain focused, single-pointedly, on the goal. To animate this point, the Fourth aphorism likens the discipline of channeling one's energies to the ministrations of the Farmer: "*nimittaṁ aprayojakaṁ prakrtīnāṁ varaṇabhedaḥ tu tataḥ kṣhetrikavat*" (249). B.K.S. Iyengar in his *Light on theYoga Sūtra of Pataňjali,* elucidates the aphorism thus:

> Culture of the sprouted consciousness is of paramount importance in yoga. As a farmer [*kṣhetrikavat*] builds dykes between fields to regulate the flow of water, evolved yogis channel the abundant flow of nature's energy to free themselves from the bondage of their actions and develop spiritual insight. (249)[18]

The relationship between the Farmer/Gardner/Socrates and the Field/Seed/Dan is based on the principle of harmony between the immediate field of action, so evocatively captured by

16 Chinmayananda Swami, *The Holy Geeta*. Mumbai: Central Chinmayananda Trust, 1992.

17 Kalidasa, *Kumara Sambhavam*. Translated by KuttyKrishnamaral. Kozhicodu: Mathrubumi.

18 Iyengar, LOY, 249.

William James in the phrase, "the supreme theatre of human strenuousness" (*BC* 170)[19] and the circumambient universe whose vernal instincts influence our thoughts and consciousness like the seasons influencing the germinating seed. The relationship is understood as that fine tension between the care of the Farmer (which is more about unconditional giving) and the resilience or the give of the Field (which is more about absolute trust in the hands of the tiller). When Dan wanted to leap from the rooftop for the first time, he was petrified by self-doubt and dread. It appears that his father's advice was not adequately inspiring. Socrates, steps into Dan's life after his father's death, and picks up the thread from where his father left off when he draws attention to the "Destiny [which] ... began some years ago ... on a rooftop. Now it's time for you to leap again. And I may be able to help you" (52).[20] It is this help which Socrates extends to Dan that must be examined in the context of the Farmer's care towards the germinating seed.

Building the Peaceful Warrior

There are, in fact, three mentor-figures in the narrative: Dan's father; his coach, Lopez; and the Farmer, Socrates. The question one must ask at this juncture is: Who among the three would count as the real mentor? Dan's father brought him into the world and gave him the first valuable lesson about life: "It's OK to be afraid, Danny. We all feel scared sometimes ... but you can't let the fear stop you" (9). Those encouraging words lend succor and strength to Dan to perform routines on the trampoline and in the gymnasium. He resolves to make a career in gymnastics which brings into his life the second father-figure: his coach, Lopez. When he receives the news of Mr. Millman's death, coach, Lopez does not convey the news to Dan immediately. He thinks about the competition where he expects Dan's performance on the Uneven Bars to increase the chances of the UC Berkeley team (11). In fact, the words with which the coach is introduced provide a telling profile of the man who can only be obsessed with: "If everyone hits, we have a shot to win this" (11). In the eyes of his friends, Dan is that "Secret Weapon" (42) who must be unleashed during the competitions. Coach Lopez does not see a greater purpose than that for Dan, the gymnast, when he intervenes during a lean patch in order to advise him: "Take your risks in the *gym*, not in life. In life, Dan, play it safe" (54). Under the care of his father and later his coach, Dan is but a weapon who will be prevailed upon and coerced into conforming with the designs that others have chalked with little possibility of discovering one's purpose in life or pausing to see the beckoning hand of destiny. His life takes a momentous turn when he encounters, in the gas station, Socrates for whom Dan is not as much a "weapon" as he is himself the "Peaceful Warrior."

Actually, the graphic narrative makes a distinct departure from both the film and the novel, in that, it suggests a chance meeting between Socrates and the coach when they "Struck up a conversation. He [Socrates] shared some interesting ideas that changed my thinking" (144). Coach Lopez brings the wisdom gleaned from that encounter to prepare the gymnasts for their final performance at the NCAA Championship: "That old guy reminded me that we can't control any outcomes in life, only our efforts. All we can do is show up and do our best" (144). While coach Lopez would take the wisdom received from Socrates to enhance his chances in the Gymnastics arena, the latter (on his death-bed) plants the same seed of wisdom in the soil of Dan's life to watch the germination of actions born out of the spirit of following one's vision; doing what one is born to do and what one has worked for (142). Shusterman invokes the "care of the self" implicit in the Japanese philosophy of personal cultivation called, *shugyō* where

19 Shusterman, BC, 170.

20 Millman, PW, 9, 11,42, 54.

there is an equal emphasis on the body as on the mind as, together, enabling "self-knowledge and self-cultivation" (BC 18). The exhortation of Socrates would require Dan to recalibrate his gymnast's body into the field of the "Peaceful Warrior" who must attend to "the concrete reality of the present moment" (*TTB* 312) with "greater mindfulness" (312) so as to experience the "somatic symphony"(313) when the music of "an overwhelming impersonal perception of breathing that pervade[s] all ... [the] consciousness" is apprehended as an eternal wakefulness or superconsciousness.

Between the two Acts (Act I: the Gymnast and Act II: the Peaceful Warrior) comes the dramatic Interlude of the motorbike accident whose gravity becomes clear when the surgeon reads Dan's X-ray: "Fractured Right Femur ... badly mangled... about forty pieces" (PW 59). The interlude does mark the turn that Dan's life takes towards the 'purpose'. It has an intensity all its own with Dan in a semi-conscious state in which he remembers a flurry of activity and visits by several people. The episodes in the hospital begin in despair and culminate in Dan's tryst with himself and the higher purpose within him which suggest the trajectory of the damaged gymnast who must repair his body and his mind before beginning the journey of the "Peaceful Warrior." It begins with the surgeons agreeing on the prognosis that his gymnastics days are all but over and it would be a miracle if he would be able to walk again. Later, when a worried coach Lopez confers with nurse, Valerie, about Dan's chances of competing again, he is told that they are not even remote. In his delirium, Dan has nightmares of being chased by the "Dark Specter" (59-60). With a gorge suddenly in front of him, Dan decides to dive across the chasm to "save his life" (60) "- or maybe save his soul" (60). Miraculously, a hand materializes in the darkness- the hand of Socrates - which grabs his wrist and leverages him to safety. Socrates, indeed, visits Dan in the hospital. He "Lays his hands on Dan's injured leg... and heart" (61). A few days later, Joy, Socrates's protégé, stays at Dan's side while he is asleep. The gesture of touching the injured leg and the heart is symbolic of Socrates transmitting his vital energies which are a result of "Clean Living" (80),[21] in order to heal the broken body and the distraught mind. B.K.S. Iyengar's notes on the 35th aphorism of the third chapter of the *Yoga Sūtra* add credence to the fact that Socrates is mending the body and mind of Dan by spiritually overhauling his constitution:

> The citadel of *puruṣha* [the soul which is the seer] is the heart. It is *anāhatacakra*, the seat of pure knowledge as well as of consciousness. By *saṁyama* [perfect integration of body and mind which Shusterman calls a "somatic symphony"], a yogi [like Socrates] can become aware of consciousness and of true, pure knowledge. He learns to unfold and tap the source of his being, and identify himself with the Supreme. (216)[22]

It is this spiritual energy, communicated by Socrates to Dan during such "Jump Start[s]" (79) that enables his somaesthetic reconditioning. The teacher also tells the student that he is in a stupor, in a dream visited by illusions that are mistaken for reality. The latter is "Missing the big picture" because he is "Like a fly sitting on a TV screen" (66) distracted by the myriad tiny dots. And to catch the meaning of Socrates's words Dan must wake up. And Dan would not wake up until he realizes that he has been in deep sleep (66).

21 Millman, PW, 59,60,61,80

22 Iyengar, LOY, 216

Healing: The Anahata Chakra

The Peaceful Warrior as *Yogi*

The entry for "Mentor" in *Brewer's Book of Myth and Legend* reads as follows:

> A guide, a wise and faithful counselor; so called from Mentor, a friend of ULYSSES, whose form MINERVA assumed when she accompanied TELEMACHUS in his search for his father. (181)[23]

The mythological description of Mentor points to the human and the divine becoming one; of the human being inspired by the divine in order to become charged with purpose. In the case of Telemachus, Mentor takes the place of his father, Ulysses, only after the "Supramental descent" (Sri Aurobindo's pregnant phrase)[24] of Minerva into the human person thus bringing to the body of the warrior the superconsciousness,in which empowered state, he leads Telemachus and shows him the way. Shusterman, in *Body Consciousness*, alludes to the power one comes into when the human and the divine or infinite fuse into one by invoking Emerson:

> We do few things by muscular force, but we place ourselves in such attitudes as to bring the force of gravity, that is, the weight of the planet, to bear upon the spade or the axe we wield. In short, ...we seek not to use our own, but to bring a quite infinite force to bear. (215)[25]

Socrates becomes such a divinely inspired Mentor to Dan when, on the death-bed he tells the latter: "My journey is nearly over. Yours is just beginning. Wherever you step, the path will

23 J.C Cooper. ed., *Brewer"s Book of Myth and Legend.* Oxford: Helicon, 1993.

24 "Sri Aurobindo's teaching and spiritual method." Auroville: The City of Dawn. 13 Aug. 2014. Online. 18 Nov 2015. http://www.auroville.org/contents/575.

25 Shusterman, BC, 215.

appear. Trust that. And whatever you face ... I'll be there. We're part of one another's destiny" (142). Socrates, indeed, is with Dan at every step of the journey guiding him through the triple-roads of Action, Knowledge and Devotion; through the triple-discipline that begins at the External Somatic Territory, passes through the Internal Territory of the Mind and comes to rest at the Innermost Territory of the Soul; involving the eight aspects of Ethical Restraints, Ethical Observances, Postures, Expansion of the Vital Energy through Breathing, Withdrawal of the Senses into the Mind, Concentration, Meditation and Emancipation; and through the four degrees of consciousness beginning with Sleep, Dream, Wakefulness and Eternal Emancipation or the state of superconsciousness.

The path of Action (*Karmamārga*) begins as the discipline of self-cultivation at the outermost somatic territory (*Bahiraṅga Sādhana*). The actions involve wrestling with the neglected soil whose potential remains because it is untapped due to the smugness that makes Dan accept his achievements in gymnastics as the ultimate purpose of his life. He is too bedazzled by the glory and the fanfare to be bothered about the larger purpose of life. His life as a gymnast appears to be one filled with somaesthetic consciousness yet he languishes between the dream-state (*Svapnāvasthā*) and the sleep-state (*Nidrāvasthā*). Socrates, the Mentor, diagnoses the condition by likening Dan to "a fly sitting on the TV screen" which can only make him see the "dots" and miss the "big picture." He also cautions him about the need to "Answer the phone" when "Destiny calls" (66). So long as Dan is like the fly, he would see only the specters in his dream and so long as he is asleep he would not hear Destiny's phone call. He must needs break out of the "unconscious consciousness" in order to cultivate the keener faculties of seeing and hearing. Dan, who is actually hobbling around with a pair of crutches, in more than one sense, needs help. Socrates, vividly and objectively, reflects on the young man's condition thus: "At night, in your dreams, you walk, talk, maybe fly, all the while thinking you're awake. Your life is like a dream. Same is true for most people. You can't wake up until you realize you're asleep" (66).

The first signs of the young man making the momentous turn is when he confesses to the old man that he is scared of him. Moreover, he admits that though he may not be ready to learn what Socrates wants to teach or hear what the latter wants to say, he is still "willing to listen" only to be forewarned by the latter that "there are going to be conditions" (78), signaling the first stage of the Peaceful Warrior as *Yogi* called, *Yama* which imposes five moral restraints as spelt out in the 30th aphorism of the *Sādhana Pāda*: *ahiṁsā satya asteya brahmacarya aparigrahaḥ yamāḥ.* (LOY 142) [26] (Non-violence, truth, non-stealing, continence and contentment [constitute] *Yama*). Dan is soon appalled to hear that he would have to eschew protein, meat, desserts, beer, coffee and instead live on water, herb tea, juice, salads, fruits, whole grains, tofu, sprouts, seeds. When Socrates tells the reluctant young man with a ravenous appetite: "You want special healing, you apply special discipline" (85), he is guiding the latter towards cleansing his body and mind through a diet regimen so essential for the pursuit of self-knowledge implicit in the five-fold observance called *Niyama* which prescribes *śauca santoṣa tapaḥ svādhyāya Īshwarapraṇidhānāni niyamāḥ* (*Sādhana Pāda* 32)[27] (LOY 144) which translates as: cleanliness, cheerfulness, a burning desire, self-cultivation, and surrender to the preceptor constituting *Niyama*. After a week of somatic conditioning Dan declares to Socrates that he has put away the crutches, he has finished his fast and is ready to begin training. The old man makes the disciple sit in an imaginary chair with the back against the wall even as he gently strokes the cat, Oscar. Dan is hardly able to hold the posture for 20 minutes and the old man observes: "That's because your muscles are

26 Iyengar, LOY, 142.

27 Ibid., 144.

too tense. They waste energy fighting one another. Not like Oscar here" (PW 91). He tells Dan that "Fear can paralyze the muscles just when you need to act. So go deep. Open the body, release the past. Deeper – down to the bones!" (91). By making the disciple listen to the body as if it is a violin which needs fine tuning, Socrates emphasizes the need for prolonged ease of posture as a prelude to long hours of meditation and thus initiates the former into the third aspect of Yoga called, *Āsana*. The 46th aphorism of the *Sādhana Pād* says: *sthira sukham āsanam*. (LOY 157).[28] The principle of the *āsanam*is that it must be a posture that can be sustained with steadiness and firmness (*sthira*) even as it fills the body with a sense of felicity and transport (*sukham*). In the early days of training with the old man, Dan becomes more high-strung on account of the restraints, observances and routines. He is puzzled by the preceptor's words that it is imperative to go through the "Growing up before showing up" (101) as he is, equally, puzzled by the cryptic suggestion that the body and mind "Must ripen like fruit" (101). The warrior on the road to ripening arrives (like a fruit) at the doorstep of Joseph, the restaurateur, who conducts Dan into the final stage of *Bahiraṅga Sādhana*, involving the regulation of breath called *Prāṇāyāma*: "That's it. Breathe into your belly. When you notice any thoughts or feelings coming up, just let'em flow by like a river. No need to cling to anything, just let it be ..." (101). *Bahiraṅga Sādhana* is the stage when the somatic frontier is penetrated in order to enter the territory of the mercurial mind.

The penetration into the mind is not achieved by battering the wall of dreams and distracting consciousness but by a delicate maneuver of withdrawing the senses which are entrenched in the body. These minions of the mind prefer to keep consciousness anchored in the body by conjuring a concatenation of dreams and specters that occupy the mind in a false sense of reality and a false purpose of life. It is critical for the Peaceful Warrior to realize that the worldly sense of reality is a way of living life as in a dream. In order to shake off the specters one must begin to see that one has been sleeping. The point at which the seeker receives the intimation that he has been asleep after all is the beginning of *Antaraṅga Sādhana*. The breathing routines of *Prāṇāyāma* work to release the senses from their firm hold on the somatic territory even as *Āsana* works to release the tension that has built up in the muscles. In fact, the path of Knowledge, *Jñānamārga*, begins with the flow of awareness that the mind opens, not like a castle door but like the sluice gate of a dam which, in Shusterman's "simple-sounding injunction [is] to live one's life in a waking state" (*TTB* 291) or in Patanjali's phrase is: *Jāgratāvasthā*.

Socrates enables the penetration of the somatic territory by instructing Dan to carry a notebook to register all the random thoughts that fade in and fade out of his mind (PW 117). It takes Dan hardly a day to realize that the notebook is inadequate to contain the cascade of thoughts erupting from the mind. Socrates likens the mind to "a barking dog" (119). A dog cannot but bark. The way to control the dog is to keep it on a leash and not "let it pull ... [us] down the street" (119). Being led by one's thoughts is to live like a "puppet on a string" (119). One must come into wakefulness to perceive this as the fact about the mind so as to be able to watch it spew its conjurations. In order to keep the mind-dog on a leash, even as it barks its thoughts, is to withdraw into a position of vantage "to notice what passes through ... [one's] awareness" (119). It is imperative, then, to bridle the almost irrepressible senses in order to withdraw into oneself and watch the mind-dog bark. *Jāgratāvasthā* or the state of wakefulness enjoins the seeker to take absolute control of the senses which is implicit in the 55th aphorism which defines *Pratyāhāra* as *paramāvaśyatā* (supreme control) of the senses (*indriyāṇām*). The

28 Iyengar, LOY, 157.

aphorism reads as follows: *tataḥ paramāvaśyatā indriyāṇām*. (LOY 170).[29] The adverb, *tataḥ* (then) is a critical link in this aphorism as it suggests the Yogi's transition from the discipline of regulated breathing (*Prāṇāyāma*), through ingathering of the senses (*Pratyāhāra*) towards the higher state of *Dhāraṇā* which involves the practice of harnessing attention in order to achieve concentration and to focus on the higher purpose of attaining to superconsciousness. The first aphorism of the third chapter, which is about the innermost quest for esoteric accomplishments (*VibhūtiPāda*), characterizes *Dhāraṇā* as the practice of binding or tethering (*bandhaḥ*) the consciousness (*cittasya*) to one place or region (*deśa*): *deśa bandhaḥ cittasya dhāraṇā*. The phase of *Antaraṅga Sādhana* is marked by an inner wakefulness when Dan realizes that he has to merely "let'em [thoughts or feelings that erupt in the mind] flow by like a river. [There is, indeed] no need to cling to anything, just let it be ...." That way, he ensures that he does not maunder into the mundane streets led by the mind-dog. The adverb, *tataḥ*, also signposts that the seeker, who is now capable of watching the mind, is ready to ascend the higher rungs of *yoga* which are beyond somatic fine-tuning (*Bahiraṅga Sādhana*) and mind-watching(*Antaraṅga Sādhana*); the seeker enters the final stage of eternal wakefulness: *Antarātma Sādhana*.

Dan's journey is unique when compared to the journeys commonly undertaken by others. Common men approach journeys, sometimes with a map, sometimes with an unfinished business in mind, and sometimes with a sense of adventure whose outcomes are within the realm of communicability. Dan's journey, unlike the common journeys, takes place without a map, without a worldly purpose and beyond the communicative efficacy of ordinary men. It begins in the somatic territory and moves inwards into the cognitive and metacognitive realms of the intelligence through a wakefulness that puts behind the days when the body was languishing in the successive cycles of dream and sleep. His journey cannot be conducted with a map as the bearings of the mental geography require one to plot the regions differently and the routines of *Antaraṅga Sādhana* underline a cartography that carefully watches the bounds of the mind. So, there are no maps because there cannot be any, as the seeker is himself the journey and the journeyman whose road appears and opens even as its experiences are registered through the body and the mind. Moreover, the seeker submits to an experience whose basis is self-discovery which makes it difficult to decide if he/she has arrived at the destination. To the common traveler, the terminus marks the distance covered and the end of an exhausting affair. The huge uncertainty in the Peaceful Warrior's journey necessitates the presence of the Mentor whose care lends succor to the seeking. The support of the Mentor to the mentee is equal to the measure of penance (*Karmamārga*), the measure of knowledge (*Jňānamārga*) and the measure of identification with the Seer, which is the Soul (*Bhaktimārga*).

Socrates, whose presence goes with the Peaceful Warrior, guides Dan beyond the somatic territory ("felt in the blood" beyond Sleep and Dream); beyond the super-rational territory of the mind ("felt along the heart" beyond wakefulness) in order to arrive at the innermost territory ("into the purer mind with tranquil restoration" which is the stage of superconsciousness and eternal wakefulness –*Turyāvasthā*). It marks Dan's arrival at *Antarātma Sādhana* which, happening as it does in the innermost realm of the soul, is, essentially ineffable experience that is incommunicable. Dan arrives at *Antarātma Sādhana* after "a nine-year journey around the world" (PW 154) and "travels into the hidden recesses of his mind and heart" (155) in order to "prepare ... for something that ... [he] cannot yet see or taste or touch" (155). He only receives a beckoning intuition that it is "out there waiting" (155) for him. During this "final ascent [to superconsciousness] that may deliver or destroy him" (161), he understands that "a part of

29 Iyengar, LOY ,170.

Socrates lives within him now" (156). This reminds us of Minerva's descent into the person of Mentor who, thus inspired and informed, is able to show Telemachus the way.

The site in the narrative where Dan receives the call to commence *Antarātma Sādhana* is "the remote wilderness high in Sierra Nevada" (156). The door to his soul opens the moment he resolves "to face the darkness" that had tormented and hounded him all his life. As if on cue, Socrates makes his final appearance and instructs Dan to "open all [the] ... senses. Follow the moon. [As] it leads to the gateway" (159). The moon, an archetype of the mind, should light the Peaceful Warrior's way during the final ascent. Dan who has gone beyond Sleep, Dream and Wakefulness must open all the senses to conduct the flow of superconsciousness. Having travelled beyond the practice of *Dhāraṇā*, he accomplishes the integration of ingathered energies and like the farmer (*kṣhetrikavat*) who digs canals to guide water, Dan begins an intense meditation on the fundamental questions that have remained unanswered: "Who am I?"; "What is the purpose of my life?"; "Where is the gateway beyond the mind, beyond past and future, beyond life and death?" (156).

The fourth chapter of the *Yoga Sūtras* called *Kaivalya Pāda*, describes the journey into the "purer mind" which begins in meditation (*Dhyāna*) and culminates in "tranquil restoration" or *Samādhi*. By meditating on the fundamental questions, Dan arrives at a purer consciousness that is subtle and quite different from the earlier consciousness of his wakeful state. Earlier, while watching his mind-dog, he was able to see how consciousness was born, how it flowered into a concern and how it occupied him like an inescapable purpose. Now, with the energies flowing single-mindedly into fundamental questions he moves towards an immaculate state where consciousness is incapable of inscribing any purpose or influencing any action. The futility of attachment to the conjurations of consciousness dawns on his senses which are, on the instructions of Socrates, fully-opened like the sluice gates of a dam in order to let the answers rush in like an illumination or "Supramental Descent." The sixth aphorism of the *Kaivalya Pāda* posits that only through meditation (*Dhyāna*) can be born (*jam*) an immaculate and "purer mind" that cannot be influenced by consciousness (*anāśayam*). The aphorism begins with the prepositional phrase "of these" (*tatra*) pointing to the activities undertaken by the Yogi involving consciousness. So, the aphorism: *tatra dhyānajam anāśayam* (LOY 252),[30] suggests that, of all the consciousness-related activities, only those that result from intense meditation are pure and untainted because they do not possess the detritus of the past. They are anchored in the tranquility of now-ness. The peaceful warrior chooses to obey the commandment of life that if the time is "now" there is no choice but to act, "here." Choosing to act, here and now, Dan, finally, confronts and penetrates the specter of darkness (PW 171). The seed that Socrates planted breaks out of the darkness and "a small shoot emerges from the rich earth" (177). In that moment Dan, the Mentee, the Peaceful Warrior, becomes Socrates, the Mentor who has discovered the answers to the questions that emerge from the innermost territory of the *Antarātma* (the Soul-as-the-Seer). Millman describes the final episode of Dan's journey as the arrival at an illumination which is also a recognition. The illumination comes with the recognition of one's essential one-ness with the cosmic reality. Millman describes Dan's arrival at superconsciousness or *Turyāvasthā* thus:

> As he emerges from the cave, having passed through the visionary gateway of his death and rebirth, he gazes up at the heavens but sees only the light at the center of creation, beyond life, beyond death. ...Hiking back down the mountain, Dan knows that a part of him, the separate self, has died. ... Yet he feels more alive than ever before, having found an

30 Iyengar, LOY, 252.

understanding and peace greater than he has ever known. (179)[31]

The "light at the center of creation" that Dan experiences as his momentous destination is the omniscient consciousness (*Samādhi*) that happens when the *Kṣetram* (Dan-the-Field) becomes the *Kṣetrajñā* (the-Knower-of-the-field). The 29th aphorism of the fourth chapter talks about this arrival at the one-ness or union (*yoga*) when the light of the Soul dawns. The Seeker-as-Peaceful Warrior becomes the Seer, the *Yogi*.

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31 Millman, PW, 179.

New Art of Bodily Care in the Works of Lope de Vega and López Pinciano

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Abstract: *Treatises on acting appeared on the Spanish scene in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, especially due to the development of the dramatic genre known as the nueva comedia—a new style of play where both tragedy and comedy coexisted. Spanish rhetoricians, such as Félix Lope de Vega and Alonso López Pinciano, believed the actor's inner actions or state of mind easily influenced the outward form of the body, manifesting the same body-mind relation of Richard Shusterman's somaesthetics. From a somaesthetics perspective, these early modern acting treatises provide an innovative performance method on the art of bodily care, synthesizing physical movements with those of experience as a means for dynamic action.*

Keywords: *López Pinciano, Lope de Vega, comedia, Spain, theater, actor, actress, gesture.*

Treatises on acting appeared on the Spanish scene in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, especially due to the development of the dramatic genre known as the *nueva comedia*—a new style of play where both tragedy and comedy coexisted. Spanish rhetoricians, such as Félix Lope de Vega and Alonso López Pinciano, believed the actor's inner actions or state of mind easily influenced the outward form of the body, manifesting the same body-mind relation of Richard Shusterman's somaesthetics. Lope de Vega's *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en nuestro tiempo* (1609; *New Art of Making Plays in our Time*), a treatise written in the form of a performance piece, continues the advice first revealed in his saints play *Lo fingido verdadero* (1608; *The True Deceiver*). Lope experiments with acting techniques that underscore how an artist's lived experiences and emotions unite in the interpretation of art. On the other hand, López Pinciano's *Philosophía antigua poetica* (1596; *Philosophy of the Ancient Style of Poetry*), a manual on the art of acting, advocates proper exercises that build upon the actor's somatic skills when preparing for a role. From a somaesthetics perspective, these early modern acting treatises provide an innovative performance method on the art of bodily care, synthesizing physical movements with those of experience as a means for dynamic action.

Pragmatic Somaesthetics

Richard Shusterman's somaesthetics, the first systematic framework structured for mindful-somatic enhancement, proves useful in examining how seventeenth-century Spanish actors might have conditioned their bodies in an effort to prepare for a role. Pragmatic somaesthetics, in particular, offers practical means to improve embodied experiences and somatic awareness, thereby functioning as a tool to explain how an artist's lived experiences and emotions unite in the interpretation of art. Its objectives are threefold: the desire to improve the function of the body; self-knowledge of one's somatic habits and lived experiences that affect one's moods and

attitudes; and an "effective will" to act on the self-knowledge.[32] In theater, an actor must draw from her inner emotions or experiences in order to control or change a particular ingrained movement or gesture that prevents her from effectively performing. The three dimensions of pragmatic somaesthetics (representational, experiential, and performative) with their various technical methods work to improve the actor's appearance, experience, and performance on the stage – and beyond. All three dimensions work toward a freedom of movement through somatic sensibility, which can be associated with the acting techniques found in Lope de Vega's manifesto.

The New Art of Acting in Their Time

Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio, one of the most prolific playwrights from the seventeenth century, promoted a pragmatic approach to acting in *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en nuestro tiempo*. Lope expounds on dramatic theory and practice, offering a specific formula for writing and performing plays that depart from neo-Aristotelian precepts. For example, he rejects the three famous unities found in Aristotle's *Poetics*: the unity of time, place, and action. Lope prefers representing life as Nature intended, uniting tragedy with comedy for a more realistic and entertaining new *comedia*: "Lo trágico y lo cómico mezclado,/ ... que aquesta variedad deleita mucho. /Buen ejemplo nos da naturaleza, que por tal variedad tiene belleza"[33] (Tragedy mixed with comedy ... for this variety causes much delight. Nature gives us good example, for through such variety it is beautiful).[34] Edward H. Friedman describes it perfectly when he states that Lope "seems to intuit that the humanist shift from logic to rhetoric makes sense for the theater, which is both art and craft."[35] Furthermore, Lope defends the value of modern Spanish theater with the actor center stage: "Oye atento, y del arte no dispute/que en la comedia se hallará modo/ que, oyéndola, se puede saber todo" (Let one hear with attention, and dispute not of the art; for in [a play] everything will be found of such a sort that in listening to it everything becomes evident).[36] He appreciates the actors' commitment to the plays and their ability to embody their roles, something fundamentally paramount to the *comedia*'s success.

In *Arte nuevo,* Lope suggests a form of pragmatic somaesthetics when he instructs the playwright to create dynamic characters that transform the actors. His instructions, "Describa los amantes con afectos/que muevan con extremo a quien escucha; / los soliloquios pinte de manera/ que se transforme todo el recitante y, con mudarse a sí, mude al oyente" (Describe lovers with those passions which greatly move whoever listens to them; manage soliloquies in such a manner that the [actor] is quite transformed, and in changing himself, changes the listener),[37] reflects the experiential dimension of somaesthetics, which "refuses to exteriorize the body as an alienated thing distinct from the active spirit of human experience."[38] This reasoning applies to actors as well. Lope interconnects the performative form with one's inner feelings in his dramatic interpretation of the Saint Ginés.

In the *comedia Lo fingido verdadero,* a Roman actor named Ginés experiences a religious

32 Richard Shusterman, *Performing Live,* (London: Cornell UP, 2000), 138-39.

33 Lope de Vega, *Arte nuevo*, (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1967), vv. 174.

34 Lope de Vega, *The New Art of Writing Plays in Our Time,* trans. William T. Brewster (New York: Dramatic Museum of Columbia U, 1914). All translations of Lope de Vega's *Arte nuevo* are Brewster's translations unless otherwise noted.

35 Edward H. Friedman, "Resisting Theory: Rhetoric and Reason in Lope De Vega's 'Arte Nuevo,'" *Neophilologus* 75, no. 1, 1991), 92.

36 Lope de Vega, *Arte nuevo*, vv. 387-89.

37 Ibid., vv. 272-76.

38 Richard Shusterman, "Somaesthetics: A Disciplinary Proposal," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* 57:3 (1999), 306.

conversion before the emperor Diocleciano while preparing for the role of a Christian. Through the voice of his protagonist, Lope advises that, in order to realistically "imitate a lover," the actor must tap into his lived experiences, "Una ausencia, unos celos, un agravio, un desdén riguroso y otras cosas que son de amor tiernísimos efectos, harálos, si los siente, tiernamente; mas no los sabrá hacer si no los siente"[39] (The pain of absence, jealously, the flaring of violence and hate, these are the feelings which we live, the stock in trade of the actor's art).[40] Lope focuses on the qualities inherent to experiential somaesthetics with the belief that the emotions of pain, envy, violence and hate reside in the interior depth of a person's somatic as well as psychological memory. Only when the actor calls on his own experience can he realize the full potential of his character, endowing it with human depth. The actor's experiential somaesthetics fills in the gaps left by the play's text, providing meaning through representation and interpretation. In turn, the actors' embodiment of the characters actively engages the spectators, who experience a transformation of their own.

Lope de Vega, well aware of the power that the popular classes had over the success of the actor and ultimately of the *comedia*, emphasized the importance of playing to them, especially since they were the bulk of the paying audience in the playhouses. Spectators, who were active participants in the world of early modern theater, responded to the actors' performances through physical awareness, employing somaesthetic practices that empowered them.[41] For example, audience members, especially those from the plebeian class who made up a good portion of the playgoers, expressed their disapproval of a performance by verbally and physically attacking actors on stage with "a torrent of insults, rotten fruit, and any other objects on hand."[42] Friedman affirms that "the pragmatics of the stage—the need to keep the people happy—and the overwhelming response to the *comedia nueva* make it worth Lope's while to stress the significance of reception, to blend means with end, the popular with the cultured, *lo justo* with *el gusto.*"[43] Lope knew that pleasing the audience hinged on the actor's skill; consequently, he instructed the actor to practice representational and experiential performance techniques in order to develop their acting skills.

In order to prevent gross errors in a characterization, Lope first encourages actors to practice forms of representational-performative somaesthetics on stage: "Let not ladies disregard their character, and if they change costumes, let it be in such wise that it may be excused."[44] Audiences of all types found the "male disguise very pleasing." The use of male costumes, or *mujer vestida de hombre* (women dressed as a man), was a common trope frequently employed by playwrights. Spectators' sensorial perception of the characters increased when actors played roles that represented genders other than their own, especially women who dressed in men's attire. The masculine woman or *mujer varonil* adopts various forms. Historian Melveena McKendrick explains that the *mujer varonil* represents the woman "who shuns love and marriage, the learned woman, the career woman, the female bandit, the female leader and warrior, the usurper of man's social role, the woman who wears masculine dress or the woman who indulges in

39 Lope de Vega, "Lo fingido verdadero," (Barcelona: Editorial Iberia, 1967), 232.

40 Lope de Vega, *The Great Pretenders and The Gentleman from Olmedo*, Trans. David Johnston (London: Oberon Books, 1993), 48-49.

41 For an in-depth discussion on early modern Spanish audience embodiment, see my article "A Mindful Audience: Embodied Spectatorship in Early Modern Madrid."

42 Jodi Campbell, *Monarchy, Political Culture, and Drama in Seventeenth-Century Madrid: Theater of Negotiation* (Burlington, V.T.: Ashgate, 2006), 40.

43 Edward H. Friedman, "Resisting Theory," 89.

44 Lope de Vega, *The New Art.*

masculine pursuits."[45] Just as in somaesthetics, the practice of self-stylization goes beyond the aesthetic changing of the body; it becomes the locus for which the individual exhibits her style or identity.[46] Illustrating the interconnectedness of representational and experiential somaesthetics, theater theorist Patrice Pavis asserts, "A body is 'worn' and 'carried' by a costume as much as the costume is worn and carried by the body. Actors develop their character and refine their underscore while exploring their costume; one helps the other find its identity."[47] In other words, it is not enough to dress the part; the actor must also feel the part. Audience members responded with pleasure to actors who embodied their characters, especially those who played transgender roles. Therefore, many playwrights incorporated these types of personas in their plays. In fact, at least one hundred of Lope's plays included female and male gender-bending characters.

In the process of creating a role, Lope's *Arte nuevo* declares that one should "be on his guard against impossible things, for it is of the chiefest importance that only the likeness of truth should be represented." However, from Shannon Sullivan's standpoint, "when considering the truth of a claim, one is not asking whether it mirrors reality, but whether it satisfies various desires and needs."[48] In somaesthetics, exercises intensify emotions and thoughts that lead to heightened insight and clarity. For that reason, "rather than relying on a priori principles or seeking necessary truths, the pragmatist works from experience, trying to clarify its meaning so that its present quality and its consequences for future experience might be improved,"[49] much like the professional actor who builds on her own training and experience to master her craft.

Seventeenth-century Spanish actors subscribed to Lope's instructions in *Art nuevo*, which connect the actors' inner emotions with their physical actions. For instance, the manifesto coaches actors to tap into their experiential somaesthetics when developing a role: "If the king should speak, imitate as much as possible the gravity of a king; if the sage speaks, observe a sententious modesty." As Isabella Torres submits, Lope "credited actors with the ability to delve into the depths of their 'type' and to draw their audience into the play's deceitful hall of mirrors."[50] Evident in the character Diocletian's proclamation: "Mas pienso que es artificio / Deste gran representante, / Porque turbarse un amante / Fue siempre el mayor indicio" [51] (I think it's the artifice of this great actor, because being upset is always the best sign that someone's in love).[52] Actors oftentimes led peripatetic lives, traveling from city to city and performing as many as 44 shows a month. Therefore, actors who neglected to cultivate appropriate somaesthetic habits would find themselves unable to sustain these intense schedules, let alone highly emotional characters. Moreover, ineffectual somaesthetic awareness could result in the development of "highly neurotic actors," a fear expressed by early modern critics. According to Joseph R. Roach:

> The desperate prejudice against actors in the seventeenth century was motivated in part by superstitious fears of their unnatural practices on the audience ... However, the principal danger was to the actor himself. The same physiological model that explained his powers

45 Melveena McKendrick, *Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age; a Study of the Mujer Varonil* (London: Cambridge UP, 1974) ix.

46 Richard Shusterman, *Thinking through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012), 27.

47 Patrice Pavis, *Analyzing Performance: Theater, Dance, and Film,* trans. David Williams (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2006), 175.

48 Shannon Sullivan, *Living Across and Through Skins: Transactional Bodies, Pragmatism, and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2001), 142.

49 Shusterman, *Performing Live,* 96.

50 Isabella Torres, "Introduction to *The Great Pretenders and The Gentleman from Olmedo*, by Lope de Vega, trans. David Johnston (London: Oberon Books, 1993), 10.

51 Lope de Vega, "Lo fingido," 243.

52 Lope de Vega, *Acting Is Believing*, trans. Michael D. McGaha (San Antonio: Trinity UP, 1986), 76.

> of bodily self-transformation also demonstrated his acute vulnerability to the forces that he summoned.[53]

It was common practice for performers to focus on emotion rather than on the message to persuade their audience (28). Well aware of this custom, Lope de Vega creates a scene in which the protagonist envisions how he would gesticulate his emotions:

> ¿Cómo haré yo que parezca
> Que soy el mismo cristiano
> Cuando al tormento me ofrezca?
> ¿Con/qué acción, qué rostro y mano
> En que alabanza merezca?[54]
>
> How shall I do to convince them that I am that very Christian when they lead me off to be tortured? How shall I move, what kind of facial expressions, what gestures shall I use to win their praise?[55]

Initially, Ginés contemplates adopting the cliché mannerisms of a 'Christian':

> Derribaré con furor/Los ídolos que desaman./Quiérome sentar aquí
> Como que en un gran tormento/Me tienen puesto, y que vi
> Que se abría el firmamento, /Que ellos lo dicen así.
> Y que/algún mártir me hablaba,
> O que yo hablaba con él:
> ¡bravo paso, industria brava!
> Llamaré al/César cruel,
> Como que a mi lado estaba.
> Perro, tirano sangriento
> (bien voy, bien le muestro furia); ...
> ¡Qué bien levanto la voz![56]
>
> I'll furiously knock down the idols they hate. I'll just make believe that I'm being cruelly tortured and that I see the firmament open, for that's what they all say, and that some previous martyr is talking to me, or that I'm talking to him. Oh, what a clever idea, what a great scene! I'll call Caesar cruel, right to his very face. "You dog, you bloody tyrant!" Oh, this is good! I'm really getting mad! ... I sound terrific when I shout![57]

This monologue exposes the pitfalls of inadequate somaesthetic practices that succumb to "highly neurotic" acting. By relying on stereotypical gestures that lead to 'overacting' as he begins to shout, Ginés's character "lacks the sincerity of nature," in the words of Roman rhetorician Quintilian. In order for an actor to build a character that lives through him, Quintilian advises one "to excite the appropriate feeling in oneself, to form a mental picture of the facts, and to

53 Joseph R. Roach, *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (Ann Harbor: U of Michigan P, 1993), 27-28.

54 Lope de Vega, "Lo fingido," 264-65.

55 McGaha, *Acting Is Believing*, 90.

56 Lope, "Lo fingido," 265.

57 McGaha, *Acting Is Believing*, 90.

exhibit an emotion that cannot be distinguished from the truth."[58]

In rejecting conventional acting practices that contrast with the *comedia nueva*'s form and style, Lope interweaves somatic techniques that connect experiential and representational forms. His protagonist discovers the need for somatic sensibility in order to make his performance effective without weakening his will to perform. In a moment of clarity, Ginés acknowledges that only by intimately connecting the mind and body does the character come to life. He considers how the "ears play the part of a deaf man ... eyes play a blind man ... smell is like those people who, according to many writers, live off the fragrance of flowers ... because it is fated to be frustrated rather than bear fruit ... touch plays the part of a madman who tries to touch heaven with his vain thoughts," and taste, "the greatest and best actor of all, now plays the part of a lover who persists in his mistaken path."[59] Subsequently, failure to will one's body to perform the simple physical functions such as breathing could result in a poor performance, which would be devastating to an actor's career.

The practice of physical exercise stems from the school of ancient philosophers who advocated, in Shusterman's viewpoint, corporeal training, "since fit bodies provide sharper perceptions and more discipline and versatility for adapting oneself in thought."[60] Somaesthetic practices can "reveal and improve somatic malfunctionings that normally go undetected even though they impair our well-being and performance" (303). Quintilian endorsed a strict regimen of "walking, rubbing-down with oil, abstinence from sexual intercourse, an easy digestion" when training for a performance. He illustrates how even hidden "somatic malfunctions" can deter actors from genuinely portraying their characters on stage: "If gesture and the expression of the face are out of harmony with the speech, if we look cheerful when our words are sad, or shake our heads when making a positive assertion, our words will not only lack weight, but will fail to carry conviction. Gesture and movement are also productive of grace."[61] Quintilian suggests the actor adopt techniques similar to ancient Greek orators, "It was for this reason that Demosthenes used to practise his delivery in front of a large mirror, since, in spite of the Greek that its reflexions are reversed, he trusted his eyes to enable him to judge accurately the effect produced" (11.3.67-68). The practice of using mirrors to improve one's physical behavior was seen in seventeenth-century theater as well.

Speaking through his character Betterton in *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton* (1710), Charles Gildon (1665-1724) suggests the same exercise as Demosthenes', recommending "extensive practice before a mirror to perfect 'the whole Body likewise in all its Postures and Motions.'"[62] The Italian singer and actor Cavaliere Nicolini Grimaldi (1673-1732), also known as Nicolino, prepared himself for a performance by exercising daily in front of a mirror "to practice deportment and gesture" (68). By active observation, the actor becomes aware of his posture, movement, and changes in equilibrium, and hence "should be able to infer from his proprioceptive feelings what his posture from the back would look like in actual performance (without using any mirrors), even though he does not strictly see himself from the back."[63] Consequently, Lope de Vega endorsed a form of performative somaesthetics, recognizing the

58 Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory*, ed. Lee Honeycutt, trans. John Selby Watson (Iowa State, 2006), 11.3.61-62.

59 McGaha, *Acting Is Believing*, 70.

60 Shusterman, "Somaesthetics: A Disciplinary Proposal" (*The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 57, no. 3, 1999), 302.

61 Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory*, 11.3.67-68.

62 Roach, *The Player's Passion*, 55.

63 Shusterman, "Body and the Arts: The Need for Somaesthetics" (*Diogenes*, 2014), 141; In "Proprioception as an Aesthetic Sense," Barbara Montero defines proprioception as "the sense by which we acquire information about the positions and movements of our own bodies, via receptors in the joints, tendons, ligaments, muscles, and skin." She claims "that proprioception is an aesthetic sense and that one can make aesthetic judgments based on proprioceptive experience" (231).

importance of the actor's continued refinement of his craft. Some ten years after writing *Arte nuevo*, Lope emphasizes the actor's skill and its impact on the success of the *comedia* in his *Dozena Parte,* an anthology of some of his works published: "I know that in reading them you will remember the deeds of those who served this body of work, for the movement of the figures alone will grace you with pleasure."[64] It makes sense that Lope would dedicate much of his treatise to the method of acting, since actors ultimately brought the plays to life, a point also made in Alonso López Pinciano's *Philosophía antigua poetica*.

A Somatic Philosophy on the Art of Acting

López Pinciano's *Philosophía antigua poética*, the first major Spanish work on the art of poetry, comprises 13 *epístolas* or letters dealing with the distinctions among the poetic genres. The treatise, written in three-person dialogues, dedicates the thirteenth letter to the art of acting. López Pinciano focuses mostly on the somatic components of acting, declaring that the actor, through the manifestation of his character, gives force to the playwright's words.[65] In emphasizing qualities inherent to representational and experiential somaesthetics, López Pinciano advises the actor to study the physical movements of the person he wishes to imitate, "conuiene, pues, que el actor mire la persona que va a imitar y de tal manera se transforme en ella, que a todos parezca no imitación, sino propiedad" (in order to transform himself into the person he wishes to imitate, in a manner that will not seem an imitation, but rather the person himself" (502). Furthermore, López Pinciano challenges Cartesian dualism by affirming, like somaesthetics, that the human self thinks, acts, and exists as a soma – a unified body-mind. The rhetorician believes "que no la ánima anda, ni come, ni bebe, ni discurre, consulta y elige, sino el hombre, que es decir, ánima y cuerpo unidos, andan, comen, beben, discurren, consultan y eligen ... las acciones dramáticas y de representantes tienen mucho más de lo sutil y espiritual que no las de los volteadores" (that the soul neither walks nor eats, nor drinks, nor runs, nor consults and chooses, but man, that is, soul and body together, walk, eat, drink, run, consult and choose . . [and that] dramatic actions and actors are much more delicate and soulful than those of acrobats) (496). In other words, acting consists of more than mere physical imitation since both body and mind compose man. The actor who practiced experiential and representational somaesthetics enhanced her performative skills, empowering her to better embody her character.

In order to achieve total embodiment, López Pinciano, like Lope de Vega, insists that the character develop from the actor's inner and outer actions "porque las personas graves y trágicas se mueven muy lentamente, las comunes y cómicas con más ligereza, los viejos más pesadamente, los mozos menos, y los niños no saben estar quietos" (because serious and tragic people move very slowly, the common and comic folk more lightly, the old more heavily, the young men less, and children do not know how to stay still) (504). López Pinciano describes how natural gestures vary from person to person, depending on the individual: "Los cuales vemos mueven diferentemente los pies, las manos, la boca, los ojos y la cabeza, según la pasión de que están ocupados; que el tímido retira los pies y el osado acomete, y el que tropieza pasa adelante contra su voluntad" (Those who, as we can see, move their feet, their hands, their mouths, their eyes, and their heads differently, according to their mood; the shy draw back their feet and the bold move forward, and the one that stumbles advances against his will" (504). Focusing his attention

64 Victor Dixon, "Manuel Vallejo: un actor se prepara: un comediante del siglo de oro ante un texto (El castigo sin venganza)," (Actor y técnica de representación del teatro clásico español: Madrid, 17-19 de mayo de 1988, edited by José María, Díez Borque, London: Tamesis, 1989), 74.

65 Alonso López Pinciano, *Philosophía Antigua Poética*, ed. Peña P. Muñoz (Valladolid: Impr. y Libreria Nacional y Extranjera de Hijos de Rodriguez, 1894), 504. All of translations of López Pinciano are my own.

on the hands, López Pinciano connects experiential somaesthetics to representational forms, directing the actor in the process:

> Si es grave, puede jugar de mano, según y cómo es lo que trata, porque si esta desapasionado puede mover la mano con blandura, agora alzándola, agora declinándola, agora moviéndola al uno y al otro lado; y si está indignado la moverá más desordenadamente, apartando el dedo vecino al pulgar, llamada índice, de los demás como quien amenaza. (505)
>
> If he [the person the actor is emulating] is serious, you can use your hands to play him, according to the situation; because if he is dispassionate, you can move the hand with gentleness, raising it now, dropping it now, moving it now from side to side; and if the mood is outraged, moving it more wildly, pressing the thumb to the forefinger, called the index finger, in a threatening manner.

López Pinciano further advises exercising the technique of observation, especially since those mentioned in his gestural exposition "sean unos ejemplos pocos de lo mucho que hay que considerar en esta parte, que son casi infinitos" (are just a few examples of the many, which are nearly infinite, that should be considered) (505). By exploring such methods, the actor pulls from experience or self-knowledge of lived experiences to create an awareness of human behavior, giving the character depth without losing her own sense of identity. Eric Mullis explains, "in order for technique to be authentic, practitioners must take the pervasive power of daily technique and cliché into account and explore various methods of modifying them, that is, of walking a path that avoids their limitations and strives to move beyond them."[66] Early modern Spanish actors incorporated into their characters the movements and behavior found in everyday functions of the people they observed in society, such as hand gestures or facial expressions of people who frequented public spaces.

To illustrate this idea, many performances integrated dance and fencing pieces into their productions, which, according to Lynn Matluck Brooks, reflected the "austerity of Spanish etiquette and movement in general."[67] Early modern Spanish actors, some of whom were trained in dance and stage combat, practiced the exercise of cultivating habits of certain individuals or groups of people found in manuals such as Juan de Esquivel Navarro's *Discursos sobre el arte del danzado* (1642; *Discourses on the Art of the Dance*) and Luis Pacheco de Narváez's *Libro de las grandezas de la espada* (1600). For example, skilled actors danced with an upright carriage, as instructed by Esquivel Navarro, "Ha de ir el cuerpo danzando bien derecho sin artificio, con mucho descuido,"[68] a stance that resembled the posture and attitude of aristocrats. Pacheco de Narváez's handbook focuses on the actor's proprioceptive feelings to develop somatic habits appropriate for stage combat specific to the Spaniards. In addition to geometric diagrams, the author provides precise instructions on the proper body posture for swordplay: "Han de tener primeramente, la cabeza derecha, los ojos vivos, despiertos, la voz gruessa, el pecho alto" (First of all, one must maintain the head straight; the eyes alive, awake; the voice coarse; the chest high).[69]

Laura Vidler, author of "Bourdieu, Boswell and the Baroque Body: Cultural Choreography

66 Eric C. Mullis, "Performative Somaesthetics: Principles and Scope," (*The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 40, no. 4, 2006), 111.

67 Lynn Matluck Brooks, *The Art of Dancing in Seventeenth-Century Spain: Juan de Esquivel Navarro and his World (*Lewisburg, P.A.: Bucknell UP, 2003), 90.

68 Juan de Esquivel Navarro, *Discursos sobre el arte del danzado*, (Lewisburg, P.A.: Bucknell UP, 2003), f. 20.

69 Luis Pacheco de Narváez, *Libro de las grandezas de la espada* (Madrid: Por los Herederos de J. Iñiguez de Lequerica, 1600), f. 6v. Translation of Pacheco de Narváez is my own.

in *Fuenteovejuna*," explains that these tactics "are a direct result of the principles of Euclidean geometry used to develop the Spanish combat style ... the most effective thrust was accomplished with the sword at a right angle to the body as the radius drawn by such an angle has the farthest reach relative to the opponent's position," see figure 1.[70] Narváez cautions the swordsperson not to "draw back" since "El que se hace atrás, además de no ser tan largo, va con menos certeza. Y lo que es mas de considerar, que cualquier movimiento que se hace, echando pie atrás, que no es para herir (siendo el tal movimiento desde el medio de proporción) de lo cual os resultará tener mas lugar para ir adelante" (One who draws back, in addition to not going far, goes with less certainty. Another thing to consider is that any move you make where you fling your foot back without the intention to hurt (being that such a move is proportionately made) will result in you having more room to go forward).[71] Narváez's advice is analogous to López Pinciano's, who states, "El tímido retira los pies y el osado acomete, y el que tropieza pasa adelante contra su voluntad" (The shy draw back their feet and the bold move forward, and the one that stumbles advances against his will).[72]

A skilled actor connects with her audience by consciously attending to the gestures, voice inflections, or physical movements indicative of her character. Therefore, in addition to merging her own inner spirit or experiences with representational forms adopted from people she observed in society, an actor must continue to build her somatic skills by following the acting and movement directives found in the aforementioned treatises, which seek to "refine and magnify the body's gestures, movements, and vocalizations."[73]

Figure 1: Proper posture and sword position. *Libro de las grandezas de la espada* (f. 40r).

70 Laura Vidler, "Bourdieu, Boswell and the Baroque Body: Cultural Choreography in *Fuenteovejuna*" (*Comedia Performance* 9, no. 1, 2012), 46.

71 Pacheco de Narváez, *Libro*, f. 52r.

72 López Pinciano, *Philosophía*, 504.

73 Mullis, "Performative Somaesthetics," 6.

Conclusion

Lope de Vega's *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* and López Pinciano's *Philosophía antigua poética*, when viewed from a somaesthetics lens, assists one in understanding the intricate process of building a character in early modern Spanish theater. Lope de Vega and López Pinciano coach the actor on the importance of somatic awareness to develop internal and external performance techniques. The rhetoricians insist that art is not a mere copy or mimesis, as Plato's *Republic* proposes, but an interpretation of experiences put forth by the artist that is further interpreted by the receiver. For this reason, the actor's portrayal of events or actions that ring true to real-life lends an empirical credence to the *comedia*, further enhancing the audience's embodied aesthetic experience. As a playwright, Lope desired that his plays experience life through actors on stage; therefore, he experimented with somaesthetic techniques in his new form of *comedias*. Through his protagonist Ginés in *Lo fingido verdadero*, Lope demonstrates the importance of developing a role through exercises that enhanced the actor's internal and external gestural language, an essential practice for a successful play. Moreover, in publishing his plays, Lope had hoped scholars, present and future, would read them in the spirit in which they were written—*comedias* for live performances in the Spanish playhouses.[74]

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74 Dixon, "Manuel Vallejo," 74.

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