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In my introduction, I want to focus on two aspects of this issue of *The Journal of Somaesthetics*: first, to describe the picture an open issue paints of the current field of somaesthetics, and secondly, to discuss the Nordic component of this issue.

The first issue of 2018 is an open issue without any thematic focus except that the articles have to position themselves within the theoretical or pragmatic field of somaesthetics. It is based on an open call with the intent to explore the field of somaesthetics from various angles. The majority of contributions in one way or another deal with art. Of course, this should not come as a surprise, because aesthetics has been connected to art reception since the modern rise of aesthetics as a scholarly field coincided with the modern rise of the autonomy of art. More recent developments in contemporary aesthetics have sought to bring aesthetics back to its original broader conception as concerned with sense-making and appreciation that finds expression in all of life's domains. This development, however, has mainly been analyzed through objects – art and design artefacts, and seldomly by tracing human sense-perception and anthropological research. In this context, the concept of somaesthetics proves important, because it focuses on the aesthetic experience of the soma, the living, perceiving, purposive body, as an integrated aspect of aesthetic experience and a medium of research. Concurrently, the field of artistic research and arts-informed academic inquiry is rapidly expanding, yielding novel approaches and a renewed debate about how we should understand the notion of knowledge in aesthetics, in its academic and artistic ramifications. The vocabulary of somaesthetics seems to be able to embrace and facilitate this novel demand to aesthetics and knowledge.

In addition to this expansion of the aesthetic field, there can be seen another closely related development. As art increasingly embraces audience activation converting audiences from contemplating onlookers to participants and co-creators, so the field of aesthetics must consider the active participant as intrinsic part of the work of art transforming art into events of experience and consumption in line with other cultural artefacts and events. Seen in this light, aesthetics has to enlarge its methodical tool box towards a thinking through and with the soma as a perceptual and sense-making 'organ' in order to be able to capture the experiential, creative, and ameliorative dimension – not only of art making and art perception, but also of other cultural fields that rely on aesthetic perception.

The second point I wish to mention is that *The Journal of Somaesthetics*, founded from the outset in Aalborg University, Denmark, is now in a period of reorganization to emphasize its Nordic dimension by establishing a predominately Nordic editorial board. We hope this will strengthen the Journal's contribution to presenting Nordic approaches to the many topics and applications of somaesthetics, but we aim to do so by also engaging with and publishing the best research in somaesthetics from scholars in the wider international research community. Although it is hard to generalize, Nordic research has a distinctive take on questions concerning somaesthetics because of certain features of Nordic culture and Nordic academic histories, practices, and aims. Noticeable is the interest for letting somaesthetic theory and concrete

somatic practices permeate each other. The idea here is not simply practice as a mechanical application of somaesthetic ideas and concepts, but rather an academic research from within framed and observed, but always experienced practices. Practice should here be understood as either the investigatory measurements and activities of distinct professions and fields of research and/or the compassionate but analytical observation of and interaction with professional or everyday actions of distinct social groups. It is not surprising that in recent years there have been a significant number of research-oriented practical workshops in somaesthetics in Nordic countries.

One of this issue's authors write from within the field of art and art research: Rasmus Ölme, a dancer and researcher, writes in his article "Suspension" about his practice-based research on the materiality and immateriality of movement, thereby investigating the performative relationship between the cognitive and sensory, movement and space, and artistic experience and academic theoretical conceptualization. My own article, "Into the Woods with Heidegger" can be categorized as arts-informed, academic research in that it is a reflection on an autoethnographic project documenting my encounter with some passages of Heidegger's essay "The Origin of the Artwork" while helping an artist constructing a land-art piece. The project's aim was to find common grounds between art theoretical and artist-practical work. The encounter has led me to the question, whether the soma harbors inherently ameliorable capacities via bodily self-reflections or whether the body merely is a performative machine for very disparate ideological content. In her article "Care of the Self, Somaesthetics and Drug Addiction: An Exploration of Approaching and Treating Problematic Use in Non-Coercive Settings", Riikka Perala reflects on her work with drug addicts in the context of the Finnish social system. She proposes a somaesthetic understanding of drug addicts as full members of our societies and of everyday life. By shifting from the idea of drug addiction as an illness towards drug addiction as a (hopefully temporary) life condition, she suggests that harm reduction measurements can be seen in a Foucauldian light of "care of the self" and that somaesthetic awareness can occasion more positive ways of living and better tackle the addiction.

We also find in this issue Nordic contributions that take on more traditional topics of aesthetics. Martin Ejsing Christensen's article analyzes Dewey's idea of doing philosophy as an aesthetic, experiential practice by comparing it with Richard Shusterman's idea of somaesthetics, and he implicitly transforms his writing of the article into an aesthetic experience.

Finally, Martin Jay and Ronald Shusterman use ideas from somaesthetics as tools in analyzing various musical and visual art works. In a short article, Martin Jay describes Ken Ueno's work *Jericho Mouth* with Barthes' distinction between pheno- and geno-song, the former being in the service of representation and communication, the latter as somaesthetic performance from a pre-subjective depth. Ronald Shusterman's looks at the deterritorializing ambition and effect of a selection of urban artworks that disturb the familiarity of and expectations of shared social space and urban order. He argues for a metaethical effect of these works, because their perception constitutes a transitional passage because expected orders are momentarily annulled, the emerging void asks for an altered view and another perception of urban spaces. These moments of singularities are like jokes and laughter, opening an abys.

Falk Heinrich, Editor-in-Chief

Philosophizing as an Esthetic Experience: A Deweyan Conception

Martin Ejsing Christensen

Abstract: *This paper examines the pragmatist philosopher John Dewey's idea of philosophizing as an esthetic experience. The first section of the paper presents Dewey's general idea of esthetic experience as it figures in his main work on esthetics, Art as Experience. With this general idea in place, the second section then moves on to analyze the way in which Dewey thought of philosophizing as an esthetic experience. Finally, the third section discusses how Dewey's thoughts about philosophizing as an esthetic experience can be seen as a contribution to the field of somaesthetics.*

Keywords: *Jonh Dewey, philosophy, esthetic experience, Richard Shusterman, somaesthetics.*

In his different writings on somaesthetics, the founder of this burgeoning new field of inquiry, Richard Shusterman, does not hide the fact that his thinking is deeply inspired by the American pragmatist philosopher John Dewey. In the introduction to his *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics*, for example, Shusterman suggests that Dewey "provides probably the most balanced and comprehensive view among twentieth-century somathic philosophies."[1] In his more recent collection of essays, *Thinking Through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics*, Shusterman similarly ends the second essay on "The Body as Background" by concluding that "it is Dewey, however, who makes the most sustained and systematic argument for the qualitative background as necessary to mental life." And elsewhere in the book, Shusterman explicitly states that Dewey was the "primary American inspiration" behind his earlier "pragmatist aesthetics," which his more recent somaesthetics is "a natural extension of."[2]

One of the places where Dewey's influence on Shusterman is most conspicuous is when it comes to his idea of the "soma" as "the living, sensing, dynamic, perceptive, purposive body" (47), which is explicitly inspired by Dewey's thoughts about body–mind in *Experience and Nature*. In a similar way, Shusterman's central idea of the body as "the basic instrument of all human performance, our tool of tools, a necessity for all our perception, action and even thought" (26) is also directly inspired by Dewey's thinking, just as his critique of the "dominantly Platonic–Kantian aesthetic tradition grounded in the art/reality and aesthetic/functional dichotomies"

1 Richard Shusterman, *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 12

2 Richard Shusterman, *Thinking Through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 58, p. 289, & p. 140

(282-3) is heavily indebted to Dewey's critique of the same dichotomies in *Art as Experience*.

Although Shusterman in this way has been deeply inspired by Dewey's philosophy, there are also certain parts of it that he has been mildly critical of ,[3] just as he has drawn on a wide variety of empirical research to bolster and develop many of Dewey's ideas. The most significant way in which he has contributed to the development of a Deweyean form of pragmatism, however, is probably through his imaginative use of Deweyean ideas to analyze and understand the somaesthetic dimension of a broad range of phenomena reaching all the way from rap and country music to photography and Asian Ars Erotica.[4]

Although Shusterman has used Deweyan ideas to analyze phenomena that Dewey never wrote about, there is at least one subject that Dewey *did* write about and that has occupied Shusterman, too, for a long time, and that is the subject of philosophy itself as an activity or practice. From the very beginning of his somaesthetic project, one of Shusterman's key questions has been what a somaesthetic perspective implies for the way in which philosophy should be practiced and taught.[5] As Shusterman sees it, a somaesthetic perspective implies first and foremost a willingness "to overcome the limits of philosophy's institutionalized confinements as a purely academic practice of teaching, reading and writing texts" by returning to the old idea of "philosophy as a way of life," according to which philosophy should always be embodied.[6] And it should not just be embodied in the sense that it *theoretically* affirms "the body's crucial role in all perception, action and thought" in "the familiar forms of writing, reading and discussing texts," but also, more crucially, in the sense where one *practically* demonstrates "one's philosophy through one's own bodily example, expressing it through one's manner of living," as Confucius and many Greek and Roman thinkers did (4).

According to Shusterman, however, such a break with "philosophy's institutionalized confinements as a purely academic practice of teaching, reading and writing texts" is not the only way in which a somaesthetic perspective matters for philosophy. For it also raises a number of questions about the way in which philosophy should be done if one sticks to the more traditional practice of "teaching, reading and writing texts." As Shusterman sees it, one of the problems with philosophy as a "merely theoretical discursive pursuit" (142) is that it tends to be "essentially conceptual rather than experiential" (114), because it focuses on "verbal arguments" rather than "lived perceptual experience" (141) or the "nonpropositional, nondiscursive dimension of experience" (176) that a somaesthetic perspective highlights. Instead of breaking with the practice of teaching, reading, and writing texts, it is, however, also possible to inject more experiential, non-propositional content into this practice, and that is the other way in which Shusterman takes a somaesthetic approach to matter for the practice of philosophy. In several places Shusterman has thus questioned the way in which philosophy texts usually focus on "mere conceptual understanding" (122) and asked if philosophy, understood somaesthetically as "cultural politics," could not, instead, "intervene in literary practice by making itself a self-conscious form of literary composition – say, philosophy as literature in the essay style of Montaigne or Emerson; the fictional style of Sartre, Camus, Beauvoir, or Musil; the dramatic

3 See especially Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetic: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publisher, 2000a), p. ix. Richard Shusterman, *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life* (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 157-178

4 See Richard Shusterman, *Performing Live: Aesthetic Alternatives for the Ends of Art* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000b), pp. 60-75 & pp. 76-95 as well as Shusterman 2012, pp. 239-287

5 See especially Shusterman 1997, pp. 1-66, Shusterman 2000, pp. 3-61, Shusterman 2012, pp. 166-196 and Richard Shusterman, "Philosophy as a Way of Life: As Textual and More Than Textual Practice" in *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Ancients and Moderns – Essays in Honor of Pierre Hadot*, ed. Michael Chase et al. (Oxford: John Wiley and Sons, 2013), pp. 40-56

6 Shusterman, 2012, p. 140 & p. 122

dialogical style of Plato; the poetic style of Lucretius or Dante; or in the form of literary criticism that Rorty at times has practiced with great skill?" (185)

Although Shusterman in this way admits that it is possible to make the writing of philosophy more experiential through literary means, it is striking that he does not seem to be as interested in this implication of a somaesthetic approach to philosophy. Despite his insistence on the need to break with "philosophy's institutionalized confinements," it is thus suggestive that Shusterman has not shown any interest in making his own writing more "experiential" and seems to prefer to stick to "the crisper, more lineary style of argument characteristic of the ordinary language analytic philosophy" (170) that he was introduced to in his formative years as a philosopher. At times, he even seems to operate with a dualism between the "conceptual" and the "experiential" that makes it virtually impossible for him to do so. This seems, for example, to be the case when he criticizes philosophy for being "essentially conceptual rather than experiential" (114), because it focuses on "verbal arguments" rather than "lived perceptual experience" (141) or the "nonpropositional, nondiscursive dimension of experience." (176) A similar dualism also seems to be operative when he says that somaesthetics can be seen as a way of "reminding contemporary readers that philosophy could and should be practiced with one's body rather than being confined to "the life of the mind," as well as when he claims that "the most convincing demonstrations of this truth are not in verbal arguments, but in lived perceptual experience." (141). Although I do not think that Shusterman, in the end, subscribes to such dualisms between "mind" and "body" or the "verbal" and "lived perceptual experience," the dualistic implications of his expressions are extremely unfortunate in so far as one of the main purposes of somaeshetics is precisely to overcome such dualisms.

Fortunately, however, there are resources in the writings of Shusterman's own primary source of inspiration, Dewey, for developing a non-dualistic understanding of the experiential dimension of the reading and writing of philosophy texts that may provide valuable inspiration for the somaesthetic attempt not only to reconceptualize the relationship between philosophy and the esthetic, but also to change the way philosophy is written and read. Although the question of the esthetic or experiential dimension of philosophizing seems to have occupied Dewey from early on, his most mature and developed thoughts about the subject are to be found in his main work on esthetics, *Art as Experience*. In this work, Dewey thus not only states that "philosophy, like art, moves in the medium of imaginative mind," but also talks about "genuine artistry in … philosophical speculation" just as he claims that "an experience of thinking has its own esthetic quality" and criticizes the idea "that scientists and philosophers think while poets and painters follow their feelings," because he is convinced that "there is emotionalized thinking" in both "to the same extent in the degree in which they are of comparable rank."[7] So, in *Art as Experience,* Dewey treats philosophizing – the reading and writing of philosophy texts – as an esthetic experience, and although Shusterman never really seems to have delved into these thoughts about philosophy as an esthetic experience, the many scattered remarks about the esthetic dimension in philosophizing to be found primarily in *Art as Experience* (but also elsewhere) seems, when put together, to add up to a full-blown, non-dualistic picture of philosophizing as an esthetic experience, which may be able to provide valuable inspiration for the somaesthetic attempt to change the way philosophy is written and read.[8] That is, at least, the main claim of this paper, which will try to substantiate it in the following way. The first section presents Dewey's

7 John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, (New York: Perigee Books, 2005), p. 309, p. 39 & p. 76

8 Although to my knowledge, Shusterman has not written in detail about Dewey's conception of philosophizing as an esthetic experience, he is clearly aware of it as evidenced, for example, by Shusterman 2000b, p. 22

conception of esthetic experience as it figures in *Art as Experience*. With this in place, the second section then examines the precise sense in which Dewey took philosophizing to represent a form of esthetic experience, before the third section, finally, discusses what implications Dewey's conception of philosophizing as an esthetic experience may have for the somaesthetic attempt to change the practice of "teaching, reading and writing texts" in philosophy.

Esthetic experience

As the title *Art as Experience* indicates, Dewey's thinking about art and the esthetic is rooted in his conception of experience. This conception deviates from traditional empiricist understandings of experience because it does not primarily designate anything peculiarly subjective, but instead comes very close to the idea of life itself as Dewey understands it. In *Art as Experience*, for example, Dewey explicitly states that "the nature of experience is determined by the essential conditions of life," just as he emphasizes the need to mention a number of "biological common places" if one wants to get at "the basic vital roots" of experience.[9] The way in which Dewey links his conception of experience closely with the idea of life itself becomes clear the moment one takes a look at this conception. As he explains in *Art as Experience*, the most basic element in this conception is that experience is something that comes about through "interaction of organism and environment" (22). The use of the terms "organism" and "environment" here clearly indicates the way in which Dewey relates experience to embodied, biological life, and the same point comes through when he argues that "Experience occurs continuously, because the interaction of live creature and environing conditions is involved in the very process of living" (36). So, experience, as Dewey understands it, occurs constantly because the interaction between organism and environment that defines experience occurs as long as life continues.

Although the conception of experience as an interaction between organism and environment is described from the perspective of a bystander looking at the interaction from the outside, Dewey also gives a description of experience from the point of view of the organism itself. From this perspective, experience can, according to Dewey, be said to consist in a constant alteration "between doing and undergoing" (49) in the sense that the organism, first, *does* something to the environment, and then *undergoes* something because of this doing. When I eat, for example, I *do* something: I take something in my environment and put it into my mouth. Because of this doing, however, I also *undergo* something: I feel, perhaps, the texture of the food in my mouth and experience some kind of flavor. In a similar way, when I read a book, first, I *do* something: I open the book and direct my eyes toward the first couple of words. Then, I *undergo* something: I experience that the words make sense, that they sound good and so on.

From the perspective of the organism, experience is thus an indefinite series of such doings and undergoings. The organism implicated in such doings and undergoings may, however, relate to these in different ways. On one hand, the organism may perceive the relation between the different doings and undergoings. On the other hand, it is also possible that the organism does not perceive the relation between them. William James' classic example of a child that reaches out to touch a fascinating, flickering flame provides a good illustration of the distinction.[10] First, the child *does* something in the sense that it reaches out to touch the flame, and then it *undergoes* something in the sense that it experiences a painful burn. If the child does not perceive or realize

9 John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, (New York: Perigee Books, 2005), p. 12, p. 13 & p. 20. The biological roots of experience are also discussed in John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (New York: Dover Publications, 2000), p. 8 and in John Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (New York: Henry Holt & Co, 1938), pp. 23-41

10 William James, *The Principles of Psychology Vol. 1* (New York: Dover Publications, 1950), p. 25

the relation between the doing (reaching out to touch the flame) and the undergoing (a painful burn), it will, as Dewey sees it, not *understand* that the undergoing is a consequence of its own doing and therefore not *learn* that it is painful to touch flames. The next time it sees a fascinating flickering flame, it will probably just reach out to touch it again and undergo the same painful burn. If the child instead perceives the relation between its doing and undergoing, however, it will *understand* that the undergoing is a consequence of its own doing and *learn* that it is painful to touch a flame. The next time it sees a fascinating, flickering flame, it will, accordingly, probably inhibit the spontaneous impulse to touch it and instead be more circumspect in relation to flames.

In *Art as Experience*, Dewey uses the distinction between these two ways of relating to what is done and what is undergone to define two concepts that play an important role in his understanding of esthetic experience. First, he uses it to define the idea of *intelligence*. As he sees it, "perception of what is done and what is undergone" thus "constitutes the work of intelligence" (47). So, the child that did not perceive the relation between its doing (reaching for the flame) and the undergoing (the painful experience of being burned) is, as Dewey uses the term, less intelligent than the child who did perceive the relation. In addition to intelligence, Dewey also uses the distinction to define the closely related concept of meaning. As he explains in *Art as Experience*, he believes that "The consequences undergone because of doing are incorporated as the meaning of subsequent doings because the relation between doing and undergoing is perceived." (65) When the child perceives the relation between its act of touching the flame and the painful burn that results from the act of touching, both the doing and undergoing gains meaning, as Dewey sees it. Instead of the flame just meaning a fascinating colorful thing, it now gains the meaning of something that may burn and hurt. At the same time, the act of reaching out for the flame also gains new meaning. Instead of being a joyful attempt to get in touch with something fascinating, it becomes a dangerous attempt to play with fire. So, perception of the relation between doing and undergoing does not just define intelligence, but also gives meaning to the acts of the organism as well as the objects of the environment. In this way, as Dewey sees it, the original, biological body becomes "the living, sensing, dynamic, perceptive, purposive body" (47) of somaesthetics. For it is through such intelligent interaction with its natural and cultural environment that the organism not only learns what things and acts mean, but also gradually builds up a whole stock of meanings (habits), which makes it possible for it to understand, perceive, and intend things.

A look at Dewey's most succinct definition of esthetic experience may explain why the ideas of intelligence and meaning play such an important role in his understanding of esthetic experience. As he puts it in one place in *Art as Experience*, esthetic experience is defined by the fact that "what is done and what is undergone are … reciprocally, cumulatively, and continuously instrumental to each other" (52). It is probably easiest to understand this idea by means of a concrete example, and because Dewey himself refers to Matisse at some point (141), let us imagine Matisse in front of his canvas getting ready to paint, say, *Le Bonheur de Vivre* (*Joy of Life*). First, he does something. He dips his brush in red paint and places a first brushstroke somewhere on the canvas. Then he undergoes something. He sees the red brushstroke there on the canvas surrounded by the background color. Then he places a second brushstroke next to the first one and undergoes the experience of two red brushstrokes next to each other, and so on throughout the whole process with different colors and brushstrokes. If this process has to qualify as an esthetic experience, the first condition that has to be satisfied according to Dewey's definition is that "what is done and what is undergone … are instrumental to each other." By

this Dewey simply means that they should control each other or be a means to each other. What Matisse undergoes after the first red brushstroke should thus be the experience of the red color there on the canvas and not the sound of a dog barking outside his window or the pleasant memory of last night's party. And this controlling relation should, as Dewey's definition puts it, be "reciprocal" and go both ways in the sense that the red color on the canvas that Matisse experiences as a consequence of the first brushstroke should control his second brushstroke and influence what color it has, where he places it, and so on. And this "reciprocally instrumental" relation between the different doings and undergoings should hold "continuously" throughout the process, according to Dewey's definition. So, it is not enough if it holds, say, only between the first 1,000 doings and undergoings but not between the last 1,000. Finally, the continuously and reciprocally instrumental relation between what is done and undergone should also be "cumulative." This means, as Dewey explains by reference to the etymology of "cumulative," that there should be a "heaping up" or "massing" throughout the process in the sense that the, say, ninth brushstroke should not just be controlled by the experience of the consequences of the eighth brushstroke, but should be controlled by everything that has gone before, just as the tenth brushstroke should be controlled by everything that has gone before it. In this way, the experience will have a direction and move toward some culminating whole or end, which Dewey takes to be a defining feature of esthetic experience.

The previous explication of Dewey's definition of an esthetic experience has taken as its starting point the idea of experience as a long series of different doings and undergoings. Sometimes, however, Dewey also treats an experience as consisting of just one undergoing and doing. When looked at this way, an esthetic experience begins when a person undergoes an "inner vision" (279) or "inspiration" (68), which then leads to the production of a work of art through an act of expression. As Dewey sees it, however, such a process always begins with an "inchoate" (68) or vague idea (in the case of Matisse, his first idea of *The Joy of Life*). This initial vision then prompts the person to do something (Matisse places the first brushstroke on the canvas). The person then undergoes the consequences of the doing (Matisse experiences the red color on the canvas), which then modifies the original idea or inspiration, before this idea then prompts the next doing and so on throughout the whole process. Although this constitutes a slightly different perspective on esthetic experience, it still fulfills the conditions laid down in Dewey's definition of esthetic experience. Here, the relation between the initial, inchoate idea, or inspiration, and the outer work can be said to be "reciprocally, cumulatively, and continuously instrumental to each other" (52). The initial, vague idea controls the first act of expression. The work done then controls the modification of the idea. The modified idea then controls the next act of expression and so on, back and forth continuously throughout the process until it culminates in a fully worked-out idea and a finished work of art.[11]

Although the previous elucidation has used the activity of an artist like Matisse to illustrate Dewey's idea of esthetic experience, it is important to notice that Dewey does not limit the idea to creative artists like Matisse, but extends it to "the perceiver and appreciator" (54) as well. As he puts it in one place, he thus believes that "what is true of original production is true of

11 Because Dewey, in this way, takes an esthetic experience to begin with a vague idea that is gradually worked out, he can also claim that "the unexpected turn, something which the artist himself does not definitely foresee, is a condition of the felicitous quality of a work of art" (145), just as he can say that the esthetic is to be found "between the poles of aimlessness and mechanical efficiency" (40) or "caprice" and "routine" (51). In *Art as Experience* he also claims that esthetic experience is characterized by a special immanent relation between "means and ends" (204-5); "the practical, emotional, and intellectual" (56); "the past, present and future" (127 & 183); and "all the senses" , which he sums up by describing esthetic experience as "imaginative experience" (279), where the imaginative "designates a quality that animates and pervades all processes of making and observation" in so far as "it is a way of seeing and feeling things as they compose an integral whole." (278) I will not, however, go further into these ideas here.

appreciative perception" (184) in the sense that both activities have to fulfill the same conditions if they are to qualify as esthetic experiences. Just as with the creative artist, the creative perceiver or appreciator of a work of art like Matisse's *Joy of Life* will, as Dewey sees it, begin the experience with "a first total, unanalyzed qualitative impression" (311), which will then guide his or her activity of looking, and it is only if the perceiver, on this basis, manages to have an experience where all of the different doings and undergoings that make up the activity of looking at Matisse's *Joy of Life* are "reciprocally, cumulatively and continuously instrumental" to each other that the activity will qualify as an esthetic experience. It is, of course, still possible to distinguish between "the artistic" as something that "refers primarily to the act of production" and "the esthetic" as something that refers to "perception and enjoyment" (48), but then it only designates a difference of content and not a difference of structure, as Dewey sees it. When painting the *Joy of Life*, Matisse is obviously doing something different than the one who perceives it afterward, because he is handling brushes and paint, whereas the perceiver is moving his eyes and body. But in so far as they both have an esthetic experience, the relation between their different doings and undergoings will, according to Dewey, be similar because it will be "reciprocally, cumulatively and continuously instrumental."

As this idea of esthetic experience suggests, it is possible for different experiences to fulfill these conditions to different degrees depending on the extent to which what is done and what is undergone are "reciprocally, cumulatively and continuously instrumental to each other," and in *Art as Experience*, Dewey introduces a rough distinction between experiences having "esthetic quality" (57) and "distinctively" (57) or "peculiarly and dominantly esthetic" (58) experiences in order to differentiate between those experiences that fulfill the conditions to some extent and those that do it to a high degree. If an experience has "esthetic quality," it is, as Dewey sees it, because it fulfills the conditions for an esthetic experience to some degree, whereas a "distinctively esthetic experience" is one that fulfills the conditions to a high degree. The distinction between experiences having "esthetic quality" and "distinctively esthetic experiences" is, however, just a rough one because is possible for different experiences to fulfill the conditions for an esthetic experience to all kinds of degrees.

It is so important for Dewey to emphasize that the esthetic is a matter of degree because he is critical of traditional attempts to make a sharp separation between "fine art" and "ordinary experience" (4). This critical attitude is founded on his conviction that the "customary distinction ["between fine art and useful or technological art" or "ordinary experience"] is based simply on acceptance of certain existing social relations" (27). As Dewey sees it, it is, thus, solely social conditions that have decided that some activities (say painting) have been allowed to fulfill the conditions that define an esthetic experience to a high degree, whereas an activity like masonry, say, has been reduced to a rather monotonous line of work. His belief in the social relativity of the distinction between fine art and ordinary experience is in fact so deep that it can be said to motivate the whole of *Art as Experience*'s attempt to rethink the idea of esthetic experience. As Dewey himself puts it in the introductory chapter, the whole point of the book's basic idea of continuity between esthetic and ordinary experience is thus to make it possible to "explain how and why" "artistic and esthetic quality" "so generally fails to become explicit" despite the fact that it is "implicit in every normal experience" (11). In this sense, the purpose of Dewey's idea of esthetic experience is not only to allow the reader "to indicate the factors and forces that favor the normal development of common human activities into matters of artistic value," but also "to point out those conditions that arrest its normal growth" (10), and, as the next section will demonstrate, one of those common human activities that Dewey took to have the potential to

develop "into matters of artistic value" is the activity of philosophizing.

Philosophizing as an esthetic experience

That Dewey takes philosophizing to be one of the kind of experiences that has a potential to develop "into matters of artistic value" is something he states explicitly in a number of places in *Art as Experience*. In one place, he simply states that "an experience of thinking has its own esthetic quality" (39), whereas elsewhere he claims that the way in which thinking orders "a variety of meanings so that they move to a conclusion that all support and in which all are summed up and conserved" is "the essence of fine art" (179). In other places he similarly claims that "philosophy, like art, moves in the medium of imagination" (309), just as he emphasizes the possibility of "genuine artistry in scientific inquiry and philosophic speculation" (125). So, there can be no doubt that the activity of philosophizing is one of the activities that Dewey took to have the potential to develop "into matters of artistic value." But how, exactly, does he see philosophy as an experience with (at least) esthetic quality?[12]

At the most general level, Dewey thinks that an experience of thinking has esthetic quality because it fulfills the general conditions for an esthetic experience. When one has an experience of thinking, what is done and what is undergone are thus "reciprocally, cumulatively, and continuously instrumental to each other" (52). Although Dewey takes this idea to apply to the "artistic" philosopher who creates a work of philosophy, as well as the "esthetic" reader who reads it, it is probably easiest to understand in relation to the reader of a work of philosophy. As Dewey sees it, philosophical ideas and arguments are, in a sense, works of art, just like a painting by Matisse. In *Experience and Nature*, he thus states that "the idea is, in short, art and a work of art."[13] And just as he thinks that the real work of art is not the physical painting by Matisse hanging on the wall, but the esthetic experience that is called forth when an encultured person interacts with it, he also thinks that it is the experience called forth by the definition of an idea or the presentation of an argument that is the real experience of thinking, and not the words in themselves. In *Art as Experience*, he explains this idea in relation to an argument as follows:

> *We say of an experience of thinking that we reach or draw a conclusion. Theoretical formulation of the process is often made in such terms as to conceal effectually the similarity of "conclusion" to the consummating phase of every developing integral experience. These formulations apparently take their cue from separate propositions that are premises and the proposition that is the conclusion as they appear on the printed page. The impression is derived that there are first two independent and ready-made entities that are then manipulated so as to give rise to a third. In fact, in an experience of thinking, premises emerge only as a conclusion becomes manifest. The experience, like that of watching a storm reach its height*

12 Although Dewey clearly insists that philosophizing may have "esthetic quality," it is less clear if he thinks it may constitute a "peculiarly and dominantly esthetic experience." Sometimes he seems to suggest that it may, in so far as he seems to claim that the only difference between philosophy and those activities that are traditionally recognized as the fine arts is *material*. Thus: "An experience of thinking has its own esthetic quality. It differs from those experiences that are acknowledged to be esthetic, but only in its materials. The material of the fine arts consists of qualities; that of experience having intellectual conclusion are signs or symbols having no intrinsic quality of their own, but standing for things that may in another experience be qualitatively experienced" (39). At other times, however, he seems to suggest that the difference is not just *material* but also *formal* in a sense that the formal has to do with the purpose that drives an activity. Thus: "Nevertheless, the experiences in question are dominantly intellectual or practical rather than distinctively esthetic, because of the interest and purpose that initiate and control them" (57). Although precisely what he means by this is an important question, I will not pursue it here, but limit myself to the more modest claim that philosophizing at least has esthetic quality. The relation between philosophy and literature is also discussed by Shusterman in relation to Rorty and Habermas in Shusterman 1997, pp. 113-129

13 John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (New York: Dover Publications, 2000), p. 371

> *and gradually subside, is one of continuous movement of subject-matters. Like the ocean in the storm, there are a series of waves; suggestions reaching out and being broken in a clash, or being carried onwards by a cooperative wave. If a conclusion is reached, it is that of a movement of anticipation and cumulation, one that finally comes to a completion. A "conclusion" is no separate and independent thing; it is the consummation of a movement (39).*

As this passage makes clear, Dewey equates the conclusion of an argument with "the consummating phase of every developing integral experience." It corresponds, in short, to the culmination of an esthetic experience or, at least, an experience with esthetic quality. The thought is as follows. If one reads an argument printed on a page, one does something: One directs one's eyes toward the first line/premise. Then one undergoes something in the sense that one experiences some kind of meaning. This experience of meaning is, as Dewey sees it, a product of the interaction between the printed signs on the page and the embodied meanings/habits that one has acquired through one's previous experience with such signs. The meaning attributed to the first premise then automatically creates an expectation of what the next premise/sentence will be about because it leads one to expect that it will be about something that is related to and relevant to the first premise. If the experience is a real experience of thinking, however, the meaning attributed to the first premise will be only a tentative suggestion so that, when one does something again and moves one's eyes toward the second sentence/premise, it is perfectly possible that it does not correspond to the anticipation or expectation that was set up by the meaning attributed to the first premise. Instead of "being carried onward by a cooperative wave," it is thus possible that the suggestions will be "broken in a clash." Of course, this may just be because it is a bad argument, but it may also be because the meaning assigned to the first premise was premature and inappropriate. If the second premise thwarts the expectation created by the meaning assigned to the first premise, it may then lead to a revision of the meaning originally assigned to the first premise, and similarly, if one moves on to the conclusion. Even if one feels that the reinterpretation of the two premises have made them fit together and carry one's thinking "onwards by a cooperative wave," they may then clash with the meaning spontaneously assigned to the conclusion and start a similar process of revision all over again. In this sense, as Dewey sees it, the premises and the conclusions in a real experience of thinking are reciprocally, continuously, and cumulatively instrumental to each other in so far as one's understanding of the premises is informed by one's understanding of the conclusion, just as much as one's understanding of the conclusion is informed by one's understanding of the premises, and this process of mutual adjustment continues throughout the experience until it culminates in the acceptance or rejection of the argument. In this way, as Dewey puts it, a conclusion is thus "no separate and independent thing," but "the consummation of a movement" of thinking, in the same way that the physical painting by Matisse is not the real work of art, but the consummation, culmination, or conclusion of a movement or experience of painting or looking.

The same idea of an experience of thinking as having esthetic quality applies, as already mentioned, to the thinking of a single idea just as much as to the thinking of an argument. Because Dewey, in the passage from *Experience and Nature*, in which he refers to ideas as works of art, specifically refers to the idea of art itself as a work of art, his own idea of art may be used to illustrate this idea. As I have presented it, the essence of Dewey's idea of art is that "what is done and what is undergone are … reciprocally, cumulatively and continuously instrumental to each other" (52). This idea is, as Dewey sees it, itself a work of art in so far as it, like a painting by Matisse, is the product of an experience that fulfills the conditions defining an esthetic

experience and is capable of eliciting the same kind of experience when a suitably encultured organism interacts with it. Just like the person who looks at a painting by Matisse has to connect the different parts of the painting with each other, the person who tries to understand Dewey's idea thus has to relate the different parts of the idea to each other: the idea of doing, the idea of undergoing, the idea of instrumentality, the idea of reciprocality, the idea of continuity, and the idea of cumulation. And for the person who encounters Dewey's idea of art for the first time, there will, just as with an argument, probably be a continuous movement back and forth between the different ideas before the experience finally culminates in a real understanding of Dewey's idea of art.

So, as Dewey sees it, an experience of thinking has its own esthetic quality, because such an experience – no matter whether it deals with a single idea or an extended argument and no matter whether one is "artistically" creating them or "esthetically" perceiving them – is structured in such a way that "what is done and what is undergone … is reciprocally, cumulatively and continuously instrumental to each other."

It may seem surprising that Dewey in this way treats philosophizing as a form of esthetic experience, but in *Art as Experience*, he applies precisely the same ideas to philosophizing as to esthetic experience in general. Just as he claims that esthetic experience is imaginative experience, he thus insists that philosophizing depends on the imagination. Inspired by the English romantic poet John Keats, he claims that:

> *Even "the greatest philosopher" exercises an animal-like preference to guide his thinking to its conclusions. He selects and puts aside as his imaginative sentiments move. "Reason" at its height cannot attain complete grasp and a self-contained assurance. It must fall back upon imagination – upon the embodiment of ideas in emotionally charged sense. (34)*

As this passage makes clear, Dewey takes a real experience of philosophical thinking to share the same imaginative quality that characterizes all forms of esthetic experience. Similarly, he also takes an experience of thinking to be creatively inspired in the same way as other forms of esthetic experience. This is how he puts it in one place in *Art as Experience*:

> *Persons who are conventionally set off from artists, "thinkers," scientists, do not operate by conscious wit and will to anything like the extent popularly supposed. They, too, press forward toward some end dimly and imprecisely prefigured, groping their way as they are lured on by the identity of an aura in which their observations and reflections swim. Only the psychology that has separated things which in reality belong together holds that scientists and philosophers think while poets and painters follow their feelings. In both, and to the same extent in the degree in which they are of comparable rank, there is emotionalized thinking and there are feelings whose substance consists of appreciated meanings or ideas. (77)*

As Dewey suggests here, an experience of thinking begins with the undergoing of a vague idea of something that one wants to express or think through ("some end dimly and imprecisely figured") whose "aura" then guides the philosopher's creation of an idea or argument in such a way that both the original idea and its expression in words (written or verbal) gradually form each other through an experience of thinking characterized by a reciprocally, cumulatively, and

continuously instrumental relationship between what is done and what is undergone.[14] The quoted passage also reveals that Dewey takes philosophizing as breaking with a rigid distinction between the practical, the emotional, and the intellectual in the same way that he takes all forms of esthetic experience to do. As he points out, he thus believes that "there is emotionalized thinking" and "feelings whose substance consists of appreciated meanings and ideas" to the same extent in philosophy and in conventionally recognized forms of art, like poetry and painting. So, as Dewey sees it, the conventional picture of philosophy as purely intellectual or abstract, having to do only with reason as opposed to emotions, is deeply flawed.

Dewey takes the ability to feel to be so important in philosophy because he is convinced that a philosopher has to have a bodily rooted "feel" for his materials in the same way that any artist, whether a painter or a sculptor, needs a "feel" for his or her material. As he puts it in one place:

> *It is quite true that certain things, namely ideas, exercise a mediating function. But only a twisted and aborted logic can hold that because something is mediated it cannot, therefore, be immediately experienced. The reverse is the case. We cannot grasp any idea, any organ of mediation, we cannot possess it in its full force, until we have felt and sensed it, as much so as it were an odor or a color. (124)*

So, just as a painter needs a certain "feel" for colors – an immediate experience of their meaning – ideas have to be "felt and sensed" by a philosopher if an experience of thinking is to occur. That the importance of feeling in philosophy is not generally recognized, Dewey seems to suggest, is partly because it is difficult for outsiders to understand, since they cannot help but experience philosophical ideas as "signs or symbols having no intrinsic quality of their own, but standing for things that may in another experience be qualitatively experienced" (39). The case is different, however, for the thinker who has had intense experiences philosophizing. As Dewey points out:

> *Those who are especially addicted to thinking as an occupation are aware when they observe the processes of thought, instead of determining by dialectic what they must be, that immediate feeling is not limited in its scope. Different ideas have their different "feels," their immediate qualitative aspects, just as much as anything else. One who is thinking his way through a complicated problem finds direction on his way by means of this property of ideas. Their qualities stop him when he enters the wrong path and send him ahead when he hits the right one. They are signs of an intellectual "Stop and Go." (124)*

So, those who know the art of philosophizing from the inside are aware that it is guided by the immediate, qualitative feel of certain ideas, just as all other forms of art are guided by a feel for their peculiar material. And just as Dewey takes such a feel to be necessary if an experience is to take on esthetic quality within all other fields, he also takes it to be necessary within philosophy. As he puts it::

> *Whenever an idea loses its immediate felt quality, it ceases to be an idea and becomes, like an algebraic symbol, a mere stimulus to execute an operation without the need of thinking. For this reason certain trains of ideas leading to their appropriate consummation (or conclusion) are beautiful or elegant. They have*

14 Dewey also expresses the same idea in a slightly different way by saying that "the beginning of a new idea, terminating perhaps in an elaborate judgment following upon extensive inquiry, is an impression, even in the case of a scientific man or philosopher" (317).

> *esthetic character. In reflection it is often necessary to make a distinction between matters of sense and matters of thought. But the distinction does not exist in all modes of experience. When there is genuine artistry in scientific inquiry and philosophic speculation, a thinker proceeds neither by rule nor yet blindly, but by means of meanings that exist immediately as feelings having qualitative color. (124-125)*

So, as Dewey sees it, in the end it is the qualitative feel of certain ideas and the sense for such "feel" that conditions the presence of "genuine artistry" or "esthetic character" in an experience of thinking, because it is the guidance provided by them that makes it possible for the thinker to proceed "neither by rule nor yet blindly" and thus avoid the two extremes that he takes to delimit the esthetic in experience. But in what way may such a conception of philosophizing as esthetic experience be able to contribute to the field of somaesthetics? That is what the next section will explore.

Somaesthetic lessons

Shusterman defines somaesthetics as being "concerned with the critical study and meliorative cultivation of how we experience and use the living body (or soma) as a site of sensory appreciation (aesthesis) and creative self-fashioning."[15] As this summary description indicates, somaesthetics has both a theoretical ("critical study") and practical side ("meliorative cultivation"), because it studies not only the role of "the living, feeling, sentient body" in experience *theoretically*, but also tries to come up with and implement *practical* ways of "improving specific somatic skills of performance" by means of increased "somatic understanding and awareness.[16] Given this understanding of somaesthetics, it is clear that Dewey's understanding of philosophizing as an esthetic experience, which is deeply rooted in the interaction between an encultured body and its environment, can be seen as a *theoretical* contribution to somaesthetics. More importantly, I also think that it is able to go beyond the purely theoretical and contribute practically to the somaesthetic task of "improving specific somatic skills of performance." Implicitly, Dewey's conception of philosophizing as an esthetic experience thus points to a number of ways in which the activity of philosophizing – for example, when philosophy students read philosophy texts – may be improved by means of increased "somatic understanding and awareness."

To appreciate this idea, it is important to understand how central Dewey thinks the body is even in a supposedly intellectual activity like reading a philosophy book. As explained previously, Dewey thinks that an experience of thinking depends on a certain "feel" for specific ideas. But as Dewey sees it, these feelings are deeply rooted in the body. This becomes especially clear in *Experience and Nature*'s seventh chapter on "Nature, Life and Body–Mind," where Dewey explains the bodily rootedness of ideas as follows:

> *When I think such meanings as "friend" and "enemy," I refer to external and eventual consequences. But this naming does not involve miraculous "action at a distance." There is something present in organic action which acts as a surrogate for the remote things signified. The words make immediate sense as well as have significance. This something now present is not just the activity of the laryngeal*

15 Shusterman 2008, p. 1.

16 Richard Shusterman, "Body and the Arts: The Need for Somaesthetics" in *Diogenes*, 59 (1-2), 2013, p. 16. There Shusterman also explains his distinction between analytic, pragmatic and practical somaesthetics

> *and vocal apparatus. When shortcircuiting through language is carried as far as limitation to this apparatus, words are mere counters automatically used, and language disappears. The ideas are qualities of events in which all the parts of organic structure which have ever been implicated in actual situations of concern with extra-organic friends and enemies: presumably in proprio-receptors and organ-receptors with all their connected glandular and muscular mechanisms. These qualities give body and stuff to the activity of the linguistic apparatus.*[17]

So, as Dewey sees it, the meanings that certain ideas – whether the ideas of "friend" and "enemy" or "experience" and "nature," for example – possess for a specific person "are qualities of events in which all parts of organic structure which have ever been implicated in actual situations of concern" with the things that the words or ideas designate. In this sense meaning is, according to Dewey, a bodily affair of "glandular and muscular mechanisms" and "proprio-receptors and organ-receptors."

The feel for ideas that guides thinking is thus deeply rooted in the body, according to Dewey, and the significance of this for an activity like reading is tremendous. For, as Dewey goes on to explain in the next chapter on "Existence, Ideas and Consciousness," even "our most highly intellectualized operations" depend on the "immense multitude of immediate organic selections, rejections, welcomings, expulsions, appropriations, withdrawals, shrinkings, expansions, elations and dejections, attacks, wardings off, of the most minute, vibratingly delicate nature" that constitute the organic substratum of thinking (299). When it comes to "reading a book" (306), for example, it is thus the case that, if "a reader" does not repeat "something of these organic movements, and thus "gets" their qualities, he does not get the sense of what is said; he does not really assent, even though he gives cold approbation" (300). So, as Dewey sees it, a process like that of reading a philosophical text is in this sense deeply rooted in a multitude of minute, organic movements. Based on the meanings that have been deposited in one's body through previous engagement in "actual situations of concern" with the things that the ideas refer to, certain organic movements (and meanings) are automatically activated the next time one encounters similar signs on a page. Provided that the activity is running smoothly and one understands the text, there is of course no need to pay any attention to these minute "organic movements," which are then better left in the background. Unfortunately, however, "the act of taking which enables dialectic [reading] to exist or occur" is not always successful in so far as "taking is fallible" and, as such, "often mis-taking" (287). For philosophy students, for example, who have to read complex and abstract (historical) texts, it is thus a fact that they often have a hard time understanding or making sense of the texts that they read. Of course, there are many reasons why this is so, but from a Deweyan perspective they will, in the end, always be rooted in bodily movements. As he explains in *Experience and Nature*, understanding may thus

> *… flag because of fatigue; it may take one meaning for another because of perverse sensory appreciations, due to organic maladjustment; haste, due to absence of inhibition, may lead one to take a meaning to be clear when it is cloudy or ambiguous with respect to the purpose for which it is used, although in itself it is neither clear nor obscure. (288)*

So, all of these ways of mistaking or misunderstanding a text are, according to Dewey, rooted in organic conditions such as "fatigue," "perverse sensory appreciations," "organic

17 John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (New York: Dover Publications, 2000), p. 292

maladjustment," and "absence of inhibition;" when such mistakings occur, it becomes, as he explains, a substantial problem that "we are not aware of the qualities of many or most of" those organic movements that condition our understanding in so far as "we do not objectively distinguish and identify them" even though they "exist as feeling qualities, and have an enormous directive effect on our behavior" (299). And the reason why it is such a problem that we are not aware of these organic movements is that we, then, cannot adjust or change them in such a way that we can move from misunderstanding and mistaking to understanding and an experience of thinking. So, just as with someone who is unable to "stand" or control his "posture and movements" (299), the solution for someone who cannot understand a philosophy text is, as Dewey sees it, to strengthen "the plane of conscious control, the direction of action by perception of connections" (296).

But how could one strengthen the plane of conscious control so that philosophy students, for example, will perform better when reading philosophy texts? Of course, one way to do this is through theoretical lectures on philosophizing as an esthetic experience, which might change the way in which students approach this type of text.[18] But that would still be a very theoretical intervention. Practically, one of the most important things would probably be to teach them to slow down when reading. From a Deweyan perspective, reading is a bodily activity that takes time in so far as it not only involves eye movements, turning pages, and so on, but also constant activation of the embodied habits that are responsible for the meaning ascribed to individual words.[19] If students are to become more aware of this process, they need to slow down so that they become able to pay more attention to it. This also seems to be implied by Dewey's suggestion that "haste, due to absence of inhibition, may lead one to take a meaning to be clear when it is cloudy or ambiguous."[20]

The all-importance of slowness when reading philosophy texts has recently been emphasized by Michelle Bolous Walker in her *Slow Philosophy: Reading Against the Institution*, where she suggests that slowness is a precondition of appreciating philosophy texts in exactly the same way as eating slowly may be a precondition of appreciating food. As Walker describes it, many students come to philosophy with reading habits formed outside philosophy, where they have developed "superficial skimming techniques … online" that make them "ill-equipped" for philosophy, because they simply lack "the basic skills of concentrated attention, uninterrupted thinking and receptivity" that philosophy demands.[21] According to Walker, this situation is exacerbated further by the institutional setting of philosophy. As she explains, drawing on Pierre Hadot and others, the institution of philosophy was originally inspired by the ancient idea of philosophy as "a way of life that binds the philosopher to philosophy" or as a "love of wisdom" that "inaugurate a transformative relation" (2). Gradually, however, this original idea has been replaced by the idea of philosophy as a "forensic desire to know" (1), which, as Walker sees it, has had profound effects on philosophical reading habits because it has encouraged a "cult of speed and haste" (10) guided by images of reading as "'information extraction" or "mining'" (18) that positively prevent the practice of philosophizing as "a slow and repetitive art" (21)

18 In a similar way, one could also make students aware of the fact that philosophers write within many different genres, as has been emphasized by Berel Lang in *The Anatomy of Philosophical Style* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp. 9-44 or make them read some of the essay in an anthology like Costica Bradatan (ed.), *Philosophy as a Literary Art: Making Things Up* (London: Routledge, 2015)

19 Here Dewey is in line with Siri Hustvedt who in her *Living, Thinking, Looking: Essays* (New York: Picador, 2012), p. 134 claims that "the act of reading takes place in human time; in the time of the body, and it partakes of the body's rhythms, of heartbeat and breath, of the movement of our ideas, and of our fingers that turn the pages, but we do not pay particular attention to any of this."

20 This fits in well with Shusterman's analysis of Thoreau in Shusterman 2012, p. 297, according to which "Slowness is another method Thoreau recommends for heightened awareness."

21 Michelle B. Walker, *Slow Philosophy: Reading Against the Institution* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), p. 13

of reading that "grounds thought in the body, in experience" (29). The question which these considerations lead Walker to raise, and which I think Dewey's thinking about philosophizing as an esthetic experience also raises, is if there are "ways, then, that we can, as teachers of philosophy, welcome our students into an ethical community of readers" and teach them "what it means to read philosophy slowly and patiently" (22). I will not go further into Walker's own positive suggestions (which she develops through slow reading of other philosophers) here, but rather take my cue from a suggestion that she makes and then develop it in a Deweyan way. Walkers suggests that teachers could help students learn how to read slowly by making "slow reading exercises a standard part of the curriculum" (14).

But how could one go about introducing such exercises into the curriculum in a Dewey-inspired way? Here I draw on a personal example.[22] A year ago I gave an introductory lecture on phenomenology to a class of roughly 40 first-year philosophy students. As part of their preparation for the lecture, the students had been asked to read a number of introductory texts about phenomenology. One of these was the text "Phenomenology and psychology" by the Danish phenomenologist Løgstrup; another was Merleau Ponty's famous "What is Phenomenology?" preface to his *Phenomenology of Perception*. The lecture lasted three hours and began in a quite traditional way in so far as I first gave a general introduction to some of the key concepts in phenomenology (such as phenomenon, subject, lifeworld, intentionality, epoché, reduction, and so on), and then went on to say a bit about how these ideas figure in Merleau-Ponty's dense text. Next, however, I projected a PowerPoint with a difficult excerpt from Merleau-Ponty's text[23] and suggested to the students that I would like to use it as a reading exercise. Then, I read it slowly to them aloud before I suggested that they should go over the passage, two and two together, and see if they (with the background understanding of phenomenology that I had given them) could make sense of the whole passage. I also emphasized that I thought it was a difficult passage even for me, while I pointed out that they would have plenty of time to do the exercise (I had reserved 45 minutes for it). Then the students started reading and arguing with each other, and after approximately 25 minutes, I asked if anyone was willing to hazard an interpretation of the first couple of sentences or even of the whole passage. Several students were willing to do so, and we then went through the whole passage word by word and line by line. Each time a student suggested an interpretation that was able to make sense of some parts of a sentence but not all, I asked how they would make sense of the rest of the sentence or passage and, in this way, we collectively/collaboratively finally managed to make sense of the whole passage (or so we

22 While the example is personal and inspired by Dewey's thoughts about philosophizing as an esthetic experience similar exercises have also been suggested by university didacticians. See for example John C. Beane, *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking and Active Learning in the Classroom* (San Francisco, John Wiley & Sons, 2011, pp. 133-148

23 The relevant passage can be found in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. xiii–xiv, where Merleau-Ponty explains that "For Husserl, on the contrary, it is well known that there is a problem of other people, and the alter ego is a paradox. If the other is truly for himself alone, beyond his being for me, and if we are for each other and not both for God, we must necessarily have some appearance for each other. He must and I must have an outer appearance, and there must be, besides the perspective of the For Oneself – my view of myself and the other's of himself – a perspective of For Others – my view of others and theirs of me. Of course, these two perspectives, in each one of us, cannot be simply juxtaposed, for in that case it is not I that the other would see, nor he that I should see. I must be the exterior that I present to others, and the body of the other must be the other himself. This paradox and the dialectic of the Ego and the Alter are possible only provided that the Ego and the Alter Ego are defined by their situation and are not freed from all inherence; that is, provided that philosophy does not culminate in a return to the self, and that I discover by reflection not only my presence to myself, but also the possibility of an "outside spectator'; that is, again, provided that at the very moment when I experience my existence – at the ultimate extremity of reflection – I fall short of the ultimate density which would place me outside time, and that I discover within myself a kind of internal weakness standing in the way of my being totally individualized: a weakness which exposes me to the gaze of others as a man among men or at least as a consciousness among consciousness. Hitherto the Cogito depreciated the perception of others, teaching me as it did that the I is accessible only to itself, since it defined me as the thought which I have of myself, and which clearly I am alone in having, at least in this ultimate sense. For the "other" to be more than an empty word, it is necessary that my existence should never be reduced to my bare awareness of existing, but that it should take in also the awareness that one may have of it, and thus include my incarnation in some nature and the possibility, at least, of a historical situation. The Cogito must reveal me in a situation, and it is on this condition alone that transcendental subjectivity can, as Husserl puts it, be an intersubjectivity."

thought, at least).

How can this exercise in slow reading be said to help the students perform better philosophically? Based on my knowledge of their abilities, I feel certain that most of them would not have been able to make sense of the passage when they read it at home – probably because they lack the appropriate background understanding of phenomenology and read too fast. Often, however, students are not even aware that they have not understood a text, because they simply project a more or less arbitrary meaning on it and then think they have understood it. So, the first thing an exercise in slow reading may do is make them aware that they have not really understood the text. Next, of course, it may also make them aware that it takes time to read such texts and that it pays to slow down while reading, because this is what allowed us to move from a situation of non- or mis-understanding to understanding. In this way, the exercise in slow reading may thus be said to have given them a concrete experience of how slow reading is able to improve performance when it comes to reading philosophy texts. Instead of the reading process being a mysterious black box that some get and some do not, it was, so to say, opened up collectively and became something that we did together, in public. The evidence here is of course anecdotal, but I think it points to the fact that, in principle, the situation with philosophy students who are unable to read philosophy texts are not different from the case of a person who has bad posture and does not know how to correct it. From a Deweyan, somaesthetic perspective, the solution in both cases is the strengthening of "the plane of conscious control, the direction of action by perception of connections" and, as I hope to have indicated here at the end of this paper, slow reading exercises inspired by Dewey's understanding of philosophizing as an esthetic experience is one way in which this plane of conscious control may be strengthened, so that it may lead to somaesthetically improved performance within the very special practice of reading philosophy texts.

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Care of the Self, Somaestethics and Drug Addiction: An Exploration on Approaching and Treating Problem Drug Use

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Abstract: *Can a person use dangerous substances and still take care oneself and be healthy? Is it right to give people directions and tools for using substances, which, in the worst case, could be lethal to them? This article provides empirical examples of practices and policies designed to offer those who inject drugs opportunities and methods for taking care of themselves and, thus, the chance to lead a more balanced life, in spite of it all. Images of problem drug use have traditionally been associated with despair and devastating marginalization. Harm-reduction policies, initiated in the 1980s to combat the spread of HIV and other blood-borne viruses among drug users, raised the issue of drug use in the context of health and healthcare, and gave users new ways to think about themselves. Critics refer to this development as "biopower," in which drug users have become "docile bodies," who are expected to follow safe injecting practices and other such procedures under the surveillance of healthcare professionals. However, the users themselves have been more positive and consider harm-reduction policies not only as life saving, but life altering. This article touches on different aspects of harm-reduction policies in the context of the Foucauldian discussion of "care of the self." A somaesthetic framework is applied to understanding harm reduction as a set of practices in which helping drug users goes through their body and not through their will, as in traditional approaches to addiction. Focusing on the body provides users with new ways of thinking about their existence and relationships with themselves and others.*

Keywords: *problem drug use, addiction, care of self, somaesthetics.*

Prologue

Former Canadian health minister Jane Philpott found herself in a tight corner on May 14, 2017. It was the opening ceremony of the biannual meeting of Harm Reduction International, a global network that promotes evidence-based public health and drug policies and the human rights of drug users. Philpott was to give speech as a representative of the Canadian government. The evening had already been emotional. In 2016, it was estimated that 2,300 people in Canada had died from opioid overdoses, and the deaths continued in 2017. One of the victims was Raffi Balian, a Canadian harm-reduction and human rights activist who had died of an overdose just

a few months before the conference, and whose work and contributions to the harm-reduction community were mentioned in the ceremony by grieving friends and colleagues.

When it was Philpott's turn to talk, she faced an angry crowd of protestors. Signs held by the protestors read "TheyTalkWeDie" and "LifeWon'tWait," indicating that the Canadian government had not taken sufficient action to combat overdose deaths. Some of the protestors turned their back on Philpott while she desperately tried to convince them and other members of the audience that she took their criticism seriously. An article about the ceremony that appeared in Canada's "Now Magazine" a couple of weeks later noted that "Minister Philpott appeared shaken" and that for some "it was difficult to see an overseer of tangible progress take the brunt of so much collective frustration and anger." According to Hugh Gibson, the author of the article, for the protestors, "it also wasn't a time to be warm and cuddly."[1]

After her speech, Philpott left the stage with a slightly nervous smile. "Stop smiling," one of the protestors shouted angrily. "Thousands are dead, and you're smiling."

Two weeks later, Philpott continued the discussion in an interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)[2], in which she again reassured users and their families that she had taken note of their concerns. One of her solutions was to provide heroin-assisted treatment to people suffering from severe opioid addiction. She stated "although a challenging concept for some people," it could "save lives." Researcher Eugenia Oviedo-Joekes, who was asked to comment on the minister's suggestion in the interview, saw it as an important step toward seeing drug users as people. "[It's] very important that a minister of health is saying those words," Oviedo-Joakes stated. "We need to change the way people see our patients. We are not kind to our patients. People need to stop thinking about the drug and start thinking of the people."

Introduction

The World Health Organization's (WHO) Burden of Disease (GBD) reports provide data on mortality and loss of health as a result of diseases, injuries, and risk factors for all world regions. The original GBD study was commissioned by the World Bank in 1991, and provided burden of disease estimates for 1990. Later, the project was extended to provide estimates for the years 2005, 2010, and 2013. The task of Australia's National Drug and Alcohol Centre (NDARC) was to calculate the global levels of disease, injury, and death associated with illicit drug use and dependence. To date, the findings of its study have pointed out that burdens of death and illness caused by illicit drug use are notably high in the U.K., U.S.A., South Africa, and Australia. The most pronounced source of the burden is opioid addiction, and the burden of this disease falls most heavily on men aged 20–29 years old. Disability and illness caused by opioid dependence increased more than 74% between 1990 and 2010. Another central cause of death and illnesses associated with illicit drug use is amphetamine addiction.[3]

It is not only the users of illicit drugs who carry the disease burden related to drug use. For example, opioids are highly addictive substances, and their medical use can have adverse and irreversible consequences. In the U.S., consumption of opioid pain relievers (OPR) and the harm associated with their consumption has soared in the 2010s. Overdose mortality quadrupled

1 Hugh Gibson, "Dispatches from Montreal's International Harm Reduction Conference," *Now* 26.5.2017. https://nowtoronto.com/news/dispatches-montreals-international-harm-reduction-conference/

2 Catherine Tunney, "Jane Phillpot says pharmaceutical heroin a potential livesafer in opioid epidemic," CBC 20.5.2017 https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/philpott-heroin-addiction-opioids-1.4123233

3 Summary of the NDARC's findings and background on GDP reports can be found from their website https://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/project/global-burden-disease-mental-disorders-and-illicit-drug-use-expert-group)

between 1999 and 2011. The period 1997–2011 saw a 900% increase in people seeking treatment for opioid addiction, as well as a sharp increase in the number of visits to emergency rooms caused by drug use.[4] The U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) referred to the situation as the worst drug overdose epidemic and added opioid-related deaths to its list of five public health challenges. President Trump has also taken a stand, calling the situation "a health emergency." In Canada, the government has referred to its situation as a national opioid crisis and a public health emergency.[5] One of the government's solutions has been to launch the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act, to help Canadians save a life during an overdose situation.

In Europe, opioids, especially highly potent synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl and karfentanyl, are considered a growing health concern along with new psychoactive substances (NPS) produced in small laboratories across the world and sold and bought on the dark web. In addition, injecting drugs continues to be problem.[6]

Given the magnitude of the problem related to opioid use, and drug use generally, our ability to deal with these problems is surprisingly limited. Also, we easily resort to traditional approaches to understanding drug use and its causes and effects. As researcher Oviedo-Jokes noted in the CBC interview mentioned above concerning heroin-assisted treatment, "Do you know how hard it is to know that there is a medication that works, but no one seems to just do it?" Prominent public health experts have raised a similar question: Why do we continue to invest heavily in criminal and legal enforcement measures, although there is very little scientific evidence of their effectiveness?[7]

This article poses two questions. First, why is it so difficult and, in some cases, even unthinkable, to apply new and alternative ways, such as heroin-assisted treatment, to deal with opioid problems and drug addiction? Second, have we overlooked some important issues regarding drug users' health, well-being, and their maintenance and, because of this, contributed to their degradation?

In a vein similar to that of Helen Keane[8], my starting point in this article is that one of the problems is our understanding of drug problems and addiction as a total lack of individual control and the use of drugs as inherently pathological. Surely, as Keane notes, living with drug addiction is often extremely difficult and many want it to end. However, there seems to be only few options available for how this could be done. For instance, we tend to forget that many quit their drug use without formal help and that there could be other ways of approaching drug problems, outside the demands of normality and complete recovery from addiction.[9]

The present article makes use of Michel Foucault's "care of the self" concept and Richard Shusterman's somaesthetic framework to argue for drug policies and treatment practices that would take as their starting point problem drug users' ability to make rational decisions and choices regarding their health and well-being without coercion and control, if they were given a proper chance and the tools to do this. The context is a drug policy orientation called harm reduction, which consists of a range of public health policies, programs, and practices that aim to

4 A. Kolodny, D.T. Courtwright, C.S. Hwang, P. Kreiner, J.L. Edie, T.W. Clark, C.G. Alexander, "The Prescription Opioid and Heroin Crisis: A Public Health Approach to an Epidemic Of Addiction," *Annual Review of Public Health* 18:36 (2015), p. 557-9

5 Ibid.

6 Jane Mounteney, Paul Griffiths, Roumen Sedefov, Andre Noor, Julián Vicente & Roland Simon, "The drug situation in Europe: an overview of data available on illicit drugs and new psychoactive substances from European monitoring in 2015," *Addiction Review* 111 (2016), p. 34-48

7 Thomas F. Babor, Jonathan P. Caulkins, Griffith Edwards et al., *Drug Policy and the Public Good* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

8 Helen Keane, *What's Wrong with Addiction?* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002)

9 Ibid., p. 8.

reduce the harm associated with drug use. Typical interventions are needle and syringe exchange programs, overdose prevention and other forms of health and social counseling related to drug use, and opioid substitute treatment. In addition, harm-reduction advocates for users' rights and includes their views in the development of drug and welfare policies.

For Foucault, as cited e.g. by Didier Eribon,[10] drugs weren't something that one could or should either support or reject. They are part of our culture, and there are good and bad drugs and their effects, as there is good and bad music. His ethics were based on an idea of individual existence that would be independent of present categories and discourses of normality, developed particularly in the fields of the medical profession and human sciences, such as psychology. The key question is how can a person take care of him/herself and develop meaningful ways of existence.[11]

Richard Shusterman's somaesthetics is used to highlight the importance of practices based on the drug users' bodies and surrounding environments in users' rehabilitation and re-integration into society.[12] According to Peter Ferenzy,[13] in the heart of the modern understanding of addiction, there has been an understanding of repression from which the individual should be liberated. Traditional treatment, for its part, has concentrated on overcoming this repression by treating users' minds and "wills."[14] However, as will be shown in the empirical part of this article, focusing on the body may provide the users with new ways to think about their existence and relationship to self and others.

Images and theories of drug addiction

Previous research has demonstrated many problems in the ways that societies handle drug problems and drug addiction. Nordic sociologists Nils Christie and Kettil Bruun referred to drugs as societies "good enemy."[15] As they claim, it is very easy as well as politically convenient to wage a war on drugs and drug users, because they are often alien to many. It is also very hard to say anything positive about drugs without being labeled suspicious, while it is very easy to project everything that is wrong in society on them and on people who use them.

Drug users themselves often feel that they carry a stigma, which prevents them from participating in society or normal life. The International Network of People Who Use Drugs (INPUD) has criticized the criminalization of drugs, which, according to them, produces many of the harms associated with drug use. Also, the general understanding of drugs and drug users is often inaccurate and crude, stigmatizing people who use drugs as deviant criminals.[16] There is a growing body of evidence indicating that even basic social and health policy services may be out of reach of drug users or fail to offer proper treatment and help for them.[17]

10 Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault* (Translated by Betsy Wing) (Cambrigde: Harvard University Press 1991)

11 Eribon, 1991, p. 394

12 see e.g. Richard Shusterman, *Thinking Through Body. Essays in Somaesthetics.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2012); Richard Shusterman, *Performing Live. Aesthetics Alternatives for the Ends of Art* (London: Cornell University Press)

13 Peter Ferenzy, "Foucault and Addiction" *Telos* 125 (2002), pp. 167-191

14 Ibid.

15 Nils Christie and Kettil Bruun, *Den Goda Fiende. Narkotikapolitik I Norden* (Universitetsförlaget, 1985)

16 See e.g. INPUD, "Drug User Peace Initiative. Stigmatizing People Who Use Drugs" (London: INPUD Secretariat 2014)

17 Hatcher, E. Alexandrea, Sonia Mendoza & Helena Hansen,"At the Expense of a Life: Race, Class, and the Meaning of Buprenorphine in Pharmaceuticalized "Care," *Substance Use & Misuse* 53:2 (2018), p. 301-10; Julie Netherland & Helena Hansen,"White opioids: Pharmaceutical race and the war on drugs that wasn't," *Biosocieties* 12:2 (2017), p. 217-238.; Anna Leppo & Riikka Perälä, "Remains of Care. Opioid Substitution Treatment in the Post-Welfare State," *Sociology of Health and Illness* 39:6 (2016), pp. 959-978.; Philippe Bourgois & Jeff Schonberg, "Righteous Dopefiend" (Berkeley: California Series in Public Anthropology, 2009); Nina Mulia, "Ironies in the pursuit of well-being: the

Culturally speaking, drug use, especially problem drug use and opioid addiction, has indeed been depicted as one of the most devastating vices of Western societies. Caroline J. Acker looked at the construction of opiate addicts in the field of psychiatry and psychology.[18] According to her, by the mid-twentieth century, heroin addiction came to symbolize an incurable deviance. Heroin addicts, in turn, came to be perceived as inherently flawed and morally corrupt personalities who were incapable of living in a normal society. According to Acker, the effects of these constructions can be seen in the field of drug policy, which legitimizes the criminal control of drug users. They have also had an effect on the popular cultural image of drugs and drug use, which is routinely associated with criminality and violence, while people who use drugs are depicted as desperate and immoral "junkies."

Robin Room[19] has discussed addiction narratives as a form of (horror) story-telling with certain reoccurring characters and events: a good person turning into a bad one because of addiction, a lonely struggle against addiction where the hero or heroine of the story meets different obstacles and setbacks and usually fails, and the betrayal of ones' family members and friends, often in horrible ways. Sometimes help is available, especially for men in the form of "a good woman," but usually the process of addiction is described as inevitable degradation – "first to the poorhouse and then to the grave as in the cautionary tales of the temperance movement" [20]– and the loss of one's humanity. This story has also been prevalent in treatment, where loss of control over drinking and drug use – and later over one's entire life – has been depicted as one of the quintessential features of addiction. Further, this condition can be treated only by the addicted individual her/himself with the help of various confessional procedures, where one admits her/his problem with alcohol or drugs, and uses her/his entire willpower to overcome the problem.[21]

All of this is partly true, as Room notes,[22] and drugs indeed have destructive effects.[23] Problem drug users suffer from many different problems and many live outside the normal curriculum of societies. Users themselves have considered addiction as a fruitful and re-assuring way to understand their behavior

However, discourses of addiction, as Keane[24] notes, are also engaged in the production of truths about drugs and drug users. More importantly, they have maintained policies and identities that have been damaging to users, such as denying them, as addicted individuals, a possibility for autonomous agency and proper subjectivity.

Care of the self and somaesthetics as frameworks of addiction

For Foucault, as previously mentioned, drugs weren't an undisputable "bad," but also a source of physical pleasure. Foucault did not discuss addiction in his scientific work, but he might as

perspectives of low-income, substance-using women on service institutions" *Contemporary Drug Problems*, 29 (2002), pp. 711-4

18 Caroline J. Acker, *Creating an American Junkie. Addiction Research in the Classic Era of Narcotic Control.* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins's University Press, 2002)

19 Robin Room, "The Cultural Framing of Addiction", *Janus Head* 6:2 (2003), pp. 221-234

20 Ibid., pp. 230-231

21 Ibid., pp. 230-231

22 Ibid., p. 232

23 Keane, 2003, p. 9

24 Keane, 2003, p. 11

well have, as Ferenzy[25] has argued, because the discourses on addiction formulated in the field of medicine and psychiatry entail themes similar to the discourses on sexuality in which Foucault was interested.

Foucauldian ideas of power and governance are often associated with iron-cage-like images of control and power, where the individual is merely an effect of different power relationships and discourses.[26] This has also been the case in the field of drug research. For example, the harm-reduction policies looked at in this article have been described as a new medical discipline and control that represses drug users rather than supports them. Peter G. Miller[27] used Foucault to discuss harm reduction as "surveillance medicine" and "new public health" thinking, where drug users are seen not only as entitled, but also obliged to take responsibility for their own health. Since then, this view has been cited in several journals and has gained ground as a prominent critique of harm-reduction policies.[28]

Miller points out the pitfalls that one should be aware of while conducting and developing harm-reduction policies and public health policies in general; however, what is problematic in these kinds of views is that they often overlook Foucault's ideas of resistance and possibilities for change.[29] Later in his career, Foucault became interested in alternative modes of living that would allow for a more heterogeneous form of existence than those found in Western societies based on Christian morality.[30] This led him to investigate practices of the sexual care of the self of ancient Greece and Rome, and later, as Kevin Thompson and Amy Allen demonstrate in their analyses on Foucault's ideas of power and resistance[31], to strive for practices of care of the self in which both our individuality and relationship with others could be renegotiated and refashioned. Next, I will discuss Foucault's ideas about what Foucault called "care of the self," and developed in his later works, lectures, and interviews. After this, I will turn to Richard Shusterman, who used Foucauldian ideas to formulate his own somaesthetic discipline. In the empirical part of the article, I will use Foucault and Shusterman's ideas to search for forms of working with drug users that would move away from treatment techniques based on coercion, control, and normalization, still typical of many drug treatment interventions today.[32]

The notion of care of the self, as Foucault starts to explain the theme of his lecture series at the College de France in 1982, is his best translation of the complex Greek notion of epimeleia heatou, which refers to practices of care of oneself in Greek culture. In the lecture, Foucault portrays Socrates as the first person associated with the idea, which subsequently remained

25 Ferenzy, 2003

26 On discussion see e.g. Amy Allen, "Power, Subjectivity, and Agency: Between Arendt and Foucault," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 10:2 (2002), pp. 131-149, 145

27 Peter G. Miller, "A Critical Review of the Harm Minimization Ideology in Australia," *Critical Public Health*, 11:2 (2001), pp. 167-178

28 see e.g. Benedict Fischer et al., "Drug use, Risk and Urban Order: Examining Supervised Injection Sites (SISs) as Governmentality," *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 15 (2004), pp. 357-365

29 Amy Allen, "Rethinking Resistance; Feminism and the Politics of Ourselves," *Eurozine*, 5:5 (2010); Eribon 1992; Alan Rosenberg and Alan Milchman, "The Final Foucault; A Central Issue in Governmentality and Government of the Self," in Sam Binkley and Jorge Capetillo (eds.), A *Foucault for the 21st Century: Governmentality, Biopolitics and Discipline in the New Millennium* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), pp. 62-72

30 Eribon 1992; Kevin Thompson, "Forms of Resistance: Foucault on Tactical Reversal and Self-Formation," *Continental Philosophy Review*, 36 (2003), pp. 113-138

31 see also Kevin Thompson, "Spaces of Invention; Foucault and the Question of Transformative Institutions" (University of Chicago Political Theory Workshop November 28, 2011). Available online at: http://ptw.uchicago.edu/Thompson11.pdf

32 See e.g. Julian Randall & Iain Munro, "Foucault's Care of the Self: A Case from Mental Health Work," *Organization Studies* 30:11, pp. 1485–1504. I am indebted to Julian Randall and Ian Munro's analysis on care of the self and mental health, which inspired me to use the notion care of the self in the context of harm-reduction measures.

as the fundamental philosophical idea of the Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman cultures.[33] In the summary of the course[34], Foucault brings to the fore some of the most important aspects of this practice. First, care of the self is an activity that requires some regularity, methods, and objectives, not just "an attitude or a form of attention focused on oneself." Second, care of the self is a critical and pedagogical practice, a struggle, where one takes responsibility for oneself and changes oneself with the help of the aforementioned regular practices. Third, it is a relationship that requires a master, a guide, or anyway someone else, as care of the self is also about the person becoming part of the society he or she lives in.

Care of the self does not mean, like many of Foucault's critics often assume, retreating to self-centered individualism or freedom to do what one wants. As Julian Randall and Iain Munro have summarized Foucault's conception of ethics in their investigation on care of the self in the context of mental health, in the heart of Foucault's ethics, there is a principle of equality, where one actively shapes oneself with the help of others – friends, family, or an advisor – and, in this way, transforms oneself.[35]

For the purposes of this article, what is particularly interesting in practices of care of the self is the role of medicine. It is not considered as a controlling discipline, but rather a supportive one. In the third and final volume of his book *The History of Sexuality: The Care of the Self*[36], Foucault cites the ideas of Plutarkhos and Celcus. In their writings, medicine is not be conceived of solely in the context of illness, "as a remedy or an operation," but also as a form of practical philosophy, a "medical perception of the world," which provides the individual with knowledge of and rules for a good life. What is especially important is the individual's relationship with his/her environment. As Foucault cites Celcus's ideas of "health practices" (*hygieine pragmateia* or *techne*): a certain change in a surrounding environment could have morbid effects on the body. On the other hand, a weak body may benefit from a certain environment.[37]

Richard Shusterman discusses Foucault's analysis of Socrates and Diogenes as examples of Foucault's idea of philosophy that would not be just a matter of text, but also an embodied life practice.[38] Shusterman himself separates three different branches of somaesthetics into a discipline that tries, among other things, to "think through the body" the possibilities for new forms of creative self-fashioning and aesthetic pleasure.[39] Analytical somaesthetics is a theoretical field that describes the basic nature of our bodily practices and demonstrates how these practices can be shaped by different power relationships and discourses. Pragmatic somaesthetics is concerned with different methods of somatic improvement and their comparison and tries, in this way, to make some sense of their contribution to the human body. Lastly, practical somaesthetics is about the actual practice of these body practices as well as about physically engaging in the care of the body.[40]

At the center of somaesthetic theory is Shusterman's critique of traditional philosophy,

33 Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject. Lectures at the College de France 1981-1982* (New York: Palgrave McMillan 2001)

34 Ibid.

35 Randall & Munro

36 Michel Foucault, *The Care of the Self. The History of the Sexuality. Volume 3* (New York: Random House 1988)

37 Ibid.

38 Richard Shusterman, 'Somaesthetics: A Disciplinary Proposal', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 57: 3 (Summer, 1999), pp. 299-313

39 Shusterman, 2012

40 Shusterman, 2000

particularly its prejudice of the body and its maintenance.[41] Yet, as Shusterman[42] writes, ancient philosophers like Socrates noted the value of the body for human activities. Even the act of thinking required a healthy body, whereas ill-health could lead to serious mistakes. One should not ignore the role of the body in the formation of our self-knowledge, which Shusterman considers one of philosophy's prime cognitive aims.[43]

In fact, Shusterman asserts that improving awareness of our body and its states can influence our moods and attitudes. For example, some malfunctions of the body can become so habitual for us that we do not even recognize them anymore. Nonetheless, they may have a profound impact on our activities as well as on our thinking. Also, the ability to act as we will act depends on somatic efficacy. What is more, our bodily operations are deeply intertwined with our possibilities for virtuous and right action and a good life.[44] Body can also work as a site of resistance, as Shusterman writes, commenting especially Foucault's ideas of body as a site of inscribing social power.[45]

As for the questions posed in this article, Shusterman[46] asks an interesting question: "Why so much inquiry has been devoted to the ontology and epistemology of pain and so little to its psychosomatic management, to its mastery and transformation into tranquillity or pleasure?" With respect to addiction, the question could be, why are we so preoccupied with describing and thinking about the pains of addiction and not with providing addicted people chances for finding peaceful and meaningful ways of existence with their injured body?

Research Setting

I will now turn to the empirical part of the article, where I will discuss Foucault and Shusterman's theories in the context of harm-reduction policies. Most of the data used in the article is derived from a needle and syringe exchange facility for injecting drug users, which was founded in the southern part of Finland at the beginning of 2000 and which follows a harm-reduction ideology. This facility was the first of its kind in Finland and part of a radical and rapid change in Finnish drug policies toward harm reduction.[47]

Harm-reduction policies are conducted all over the world, but in very different contexts and with very different possibilities. In Central Europe, harm reduction has become mainstream, and many countries, such as the Netherlands, Portugal, Denmark, and Switzerland, consider it as the central tenet of their drug policies. Finland, Sweden, and Norway follow a dual track (Tammi 2007), where harm reduction is applied along with a strong focus on the criminal prevention of drugs. In some countries where the emphasis is on "the war on drugs," harm-reduction measures are considered illegal.

It is interesting that, although a great deal of data on the effectiveness of harm reduction is available, its measures are still often questioned or bypassed by many prominent actors. For

41 Shusterman, 1999

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid., p. 330

47 Pekka Hakkarainen and Christoffer Tigerstedt, "Ristiriitojen huumepolitiikka–huumeongelman normalisaatio Suomessa," in M. Heikkilä, and M. Kautto (eds.), *Suomalaisten hyvinvointi 2002* (Helsinki: Sosiaalialan tutkimusja kehittämiskeskus 2002) ["Conflicting Drug Policy–the normalization of drug problem in Finland," in M. Heikkilä, and M. Kautto (eds.), *Well-being in Finland 2002* (Helsinki: National Research Institute for Social Welfare and Health, 2002)]

example, the WHO has taken criminal control as a given in the case of drugs, whereas other "dependence-producing" substances, such as alcohol and tobacco, have been managed within a public health framework.[48] At the moment, services to reduce drug-related harm and provide clean needles and syringes for injecting drug users have failed to keep up with the growing need, although, for instance, the UN has pledged to end AIDS by 2030. In some countries the number of harm-reduction services has even fallen.[49]

In all, the data examined in the article entail 150 pages of field notes, as well as interviews with clients and employees (N = 25 and N = 17), which were carried out during my ethnographic investigation in the harm-reduction facility between 2004 and 2007. The employees had professional background as nurses, health nurses, and social workers. The clients injected drugs, mainly bubrenorphine and other medical opioids and amphetamine. Most of the drugs were obtained illegally from the street. The age range of my client interviewees was 19–57 years old. I did not ask all of them specifically when they had started injecting drugs, but statistically the clients of the services had started injecting when they were 16–18 years old. My interviewees told me that they had started injecting "in high school" or "at adolescence." One of them told me that she had started when she was 40 years old.

Altogether I spent a year and a half in the field, in short, 2–3 month periods. The analysis is based on following observation and interview data: (1) following the client and employees' interaction and activities in different parts of the service, as well as following the different ways clients used the service; (2) following the health education courses that were arranged for the voluntary clients for the prevention of drug-related harm during or outside the opening hours (altogether four courses); and (3) interviews that handled various themes from the prevention of drug-related harm and the realization of harm-reduction policies to user and employees' views about the current service system and about the activities that took place in the facility.

For the purposes of this article, I looked at parts of my data, where the users and staff discuss the possibilities of harm-reduction practices to help the users in ways other than treatment orientations, or where I made these kinds of observations myself. This was not the initial starting point of my investigation, but it turned out to be a very relevant theme. Importantly, harm-reduction services did not only provide sterile needles and syringes, but also possibilities to look at problem drug use in new ways.

In the upcoming analysis, I will interpret my data through Foucault and Shusterman's theories and provide a more systematic view of what I see could be possible harm-reduction policies to contest prevailing treatment approaches. I will focus on three themes: (1) harm reduction as a drug policy orientation, which provides drug users with a regular curriculum and a possibility to organize their lives in new ways by focusing on their physical well-being; (2) harm reduction as a set of practices that gives users a chance to think about their life and relationship with others in a new light; and (3) harm reduction as a new way of organizing the relationship between the users and drug treatment professionals.

48 Suzanne Taylor, Victoria Berridge and Alex Mold, 'WHO Expert Committees and Key Concepts for Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco', In Matilda Hellman, Victoria Berridge, Karen Duke & Alex Mold (eds.) *Concepts of Addictive Substances and Behaviours across Time and Place* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2016)

49 Katie Stone, *The Global State of Harm Reduction 2016* (Harm Reduction International, 2016)

Results

Finding structure and content in life with the help of harm reduction

While reading Foucauldian analyses of power and societal governance, one cannot escape the conclusion that administering to the well-being and health of individuals in contemporary societies is something negative: a way of achieving societal order or suppressing individuals. Also, harm reduction, as was shown earlier in the article, has been described as this kind of discipline. In my data, on the other hand, what turned out to be one of most interesting feature of the harm-reduction service was its ability to provide users who came to the facility with the chance to organize and structure their lives in a context and an institutional surrounding that made sense to them and gave content to their lives.

During the first week of my fieldwork, I described my impressions about the facility and its clients in my field journal as follows.

> *"The clients came to the facility for various things, not just for clean paraphernalia. The organization of the service is surprisingly smooth and predictable. I am already familiar with the routines and wishes of some of the clients. One regular visitor uses thick, 0.8 mm needles while injecting, which the staff does not recommend, but the man insists on. There is always a small discussion around that when he comes to the facility, but the workers do not want to moralize. "We try to softly direct and lure them into making healthier choices," one of the workers explains to me. One, on the contrary, is terrified of injecting, and wishes for as thin needles as possible. One is waiting behind the door every morning, when the facility opens at noon, and comes mainly for food and a chance to talk to somebody. Everyone I meet and get a chance to talk to greets the service. "This is the best place in town, write that in your book," "This facility has saved my life," and "I would be in the gutter without this."*

From the point of view of the Foucauldian discussion on the care of self and Shusterman's somaesthetics, a noteworthy aspect of users' views is that, instead of feeling as if they were being supervised in the facility or obliged to concentrate on their health, many clients told me that they "finally" had the possibility to take care of their health and themselves. Many of the clients came to the facility regularly, 2–3 times a week, and some of them could spend the entire opening time (four hours) there. Some popped by many times during the day. My interviewees told me that coming to the service provided them with "a timetable," as well as access to information they said they had not had before. "I can spend my days here, instead of at my flat. And there is always something interesting going on here," as a young man in his 20s summarized his feelings about the service to me.

Shusterman[50] discusses our culture's deepening preoccupation with the body and its well-being. I realized very soon that the clients of the harm-reduction facility shared this preoccupation and strived for better health and life, in spite of their drug use. For example, many wanted to be tested for HIV and Hepatitis C regularly and were generally worried about their health. Many considered drug use as an "addiction disease," from which they suffered, and wanted to take as good care of themselves as possible, despite their condition. For example, in the interviews, many described how relieved they were when the HIV test result turned out to be negative. "It would have been a death sentence. I could not have dealt with that," as one of them summarized his feelings to me. The nurse of the facility described that the testing situations

50 Shusterman, 2000

were always very emotional. According to her, the relief of a client after the test turned out to be negative showed as a relaxation of his/her entire body and appearance. "They don't want to die. In fact, I think that they are survivors and very strong people, who have kept themselves together in conditions, which are sometimes intolerable. We try to direct this energy toward healthier things," she continued.

The exchange of clean needles and syringes had become "a matter of the heart" for many, and some had also started to exchange clean paraphernalia among their peers who didn't visit the facility, gaining in this way status and experience as peer workers and harm-reduction experts. This work also provided a clear structure to their lives. One of the most active clients, a woman in her 40s, explained to me her relationship with the service as follows.

> "*I come here every Tuesday and Friday to change clean paraphernalia. I am a "super exchanger", so I get to change 300 needles and syringe at a times, whereas the other ones get to change maximum 40 at a time. On Mondays and Fridays I exchange needles and syringes among my friends and then I bring the used ones back here.*"

I followed her use of the facility throughout my entire fieldwork period. She had started to use the services a little more than a year before and was already very familiar with the staff, calling them "my angels." Although she did not quit using drugs during my research period, her use was much more under control by the end the research period than at the beginning. She had also become an active member of the user organization that was founded by the clients of the facility during my research period, as well as one of the first "peer workers" to accompany the facility's staff to different harm-reduction lectures and events, both in Finland and other parts of the world.

One of the nurses at the facility explained her impressions of the meaning of the service and the work done there:

> *"There is so much potential in these people (the drug users). And here (in the facility), it becomes visible as we take them as they are, and they don't have to pretend that they are not using or that they want to recover. It is very liberating for many.... Many of them also strive for a normal life and better health, and are happy that they have the possibility to come here to pursue these things.*"

One of the benefits of the service was that it was seen as being neutral in its orientation. Clients often compared the service with other services by saying that, in other treatment institutions, one was supposed to answer a list of questions before "getting down to business," "how much [drugs] you have consumed and so on," as on one of my interviewees explained. Instead, at the facility, the focus was on everyday matters and problems of the users. What the clients appreciated in particular was that they could receive information on what was really bothering them, whether it was high blood pressure, a mysterious rash, or how to look after yourself and your friends while injecting.

From the viewpoint of Foucault's care of the self and Shusterman's somaesthetics, it was interesting that all of this happened through various practices that were somehow regular in nature, although not codified. For example, needle exchange was seemingly an important ritual for many. Not only did the user receive clean paraphernalia, he/she also had the possibility to ask the staff about different topics linked to injecting, which method was safe, what kind of needles

should they use, and so forth, as well as have contact with someone. Later, the service started to supply harm reduction opioid maintenance treatment, which many clients saw as "life saving." According to them, they received not only medicine in this treatment, but also a regular and stable structure to their lives.

The facility manager reflected this in her interview. Life for the clients was often chaotic and even violent outside the facility, but inside they had the possibility to reveal their "soft" side and relax for a while. I wrote in my field journal after one particularly nice and relaxing afternoon (May 2007) that many of the clients seemed to enjoy the possibility of just sitting and spending time in the facility and looking at other people, which, in turn, was something that made them feel "more normal" or an "ordinary human being," as many of them often sighed. The feeling of normality, for its part, was for many the first step toward a life without drug use or, at least, toward a more controlled use.

Next, I will look more closely the therapeutic effects services operations had on the clients.

Feeling like "a human being" again

According to Shusterman,[51] the body needs care in many ways and for many reasons. For drug users who came to the harm-reduction facility, care was something that made them feel like a "human being again."

A very important element in creating this feeling was, first, the fact that the staff did not fear or judge the clients in any way. This was a deliberate policy that was regularly discussed by the staff. The clients, in turn, saw this as the staff's respectful attitude toward them, which they appreciated. Many were ashamed of their bodies, which often had bruises and infected needle marks. Some of the clients had lost their limbs and sat in wheelchairs or had walkers. Many had bad teeth caused by their drug use. In the facility, however, the clients and their injuries were always addressed in a very polite way, and the staff made a concerted effort to ensure that the clients felt accepted and as normal as possible.

A nurse working in the facility explained to me her views of what took place in the facility:

> *"They (the clients) sense that their problems are taken seriously here. If they go to for instance emergency rooms, they are often turned away, because they are intoxicated. Also, all of their troubles are almost always interpreted through drug use, which they should stop in order to receive help. Here we help them without conditions. It is seemingly liberating for many to be treated like a regular customer, who has issues with his/her health, and not just a "junkie"."*

A female client in her 30s discussed the meaning of the service and compared its orientation with the stereotypical notions of drug users in a very similar manner:

> "*The discussion goes always like "drug injecting is a death sentence" and that person will use drugs "forever". Some people do live on the streets and have a lot of problems for sure, but many also have homes and, you know, we watch television and all (laughs). Here (in the service) I get information, which I can really use of in my everyday life.*"

Our discussion was brief and the woman did not explain further to me what kind of

51 Shusterman, 2000

information she was talking about. The discussion, however, took place during a health education evening, where the woman participated actively in the discussion about the prevention of overdose deaths and the use of emergency services in these kinds of situations.

A man in his 50s explained to me his transformation as a "paradox." Before starting at the facility, he had tried many treatment orientations, but always left them "in anger."

> *"There is no use in controlling and forcing a person to do something, if he hates authorities, you know".*

He continued to describe that, in the facility where this kind of coercion did not exist, for first time, he took responsibility for himself by himself:

> *"First, I came here once and a while to exchange needles and syringes. Then I started to talk to some of the workers about the educational leaflets that were available in the facility and commenting on them. You know, how they depicted drug injecting et cetera. Then I got interested in peer work and here I am now, a chair of the user organization."*

From the point of view of Shusterman's somaesthetics, it was interesting that concentration on physical well-being seems to liberate clients from constant reflection on their drug use and life in general, which they found relaxing. Many of the clients described the facility as their "home" or "closest thing to home," where they were looked after and got help without conditions. Vice versa, they did not have to "pretend" to be sober or want to end their drug use. Harm-reduction orientation also provided them with opportunities to help others besides themselves. In the following excerpt, one of the peer workers of the facility, a woman in her 40s who was in opioid substitution treatment, described her activities:

> *"I just took this one girl to a birth control clinic and on Wednesday I escorted this one to a drug treatment evaluation. Now, I was able to bring these three girls here from their apartment. Just to get them out of there. I have some clothes reserved for them [...]"*

These kinds of accounts come close to Foucault's ideas of care of the self as a collaborative effort, where an individual's relationship with him/herself and others is rethought and refashioned. As demonstrated earlier, drug users are often depicted as tough and amoral criminals, incapable of living as or with normal people. I, on the other hand, observed very early that many of the users were as caring as any other person and also wished to be taken care of.

The question arises, can we strengthen these kinds of elements in treatment somehow? In the last part of this chapter, I will look more closely at some of the factors in the operation of the service and particularly in the operation of its workers that helped the users acquire new things and perspectives in life.

Towards new professionalism

I have written elsewhere that the emancipatory nature of the facility owed a lot to its nature as a place that had more faith in the drug users' own initiative than average drug treatment facilities. The clients were not pressured to do anything against their will. Instead, the employees wanted to give them time to get used to the facility and staff, and take the initiative when they felt like

it.[52] For me, this was very surprising at first, because problem drug use is often depicted as a total lack of interest toward anything else other than drug use.

According to the staff, it is important to gain the trust of the users who came to the facility. Without trust, as clients explained to me, it was useless to promote any other goals. However, if trust is gained, many a user reveal a new side. The following story by a social worker resonates well with Foucault's ideas of care of the self as a relationship that strives for an individual's self-realization with collaborative, not coercive, methods and demonstrates the positive effects that efforts to build a confidential relationship with a client can have:

> *"This one man came here almost every day for a couple of years and just exchanged needles and syringes. Didn't say a word and looked like he wanted to kill everybody. But I always greeted him, said hi and goodbye and see you again. And then one day he started talking. And there was no end to it (laughs). It's was like a lamp had turned on in his head or something. Now he is one of our most active peer workers."*

Other employees told similar stories. In them, particularly three themes stood out as relevant. First, the workers did not do anything special, but just were there for the clients. What was particularly important was that they had time and "did not look at the clock all the time." Second, clients started to change their behavior, if they were given enough chances and, again, time and space to do this on their own terms. Third, clients appreciated that they were not treated paternalistically in the service, but were treated as adults who could make their own decisions and judgments. Many of the clients, for instance, stated that they wanted "information," not "moral guidelines." Also, the clients easily saw that, if they were looked down on by the employees or if their judgment was questioned, it became a situation that usually led to the client leaving the service in anger. This, however, did not take place often, as the employees knew how to be careful and not offend the clients.

In fact, I was often very surprised how close and playful the employees were with the clients, as the sociological classics had taught me that the most crucial features in the operation of different treatment institutions was the conflict between the clients or "the inmates." One of the employees explained her working orientation in the interview in the following way, which comes close to Foucault's ideas of care of the self as an equal relationship between the individual and her/his aid:

> *"I use elements of friendship in my work. I talk with the clients about regular stuff that takes place in their life and in my life as well, such as films, pets, music et cetera. After a while, they get interested in the other things we have here as well, which is of course my ultimate goal. But, I'm not cheating them or anything. I truly enjoy discussing about things with them, and many of them are very bright. But of course, there is also a professional orientation on the background as well."*

According to another employee, the lack of the "controlling function" gave the clients the possibility to work with the workers more openly than they can with the representatives of the social services and other public institutions. As she explained, "they don't have to, for instance, lie to us that they don't use drugs, and they also feel that they can tell us other unpleasant things about their lives."

52 Anna Leppo & Riikka Perälä, "User Involvement in Finland: The Hybrid of Control and Emancipation" *Journal of Health Organization and Management* 23:3 (2009), pp. 359–371

Different first aid training and overdose prevention education evenings and workshops were very popular among clients. In somaesthetic terms, these activities could be described as a combination of analytical and practical somaesthetics, where the clients were first taught about their body's various functions, and then, how to take care of the body through different practical measures. I attended four of these evenings, and they were an eye-opening experience for me in many ways. What was especially surprising for me was how engaged the clients were in these evenings and how actively they shared their experiences and thoughts about the themes that were handled in them. Many of the clients liked one anesthesiologist in particular, who used scientific terms while discussing overdose prevention and did not paint moralistic pictures of the harms of drug use. "You are pretty different from the others doctors I've met," one of the participants told him during one session.

The leader of the user organization described his feelings about the course and similar activities:

> *"Finally someone has realized that, hey, let's involve the drug users in the development of the services as well. It was "a stroke of genius" in many ways. I mean, my god, how good it feels when you are asked to be part of something."*

Conclusions

In this article, I asked first why it is sometimes so difficult and, in some cases, even unthinkable to apply new and alternative approaches, such as heroin-assisted treatment, to deal with drug problems and drug addiction. The second question was, is it possible that we have overlooked some important issues regarding the drug users' health, well-being, and their maintenance and, because of this, contributed to their degradation?

As for the first question, I demonstrated how according to the traditional and stereotypical understanding of addiction and problem drug users, it is still even impossible for us to see that drug users could be interested in maintaining their health and be capable of looking after themselves and each other. However, as I demonstrated in the empirical section, even the most problematic drug users seek a better health and life if there are proper chances and infrastructures available for this. Working with the user's physical well-being, in particular, seems to resonate well with many of the users' needs to be taken care of.

In light of my analysis, there is considerable potential for somaesthetic thinking in the field of health and social policy, particularly in the work with people living on the margins of society. As shown in the article, addiction treatment has traditionally been about dealing with one's inner pathologies, using different psychiatric and psychological methods. This "confession" leads to recovery, as the addicted person sins against him/herself and others. Yet, as I have demonstrated, the focus on the body can be a more neutral tool for recovery, while also providing people who suffer from addiction with ways to live with their addicted body.

The use of Foucault's ideas of care of the self has emphasized factors in harm-reduction measures that have provided professionals with tools to reach problem drug users without coercive or involuntary methods. There is already quite a lot of research on the political activism of drug users in the harm-reduction field, as well as public-health-oriented research about the effectiveness of harm-reduction measures. The focus in my analysis has been on the actual, everyday practices of harm reduction, which have been discussed and investigated less, but could offer important insights into how to deal with drug problems in future.

Particularly significant themes in users' paths to transformation in this analysis have been employees trust in users' own initiative, the respectful attitude of the employees toward them, and the close collaboration between the clients and the employees over users' health. The harm-reduction facility was, in many ways, a community, where the users were welcomed as they were, and where they were helped and taken along without too many conditions. Contrary to many analyses, use of medical knowledge was also considered liberating, providing the users with information on their condition and tools and daily structures that helped the users live with them.

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Suspension

Rasmus Ölme

Abstract: *The article is a report from the final stages of the artistic research project* Movement Material *and articulates an overview of the project through the lens of a term that came to be a key term in the project: suspension. The article describes the problems from which the research questions emerged, the theoretical underpinnings of those questions, the practical research proceedings, and some of the documentation that the practical research produced.*

Keywords: *choreography, dance, suspension, intra-action, materialism, artistic research.*

Starting note

Movement Material is the title of an on-going research project in dance and choreography that I conduct at the Danish National School of Performing Arts, in Copenhagen.[1] TThe project continues until autumn 2018, and this article unpacks what has come to be a key element of the research: **suspension**. The term was initially present in the work understood as the resilient feature of matter. However, during the research, the term gained importance and expanded its meaning to describe an immaterial quality of (running the risk of sounding presumptuous) a state of mind and/or a form of thinking seen as an attunement of two poles of a dichotomy. The article describes the terminological reformulation of the term suspension as an example of the entanglement of theory and practice, the thinking in doing (the dance), and the doing in thinking. It does so by describing how the correlation of word and experience has played out in the research project.

I want to emphasize that Movement Material is an artistic research project and that its purpose is to further the art form of dance and choreography. This means two things: (1) The purpose of the dancing is as a laboratory for the research questions and not as the means of producing a dance performance. Therefore, the research is not done in relation to an audience. (2) The theories that I engage with are used as tools for the artistic investigation. This somehow un-academic (although it takes place in academia) method differs from more scientific methods in the sense that I'm not claiming to properly understand philosophical concepts and represent them artistically. The contextualization of the concepts I use may therefore seem brief, because I focus instead on how the concepts have furthered my thinking through – and articulation of – the dance practice.

1 The research project is funded by the Danish Ministry of Culture

The field of research – Materialism in Dance and Choreography

Just as artistic practices can provide working material for philosophical practices, philosophy can provide articulation for artistic work. In this case, the theoretical influence appeared through the increasing importance of New Materialism in the field of dance and choreography. This development is seen inside what has been called the Expanded Field of Choreography, which began approximately 10 years ago and is closely related to Object-Oriented Ontology, Speculative Realism, and Post-humanism. The term expanded choreography echoes Rosalind Krauss' 1979 essay "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," and testifies to a desire to detach choreography from its traditional connection to dance.[2] For the 2012 conference "Expanded Choreography. Situations, Movements, Objects …," the term was referred to as follows:[3]

> *In the last few years the term "choreography" has been used in an ever-expanding sense, becoming synonymous with specific structures and strategies disconnected from subjectivist bodily expression, style and representation. Accordingly, the meaning of choreography has transformed from referring to a set of protocols or tools used in order to produce something predetermined, i.e. a dance, to an open cluster of tools that can be used in a generic capacity for both analysis and production.*

Another, more recent, appearance of the term is from the title of the PhD publication by Danish choreographer Mette Ingvartsen (2016): *EXPANDED CHOREOGRAPHY: Shifting the Agency of Movement in The Artificial Nature Project and 69 Positions*.[4] Ingvartsen does not explicate the origin of the term "expanded choreography," but describes her interest in distancing her work from the dancing human subject as "a reconsideration of how movements could be formed beyond the human body in its intersection with materials, machines, imaginations, affects and sensations."[5] Ingvartsen sees this as "a way of proposing a non-anthropocentric notion of dance and the body, by including the expressions of non-human elements."[6] Expanded choreography refers to the use of choreography outside its more traditional relation to dance. This article, and the research project it refers to, shares the desire to broaden the horizon of what choreography can mean, but differs from the abovementioned desire to distance itself from dancing. My interests instead concern how such an expansion can take place from within choreography's relation to dance. Such an expansion "from within" is a questioning of choreography that does not look for an application outside dance, or outside the body, but instead questions the supposedly evident relationship between dance and choreography. Movement Material also proposes a different take on what could be understood as a non-human element. A materialist approach to the body can be seen as less anthropocentric, as it considers how the material body choreographs the human subject just as much as vice versa.

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2 Swedish choreographer Mårten Spångberg makes a claim of the term in an online interview: "After International Festival, I introduced a term we stole from Rosalind Krauss: choreography as expanded practice. This was all a matter of saying that choreography could be other than a dance. It's a mode of production." https://contemporaryperformance.com/2016/07/04/interview-marten-spangberg/ (accessed 07.11.2017)

3 An event organized by the University College of Dance and Circus in Stockholm, the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, and the Mercat de les Flors, with the support of the Swedish Research Council and the Swedish Arts Grants Committee, on the occasion of the exhibition *Retrospective* by Xavier Le Roy at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies. Devised by Mårten Spångberg. http://www.macba.cat/en/expanded-choreography-situations (accessed 07.11.2017)

4 Mette Ingvartsen, *EXPANDED CHOREOGRAPHY, Shifting the agency of movement in The Artificial Nature Project and 69 positions*. Diss. , 2016. Available at: http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uniarts:diva-177

5 Ingvartsen, 2016, p. 9

6 Ibid.

Symbolic and material

Through years of choreographic practice in the form of art work, research, and teaching, I ended up, sometime around 2013, grappling with the materiality of movement. Although dance clearly identifies itself with the body, dance often gets stuck in representations of bodily ideals (a classic critique of dance) and psychological and/or conceptual narratives. It should be said though that the times they are a-changin', and the development in the European scene of the recent decade with its exploration of somatic techniques and interest in post-humanism has presented other bodily representations. Such representations are not immune to bodily idealization, but may at least serve as alternatives that broaden the spectrum of possible representations. My incentive to engage in the materialist approach is to contribute to the manifoldness of possible bodily representation. Emphasizing the material agency in the body is an effort to counter a symbolic dominance that I experience within the history of Western staged dance.

My first attempts to articulate my critique in words moved through the dichotomy of symbolic and material. I borrowed the two terms from French philosopher Catherine Malabou, who in turn gives two references for them: the French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss and the Polish historian Ernst H. Kantorowicz.[7] Levi-Strauss introduced the separation of symbolic and material by looking at the importance of gifts between tribes and defined the symbolic as that which is not material. Kantorowicz has written on the subject in his book *The King's Two Bodies*.[8] There are two common sayings that illustrate well the examples of both the gift and the king: "It is the thought that counts" and "The King is dead – long live the King." In the first case, the object is imbued with the non-material value of intention. Yet, intention is not enough; it demands to be materialized. In the second case, the symbolic royal body shifts from one material body to another, as if it were a demon or spirit of some sort. Both examples demonstrate an uncanny feature of matter, as they point to an immaterial presence within matter. These two examples are related to social organization, but we can also find examples in physics, such as gravity and magnetism. Both the gravitational pull and the magnetic force reside in the matter, but extend beyond its surface. In reference to the human body, we find this complex relationship between the material and immaterial in the body/mind problem or the body–mind split. The use of the term *mind* in contemporary Western discourse mostly relates more to conscious thought than to soul or spirit, which could be seen as other immaterial properties of the human matter. The body–mind split has been under attack for quite some time, but the misconception prevails, as it somehow lends itself well to human intuition. It makes sense of the world in a seductive way. Similar to the experience of self, the body–mind split can be quite easily deconstructed in abstraction, but is much more difficult to change in actual and immediate experience. I might be able to understand the argument that there is no self, but still perceive that understanding from the standpoint of my (non-existent) self. In the same way, I can acknowledge the futility of the body–mind split argument, yet still experience the existence of a gap between me and my body. The sheer fact that we have such a linguistic separation between "me" and "my body" reveals the existence of such a gap. The experience of this gap easily leads to an understanding of the body as a tool of the mind. Dancing from that standpoint reflects the symbolic dominance in dance that I want to counter by emphasizing the material body.

I have developed a technique to work on this that I have come to call Body-Self Attunement.

7 Malabou refers to them in a course entitled Plasticity of Life vs. Biopower, at the European Graduate School in Saas-Fee, Switzerland. The course was published on-line at www.egs.edu

8 Kantorowicz, Ernst Hartwig, *The King's two bodies: a study in mediaeval political theology*, 7. pr., Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1997[1957]

It is a *qi-gong* movement that I picked up approximately 15 years ago and then used extensively in my teaching. The movement is simple and so is the principle of it. Quite instinctively, when saying "I" or "me," the person uttering the word points towards the chest: a specific place on the body where the experience of self seems situated. Body-Self Attunement works on constructing bodily kinesthetic experience around centers other than this self-center pointed to on the chest. Rather than explaining it only through text, I would like to invite you to look at that movement and hear my articulation of it through this link (and feel free to try it out with me).

Body-Self Attunement
https://vimeo.com/242752813

Attunement and intra-action

As shown, Body-Self Attunement is a movement practice that emphasizes material agency in the human body. The goal is for the practitioner to develop a sensitivity to the material body through experience, but also to notice the potential differences in ways that a movement can be experienced. The use of the body–self dichotomy can be a bit deceiving, as it may seem as an either/or logic, either symbolic or material. This is why attunement is an important term. Attunement suggests a tension between the two poles of a dichotomy. When tuning a string instrument, you negotiate the tension between the two points of attachment of the string. The actual playing does not happen in the extremities, in the points of attachment, but between them. However, no sound can occur without the tension between those points. This suggests a relation to dichotomies that is not based on either/or, but as creating a space for play by setting up a tension between two points. Body-Self Attunement can thus be seen as a proposed configuration between those two points – a different tune. We can extend this metaphor to a form of thinking. Nowadays, the term binary, when related to as a form of thinking, has a pejorative connotation. Supposedly, binary thinking is limited, lacking nuance, and provides little help in approaching complex problems. However, the binary remains a element crucial to thought (not least in computer programming and coding through which we conduct our everyday digital lives). I would go so far as to say that the binary is inescapable. Paradoxically, even the term non-binary is based on the binary assumption that you are either binary or non-binary. To continue the articulation of what attunement can mean in terms of thinking, I turn to *intra-action*, a term that Karen Barad coined to describe a relational mode of thinking that "signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies."[9] In contrast to the neighboring term "interaction," which presupposes the existence of determined and separate agencies that, once constituted, interact with each other, Barad proposes intra-action that "recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through their intra-action."[10] As such, intra-action does not deny the existence of binaries, but looks beyond them, before they were formed. Approaching binaries through intra-action is not an effort to undo or collapse the binary, but a way to engage with the space between two poles. It is with this in mind that I approach the binaries that appear throughout this text (all of them, in one way or another, echoing the body/mind binary): material/symbolic, doing/thinking, practice/theory, dance/choreography, and sensorial/cognitive. What intra-action can add to what I call attunement is the mutual constitution of entangled agencies. In that sense,

9 Karen Barad. *Meeting the Universe Halfway. Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning.* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007) p.33

10 Ibid., p. 33

the playing and the tuning are mutually constituted. The dichotomy does not exist before the negotiation between opposites. Its constitution is entangled in negotiation.

Movement and matter

In the introduction, I mentioned how the term suspension was first understood as the resilient feature of matter. There is a linguistic genealogy of translations behind that understanding, and I want to give an account of this genealogy to report on how the term suspension appeared in the research in the first place.

IIn the Swedish edition of the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze's book *The Fold- Leibniz and the baroque* I found an intriguing statement: "… *materiens mekanism är fjädringen.*"[11] My own translation would be "… the mechanism of matter is springiness." To find a more precise English phrase, however, I went to Tom Conley's 1993 translation and found a version very different than my own: "… motivating spirit as a mechanism."[12] In my opinion, there is no exact English translation of the Swedish word *fjädring*, but one of the uses of the term in English is suspension, as in the suspension of a car, which is how the term suspension ended up in this research project. The suspension system of a car allows it to run smoothly on uneven surfaces; you can observe it in action by pushing down a car's hood and then watching it bounce back when you release the pressure. Let me trace back the process of translations and show how it revealed new perspectives to me. In his original French version, Deleuze uses the term *ressort*, which commonly translates to *spring* or *coil* in English.[13] *Ressort* is cconsistently translated to *fjädring* in the Swedish edition, whereas in Conley's translation, in addition to the previously mentioned, it reads "a spirit in matter" (7:2006), and "the motive force" (14:2006). Curious about his choice of translation, I emailed Professor Conley, and he very kindly responded. In our brief email exchange, he explained that the rationale for this translation was to avoid reference to the metal coil to maintain a sense of the abstraction that prevails. He also mentioned other possible translations, such as resilience, elasticity, or springiness. Although at first, I had trouble with Conley's translation, because I could not understand why he introduced such abstraction and immaterial notion of matter, I'm now very sympathetic with his concern regarding the abstraction that might get lost by referring to an actual piece of matter. In Swedish, coil/spring reads *fjäder* meaning that *fjädring* is not the actual spring, but the mechanism that the spring has, its springiness or, as in the example of the car, suspension. The linguistic differentiation between spring and springiness (in Swedish: *fjäder* and *fjädring*) reveals a separation between the thing and its mechanism, similar to what I described above in relation to a magnet and its magnetism and to the separation between me and my body. By using the term *spirit*, Conley points to an immaterial feature of matter. Spirit is not understood here as something beyond matter, but as an animate force and mechanism within matter itself. There is not just matter that can be moved, but there is movement in matter. The Latin word for spirit is *anima,* which also reveals the entangled understanding we have between movement (animated), being alive (animate), and spirit (anima).

Relating to Conley's less material translation of the French *ressort,* I will turn to Jane Bennet, who addresses the tension between the mechanistic and the spiritual in the chapter "Neither Vitalism nor Mechanism" in her book *Vibrant Matter: a political ecology of things*. Bennet tells

11 Gilles Deleuze , *Vecket: Leibniz & barocken* (Glänta, Göteborg, 2004) Translation and foreword by Sven-Olov Wallenstein. p.38

12 Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the baroque*, (Univ. of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2006 [1993])

13 Gilles Deleuze, *Le Pli: Leibnix et le Baroque* (Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1988)

the reader that she is "looking for a materialism in which matter is figured as a vitality at work both inside and outside of selves, and is a force to be reckoned with without being purposive in any strong sense."[14] She continues by noting how "the association of matter with passivity still haunts us today, I think, weakening our discernment of the force of things."[15] In the chapter, Bennet draws on three different concepts: Hans Driesch's *entelechy*, Henri Bergson's *élan vital,* and Immanuel Kant's *Bildungstrieb*. The three thinkers are summoned to question the idea of an immaterial force acting on matter and, instead, propose the presence of an immaterial force within matter. It is important to emphasize that this non-material and non-spatial force still resides only within matter (just as the immaterial self is still pointed to on the body). It is not a spirit added to matter, just like gravitation is not added to mass, but is intrinsic to it. Driesch proposes that entelechy resides in the gaps within matter or what he describes as the "only partly spatial portion" of nature.[16] We can understand, at least metaphorically, how the space within matter allows for the mechanism of springiness, or resilience. In order to have some springiness, there needs to be emptiness. It is not the aim of this article to unfold in depth the three concepts that Bennet uses, but I want to report on how Bennet's articulation of Bergson and Driesch furthered my thinking about suspension.

Addressing Bergson's *élan vital*, Bennet describes how the concept proposes matter as a "*tendency* toward spatialization."[17] It should be noted that she does not say that matter *has* this tendency, but that it *is* this tendency. Just as mass is gravity, the spring is springiness. Bennet gives one more example of the spatial relationship to matter's immaterial force as she quotes Driesch, explaining morphogenesis as where "manifoldness in space is produced where no manifoldness was."[18] A similar articulation can be found in *The Fold*, where Deleuze (referring to Heinrich Wölfflin) notes how "matter tends to spill over in space," or as my own translation from the Swedish version would have it: "matter's tendency to inundate space."[19]

To conclude, three characteristic properties of matter have been articulated: (1) its resilient capacity (*fjädring/springiness*), (2) its tendency to extend into space, and (3) the presence of an immaterial feature in matter. We can quite easily acknowledge the presence of these features in the human body: the resilience of the bodily tissues, the morphologic extension into space (from embryogenesis and on), and the experience of an immaterial existence in the material body. I will now continue to demonstrate how I have been working with these aspects and their implications for bodily movement inside the practical research.

14 Jane Bennett, *Vibrant matter: a political ecology of things*, (Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 2010) p. 7

15 Ibid., p. 65

16 Ibid., p. 65

17 Ibid., p. 77

18 Ibid., p. 70

19 Deleuze, 2006, p. 4

Dance and Choreography – Sensorial and Cognitive

Traditionally, the relationship between dance and choreography has been understood as being embodied by the choreographer, who is the one with the original idea and the mental capacity to structure it into a coherent expression, and the dancer, who remains merely the medium: the doer who does not need to know why s/he is doing something, provided that s/he can do it. I'm aware that I'm simplifying when saying this. There are other practices, both historical and contemporary, but I see enough examples of the opposite – on stage, in the studio, and in media – that I feel confident making this generalization. A similar hierarchy exists between knowing and feeling, which is what I express as cognitive and sensorial. Cognition is a vast concept, and my use of it requires some delineation. Here, cognitive capacities should be understood as the process of knowing, related to the mind's faculty to plan and make conscious decisions. In terms of choreographic work, I understand this capacity in two ways: first, the conscious choice of a certain theme of the dance that could be practically anything, such as spatial coordinates, aesthetic ideals, belief systems, and so on. This is about knowing what the dance is about. Second, I relate it to compositional choices made in relation to an overall structure. This is about knowing what is going to happen and constructing a sense-making structure. What I refer to as the sensorial capacity points to a less planned activity that feels its way through the direct kinesthetic experience, as opposed to planning toward a specific goal, meaning, or result. It does not worry about meaning and does not plan ahead. Such an approach to dance and choreography is not new, and it has taken various artistic expressions throughout the history (such as Contact Improvisation and Authentic Movement, to mention just two). I will continue by articulating more specifically the outcomes it has produced in this research project.

The practical research phase was done by *Svärmen* (The Swarm) a research group that I formed during the PhD research "From Model to Module: A Move Towards Generative Choreography."[20] The purpose of involving this collective was to set up a structure for critique and develop the research questions. Because we have collaborated since 2013 and the research questions in Movement Material resonate with some of the concerns of the PhD research, these people have the most profound practical embodied experience of the questions at stake. The name, *Svärmen*, came out of discussions around what collective working and thinking can mean. To form a swarm meant to create a group mind that could produce forms of knowledge different from the individual. In the same way, I wanted to make use of this group apparatus to be able to harvest more thoughts, reflections, ideas, and insights than I thought I could do on my own. To accomplish this, I set up a protocol, or score, for a two-hour practice session, which could be done either together with the others or alone in the studio. The greater part of the session was based on documenting and reflecting on one's practice. These reflections were posted on an online platform so that we could keep track of each other's work, even when working individually. For the purpose of this paper, I will focus on the movement part: a 30-minute session that was scored as follows:

> *Practice dance and choreography through materialization of movement with the following ideas:*
>
> - *Follow the movement.*

20 Rasmus, Ölme. *From model to module: a move towards generative choreography*. (Diss.) (Stockholm: Kungliga Tekniska högskolan, 2014) Available on www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:929122/FULLTEXT02.pdf

Current participants of Svärmen are Linda Adami, Dan Johansson, Tilman O'Donnell, Ellen Söderhult and Rasmus Ölme

- *Springiness as the basic mechanism.*
- *Matter's tendency toward spatialization / to spill over in space.*
- *Track your mind in the attunement of sensory and cognitive capacities.*

I have already introduced the origins of most of the terminology in the score: springiness (*fjädring*) as a material feature, matter's extension beyond its surfaces (spatialization/spilling over), and attunement between sensory and cognitive. However, the first instruction – Follow the movement – is new and needs more explanation.

Follow the movement

While working with *Svärmen* during the PhD research, we developed a practice we called *Inside Touch*. It is based on the idea of kinesthetic experience as tactile. Sensing movement in the body is likened to the tactile sensation of surfaces sliding on each other, for example, a hand sliding along a fabric. Instead of defining movements to ourselves through spatial coordinates, such as "lift your left hand diagonally to the right," we wanted to define them through experience and actual physical sensation. For example, the kinesthetic experience of the above-described movement is felt more in the shoulder than in the hand and the direction of that sensation is neither necessarily "diagonally" nor on "the right". Surfaces within the body are sliding on each other, and you can feel the movement passing through your body. Following that sensation is following the movement. It is as if you, eyes closed, feel your way through a room, letting your body's surfaces slide along the surfaces of that space, except in this case that space is your body and the surfaces are inside instead of outside your body.

To speak of following may sound like there is something already present that I just need to get in touch with and then follow, but following is more active than that. In André Lepecki's words: "dancing demonstrates before our eyes that there is much more to the work of the follower than to submissively shut up and walk behind in passive, or servile, or obedient participation."[21] Lepecki takes this as an example of what he calls "Followingleading," which he describes as "… leading by following, and of following by taking initiative …."[22] He, in turn, refers to Canadian theorist Erin Manning, who has written on the subject of leading and following movement. Manning write:

> *We walk. I am leading. But that does not mean I am deciding. Leading is more like initiating an opening, entering the gap, then following her response. How I follow, with what intensity we create the space, will influence how our bodies move together. I am not moving her, nor is she simply responding to me: we are beginning to move relationally, creating an interval that we move together. The more we connect to this becoming- movement, the more palpable the interval becomes. We begin to feel the relation.*[23]

Manning describes how one has to follow while leading when dancing with a partner. In the example of *Follow the Movement*, it is movement itself that is the partner, but still arrives at

21 André Lepecki, "From Partaking to Initiating: Leadingfollowing as Dance's (a-personal) Political Singularity", International Symposium "Dance, Politics & Co-Immunity" in *Dance, politics & co-immunity*. (1st ed.) (Zürich: Diaphanes. Edited by Gerald Siegmund und Stefan Hölscher. 2013) p. 33

22 Ibid., p. 34

23 Erin Manning, *Relationscapes: movement, art, philosophy*. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. 2009) p. 30

the same conclusion of following, as not being a passive action. There is still one more reason to underline the leading aspect in following. If following were a purely passive act, the follower would be devoid of responsibility and liability in relation to the produced movement. Such understanding of the follower/dancer as an immaculate, frictionless medium will lead to an essentialist understanding of movement as true or natural. This needs emphasis. Different bodies will follow in different ways, and each body's way of following is in itself an expression of the conditioning that this specific body has been formed within. There is not one natural body, so there is not one natural way of following and not one natural movement to follow. Again, we need to be reminded of intra-action. There is not first movement and then the following, but an entangled relation between the follower and the followed, as Lepecki's term "Followingleading" suggests. It is exactly in this entangled relation between supposed binaries that *Following the Movement* takes place: in the attunement of moving and being moved. While moving through the physical research practice called Follow the Movement, I'm playing in the space between the sensorial and the cognitive, between dancing and choreographing.

Just as Body-Self Attunement emphasized the material in the material/symbolic binary, *Follow the Movement* privileges the sensorial before the cognitive as an effort to find a different attunement of the two. Therefore, while practicing *Follow the Movement*, I do my best to avoid planning and composing. I try to not have any good ideas about what I should be doing and, if I get any, I do my best to ignore them. Thinking something about what I'm doing tends to make me loose contact with the immediate sensation of movement. I cannot stop myself from thinking, but I can work on the attunement of the sensorial and cognitive faculties available to me, and propose a different setting for those parameters. While practicing *Following the Movement*, I have experienced that I do not need to choreograph for choreography to appear. Choreography will emerge anyway. In that sense, one could say that it is possible to take the dance out of choreography (as the Expanded Field of Choreography has worked on), but one cannot take the choreography out of dance. Paradoxically then, the skill of allowing choreography to appear lays in the suspension of voluntary conscious choreographing as a planning cognitive faculty. This is where suspension is re-formulated from its initial inspiration as material property to refer instead to a state of mind.

Immaterial Suspension

As the immaterial properties of matter were not described as separate from matter in my previous examples (*élan vital*, *entelechy*, gravitation, magnetism), so the immaterial suspension should not be understood as separate from matter's suspension in the form of resilience. There are three features that I associate with suspension in its immaterial form: something hanging (sus-pended), a temporary break in an activity (suspended from school), and the excitement felt in front of an unpredictable future (suspense). A body in suspension defies gravity, free-floating, ready and waiting for an as yet undefined event. The term "undefined" is important here and should be understood as a suspension of definition that relates to the faculty of mind that I have described as cognitive. I cannot stop myself from knowing (and why would I want to!?), but I can work on suspending knowing. This leads to a negative definition of suspension. Instead of being an action in itself, the suspension is the suspension of an action. But suspending is not the same as stopping. Being suspended from school is not the same thing as being expelled. It presupposes that there will be a re-integration, a return. In the same sense, when I suspend a movement, I do not stop moving. When a movement is suspended, the movement is still there, but not active. The force that generated the movement is still active, but it is balanced through

suspension, hovering in thin air. When an activity is suspended, it is still active, but not acting. Just above, I wrote "the movement is still there." The double meaning of "still" suggests that there is no movement – it is still – but also that movement remains present – still there. If movement is always present, always still there, one could consider movement as the default mode of all things. There is no inert matter; no stillness to which movement needs to be added. Instead, it is a question of releasing the suspension and allowing movement to move on. This definition proposes a quite radical argument against a more common understanding of movement as ephemeral. Movement is never gone, it is only suspended. Movement then becomes ineradicable. Unstoppable like time. Omnipresent like space. Movement is then no longer done, but allowed to happen; to move on. There are similar articulations of suspension and movement as a default mode in the texts already mentioned. Bennett explains how Driesch describes the immaterial force of *entelechy* in negative terms as it "relaxes its suspensory power."[24] The movement appears because suspension is relaxed. As for Deleuze, he describes how movement as default mode can be detected as "cause for movement already present within the body, only awaiting the suppression of an obstacle from outside."[25]

Suspension. A word that has revealed a world to me. But also in reverse, there was a world, or maybe an ecology of practices, which led me to that term. The entire translation dilemma that led me to the expanded understanding of the term suspension was based on a physical understanding of a word: the physical sensation of something that the word could not exactly encompass when translated between different languages and/or different translators. A physical sensation of meaning and a physical sensation of mismatch between the signifier and the signified. Dance is often described as a wordless art form that expresses what words cannot. Often, this is then referred to as emotions and considered in opposition to thinking, again echoing the body/mind problem. It is to be hoped that this article can contribute to a more complex understanding of the relation between sensation (instead of emotion) and word. The importance of grappling with language and terminology is obvious, yet the insufficiency of language remains. Just as I previously described how the tension created between two opposites formed a space for reflection and play, this experienced discrepancy between a sensation and its semantic definition can be understood as a productive, creative, and playful space. A space to hover in, rather than to minimize; a gap to be maintained rather than closed. But when experiencing the discrepancy between a sensation and its expression in language (we all know the feeling of looking for the right word for something we feel), it is as if the signifier becomes matter. One can think of a word as a symbol for what it represents. Without the signified, the signifier can seem empty, but the experienced mismatch reveals a more intricate relation between the two. Not only do our words matter, but they seem to have material qualities balancing on the onomatopoetic. I have had to move through different languages known to me (which remain in the occidental branch of the Indo-European language family) to try to name something that none of the words by themselves express. An in-between-words that gets circled in by those words, indicating a domain or field rather than an exact semantic definition, a bit like a tag-cloud that encircles the phenomenon of a property of matter. A tag cloud that would look something like this:

24 Bennet, 2010, p. 72

25 Deleuze, 2006, p. 14

Ending note

I want to end this article by describing the mentioned creative and playful space between word and sensation by presenting some documentations by *Svärmen*. As much of the documentation is poetic, scattered in keywords or notes not meant to be published, I have edited them (and sometimes translated from Swedish) to make more sense in relation to this article. The *italics* are the actual quotes, followed by my comments, which try to contextualize the quote in relation to this text. As I have already presented the complexity of translation, here I will leave the Swedish term *fjädring* untranslated and consider it as a signifier that represents the tag cloud above.

> *Notes on Fjädring: I first found it elusive, but then I began to acknowledge it not so much as an activity but as a state – psychophysical, spatial, organizational, relational, etc. I felt I needed an English word and I chose buoyancy. A mind can be buoyant and likewise a room or an organism. Buoyancy here, then, is a thinking defined by allowance, tempered by curiosity about the circumstances as they are. Buoyancy as a state of mind, not just as a physical feature. Then the two instructions of "Following the movement" and "matter's tendency toward spatialization" fall into each other.*

This quote reveals the difficulty of translating *fjädring* to English. I relate the term *buoyancy* to suspension through the floating, as I described the suspended body as free-floating.

> *The mechanics of the breath as metaphor for* fjädring. *The air you breathe comes into the body, gets processed, and exhaled. Notice the air outside and inside the body; their directions and their movements. The sphere of one's own breath includes both outside and inside. It includes the space in the body, the space around the body, and a border where the exhalation turns back to the body again and gets inhaled. I don't refer to the exact same air, but to that sphere as a form of* fjädring.

Here the breath is related to *fjädring*, as air bouncing in and out of the body. Anyone who has tried floating on water or scuba diving, also knows how the breath relates to buoyancy. Breathing out changes one's density and one sinks. Inhaling lifts you up, suspends you, makes you float. But the note above also describes another body, a body of air. The surface delineation of the body is no longer the skin, or the silhouette, but in that place outside your body where the air gets inhaled from. Similarly, space is no longer defined as that outside and around the body, as it also exists within the body.

> *I noticed how* fjädring *can have different strengths or degrees. Like the difference of a hard and a soft bed. I noticed how I would push down in order to reach up and to make myself more suspended. I noticed how I could use my body as a slingshot and catapult myself away. There is* fjädring *in rotation, in momentum and in the twist. In the lever, the catapult and the bounce. Then I got curious about the smaller scale and the* fjädring *that is on-going and active also when the body is still. I noticed how the sensation of* fjädring *increases when different body parts met other bodily surfaces. There is* fjädring *in the lungs, the skin, and the fat. When am I bouncing against something, that is springy, and when am I the springy thing?*

Here we find variations of *fjädring*. There is the intentional engagement of turning it up or down. As with the metaphor of tuning a string instrument, the researcher varies the tension of the string. How hard can I tense it before it snaps, and how loose can I make it, but still be able to play on it? Then there is scale. From full body bounce to molecular bounce. There are qualities of *fjädring* through different functions: catapult, twist, and so on. Finally, once again the body dissolves with its surrounding as the researcher questions where *fjädring* is located and finds it both in the bodily matter and in the material that the body bounces against. The material experience of one's own body cannot be separated from the material sensation of something that the body touches.

> *Instantly I sense that* fjädring *forms spirals. I sense the body as a spiral and visualize a wringed towel and a Twister ice cream. The spiral expands both within the body and in space and becomes never ending. It travels in space like a lost fly. Where did it go? Sometimes I have to look for it. Like going through all your pockets to find something you think you have lost. It travels fast to other places in my body and sometimes becomes superficial. Could that be an alternative? What is profound and what is superficial* fjädring*?*
>
> *I give time, attention and affection to the event and space is created in me. Body becomes porous.*
>
> *I visualize myself as a lazy old rubber band that lost its elasticity. Profound* fjädring*. I AM a rubber band – I AM the* fjädring *instead of adding* fjädring *to what I am.*
>
> *The bounces are tiny but the sensation is wide and extended. Through simply sitting and sensing the* fjädring *that lives in the action of sitting but to which I've never payed attention. I learn.*

There is a lot inside this document. It reveals a relation between *fjädring* and spirals and how those spirals, once again, blur the body in space, as they are felt both on the body and into the space. That sensation is then clearly expressed by saying that the body becomes porous.

The researcher moves on to describing how *fjädring* can get lost, or rather how one can lose contact with it, as the researcher then notes how *fjädring* is "something that lives in the action … but to which I never paid attention." I find that is a great description of *Following the Movement*. The embodied kinesthetic experience is always there, but keeps falling into the background. Even the most overwhelming physical insight will eventually become a part of the default bodily experience. It takes intentional engagement to re-animate it, which can also be seen as an example of how one has to lead in order to be able to follow. Finally, the document reports on an experience similar to what I emphasized above about Bergson's *élan vital*. A piece

of matter does not have its properties, it is its properties. Here the body is experienced as being *fjädring*.

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Into the Woods with Heidegger
Reflections about an Artistic-Academic Experiment

Falk Heinrich

Abstract: *This article is an academic reflection about a video project that I conducted in the summer of 2016. The video documents my collaboration with artist Thomas Wolsing. My ambition for this collaboration was to discover and experience interlacements between, on the one hand, art theory (epitomized by some sentences of Heidegger's "The Origin of the Work of Art") and on the other hand, artistic and physical-constructional work that is building a land art piece. The article cites and reflects on dialogues and monologues presented in the video by discussing the mutual dependence between and incompatibilities of art theory and art making. The conceptual cornerstone of the discussion is the notion of embodiment as outlined by Edgar Wind and Fischer-Lichte augmented by Barad's related notion of agential intra-action. The article discusses the experienced integration of physical and discursive actions that, in the moment of performance, are elusive and refute any ethical assessment.*

Keywords: *Aesthetics, Art, Practice, Heidegger, Edgar Wind, Embodiment, Ethics.*

1. Video documentary and Academic Reflection

This article is an academic reflection about a video project that I conducted in the summer of 2016. The project was part of a bigger framework, entitled *Constructions and Emergence*, that created a framework for artists and scientists/scholars to meet and collaborate. Five collaborating teams were formed. The pieces resulting from these collaborations between artists and scientists were exhibited and presented at the LandShape Festival 2016, a land art festival funded by the region of North Jutland (KulturKanten). The LandShape Festival also exhibited other works of land art commissioned and selected by a curatorial team. I worked with the Danish artist Thomas Wolsing.

All the footage was made with a GoPro camera mounted on my head. The dialogues, monologues, and visuals are the result of improvised encounters between Thomas Wolsing and myself. In addition, I used on-the-fly selected sentences of Heidegger's seminal essay "The Origin of the Work of Art" to create an encounter between not only two persons including their physical actions, but also between an artwork in the construction phase and excerpts from art theory. These encounters played out in the forest. This article follows the edited video in which I

have retained the chronology of the occurrences. Far from the whole raw footage found its way into the final video: many dialogues and oral reflections were omitted, and some shortened in order to create a somewhat interesting dramaturgy and a coherent thematic development.

As already hinted at, the project has two different documentary outcomes: a video and a conventional text-based article (the latter being this text) each using very different media with their respective affordances. A written article accommodates extended discursive reflections, descriptions, and references, whereas the medium of the video provides for a narrative representation of a situation's complexity in regard to the depicted material conditions, the diegetic sounds of the forest, the human participants' actions, and the interpersonal occurrences and dialogues. The recording of the intonation of my uttered words in conjunction with a point-of-view shot of my movements and actions better transmits my shifting emotional states ranging from curiosity to despair and hopelessness in regards to my set objective. The text format, on the other hand, caters for the construction of conceptual-discursive frameworks within which the descriptions of the concrete occurrences and experiences are merely jumping pads for abstract theoretical explanations.[1] As the etymology of the term ex-planation suggests, this inevitably results in a necessary reduction of complexity and the construction of an intelligible and academically reflected theoretical world as a tool for comprehension.

But let me commence with the transcription of the beginning of the video. In the video, I am standing in the middle of the forest, where I have agreed to meet with the artist Thomas Wolsing for our first day of the project. He drove his red car near to the spot in the middle of the forest where he wanted to construct the planned piece of art. We had met several times before in order to discuss the framework and objectives of our collaboration. The transcript starts with a short explanation of the envisioned collaboration, its focus, and goals.

> *Falk: Here is Thomas Wolsing and his red car and … he is the artist and is taking a lot of plant pots out of his car. We have begun our collaboration a bit late, meaning that the founding concept of the artwork has been done by Thomas. I was not part of the concept development process. My collaboration will consist of helping Thomas build and install this piece of land art here in the middle of the wood. What is the piece's name, Thomas?*
>
> *Thomas: It's: Erhernogen (Engl: Istheresomebody) Parenthesis: still-life. Nature morte.*
>
> *Falk: Ok. I want to document my experiences of the process. I will talk during the process, also with Thomas, asking questions, expressing reflections and how it feels to practically help Thomas construct the art piece. As already said, I am a scholar doing research within art theory. I have read a fair bit of theoretical books, such as Martin Heidegger's "The Origin of the Work of Art". I was thinking that I will read some of his paragraphs, some of his sentences, once in a while, in-between, when I feel it would fit, read them and reflect on them a bit in relation to what I am doing in the moment: concretely helping Thomas construct the piece. I have forgotten to say that I am hoping that my theoretical understanding will in one way or another be influenced by the practical part of*

1 "late 14c., from Latin explanationem (nominative explanatio) "an explanation, interpretation," noun of action from past participle stem of explanare "to make plain or clear, explain," literally "make level, flatten," from ex "out" (see ex-) + planus "flat" (from PIE root *pele- (2) "flat; to spread")" (Harper 2001-2018). Within a visual, pictorial discourse of imagination, making plane necessitates the reduction from three dimensional to two-dimensional representations that transforms objects to more or less generic signs and transforms them from being obstacles to way points necessary for further moves and actions.

> *building, wielding something, to feel the material and form, to feel, hm… maybe there will be associations, which I might not have had if I only had read his [Heidegger's] text*

My ambition was to discover personal interlacements between, on the one hand, art theory, epitomized by some Heidegger quotes and my in situ reading of them and, on the other hand, artistic creational and construction work and processes. My intent was to find very personal points of convergence or even common points of emergence of the artistic-creational act and art theory. From the very beginning, I imagined that this field of convergence must be located in or emerge from my performing body.[2]

2. Dependencies and Distinctions

The application of art theory to concrete production work has proven to be a difficult endeavor in many art universities and universities with artistic programs. There is a historical division of labor between the art academies and the universities. The reflective part of art has clearly been allocated to the universities. Here, art is seen as a cultural expression of societies that has to be formulated and expressed with the help of academic-hermeneutic analyses bringing about knowledge-producing theories and contextualization. On the other hand, the concrete-creative methods of art production have been allocated to art schools of all kinds yielding artistic competences to be used in the materializing of inspiration and craftsmanship, be that a painting, music or sound, theatre, or other forms of artistic event. Artists produce works of art that, with Luhmann[3], can show the world that there are other possibilities than the actual ones at a given moment. The autonomy of art (in Western societies since the 19th century) does not only secure a foundational purposelessness of art making in regard to societal needs and challenges, but it also shields the artist from demands of academic reason and causal-logical methods of production. Therefore, autonomous art, so it is claimed, can transcend existing discourses.

Switching back to academics, art theorists analyze and interpret art pieces uncovering not only their internal structures and *modi operandi*, but their possible significances as an attempt to make them relevant for society and its members. However, the relationship between art making and art theory is not linear and unidirectional. Academia is not only interpreting existing pieces of art, academia is also synthesizing and voicing artistic problems; this is another outcome of academic reflective endeavor.[4] Collenberg-Plotnikov, following the German philosopher and art historian Edgar Wind, seems to hint at art and art theory intrinsically forming a circular dependency. In Wind's book *Art and Anarchy*[5], he laments that modern art is a secluded way of producing art and points to, for example, Renaissance art that also had educational purpose and

2 In this context, my performing body refers to myself constructing the piece within the conceptual framework of my project. It is neither acting in the theatrical sense or a mere doing. The performing body is not operating flesh in Merleau-Ponty's understanding. The performing body is rather bringing about manifestations initiated by the conceptual framework, my proprioceptions and associations, and academic questions.

My academic take on the performing body is informed by performance studies and the notion of performativity (Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance, The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics* (London, New York': Routlegde, 2008); Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory, Performance Theory* (London, New York: Routlegde, 2003); Karen Barad, 'Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter', Signs, *Gender and Science: New Issues*, Vol. 28,.No. 3 (2003), 801–31) and aesthetics, especially somaesthetics (Richard Shusterman, 'Somaesthetics: A Disciplinary Proposal', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 57.3 (1999), 299–313).

3 Niklas Luhmann, 'The Medium of Art', *Thesis Eleven*, 18–19 (1987).

4 Collenberg-Plotnikov, Bernadette, 'Forschung Als Verkörperung', in *Wie Verändert Sich Kunst, Wenn Man Sie Als Forschung Versteht?*, ed. by Judith Siegmund (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2016).

5 Edgar Wind, *Art and Anarachy* (Evanston, USA: Nothwestern University Press, 1985).

where patronage did not solely mean financial support, but also demands and discussions about artworks to be. If we were to believe Wind, this raised artistic quality and gave art a position in society.[6, 7] Also, Shusterman states that art theoreticians partake in making art history through "the interventions of theorists, whose views have traditionally been central to the creative and critical context in which artists, critics, and art historians function."[8]

Wind sees the cultural significance of art in the ability of embodiment ("Verkörperung"). Works of art can be seen as materialization – as artistic answers – to questions that cannot be solved by thought proper. Embodiment gives a necessary resistance to thought. Artistic questions are always means and products of thoughts. These questions might be asked by the artist himself or herself, but they are most poignantly (and often retrospectively) formulated by university academics. Art as cultural production is far from a solitary endeavor but, if it should serve any cultural and epistemological purpose, must be seen as a complex collaboration between a whole range of actors, where academic research definitely has a role to play. The same goes for any theoretical endeavor: theory too, being the production of structured thoughts, needs to be transformed and made observable as materialization of a kind. This might be in the form of artworks, any cultural artifacts, and the experiments of natural science.

This might seem to be a rather simplified functional relationship between academia and art and, most certainly, there are many more aspects, both personal stimuli and societal conditions, that eventually lead to the making of works of art. However, in my reading, Wind seems to suggest that academic analysis is not only a post-factual, interpretive endeavor, but that academic reflection also plays a prospective role in the production of art. Definitely, art does not (and should not) illustrate art and/or aesthetic theories, however, it is reasonable to claim that there is a dialogue, a mutual inspirational process going on and that art and human sciences presuppose each other (at least in the present societal constellation).

This is even more relevant today, where art academies aspire to be research institutions conducting artistic research. This development (re-)ignites the discussion about the differences and communalities of academic and artistic research and about how we operationalize and bring into play our respective competences (see, for example, Badura; Borgdorff; Savin-Baden & Wimpenny).[9] The simple fact that artistic research demands an artistic problem formulation or a hypothesis of a kind or, even more rudimentary, a specified and articulated field of interest, whose importance must be validated through a contextualization of the artistic process and product, shows that theoretical (reflective) dimensions are an intrinsic part of art making. Expressed the other way around but equally true, art making and art reception are intrinsically reflective enterprises that allow us to engage in an interplay of perceptions and significances, precisely because art, on a basic level, serves the materialization of the imaginary that circles around the fruitful dependency between rationality (the sensible) and irrationality (the not-

6 Wind, 1985, p. 62

7 Luhmann has a similar take on art seen from the perspective of sociology. He asserts that artworks are elements of the social system of art in line with other system participants such as the audience, the critics, institutions, funding bodies, etc. Artists' seclusion and autonomy is an ambition supported – and also perforated – by all the other system participants. According to Luhmann, modern art during the 20th century has begun to incorporate the very question of its social positions, purposes, modes of communication, and significances into art making (Niklas Luhmann, 'The Medium of Art', *Thesis Eleven*, 18–19 (1987)., thus creating reflective anchors (in terms of society). In my view, this is (partly) a result of the merger of art academies and universities in the Anglo-American societies and forms the basis for recent discussion about artistic research (see further down in the article).

8 Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (Lanham: Rowman &Littlefield Publishers, 2000) p. 45

9 Badura, Jens, 'Erkenntnis (Sinnliche)', in *Künstlerische Forschung - Ein Handbuch,* ed. by Jens Bdaura, Selma Dubach, Anke Haarmann, Dieter Mersch, Anton Rey, Christoph Schenker, and others (Zürich: diaphanes, 2015); Borgdorff, Henk, 'The Production of Knowledge in Artistic Research', in *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*, ed. by M. Biggs and H. Karlsson (London, New York: Routledge, 2010); Savin-Baden, Maggi, and Katherine Wimpenny, *A Practical Guide to Arts-Related Research* (Rotterdam. Boston,Taipei: Sense Publishers, 2014)

structured).[10]

But does that mean that artistic research will take over the role and competences of academic research, because the artistic researcher will incorporate these dimensions into art making proper? What, then, remains for the academic scholar? This is, of course, a vanity question. Collenberg-Plotinkov's differentiation is an attempt to characterize societal-functional differences. Of course, this generalized model cannot account for the many concrete incidences, where both artists and academics try to enlarge their field by incorporating the other side. During the past decades, one could observe a kind of beating around the bush by academic and artistic researchers in an attempt to find new distinctions. Artistic researchers have tried to define what artistic research is in comparison to academic research by experimenting with and testing different combinations of and weighings of the resulting work of art and different means of explicit reflection (e.g., documentation report, thesis, discussion, presentation) as research outcome. This is most evident in the different national requirements for artistic PhD programs (see for instance, Biggs & Karlson[11]).

On the other hand, even though academic results are most often disseminated through scholarly journals and books, academics were never prohibited from also engaging in artistic practice. That does not mean that there is still an old finger-wagging man admonishing us to keep the reflective-analytical distance to the artwork. But for many musicologists, for example, it is quite natural to play an instrument and/or to compose music. Some theatre researchers do engage in theatre productions as dramaturge, director, etc. And can universities forbid art historians from painting or curating? Therefore, on a personal level, both artists and university scholars engage in multiple ways with their fields of interest and expertise without respecting professional boundaries. Explicitly or not, experiences made in the 'other' disciplinary field will have an influence on both an artist's and a scholar's work and thinking. And it is precisely the complexity of personal involvement with the common field (of art as cultural and communicative creations) that allows for a necessary manifold of both artistic and academic outputs.

In the last passages, I have tried to set the stage for my elaboration. On this stage, I find the notion "Verkörperung" (embodiment) intriguing and it shall henceforth be the focal point of this article. Indeed, it is not a new concept and can be found in many texts on art and especially artistic research, simply because art is about the creation of an artifact, a material or otherwise tangible and concrete manifestation (painting, sculptures, installations, music or theatre performances, events/happenings – just to mention a few). However, the fact that academic research, be it in natural or human sciences, also is in need of this "Verkörperung" is a disregarded phenomenon, especially within the humanities. The natural sciences have their various forms of experiments that embody and materialize their academic research questions and give the necessary resistance and indeterminacy necessary for theory formation. The natural scientist Rheinberger calls this "nicht-fokale Aufmerksamkeit".[12]

Evidently, art theory is dependent on works of art (as many human sciences are empirically dependent on cultural artifacts of various kinds). This relation is normally seen as unidirectional, where the artwork is the pre-given subject matter for academic analyses. Human sciences 'post-artifactually' unravel the significances and inner workings of art and present them as discursive knowledge, as generalized propositions. However, I, in line with Wind, Collenberg-Plotinkov and

10 Collenberg-Plotnikov, 2016, p. 79

11 Biggs, Michael, and Henrik Karlson, 'Evaluating Quality in Artistic Research', in *Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*, ed. by Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlson (London, New York: Routledge, 2011)

12 Rheinberger, Hans-Jörg, *Iterations* (Berlin: Merve Verlag, 2005) p. 72

Shusterman (to name some), claim that works of art also serve as the embodiment of questions produced (but not exclusively) in art theory. In this regard, theories always produce questions (and not propositions), simply because all abstract and generalized propositions necessarily are hypotheses that have to be verified by the particularity of life. In art theory, artworks are most often used as referenced examples that seem to incorporate and thus make plausible the hypotheses of the theory in question. In this sense, all theories are creating the works of art they are referring to. In order to be embodiments, theories have to conjure up artworks as perceptual objects or "Gebilde" in Gadamer's sense[13], a form of "ideality" (or the ideality of artistic form) based on a conceptual structure that allows for hermeneutic participation. Only if a theory succeeds in creating its referenced artworks as perceptual imaginations, that is, as physiological occurrences, then the embodiment of theory has succeeded. Expressed a bit differently, I claim that any theory cries out for incarnation and wishes to be merged with the materiality of the world.[14]

For example, Heidegger's essay on the origin of the work of art refers several times to the Greek temple and also to Van Gogh's painting of worn-out shoes. Heidegger almost conjures up the decisive world-establishing significance of the temple by letting us recollect images of temples that incorporate perceptions of, for example, the rocky ground it is (and we are) standing on and indirectly the heat of the sun and so forth. He is almost arousing our capability to physically feel the shoes as a particular thing and their inherent thingness as a specific tool. A work of art works (performs) by creating our world that lets us reflectively experience the situated constituents of our world. Also, Heidegger's far more abstract passages on art show and let us experience the combat between world and earth, wherein the earth reads and feels as palpable materiality that is always in the process of concealment, of negating any obvious significances and therefore remains sensuously material. Of course, for Heidegger, the earth is first of all a metaphor, namely a metaphor for the agency of hiding, of remaining unknown and dark. Nevertheless, his description of Van Gogh's shoes connotes the concealing – and therefore fertile – earth. And in his description of the Greek temple, "the rocky ground"[15] becomes the ever-concealing earth, whereas the temple opened up a world for the Greek society and citizen, as long as the Gods were present in the temple.

But I am jumping ahead of myself and the video. In my performative experiment, I wanted to try to embody bits and pieces of (one specific) theory of art through the physical work of construction of an artwork; not by bringing art theory and emerging artwork into a hermeneutical alignment, but rather by searching for instances of embodiment where thought and physical construction are two sides of the same coin. What these instances of embodiment could look like, I had at this point in the video no idea whatsoever. The experimental setting was very simple; I participated actively in the construction of the artwork while reflecting on the artwork-to-be by citing and interpreting Heidegger's essay. I wanted to embody Heidegger's thoughts by bringing them into the concrete situation of physical construction work.

A whimsical aspect of my aim is that Wind detested Heidegger. He accused him of "[seeking] to replace critical analysis with contemplative declarations."[16] In his polemical essay "Jean-Paul Sartre: A French Heidegger," he heavily attacks Heidegger (and Sartre) by writing that "[t]he

13 Gadamer, Hans-Georg, *Die Aktualität Des Schönen* (Stuttgart: Reclam Verlag, 1977) p. 44

14 Wind asserts that the experiments of natural science embody their theories through the act of measurement. The apparatus of measurement becomes the materialization of thought and theoretical assumptions that, paradoxically, predetermine our notion of reality.

15 Heidegger, Martin, Basic Writings (London, New York: Routledge, 1993) p. 166

16 Wind, 2001, p. vi

dismissal of lucidity, of rationality, of any harmonious sense of existence as 'unauthentic' is one of the most vicious pieces of sophistry that M. Sartre has taken over from Heidegger."[17] Wind sees in Heidegger's adoration of darkness (concealment) the philosophical argument for his active support of National Socialism.

For Wind, embodiment of art is realized through *aisthesis*, the sensuous experiences and appreciation of the artwork. "There is only one test of the artistic significance of an interpretation: it must sharpen our appreciation of the objects and thus enhance our aesthetic pleasure".[18] He sees embodiment as a process of rationality, of hermeneutics on the basis of symbols and forms. Art ultimately is embodiment of thoughts that rigorous interpretation can pleasurably decipher by bringing into rational clarity the significances of formal composition and historic contextualization. Evidently, he is talking as an art historian at a time when artistic research was not a topic. The science of art found embodiment in existing works of art.

3. Questions, artistic embodiments and body actions

Back to the video: a summer forest with an abundance of moss, fern, and mainly coniferous trees. The first day of our encounter in the forest was a warm and pleasant day. Everything was green.

> *Falk: Ok, Thomas, what should I do?*
>
> *Thomas: We have to put these pots in this area over there. We should put each beside a fern.*

Thomas and I carried some plant pots from his car to the selected site, approximately sixty meters from the narrow stony path. The forest was not a very dense one, rather light and spacy. Thomas had chosen a spot with a lot of ferns. While carrying the pots into the forest, Thomas explained:

> *Thomas: It is like that, that, my idea for this project was that [this forest], a beautiful area with summer cottages [pause] obviously, this is an industrial, planted forest, but we call it nature […] It is a recreational area, where tourists like to come [..]. And furthermore, I am very fascinated by these ferns here, and moss. Moss and ferns were the first plants on the earth – from the origin of life. When you look at a fern like this one, as long as it is planted in the earth, is it termed nature, but when it is in a pot, is it called culture, part of civilisation. That is why I thought what we will do is dig up the ferns, plant them in the pots, widen the hole in the ground and put the pots into them.*
>
> *Falk: Ok.*
>
> *Thomas: When we do this at many spots, it can provoke the public's curiosity - yes – that is to say, something is happening here, something different. Let us continue with this idea.*
>
> *Falk: And we do not know whether the pot is coming out of the earth or whether, precisely, it is put into the earth.*

17 Ibid.

18 Wind, 1985, p.62

Thomas: So, nature is human-made, at the border of nature and civilisation. I think that is interesting and I was thinking of working with this in the project.

Figure 1: Still from the video article: Into the Woods with Heidegger – A video article

Thomas Wolsing has been working for a while with the special culture and atmosphere of provincial areas, namely parts of the country where there does not seem to be any economic and cultural progress. These are the areas where the young people move away towards the metropoles and industrial centers and where only the elder and uneducated people remain. In these areas, many houses are abandoned and slowly deteriorating, time seems to stand still. His idea for this project, is to erect a summer cottage of decay in the middle of the forest; a cottage that is in the process of being swallowed up by the forest, the forest soil, and its plants. The dialogue between him and me shows not only his thematic focus, namely the distinction and relationship between nature and culture or civilization, but that he is looking for concrete materializations of these thoughts that are able to entail the complexity not of thoughts, but rather the complexity and indeterminacy of his experiences that his thoughts arise from and that his thoughts want to capture. In order to have a playground for his (and others') thinking, he wanted to create a particular situation that could nurture his questions about the distinction and relation between nature and culture. This situation should embody his thoughts by being an artistic answer in the form of a concrete work that yet is distinctively undetermined and polysemic. Thomas has encountered the planted pot idea; a pot that grows out of the forest floor and that contains the most ancient plants to be found in this forest – moss and fern.

Until now, Thomas' idea was only a concept and not yet a full artistic answer: because we had not externalized and materialized the idea, we had not planted the ferns into the pot and the pot into the forest floor.

Thomas: Let us try to – it is tempting to dig one up.

Falk: (digging a hole) Shall I dig more?

Thomas: Yes, in there. Fine sand, isn't it.

Falk: Yes, sand.

Thomas: Fantastic. We'll try to place it [the pot] back again. It's almost like it's in a shop for decorations. Haha. Let's see. Exciting. It's quite amusing, isn't it? Yeah. It's quite effective, isn't it?

Falk: Yes.

Thomas: One takes something, manipulates it and puts it back again; then, it is completely modified. And I have thought a lot about whether I should plant a pot; but in a way, I think, one associates the fern and moss with this here [pointing at the forest]. It's strange, isn't it? No. The only thing that is strange is the pot. And pot signifies culture. How one blends….

Falk: Hmm, yea. But when we are in our gardens, we have a lot of pots, at least many have, but one experiences them not as culture, but more as… also as nature, as something that is different than the city and urban space that has another logic and atmosphere.

Thomas: It is quite exciting, when there begins … civilisation or when begins this site … a cultivation of this environment.

Falk: I think it is quite fascinating, as I said before, that one can make the association that these pots come out of the earth and are not put into the ground. They grow out of the earth like ferns. I want to question the distinction between nature and culture, one that we are socialized into. Also, what we do, that we craft culture. To generate culture is our nature, somehow.

Thomas: It is pretty. Yes. It looks good.

The planted pot is a paradoxical statement that plays itself out in-between perception and semiotics. The pot is a human-made container that allows us to grow nature in artificial environments (such as houses and terraces) and is therefore a sign for human endeavor and thus culture. The planted pot with fern and moss disturbs our normal categorization of nature and culture, it inscribes the latter into the former and vice versa. The artistic embodiment of thought (forming questions) led to a situated tableau where the pots and plants are estranged – with Shklovsky's word *ostrenje*[19] – by fiddling with their habitual context. In this constructed situation, we perceive the pot either as an almost naturally growing thing or as artificially planted cultural distinction between nature and nature (that seems to become culture). This distinction is a quite literal separation line (a clay wall) between the same (nature) that demands a categorical displacement on one side: either the planted fern is now a part of culture or the forest floor is a part of culture. Taking the round form of the pot into consideration, most likely we will consider the fern in the pot as cultural artifact. Thomas associated it with a decorating shop, which amused us. Important is that the embodied idea can be considered an artistic answer, but only if the answer itself constitutes a playground for further questions and thoughts and not definitive answers. Artistic embodiments spur cognitive indeterminacies and associations, recollections, imaginations, etc. Embodiment means here a structured but not hierarchized and not categorized simultaneity of well-selected constituents that together aspire to a transient whole. The constituents are both material objects (the pot, the fern, the moss), the place (the venue in the forest) and the perceptual associations and semiotic connotation these objects occasion. The thoughts (the questions) are directly linked to, or better, are parts of the artifact's constituents and their chancing relations. At that moment, we cannot any longer determine what came first, the thought or artifact initiated the fern-pot-forest floor-*Gebilde* (in this case, a kind of tableau). Nonetheless, this tableau elicits more thoughts and further questions that, in a

19 Viktor Shklovsky, 'Art as Technique', in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, ed. by E.L.T. Lemon, E.L.T. and M.J. Reiss (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965).

recursive movement, shapes our perception of the artifact through varying interpretations and yields possibly further modifications of the tableau.

But there is one thing missing. Until now, my elaboration of the pot-in-the-forest-floor has focused on the objects and their relations, but not on the action of digging up the fern, of putting it in the pot, and putting the pot back into the earth. Are they just intermediary means towards a goal, which in this case is the tableau and ultimately, the finished artwork? Or do these physical actions entail an essential function of their own? Of course, my questions are rhetorical; I claim that these actions (beside the objects) quite literally embody the artistic questions by slowly constructing an artistic answer. Embodiment is thus not only the engendered result (the artwork), but also the very act of producing it. Here, thoughts are transformed into moving and working bodies; these bodies are constructing tangible statements (in our case, by displacing objects and composing new constellations). In our Western culture, these tangible statements are seen as works of art, as final results of artistic creation that can be perceived and contemplated, analyzed and judged, and distributed with the support of our economic system. However, Wind's project and idea of embodiment needs human bodies and human labor.

My endeavor is different from Wind's and therefore also my idea of embodiment. My question is: How to embody philosophical thoughts in or through my own physical activity of art making? My bodily actions are (somehow) intended to be the instrument with which I want to embody Heidegger's "contemplative declarations."[20] Or expressed differently, can the performative body be the locus for an integration of artistic practice and theoretical discourse? And is this at all desirable? The closest integration of these two approaches is to be found in the field of somaesthetics. From its conception, this field is thought as a field that crosses between aesthetic theory and body practices, where one informs the other.[21] However, the most radical approach is found in post-human theories, such as Barad's "agential intra-action." Standing on both Foucault's but also Deleuze's shoulders, Barad proposes a novel approach: "The primary ontological units are not 'things,' but phenomenal-dynamic topological reconfiguration / entanglements/relationalities/(re)articulations. And the primary semantic units are not 'words' but material-discursive practices through which boundaries are constituted."[22] The basis for Barad's assertion is the conviction that statements ("discursive formations"[23]) and, for example, material and performing bodies, have a direct formative impact on each other, thereby constituting agencies (and not objects). She elaborates on this by referencing Bohr: "On the basis of this profound insight that 'concepts' (which are actual physical arrangements) and 'things' do not have determinate properties, or meanings apart from their mutual intra-actions, Bohr offers a new epistemological framework that calls into question the dualism of object/subject, knower/known, nature/culture, and word/world."[24] In a specific way, my project tried to make Barad's first assertion physical by bringing specific words into the closest possible contact with body actions within an artistic framework. The concept of my experiment thus is the physical and

20 Ironically, one could claim that contemplative declarations are the very method of modern art making where rationality and irrationality make a tension field. Collenberg-Plotnikov writes: "Mit Warburg sieht Wind das Kunstwerk im Spannungsfelt von Rationalität und Irrationalität. Dabei wird om jeweiligen Kunstwerk aber eben kein Ausgleich zwischen den Polen erreicht, sondern beide Pole bleiben, […] stets als solche erhalten; die synthese bleibt labil" (Collenberg-Plotnikov, 2016. "Forschung als Verkörperung" in Siegmund, J. (ed). *Wie verändert sich die Kunst, wenn man sie als Forschung versteht*, Bielfeld: transcript Verlag. p. 79). Does that mean, seen from the perspective of Wind, that Heidegger's philosophy is art in disguise? Certainly not. However, it shows that both art and science are nurtured by the force of inducing rationality (understood as an ordering, coherent system) to the (yet not) inexplicable.

21 Shusterman, 1999

22 Barad, 2003, p. 818

23 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1972).

24 Barad, 2003, p. 820

agential vicinity of all the constituents (Heidegger's words, video camera, Thomas, my actions including perception and proprioception, the material objects on site, etc.).

Let's get back to the transcript. My last comment in the cited passage is a critical and theoretical question about the validity of the historic-cultural distinction between nature and culture. This thought obviously has roots in my academic reflection and was prompted by the pots in the forest ground. Clearly, Thomas was not interested in this academic excursion and responded to my invitation with an aesthetic judgment, *"[t]hat is pretty. Yes. It looks good."* We concluded this session. I turned off the camera and we agreed on a date for our next meeting.

4. World and earth – opening and concealment

I came back several days later. I came a bit earlier, because I wanted to see what he had done in the past few days and I wanted to have some time alone, which meant some time with the camera and Heidegger's essay. The weather was still very nice and warm, the forest floor dry and inviting. When I arrived at 'our' site, I put on the camera and inspected Thomas' progression of the work.

> *Falk: Now, I am here again and I want to see what Thomas has done yesterday and the day before. [..]He has made a wooden construction with tiles under it. This appears to become a terrace. And here, I think this will be the outline of the house.*

After having inspected the work from various angles, I thought about this project's main objective: how to fuse academic essays with artworks, how to fuse one specific essay with one artwork that is not even finished? For some decades, I have been working as an academic, which means I quite naturally started with text. I sat down on the moss, in the middle of the unfinished work and began to read and interpret some of Heidegger's key notions. This form of improvised interpretation is more a series of associations than academic answers. These associations transform theoretical notions into concrete images placed into a very concrete context.

> *Falk: Maybe we should just read a bit, again, something with earth, which I find very interesting. "The work lets the earth be an earth." He [Heidegger] has this opposition between world and earth and earth is the covered, the hidden, one cannot say something about. "Earth is essentially self-secluding. To set forth the earth means to bring it into the open region as the self-secluding."*[25] *Earth is also a movement, it's not the material we are talking about here – moss, soil, etc. – but earth is also a symbol of something that hides, that does not want to be identified. And if you want to present earth, you will also have to present that earth does not want to be presented as something. It's a movement of disclosure, all the time. Here, we have the world of the house, of a house that will be built – also if you build a house in decay, it is built after all; it constructs a world, the world we live in, the comprehensive world we live in – and then there is the forest floor, earth, that we do not know. Yes, we know it in a biological sense, chemical and this kind, of course. But nevertheless, there is always something that gets hidden, that is closed off, a secret. The dark, not a dark force, but something we do not have access to. We only have access to it when it surfaces. (pause) And then we have the earth: "The work lets the earth be an earth …"*

25 Heidegger, 1993, p.172

From a philosophical standpoint, this seems very clear to me. According to Heidegger, the work of art is a "setting up of a world" and a simultaneous "setting forth of the earth" by paradoxically setting "itself [the work] back into the earth".[26] Following Heidegger, a work of art is an ongoing movement of becoming (setting up) and disintegration. Especially seen in the light of modern art, which is (also) very much about the process of creation proper and the showing of the many possible artistic constellations and combinations of artistic means be they figurative, abstract, or in the process of become identifiable figures or, the reverse, of becoming geometrical abstractions. Heidegger's earth can be seen as the very possibility of, but not yet actualized, cultural creation and as the multiplicity of artistic instantiations through which we see our world. My interpretation is very much influenced by thinkers such as Luhmann, who substitute the conceptual pair of matter and form with medium and form, where medium is defined by loosely coupled constituents and form by more tightly coupled ones (see Luhmann[27] and my elaborations[28]). And, for example, Rancière, who associated the "aesthetic regime" of modernity with an altered concept of beauty that no longer is associated with the harmony of "proportions of parts, or the unity of expressions of a character, but [with] the indifferent potential of the whole that endlessly mixes elements together by leaving them perceptually at peace".[29] Or by Deleuze's elaboration of the distinction between the actual and the virtual.[30] In my interpretation, the earth is a metaphorical description of the creative-artistic process that becomes a feature of its own in the artwork proper and thus also a guideline for its reception.

Those are thoughts that belong to the discourse of aesthetics trying to identify and describe the various workings of artworks. Evidently, the above-outlined mechanisms have something to do with the relationship between the artist, the work of art, and the recipient. The descriptions clearly are abstract in the sense that they are intended to be applied to works of art in general. In my eyes, they correlate fairly well with my concrete situation in the video: sitting on the forest floor contemplating the unfinished work through the framework of Heidegger's notions (and my interpretation thereof). As such, this cognitive framework filters and solidifies my sense perception creating a cognitive closeness and a physical distance. Now, both the artist's (Thomas) and Heidegger's thoughts are present in this unfinished work of art. However, I can only partake from a distance, because I do not embody the thoughts in an agential, performative sense.

This reminds me of the artist William Kentridge and his account of studio work: "One of the fundamental things that happens in the studio is the process of creating: the physical activity of making marks, erasing and redrawing, in which there is always a gap between the head and the art – a reliance on the hand's motor memory for the manifestation of ideas, as well as a direction from the brain in which these two forms of control are combined with unconscious memory"[31] Kentridge asserts that there is a difference between the physical action as an intelligence of its own compared to the cognitive intelligence. At the same time, he acknowledges that there is a productive gap at play while doing studio work. He continuous by identifying "a secondary split, and that is when you step back from being the artist as maker of a drawing and become

26 Heidegger, 1993, pp. 171-173

27 Luhmann, Niklas, 'The Medium of Art', *Thesis Eleven*, 18–19 (1987)

28 Heinrich, Falk, 'A Theoretical Foundation for Interlacing Artistic and Academic Methodologies', *ISEA 2014 Proceedings : Conference Proceedings*, 2014, p. 4

29 Rancière, Jacques, *Aisthesis- Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art* (London: Verso Books, 2013) p. 11

30 Gilles Deleuze, *Repetition and Difference* 1994 (New York: Columbio University Press, 1994).

31 Kentridge, William, *No It Is* (Cologne: Verlad der Bichhandlung Walther König, 2016) p. 25

a viewer of what you have made."[32] Indeed, there is nothing surprising in this account, it is the very condition of modern artmaking and, I would claim, of any creative work.

So, even in artmaking this split seems to be unavoidable and even a necessary condition. Is my aim of exploring the anticipated merger of philosophical aesthetics and art creation an impossibility? Is it in vain to look for an integration of art production as a performative act and aesthetics as a reflective endeavor? I am fully aware that philosophical aesthetics constructs its own discourse and belongs to a different social system and epistemological domain than artmaking (as mentioned earlier) and that this split and its intended dissolution since Descartes runs as a red thread through the history of Western philosophy. Reading Kentridge's reflection on studio work, it seems clear that this split is not only a philosophical concept, but also an artistic condition.[33]

No wonder that frustration began to grow in me. I remember going from the site – that in this particular moment wasn't a "clearing"[34] at all – back to the carpark at the edge of the forest while talking to my recording device. In order to convey through the video this confusion, this frustration about the impossibility of my naïve project, I created two simultaneous audio tracks, one with the continuation of my explication, where the artwork is just an exemplification of theory that slowly turns into frustrated exclamations of my own naivety, stupidity, and vulnerability. And the other track tries to explain the project's impossibility.

> *[Simultaneous voices]*
>
> *Falk Voice 1: That what we do not know, undisclosed at all times, it has not yet opened itself, it hides, conceals itself. Maybe that is what I am doing here, I venture into something that seems so stupid and I also feel quite stupid going around here in an artwork that yet is not, a work of art to-be, an artwork that creates a world, represents a world and I am talking to myself with the intention to combine Heidegger's elevated thoughts about the work of art that sets up a world and lets the earth be earth. And I expose myself, I expose myself due to my ignorance and inability to combine these two things together: philosophy, theory, language and … this here.*
>
> *Falk Voice 2: The world of philosophy that lives with the ephemeral, the notional and that gains meaning within its own notional system. He talks about world and earth, and things and equipment and things like this. One has to enter, go into this world and live there, breath there in order to be able to extract meaning. The work of art, or rather, the work with artworks, to install something, to take those pots and carry them that is ... that is very ... it's the body working, carrying something, feeling the forest ground. There aren't any elevated thoughts. Philosophical thoughts do not make sense here. In any case this relationship is not very clear to me, I feel like …*

32 Ibid., p. 26

33 There are several art strategies that try and tried to transcend human intentionality and thus also the poietic effect of reflection and assessment. For example, romanticism focusses on feeling and emotions, while the surrealists use techniques such as automatic drawing and writing in order to get beyond the above-mentioned split.

34 Heidegger uses the term clearing in the sense of disclosure (aletheia) and appearance of things.

Figure 2: Still from the video article: Into the Woods with Heidegger – A video article

In the video, the image of the site fades away giving space for a, not-flattering, still of counterfeit that eventually also fades into blackness. Only the cacophony of multiple voices remains. How can art theory and art-making meet? Can only representational distinctions link those two endeavors?

5. Epiphany or dangerous conjunction?

Next day, Thomas and I met again. We had to finish the terrace.

> *Thomas: I am thinking, on the practical side, I …. right now. If you could lay the foundation, only at a few spots.*
>
> *Thomas: No, I have poles, thick posts over there. So, we hammer one in here and fasten it with a screw here.*
>
> *Falk: Ok fine.*
>
> *Thomas: And … dum, dum…. in each corner. And then, you know, it is stabilized. Ha-ha. That's it.*
>
> *Falk: Ok. Super. It will be good to do something physical. Not only something on a conceptual level.*

I began working, hammering the posts into the earth with a post hammer. Hammering is a very rhythmic work like rowing or similar repetitive movements. After the first post, it occurred to me that I could accompany the hammering with one of Heidegger's key sentences, or the other way around, to spice up the monotony of Heidegger with the rhythm of the hammering. In the rush, I remembered this phrase: "To be a work means to set up a world."

> *Bang- to be – bang - a work – bang - means to set – bang - up a world- bang - to be - to be – bang - a work – bang - means to set – bang - up a world- bang to be – bang - a work – bang - means to set – bang - up a world- bang to be – bang - a work – bang - means to set – bang - up a world- bang to be – bang - a work – bang - means to set – bang - up a world- bang to be – bang - a work – bang - means to set – bang - up a world- bang ….*

Figure 3: Stills from the video article: Into the Woods with Heidegger – A video article

I felt an immense delight, not only in the movement, but especially in the found simultaneity and integration of rhythmic physical and vocal performance, semantic content, the concept of the work of art, and the forest. After the hammering scene, the video shows the following text:

> *This is the closest relation between practical building work and one core sentence of Heidegger's philosophy on art, I have experienced. It's an embodiment of words and a word-becoming of action. This rhythmic conjunction melts both the semantics of action and word into pure performance, into energetic transformations of air to muscles to sounds and movements of an earth-opening post, back to my hands and arms. This is an opening of my human earth, where my momentary body, all my perceptions and thoughts are moulded, transformed and again hidden away. This is my human earth, where pure but blind energy amalgamates with joy, sorrow, movement, sense, breathing, indoctrination to form my perception of this work of art to-be and to create my world.*

In retrospect, the incidence appears to be fairly simple; a simple simultaneity of unrelated actions and words combined by a repetitive rhythm. There is no common origin, just a heterogeneity of things, words, and actions that got forged into a peculiar amalgamation. On the face of it, my action embodied the words, primarily as sounds stripped of their semantic content or, vice versa, my action constituted the materiality and performance of word-sounds. The occurrence can be approached from two different angles: firstly, as the performativity and materiality of signs and, secondly, my working body uttering signs.

6. Performativity and Embodiment

Mersch asserts that every sign needs to be performed as presentation (as graphical or uttered signs). He characterized this as "Existenzsetzung" (setting into existence, my translation).[35] It is an occurrence that brings the sign into a factual existence. However, the sign (as reference) cannot indicate this performed existence, because medial existence is not a part of signs. According to Mersch, this is the paradox of the performance (of signs). Luhmann's claim that art has something to do with the productive distinction between perception and communication, between the perception of the performance of materiality and mediality, and the communication as sign operations and that art makes this distinction visible/palpable. Both assert that this

35 Mersch, Dieter, 'Paradoxien Der Verkörperung', in *Inervalle 9 Körper – Verkörperung – Entkörperung* (Kassel: kassel university press, 2005), p. 32

paradox is productive. Mersch states that the setting into existence of sign yields "eine Kraft […], die sinnlich *angeht, anspricht, zufällt oder ergreift.*"[36] This paradox might be true for academic reflection that is based upon (onto-)logical either-or distinctions. But does an actor not fill the semantic of signs with expressive and thus perceptual flavors that are part of the signs, part of their mediality? Mersch seems to identify the performance of a sign as an aesthetic dimension that establishes a direct and sensuous contact to the sign recipient that the sign as such cannot account for but also does not need to account for. In this unaccountability, which is nothing else than the necessity of another initiating force outside of the conceptual field of semiotics, lies a sign's aesthetic dynamic: "eine sprengende Potenz, die darauf hindeutet, dass keine Theorie sich je selbst erfüllt, sondern dass sie notwendig an Anderen teilhabt, das ihr entgeht."[37] In this very sentence, Mersch draws the consequences for theory: theory can never be able to capture the act of "Setzung" in the very moment of its utterance Here, theory is in need of the participation of something that 'performs' it, another agential force that theory in the moment cannot capture. Hence, also reading and interpreting (which means performing) theory (here, fragments of Heidegger's theory) needs another agential force: my operating body 'doing' it.

My article so far should have made it clear that I am not interested in a recipient's perspective, but in the performer's experiences (in Mersch terminology, the one who sets the sign into being). Uttering the sentence "*To be a work means to set up a world*" demands choices, but not an (onto-) logical choice between either the semantics or the performance of its 'setting into existence', but rather a choice between the expressive timbre that evidently modifies the semantic-associative field of the uttered words. This expressive quality is not only dependent on the performer's (the utterer's) psychological-associative background and agential intention, but also on the physical action and context the utterer is part of. Therefore, I claim that a shift in perspective from the recipient point of view (which traditionally is the viewpoint of academics) to a performative perspective, dissolves the paradox into mutually enforcing simultaneities. The actions of my muscle incorporate Heidegger's phrase into my body and those actions colored the phrase itself on an aesthetic-expressive and on a semiotic level. My body actions were substantially building the world of the artwork and thus a certain experiential and cognitive perspective on the world. But more importantly, my repetitive actions were opening my body. In the video, I called this my human earth – at the same time expressive and receptive. My operating, working body filled words with constructive energy and my body-mind with significations.

Fischer-Lichte states that "At this point, we are able to radically redefine the term embodiment. By emphasizing the bodily being-in-the-world of humans, embodiment creates the possibility for the body to function as the object, subject, material, and source of symbolic construction, as well as the product of cultural inscriptions."[38] The body is both something that in our awareness constitutes us as subjects, a material that can be formed and culturally inscripted and an object of reflection. However, according to Fischer-Lichte, the body proper is "elusive" (Germ:. unverfügbar) because "bodily being-in-the-world cannot be but becomes […]."[39]

However, when dealing with performativity and the delight in pure bodily action, one question is often omitted; what kind of world do we want to set up? Asked differently, who (or what) is the observer that could make a critical and ethical assessment during the hammering

36 Ibid, p. 33

37 Ibid, p. 33

38 Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 89

39 Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 89

and reciting? Asked differently, does this kind of merger between bodily action and semantics deplete any critical position?[40] In order to include reflective dimensions into her notion of phenomenon as intra-action, Barad needs to replace ontological distinctions with agential ones. She talks about agential separability and agential cuts: "The notion of agential separability is of fundamental importance, for in the absence of a classical ontological condition of exteriority between observer and observed it provides the condition for the possibility of objectivity."[41] Barad is talking about phenomena as intra-actions of various elements (for example, materiality and discourse) that entail the possibility of second order (or meta-) observations as inherent elements of "measurement" of phenomena. But what about occurrences that deliberately remove this self-reflective possibility? History has shown that the human body is not a guaranty for the good, because the performing and sensuous body cannot any longer be understood differently than as intra-actional relations. The soma is the result of effectuations of different agential forces.

Figure 4: Still from the video article: Into the Woods with Heidegger – A video article

7. Questions to Somaesthetics

The practice-based research experiment *Into the Woods with Heidegger*, which includes these reflections, opens up a vast field of indeterminacy and questions concerning, for example, embodiment. It is to be understood more as a journey of (personal) discoveries within an artistic-experimental setting. With this paper, I have embarked upon an expedition into embodiment, its concrete perceptual physicality, and its various artistic and academic-reflective aspects, while knowing that the body and thus embodiment are elusive; elusive in a performative sense (as shown by Fischer-Lichte and Mersch), but also elusive in an ethical sense. To elaborate on the latter, let me have a look at Shusterman's "Somaesthetics: A Disciplinary Proposal".[42]

In a way, the concept of somaesthetics seems redundant, because the aesthetic (aesthetic perception, aesthetic experience, aesthetic recognition, etc.) presupposes sense-perception or the recollection of those perceptions, which are bodily acts. Thus, aesthetics as an academic

40 I am aware that the physical setting of my experience is highly abstract in the sense that I am (almost) alone in the forest; there is neither an audience or other performers doing the same act as we find it in, for example, religious rituals or militaristic mass demonstrations, where a direct access to the body of the practitioners is pursued. Yet, this 'abstract' setting gives me a platform to experience some sort of embodiment stripped of a problematic content of the uttered sentence and a ritualistic context – but, of course, a research or investigatory setting. In that moment, my action did not harbor any inherently critical or self-reflective dimension, but solely surrendered to movement.

41 Barad, 2003, p. 815

42 Shusterman, 'Somaesthetics: A Disciplinary Proposal'.

discipline has in one way or another to deal with sense-perception (the manifold of empirical data). However, in Shusterman's view, somaesthetics is important, because it focuses on the amelioration of the (human) sensing body. It is an aesthetics of exercise and improvement enhancing the possibilities of aesthetic experience and sense making. In his view, somaesthetics contain at least three perspectives: an analytical, a pragmatic one, and somaesthetics as practice. The bearings of the last form seem to be that body practices are a means to development and healing and thus includes self-understanding. This is the transformative and didactic foundation for, for example, yoga, meditation, gymnastics, Feldenkrais method, martial arts, and many other somatic methods. There is no doubt that these kinds of practices can lead to more self-understanding (for example, of the very functioning of the body, the connection between body and self-awareness). The inherent claim behind these methods seems to be the assertion that the soma contains an ethical dimension that can be brought to work by those exercises. Mere body awareness (the alignment of body and mind) seems to entail promises of liberation and redemption. But is the human body the locus of pureness and the pristine? Does a retreat to an awareness of somatic functions and states rip from us societal, ideological contaminations of any kind? Not if we were to subscribe to Barad's model of new materialism, where the body (among other objects) cannot be seen apart from discursive statements. A closer look at the various body practices discloses that the different somatic practices come with a certain 'ideology'. In yoga, for example, body practices are seen and supported by the believe that exercise balances the psyche and lead to a more accepting attitude towards oneself and others. The same goes for Zen, Taiichi, and most of the martial arts. However, martial art at the European gymnastics seems to serve at least two masters: training for warfare (Gymnastics was in the Greek origins composed of physical exercise for young soldiers) and improvement and maintenance of somatic capabilities (that always include the psychic dimension such as discipline, endurance, the will to transcend limits, etc.). Shusterman is very aware of this danger and distinguishes between representational and experiential forms.[43] Representational forms are concerned with the body representation (for example, beauty in its various forms) and sees the body as an object composed of functional parts and as mechanics that can be improved for external objectives or, it can, if not suitable, be disposed of. The fascistic employment of gymnastics is to be found in this category. Here, bodies are externalized and alienated in regards to "the spiritual self".[44] The other category is based on experience, where somatic exercises serve the bodily experience (of the spiritual self?). Shusterman seems to find that the ethical component in the "body's subject-role as the living locus of beautiful, personal experience" seems able to escape societal inscriptions. According to Shusterman, this practice and perspective on the soma negates externalization and does not "impose a fixed set of standardized norms of external measurement (e.g., optimal pulse) to assess good somaesthetic experience."[45] But like embodiment or the performance of utterances, the occurrence of experience is elusive in that it is deprived of critical assessment. According to theories that promoting the human subject as unified entity, this can only be done post-factum or as an ethical inscription prior to the somatic experience. The act of experience proper melts discursive statements and materiality momentarily into an emergent unity. This is an experienced unity that cannot be assessed backwards by analysing its components.

So, how to assess a "good" somaesthetic experience and distinguish it from bad ones in the moment of experience? To rephrase the question: how can critical reflection be an intrinsic part

43 Ibid., p. 305

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid., p. 306

of the somatic experience?[46] Surely, fascistic gymnastics and body exercises can elicit a fulfilling experience precisely due to the amalgamation of ideology and body experience as can yoga. But fascist body cultivation and yoga seem totally different. My claim is thus that any somatic practice must be reflected, subjectified, and assessed by its ideological bearings as part of the experience proper.

Figure 5: Still from the video article: Into the Woods with Heidegger – A video article

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46 The conceptual bearing of my question is that reflection and doing belong to different systems that operate in parallel but interrelated. According to Luhmann's system theory, bodily actions can, for example, contribute to communicational acts and be subject to conscious. Looking at neuroscience, the human brain is a highly complex structure that can simultaneously be activated in many different, more or less interrelated locations.

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Singularities in the Streets: Bodies, Incongruity and the Metaethical Effect

Ronald Shusterman

1. Incongruity, Philosophy and Humour

It is no doubt a sad commentary on our society to note that a Google search with the terms "bodies in the streets" yields results connected to violence and massacres, terrorist attacks and war. Thankfully, the "spaces, rhythms and logics of city life" – to quote the call for papers – can sometimes be more irenic, and the physical interaction of our bodies with urban spaces can play a more positive role. Though I do not wish to deny the reality of urban suffering, I intend to turn to lighter matters in order to examine connections between urban art, humor, and the notion of singularity that I will explain shortly.

As argued in a recent French volume devoted to the art of the city and the city as art, an urban environment can itself be conceived of as a *body*, a Gestalt functioning either in an organic and healthy manner, or perhaps "dysfunctioning" because of errors and disharmonies in its conception and construction.[1] My goal in this paper is to examine a certain number of projects that explicitly or implicitly aim to challenge the routine organization of the experience of the city via the injection of radical incongruity into the urban landscape. Some of the projects evoked are quite official; others are more clandestine or even subversive in their aims and operations. But all of them can be seen to have a similar purpose – that of provoking a renewed consciousness of the place of the body in the city and thus the place of the individual in society. This renewed consciousness can be seen to occur via the perception of incongruity in an otherwise ordinary urban situation. I will link this concept of incongruity to a general notion of *singularity* that I borrow from the hard sciences, showing how these "singularities" in the streets produce what I call the metaethical effect of the work of art.

My reflections here are part of a work in progress on the connections between art, sensorial experience, humor and this concept of singularity that I intend to apply to æsthetics via what Nelson Goodman would call a "transfer of symbol schemata". Obviously, at some point I will need to confront the famous arguments formulated by Sokal and Bricmont against the illicit metaphorical use of scientific models in the humanities.[2] And I would also like to add that, as an ardent supporter of pluralism, I wish to avoid any implication of essentialism that might attach

1 See *L'Art des villes, Figures de l'Art 31*, Juin, 2016, and more particularly, Cécile Croce, "Avant-propos : L'art des villes", *Figures de l'art 31* (Juin, 2016), p. 15

2 Alan Sokal & Jean Bricmont, *Impostures Intellectuelles*, (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1997)

itself to the term: I use the term *singularity* in the plural, and this singularity that I see at the heart of many contemporary artistic practices is not to be conceived of as a substantial or formal *essence* of art but rather as a recurrent yet unpredictable pragmatic feature of the operation of our current artworld.

In astrophysics, the notion of *singularity* designates that moment or spatial location where the laws of physics no longer apply, notably at the heart of a black hole, beyond the edge of what is called the "event horizon". Obviously, this phenomenon is quite complex, and my aim is not to apply all of the mathematical or physical implications of this theory to the realm of art. I simply wish to argue that the transfer of schema here can be illuminating. My study will examine four separate theses, the first of which is far from revolutionary: it claims simply that the work of art is a singularity in a purely metaphorical sense of the term, since it often involves a rupture with previous forms and practices. The second thesis is more ambitious – it argues that certain works of art attempt to produce singularities in a sense that is not merely metaphorical. I have in mind works that endeavor to disorient perception, negate the laws of physics, or challenge our current epistemology. The third thesis argues that such works are at least analogous, or perhaps identical, to those moments in philosophy and the hard sciences where radical new paradigms are formulated. The fourth and final thesis uses this notion of singularity to enhance certain contemporary theories of humor and argues that humor often plays a deep philosophical role. Here I will be following up on a famous comment attributed to Wittgenstein who claimed that "a serious and good philosophical work could be written that would consist entirely of *jokes*".[3]

Over the centuries, there have been various theories of humor and laughter, many of which have been based on the body. For example, somatic and psychological considerations are close to the heart of the theories of Hobbes, Bergson or Freud. But a *psycho-physiological* explanation of *laughter* is not the same thing as a philosophical analysis of *why* we laugh, of how *humor* functions, and I find that the most promising general answer to this question is provided by the notion of *incongruity*. Contemporary proponents of the notion include John Morreall, Noël Carroll, Simon Critchley and others, but the idea goes back at least to Kant who argued that humor arose "from the sudden transformation of a heightened expectation into nothing."[4] As a pluralist, I am eager to recognize different forms of humor, and I do not wish to establish incongruity as the essential condition of all forms. But I do think that the concept is useful when dealing with humor in the visual arts. Indeed, the concept helps me link humor to the idea of singularity that I am trying to explore. To quote Simon Critchley, "Jokes tear holes in our usual predictions about the empirical world."[5] It is to this extent that a joke can indeed be philosophical, and I interpret Wittgenstein's remark in this light. But to go a bit further than Wittgenstein, I would like to argue that these moments of rupture provoke a consciousness of the *form* and *nature* of both perception and judgment. This is what I mean by the "metaethical effect" of the singularities produced by works of art. I will return to this point later in the paper, notably when discussing Olafur Eliasson.

Like a work of art, a joke by definition seeks an audience. Just as there is no such thing as a private language (at least according to Wittgenstein), there is no such thing as a joke that is eternally and intrinsically solipsistic. In her introduction to the volume on art in the city, Cécile Croce argues that the urban landscape itself can be seen as a collective work of art (18). If all

3 "It is worth noting that Wittgenstein once said that a serious and good philosophical work could be written that would consist entirely of *jokes*", see Norman Malcolm, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984), pp. 27-28

4 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, James Creed Meredith, trans. (Oxford, OUP, 1952), p. 199

5 See Simon Critchley *On Humour* (London, Routledge, 2002), p. 1

works of art seek an audience, then city dwellers, by definition, as bodies in a public space, are both potential spectators and potential actors in this collective work. Of course, a city is not a museum – one goes to a museum with certain expectations, with a certain somatic disposition, whereas the city is a more varied, unpredictable or even "rhizomatic" space. But indeed, this varied and unpredictable dimension can make the effect of incongruity even greater. One goes to a museum expecting to contemplate; the city is the scene of countless other actions, and the body can thus be brought to interact in unforeseen ways.

2. Urban Singularities in the Work of Mark Jenkins

I will take as my main example of urban incongruity several pieces by the American artist Mark Jenkins. In quite a literal way, Jenkins tears holes in our predictions about the empirical world. Jenkins is a street artist whose installations are situated in the midst of routine urban landscapes. The two series entitled "Storker" and "Embed Bodies" are particularly good instances of how incongruity can produce both urban singularities and social interaction.

The body occupies a central position in Jenkins' work. One typical piece is *Kicked Painting*:

Figure 1: *Kicked Painting* (2012) by Mark Jenkins

Artists hate it when you compare their work to other contemporary figures, but this particular piece is not far from some familiar items by Robert Gober:

Figure 2: *Untitled Leg* (1989-90) by Robert Gober

There are also aspects of Jenkins' art that recall the work of Maurizio Cattelan or Ron Mueck.

But unlike Gober, Cattelan and Mueck, Jenkins is less famous for museum pieces and better known for his surprising and ostensibly facetious interventions in urban situations. In the *Storker* series, Jenkins surreptitiously places plastic infants in unusual and amusing public contexts:

Figure 3: *KFC,* Storker series

Here the familiar kitsch figure of Colonel Sanders is transformed into the loving if somewhat absent-minded grandfather of one of these plastic babies. In a French study of the work of Jenkins, Frédéric-Charles Baitinger links these transparent, scotch-tape babies to the traditional notion of the Trickster, a mischievous character playing tricks, disrupting routine and undermining the habitual social order.[6] The babies do seem to be having their share of fun in incongruous contexts, turning a handrail into a sliding board, fiddling with a fire hydrant or or turning a lamppost into a seesaw:

6 Frédéric-Charles Baitinger, *Mark Jenkins : La Rue mise en scène* (Grenoble, Critères, 2013)

Figure 4: *Canarias,* Storker series

Figure 5: *Fire hidrant,* Storker series

Figure 6: *See-saw,* Storker series

But the real Trickster is of course Jenkins himself. Baitinger sees him as a "sculptor of events", and goes on to argue that the urban setting becomes a "space of events" a "performative"

form of art that seeks to "question, shock, or, at least provoke reflection." For Baitinger, Jenkins' interventions in urban settings, often the object of police scrutiny, confront "the physical, legal and moral limits of a culture."[7]

Baitinger borrows this notion of the *event* from Greil Marcus, himself inspired by Guy Debord and Situationism. In the appropriate context, for Marcus:

> *"Each situation would be an "ambient milieu" for a "game of events"; each would change its setting, and allow itself to be changed by it. The city would no longer be experienced as a scrim of commodities and power; it would be felt as a field of "psychogeography," and this would be an epistemology of everyday time and space…"*[8]

These joyful babies turn the stark urban setting into an unlimited playground, undermining the usual play of power and order. Baitinger also links Jenkins to what Roland Barthes called "le texte de jouissance" – the type of work that provokes unease or crisis via a destabilizing experience (13). One can well understand the concern of the police in cases such as the following unauthorized installations:

Figure 7: Malmö

7 Baitinger, *Mark Jenkins*, p. 9

8 Marcus, *Lipstick Traces* (London, Faber, 2011), p. 164

Figure 8: Roofgirl

Figure 9: Blonde 101

Figure 10: Biker

Figure 11: Head Above the Rest

Figure 12: Hangers

The following installation is no doubt less potentially threatening or unsettling, but it remains, paradoxically, both vaguely disturbing and yet irreverently funny:

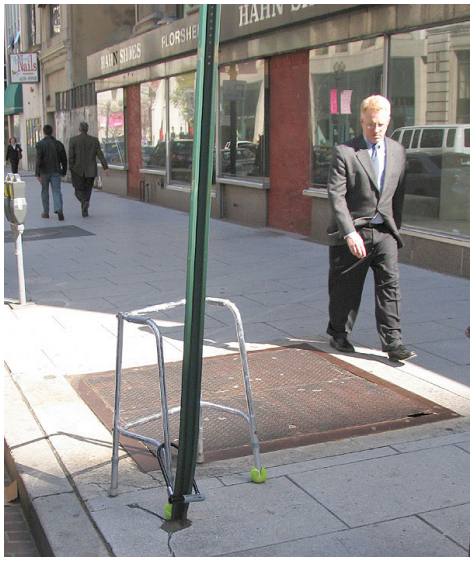

Figure 13: Walker

One ideal of Western art has often been to make all of the details in the work converge to form a complex and powerful message, and Jenkins must certainly have chosen intentionally to install his walker in front of a shoe store. And his picture of the installation does indeed provide us with an urban walker who seems to be intrigued by the incongruous object in his field of vision.

3. The Metaethical Effect

Jenkins might be seen as creating *heterotopia* in the sense defined by Michel Foucault. It seems indeed that these surprising and incongruous urban landscapes provoke "a communal effect based on the lived and shared experience obtained via an active approach to the environment."[9] I'm quoting another of the authors from the French volume I mentioned at the outset, but instead of exploring the Foucauldian notion, I'd like to connect this idea to my own concept of the metaethical effect of the work of art as developed in a certain number of my publications.[10] Many theorists have underlined the social or relational nature of art, the idea that the work of art engages not only a personal but also a social reaction. Quite obviously, works of art in public spaces provoke not only contemplation but also *consciousness of a shared necessity for interpretation*. My theory of the metaethical effect tries to explain the actual process of this interaction. Briefly put, the idea is that the perception of incongruity in a shared public space pushes us even more efficiently to a consciousness of the need for interpretation and to an awareness of its nature.

This point needs some clarification. It is useful to introduce a distinction between the "ethical" and the "metaethical" that is roughly analogous to the difference between *praxis* and theory. The distinction is basically between a reflective or philosophical discipline (metaethics) that analyses the way our moral concepts and values work, and a practical human endeavor

9 On this see Claire Azéma, « L'hétérotopie des *Lieux possibles* : Quand les pratiques 'utopisées' de l'espace urbain renouvellent les usages de la ville, » in *L'art des villes, Figures de l'art 31* (Juin, 2016), pp. 231-243

10 See (for example) my articles "Theory as Solidarity: The Ethical Dimension of Fictional and Theoretical Reading," in *Herbert Grabes & Wolfgang Viereck* (eds.), *The Wider Scope of English*, Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 2006, 205-219; and "Less than Greek - Art, Perfection and Metaethics (On Berys Gaut)", Proceedings of the European Society for Aesthetics, vol. 5, 2013, 407-423

(ethics) that applies these values to particular human problems. Whatever else it is, æsthetic reception always involves a metaethical effect. In other words, æsthetic reception is a sphere of activity where the *form* or the *process* of judgment is taught, experienced or analyzed. This does not necessarily involve making any specific decisions as to the application of these forms to concrete praxis. My argument, very briefly, is that all works of art involve an activity – a form of life – that fosters this awareness of the nature of interpretation and choice. I might go even further to defend what has been called *utopianism* by Noël Carroll.[11] This is the doctrine that holds that any work of art has at least one positive social effect: by its very existence it shows us that new ideas can be formulated, new perceptions organized, new solutions perhaps found. In other words, art shows that the human world can be changed. One can indeed get this fundamental idea from a work by Yves Klein or James Turrell, even if such works do not express explicit moral values.

Now my point here is that the urban walker, when faced with a work by Jenkins, is subtly aware of the necessity of interpreting both the work itself and its place in a shared social environment. But the surprised pedestrian does not only think about the work, does not only think about what other people may be thinking about the same object. More profoundly, he becomes conscious of this need for shared interpretation. He becomes conscious of interpretation itself. What I am saying may have much to do with Eco's idea of the "open work" or Barthes' concept of "l'oeuvre scriptible", but my argument goes a bit further in claiming that anytime we play the language game of æsthetic contemplation, interpretation and judgment, we are both aware of the game itself, aware of the "rules" of the game, and aware of the fact that the other people playing the game with us are also aware of these rules and structures. One might want to import a bit of John Searle here, and set up some sort of formula along of lines of his revision of Grice's model of linguistic understanding as formulated in *Speech Acts*:

> *S utters T and*
>
> *(a) S intends (i- I) the utterance U of T to produce in H the knowledge (recognition, awareness) that the states of affairs specified by (certain of) the rules of T obtain. (Call this effect the illocutionary effect, IE)*
>
> *(b) S intends U to produce IE by means of the recognition of i-I.*
>
> *(c) S intends that i- I will be recognized in virtue of (by means of) I-!'s knowledge of (certain of) the rules governing (the elements of) T.*[12]

But, in our case, in the case of art, one would have to redefine the notion of "rules" in a rather exotic way, and I believe it would suffice to say that the urban walkers are mutually aware both of the necessity of interpretation and of their mutual, interactive awareness of this very necessity. Just to provide a random counterexample, I could point out *digestion* as something we may do together at the same time, with greater or less success, but my own digestive process in no way interacts with yours, and none of us need to be aware of any shared rules, practices or contexts in this particular case. Yet the body in the street, when faced with a singular installation, when faced with an apparently lifeless or endangered fellow body, automatically experiences both the implicit or explicit socio-political content of the work and the *form of judgement and interpretation itself*.

11 Noël Carroll, "Art, narrative, and moral understanding," in Jerrold Levinson, *Aesthetics and Ethics: Essays at the Intersection* (Cambridge, CUP, 1998, 2001), p. 127

12 John Searle, *Speech Acts* (Cambridge, CUP, 1969), pp. 49-50

On the event, Baitinger also quotes the French philosopher Mehdi Belhaj Kacem: "At whatever scale in which it occurs, the event is that which brings a system of representation to its breaking point" (in Baitinger, 34). It is this idea of a *breaking point* that brings me back to the notion of singularity. The installations of artists such as Jenkins are singular in many senses of the term, and they often question our epistemology in subtle and implicit ways. But, to take a further example, the work of Olafur Eliasson *explicitly* attempts to modify our epistemological standpoint. We all have in mind many of his famous pieces, pieces that illustrate his slogan "see yourself sensing",[13] a project which is quite obviously a somaesthetic quest, so I will limit myself to quoting a particularly significant passage from a preface to one of his books:

> *"The artworks in this book are mostly models for space, defined by movement. They are world-makers. They love transformation. They make time their tool. […] Many of the artworks [included in this volume] are installed outside, in public space. I like to think of them as urban gestures, insisting on the inclusion of passers-by, visitors, city inhabitants. […] [My work] is an investigation into colour, theory, movement, and generosity. To me, these spaces are not utopian, but defined through their atmosphere and agency. One of the challenges that drives me when I am making a new work is the desire to create structures that acknowledge the visitors and respond to their physical presence. […]"*[14]

In countless works and installations, Eliasson shatters our perceptual expectations, ostensibly defies gravity or freezes time, asking us to renew our physical interaction with the world. To that extent, his work does indeed attempt to create singularity in a quasi-scientific sense of the term But in Eliasson's vision of art, these singularities also have a social and moral dimension: a renewed vision of our place in both the physical world and the urban setting can change our lives profoundly.

4. Space, Time and Eternity…

No other artist ever made this claim as dramatically as the conceptual architects Arakawa and Gins. In *Reversible Destiny: We Have Decided not to Die* and in *Architectural Body*, they declared solemnly that revising architecture in public and private spaces could eventually lead to the elimination of death.[15] Bodies in the streets of their ideal city would achieve eternity via the very structure of the public spaces. Curiously enough, a similar idea of achieving eternity via a reconfiguration of space and time was imagined in a whimsical story entitled "Mimsy Were the Borogoves".[16] Henry Kuttner and C.L. Moore collaborated in 1943 to write this rather philosophical tale about the capacity of objects to change our consciousness and to reverse our destinies. The authors imagine a being of another dimension who accidentally sends a number of what we might call *educational toys* back in time, first to Oxford in the 19th century, and

13 On Eliasson, see my articles "Olafur Eliasson et la métaéthique de l'art," *Nouvelle Revue d'Esthétique n°6*, 2010, 101-112 and "Notion Motion : L'image-mouvement d'Olafur Eliasson et la métaéthique du sensible", *Écrans 2015-1,* n°3, *Expanded Cinéma*, Paris, Garnier, 2015, 191-205.

14 Olafur Eliasson, *Unspoken Spaces* (London, Thames & Hudson, 2016). This quote is available online at http://olafureliasson.net/archive/publication/MDA118343/studio-olafur-eliasson-unspoken-spaces

15 See Arakawa and Gins, *Reversible Destiny – We have Decided Not to Die* (New York: Guggenheim Museum & Harry Abrams, 1997) and *Architectural Body* (Tuscaloosa, U of Alabama P, 2002)

16 Lewis Padgett, "Mimsy Were the Borogoves," in Robert Silverberg, *The Science Fiction Hall of Fame*, Vol. 1 (NY, Avon, 1971), pp. 181-210

then to contemporary America.[17] The first recipient of the toys is a certain Alice Liddell, who unfortunately is already too old to be able to be shaped by these paradoxical and otherworldly objects. She does manage, however, to get an adult friend of hers to transcribe a certain number of instructions that the toys have communicated to her, as well as other details and stories that she has grasped while playing with these trans-dimensional objects. The second recipients of these mind-shaping toys are much younger, and the two children's destinies are altered as they are slowly molded by the objects, learning first how to digest their food in a special way so that they needn't eat so much, figuring out trans-dimensional puzzles and eventually passing into another space-time continuum where death has no dominion. "Twas brillig" turns out to be a design for escape, that is, the beginning of the formula for leaving the mortality and constraints of our Euclidean prison. Or, as the Alice character puts it when asked what the stanza means by her adult friend, "It's the way out, I think," the girl said doubtfully. "I'm not sure yet. My magic toys told me" (Padgett 1943: 207). In the vocabulary of Arakawa and Gins, these toys are procedural tools for profoundly modifying our landing sites in order to achieve a reversed destiny.

Now I don't really believe that visual artists can actually defy gravity, create black holes or singularities, but some of them certainly see this physical and epistemological revolution as an ideal to be pursued. And I also doubt that any future modification of urban or private architecture might enable us to decide not to die. But it is reasonable to claim that our bodies can achieve greater awareness and fulfilment, greater *shared* awareness and fulfilment, via the singularities of urban art.

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The Sound of Somaesthetics: Ken Ueno's *Jericho Mouth*

Martin Jay

Abstract: *A sound installation titled* Jericho Mouth *was mounted at the Beijing Inside-Out Museum in 2013 by the American avant-garde composer and performer Ken Ueno. Drawing on the work of Richard Shusterman and Roland Barthes, this essay presents it as powerful example of acoustic somaesthetics in which the material body—in particular the voice emanating from the throat and guts rather than the lungs and breath—resists cultural sublimation.*

Keywords: *Ueno, Barthes, Shusterman, throat singing, pheno-song, geno-song, Jericho Mouth*

Aesthetics, it is often noted, emerged in the 18th century as a complement to an overly spiritual or rational philosophy, a way to take seriously the claims of the senses in our knowing the world. In the words of its founding father, Alexander Baumgarten, it was "the science of sensitive cognition."[1] In time, it evolved to mean more specifically the theory of art and lost its connection to science, but the combination of sensuality and something else – call it knowledge or truth or spirituality – remained. Aisthesis, it was understood, involves both sensation and perception, the former relating to pleasure and emotion, the latter to objects and their cognition.[2] Insofar as sensation is mediated by the body and rooted in our existence in the material and animal world, it was understood to connect art to the "lower" or "baser" part of our nature. The countervailing perceptual impulse worked to elevate art above our instinctual needs and desires, linking it instead to something more sublime or spiritual, indeed often ethical as well. Matter, an aesthetics stressing perception taught, must be shaped by form in order to become art, form that imbued it with order, harmony, balance and wholeness. Corporeal interests had to be suppressed in the service of a more disinterested, contemplative appreciation of art for its own sake; the lust-inducing naked body had to be re-imagined as the chaste nude admired for its qualities of beautiful form. Shaping a world of artifice took its cue from the beauty humans had discovered in nature as well, and which they often attributed to divine design.

In the terms made familiar by Sigmund Freud, art, although connected to the senses, was thus the product of "sublimation," which channeled our insatiable bodily desires and undisciplined instincts into socially acceptable practices and the creation of objects of value, understood often in economic as well as cultural terms. Artistic production and consumption were part of the

1 Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Aesthetica* (Frankfurt a.d. Oder, 1750); reprint Hildesheim, 1970) § 1

2 For a discussion, see Wolfgang Welsch, *Undoing Aesthetics*, trans. Andrew Inkpin (London, 1997), p. 10

"civilizing process" that allowed us to tame the wilder sexual and aggressive drives that threatened communal life without resorting to the brutal repression of those drives that denied them any expression at all. By transfiguring the commonplace and infusing the everyday with beauty, art could reconcile us to a world that still remained in too many respects ugly, as well as spiritually under-nourished, especially after the waning of religious consolations in an increasingly secular age. Even when it expressed yearning for something better – that *promesse de bonheur* identified by the novelist Stendhal and extolled by the philosopher Nietzsche – it envisaged it as a life lived as if it were aesthetically beautiful.

Or so we have often been told. But not all observers have been convinced by what skeptics came to call "the aesthetic ideology."[3] Their qualms come in many forms, but one was the reluctance to move away too hastily from the imperfect and vulnerable body with all of its undisciplined and messy demands to a serenely sublimated world of beautiful forms, acceptable cultural behavior and enduring value. Take for example, the German philosopher Theodor W. Adorno, who writes in his collection of aphorisms *Minima Moralia*:

> *Artists do not sublimate. That they neither satisfy nor repress their desires, but transform them into socially desirable achievements, their works, is a psychoanalytical illusion….Rather, artists display violent instincts, free-floating and yet colliding with reality, marked by neurosis….Their lot is rather a hysterically excessive lack of inhibition over every conceivable fear; narcissism taken to its paranoiac limit. To anything sublimated, they oppose idiosyncrasies.*[4]

As in much of Adorno's work, this is a palpable exaggeration, designed to shock the reader into questioning received wisdom about the elevating function of art and the consoling implications of culture at its most reassuringly anodyne. For art to be art, it must, after all, somehow distinguish itself from the raw experience out of which it is fashioned. But Adorno's assertion accurately expresses the resistance to sublimation – the de-aestheticization of art – that characterizes much of what nonetheless could still call itself art in the last century.

Take the case of twentieth-century avant-garde music. In Schoenberg's great unfinished opera *Moses und Aron*, to cite a salient example, there is a powerful opposition between the lyrical tenor arias of Aron, the advocate of meaningful communication, who uses sensual pleasure to lead the masses to God, and the unmelodious *Sprechstimme* of Moses, whose unsuccessful struggle to convey the divine word to the Hebrew people produces an anguish that resists being sublimated. In Moses, we hear the agony of a voice that comes from the depths of his being, but which cannot be transfigured into conventional expressions of beauty. In the Bible, Moses tells God that he is "heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue" (Exod. 4:10), which has often been understood to describe a stutter, but which Schoenberg renders in musical terms as an inability to sing in the conventional uplifting, mellifluous way that characterized sacred music for centuries. It was not by chance that when invited to write for the movies by an eager American film producer who gushed, "Last Sunday when I heard the lovely music you have written...," Schoenberg interrupted to snap: "I don't write 'lovely' music."

In order to make sense of the de-aestheticization of art and return to the unsublimated body in much recent art, it may help to invoke the discourse of so-called "somaesthetics" recently

3 See, for example, Paul de Man, *Aesthetic Ideology*, ed. Andrzej Warminski (Minneapolis, 1996)

4 Theodor W. Adorno, Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott (London, 1974), p. 213

developed by the American pragmatist philosopher Richard Shusterman.[5] Drawing in part on his schooling in American Pragmatist philosophy, in particular the work of John Dewey, and in part on his experience as a Feldenkreis physical therapist, he seeks to overcome the gap between mind and body, high and low art, even art and the world outside its alleged border. Soma, the Latin word for "body," is used to stress the interpenetration of mind and flesh, rather than the passivity of a body that is merely there to be formed by spirit. Rather than contemplating objects from afar, assuming a position of elevated disinterestedness, somaesthetics involves an experiential unification of subject and object in a moment of bodily intensity, as often painful as pleasurable, in the place of an eternity of formal, cold beauty. Rather than upholding the autonomy of art for its own sake, it abets the invigoration of life by art, a project foreshadowed in many avant-garde practices in movements like Dada and Surrealism. Rather than identifying art with organic wholeness and sublimated balance, it expands it to include the fragment, interrupted and incomplete.

There is much more to be said about somaesthetics and its connections, for example with democratic politics and practices of physical well-being,[6] but it is time to ask if it helps us to situate Ken Ueno's work in general and *Jericho Mouth* in particular. In his remarkable career as composer and performer, Ueno has drawn on a variety of experiences and influences, ranging from his experiments as a child in making odd noises into a tape recorder and contemporary "heavy metal" popular music to the traditions of Tuvan throat singing (*Khoomei*) from Mongolia, which involve the simultaneous sounding of several pitches producing a rich texture of overtones. Ueno's body serves as his primary instrument, even if at times it is technologically amplified by a microphone. The result is a powerfully immersive experience for singer and audience alike, in which the sounds resonate within us as well as in our environment, revealing the boundary between self and world as porous and ephemeral. The overtones are, however, anything but dulcet and no melodies emerge to help orient us in an audioscape that defies reduction to conventional musical language.

In *Jericho Mouth*, Ueno created in 2013 a sound installation in Beijing's Inside-Out Museum, in which a large hollow space with three apertures, called the "miniature museum," serves to amplify his performance, either live or flowing from computer-selected samples of his recorded singing.[7] The walls of the museum serve as prosthetic extensions of his body, shaking with powerful waves of sound that emanate from somewhere within. Whether they will crumble like those felled by the blasts of rams horns trumpeted by Joshua's army in the Hebrew Bible is uncertain; this is, after all, still an exercise within the frame of that most quintessential institution of art, a museum. But the effect is still exhilaratingly potent, in which the limits of the aesthetic are tested and the desublimated body insists on literally getting a hearing.

To clarify in conclusion the somaesthetic implications of this work, let me turn to Roland Barthes' celebrated essay of 1972 on "the grain of the voice, which introduced a useful distinction between what he calls "pheno-song" and "geno-song."[8] The former he describes as "all of the features which belong to the structure of the language being sung, the rules of the genre, the coded

5 Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (Cambridge, Mass., l992): *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life* (New York, 1997); and *Performing Live: Aesthetic Alternatives for the Ends of Art* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2001); and *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* (New York, 2008).

6 See, for example, Dorota Koczanowicz and Wojciech Małecki, eds. *Shusterman's Pragmatism: Between Literature and Somaesthetics* (Amsterdam, 2012) and Martin Jay, "Somaesthetics and Democracy: John Dewey and Contemporary Body Art," in *Refractions of Violence* (New York, 2003)

7 It can be heard at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zuKTO5LhbQE.

8 Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York, 1977).

form of the melisma, the composer's idiolect, the style of interpretation: in short, everything in the performance which is in the service of communication, representation, expression, everything which it is customary to talk about, which forms the tissue of cultural values." The latter, the "geno-song," is "the volume of the singing and speaking voice, the space where significations germinate" to form "a signifying play having nothing to do with communication, representation (of feelings) expression."[9] Whereas "pheno-song" is in the service, we might say, of cultural sublimation, "geno-song" gets us in touch – a metaphor that is particularly apt – with the unsublimated body "from deep down in the cavities, the muscles, the membranes, the cartilages….the voice is not personal, it expresses nothing of the cantor, of his soul….it has us hear a body which has no civil identify, no 'personality." Whereas in psychoanalytic terms, the "pheno-song" speaks the language of the Father, "the geno-song," the 'grain of the voice', is the "materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue."[10] As such, it re-connects us with erotic desires we – and here Barthes is talking of his experience as a man much besotted by his mother – otherwise channel into culturally acceptable ways to obey the Father's law.

Barthes helps us even further by identifying the corporeal location of the pheno-song, which he identifies with the lungs and what he criticizes as "the myth of respiration." It is connected with the *pneuma*, the soul or spirit that allegedly elevates us above the baseness of the lived body. It is what conventional training in singing strives to foster with the discipline of breathing. In contrast, the geno-song is located elsewhere in the body: "it is in the throat, a place where the phonic metal hardens and is segmented, in the mask that *signifiance* [Barthes's term for sensual, material, non-communicative meaning] explodes, bringing not the soul but *jouissance* [bliss, often sexual in connotation]." Can there be any more explosively potent grain of the voice than one that just might – who knows – knock the walls of Jericho to the ground?

9 Ibid., p. 182

10 Ibid.

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