



The Bodies We Are as Technological Artifact: The Case of 'Jasad'

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Qualitative Study

Abstract

'Jasad' is a Lebanese cultural magazine that I consider as a precious example of Merleau-Ponty's 'flesh-ontology', whereby recovering the body does not only mean to juxtapose mind and body. Rather, it allows for a completely new reconfiguration of all those spheres we have been using to consider separately. Moreover, 'Jasad-flesh' remains always at the intersection of 'what is set, although flexible'. In sum, 'Jasad' is a breathing body, living in its heterogeneous unity. My main focus of analysis is the psychosemiotic implications of the consideration of the body as a technological artifact and cultural object.

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Introduction

The present research contribution proposes an exploration of the ongoing transformations between the public and private spheres by focusing on the embodied human experience. In particular, this research contribution suggests how psychology might improve knowledge on the multiple tensions of the globalizing world by recovering a focus on the *carnal knowing*.

For such a purpose, I have drawn on the growing interest in philosophy (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Gilbert & Lennon, 2005) as well as in psychology (Wilson, 1998; Cresswell & Teucher, 2011; Cromby, 2004) for a *situated and embodied* concept of mind and culture.

Since the beginning, psychology has been characterized by profound contradictions related to the contrast between naturalistic reductionism and interpretative exercise. The current debate deals with the comparison between mainstream general psychology inspired by neurosciences and new perspectives resulting from cultural and discursive psychology inspired by socio-constructionism. By the end of the 20th century, re-focusing on the study of processes, rather than outcomes, was paved by neurosciences through dynamic systems theory and neural network models. Nonetheless, such models were already present in the late 19th century and this underlines the authentic debate at stake, that is, the paradigmatic dualism of 'hard science vs. soft science' together with the equation of 'hard' and 'real'. This last argument points to

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the necessity of discussing the role of social sciences in the hard sciences, that is, providing a set of meanings for 'real', 'hard', and 'soft' in the study of physical, chemical, and biological functions themselves. Such a set of meanings has led me to reflect on *scientific* and *anecdotal* ways to produce knowledge, and how that which is conceived as out-of-average, redundant, and 'single case' is informative about our ways of knowing. In particular, this point led me to think how both qualitative and quantitative perspectives discuss what is shared, common, distributed, and 'general'.

In fact, the historical turn toward interpretative epistemologies and qualitative methodologies in social sciences, in particular in psychology, has triggered the struggle over the formulation of new criteria for adjudicating knowledge claims in qualitative research.

The aim of the present argument is to show how the movement between interpretation and empiricism is primarily based on a common reductionism of the body and flesh.

By departing from Cromby's challenge to outline an embodied subjectivity 'that is neither individualist, essentialist nor disembodied' (2004, p. 5), I will follow his argument that social constructionism without an appropriate conceptualization of subjectivity runs the risk to reify the 'social', by creating a depopulated psychology (Billig, 1998). In this sense, the mere focus on the discursive observable features of human interaction might actually deprive psychology of what is significantly human.

Moreover, the constant omission of the embodied materiality from any psychological account could reinforce, rather than question, the Cartesian dualism of body vs. mind. By following this argument, I will attempt to show a twofold implication; on the one hand, language itself can be conceived as an embodied action (Bakhtin, Emerson, & McGee, 1986; Cresswell & Teucher, 2011), on the other hand, the embodied materiality does not provide the basis for any 'fixed,

locatable and originary' (Wilson, 1998, p. 95) psychological explanation. In my view, 'location' provides a different approach to the psychological concept of 'positioning' in terms of 'stabil-flexibility', according to which both material and cultural realities express social constraints and agency.

In so doing, I will draw on the feminist perspective of Donna Haraway and Goodeve (2000) in order to show how metaphors do not strictly imply representations of reality, cognitive maps. Rather, they are profoundly *physical/semiotic* processes that enhance novelty, by "finding regularities into chaos of sensations and discovering coherencies in what is unpredictable" (Mininni, Ligorio, & Traversa, 2012).

By following this point, I will argue that both empiricism in mainstream psychology (Danziger, 1997) and social constructionism (Tolman, 1994) rely upon a *common* reductionism that brings to a *common* homogenizing human experience.

In this vein, I will propose to focus on the body at the intersection of social structure, culture, and subjectivity. With respect to this, I will point out Foucault's concept of biopolitics (1998) to make sense of the processes of reification of bodies and his latest (1988) arguments about how agentic bodies could inhabit the social arena (only mentioned, not yet fully theorized). Then, I will further Merleau-Ponty's (2002) proposal of *carnal knowing* to explain the body not as mere *extension* (Husserl, 1970) but as *flesh*, which recovers a more mature concept of embodied subjectivity.

My arguments will be interrelated with the discussion of sexuality, pornography, and politics in order to explore the ongoing transformations of intimacy and public relations as very much embodied processes.

For this purpose, I have analyzed a quarterly cultural magazine in Lebanon, 'Jasad' (Body in Arabic), specialized in the Body's arts, sciences, and literatures.

As I will try to suggest, the body question in this context shows, simultaneously, the

agency and the social structure, the embodied subjectivity, as well as the embodied reification. In this line, by working *with* these contradictions and tensions, rather than by transcending them, there is the possibility of transformation.

Embodying subjectivity

The current attempt to recover a personal/social unity in psychology has been focused on recovering the concept of *subjectivity* (Stengers, 2008; Layton, 2008). The renewed attention to this concept has also emerged from discursive psychologists, such as Margaret Wetherell (2008). In her article published in the first number of the journal of 'Subjectivity', she noted that the recall to 'subjectivity' could be a trap, in the sense of re-confining the self in the public vs. inner essence, like psychoanalytic frameworks have been doing. She suggested the use of 'psychodiscursive practices' in order to highlight a concept of subjectivity not depicted as 'identity', that is as something pre-established and fixed, but as the peculiar, unique, personal ways to appropriate some socially-constructed definitions, such as gender, race, class, sexual orientation, religiosity, and so on and so forth. This would imply, in my opinion, to stress the specificity of individual practices/existences as inscribed in a societal level *at the same time*.

In this vein, Cromby (2004, p. 3) outlines how, even when theorized, subjectivity is somewhat disembodied; the concreteness of human experience is devoid of embodied particularities or juxtaposed to other mental/linguistic processes. Thus, social constructionism has been either neglecting the body or conceptualizing it 'as surface of inscription, metaphor or text, rather than as a fleshy organ bearing both enablements and constraints.' By downplaying the embodied materiality of existence, constructionism has been conflating discursivity and materiality. In so doing, it has treated all bodies as if they are equally *available* to the discursive construction and it has failed to account for

'real persons in real contexts' (Salvatore & Valsiner, 2008). As a matter of fact, the human experience has been reduced to how we talk and write *about* it, rather than to its actual dynamicity.

Furthermore, the lack of theorization of a concept of embodied subjectivity *conceals*, rather than *addresses*, the Cartesian dualism of mind vs. body as well as the individual-society binary.

In fact, social constructionism has been replacing the same *up-to-down* paradigm in framing the mere discursive aspects as whole determinants of situated interaction. On the one hand, mainstream psychology has reduced human sociality to variables within the individual (motivation, personality, and etc.), and on the other hand, constructionist psychology has failed to theorize embodied subjectivity, since it would recall the specters of essentialism and biological reductionism. In so doing, it has also reduced human experience.

I think that such an impasse could be addressed by re-articulating materiality, language, and metaphors as a re-articulation of location, meaning, and power-relations.

In this vein, Cresswell and Baerveldt's (2009) re-interpretation of Bakhtin provides an insight into the inseparability of corporeality and sociality of life. In fact, Bakhtin (1981, p. 171, emphasis added) argued: "[Rabelais] wants to return both a language and a meaning to the body [...] and *simultaneously* return a reality, materiality, to language and meaning". Following this point, Bakhtin (1984b) conceives the body as a social entity and not a personal entity, and thus, he stated that '[the individual] *feels* that he is an indissoluble part of the collectivity, a member of the people's mass body" (1984b, p. 255, emphasis added). The concept of collectivity is here deployed by Bakhtin to address his well-known concept of "speech genre" (Holquist, 1990). Cresswell and Baerveldt (2009, p. 4) may interpret speech genre as Bakhtin's core idea that embraces body and sociality. Ultimately, they argue that for Bakhtin our *inner* emotional-

volitional tone comes from the sedimentation of collective practices. In other words, “to participate in a speech genre is to participate in a *reality* lived in common in a collectivity that is *personally experienced* as an ontological given”. Newness in this respect comes from the very possibility to inhabit a speech genre while simultaneously opening to new self-understandings through exposing *life as framed* to a specific socio-cultural background, and thus, making life *less-given*. In this sense, “a work of art, in its creative genius, extends beyond a speech genre because it exposes life’s *tacit livedness*” (Cresswell & Baerveldt, 2009, p. 5).

Selfhood, thus, arises from the *dialogical penetration* that takes place between different speech genres. People are part of different speech genres, so that individual uniqueness is the *self-stylization* in expressing the tensions among different speech genres. Among different speech genres means substantively among other people, not in one’s head. As a matter of fact, one could be close enough to a community to be recognized as a part of it, while being different enough to satisfy his/her *outsideness* to be part of another collectivity.

In this line, Bakhtin (1984a) treated language as intimately bound to emotional-volitional tone and he theorized languages “as philosophies, not abstract but concrete, social philosophies, penetrated by systems of value and inseparable from living practice” (p. 471). Ultimately, the complex intersection of languages is the heterogeneity of speech genre that comes “in close connection” with society.

This point brings us to outline how metaphors foster knowledge not only in terms of a conflation between different domains of reality (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), but also in terms of ‘embodied semiosis’. In this vein, metaphors are practices of connection enhancing both vagueness and vividness of sense-making related to the emergence of novelty. Moreover, metaphors operate through diffraction, shifting trajectories and oblique narration by disclosing different limits and new openness.

Indeed, metaphors cannot exist out of the materiality of bodies and place/time.

As argued elsewhere (Traversa, 2010), opening the meaning is opening the body, insofar as metaphors are not only representational figures, but are also exceeding places with expressive functions. In this regard, I disagree with Cromby (2004) on metaphors as only a ‘surface of inscription’, since the functioning of metaphors appears to extend towards the *exterior*, yet just remaining *under the skin*. This double-fold nature of metaphors fosters a peculiar way to the openness of the meaning; by constraining this process to the openness, unpredictability, and intensity of the *sentient body*. This last point highlights how a disembodied conceptualization of metaphors suggests a de-located and masculine conceptualization of knowledge and novelty (Bordo, 1990); that is, the lack of materiality would prompt a universal, neutral, and ubiquitous ‘power-to-know’.

Donna Haraway (1988; 1996; 2000) offers a conceptualization of metaphor as a *generative* process, as she emphasizes *both* the literal nature of metaphor *and* the physical quality of symbolization.

As a matter of fact, as a feminist biologist/philosopher, she does not strictly separate biochemistry and language, and she conceives biology itself as ‘twofold, as something about the functioning of the world from a biological point of view, as well as about the functioning of the world from a metaphorical point of view’ (Haraway, 2000, p. 38). In this sense, metaphor exceeds its components and it is exactly the point of conjunction between the figurate and real domains, where the author feels she should live herself and not only to work with. Haraway proposes the way in which signs and flesh are profoundly interrelated, and ‘naturculture’ is a-one-word, meaning, and metaphors are able to connect *through* partialities (Haraway, 1988).

The partial perspective she referred to was not accounted for its own sake, but rather for

its possibility to keep room for unpredictable connections. In so doing, she has argued how the generative heterogeneity of metaphors is able to keep what exceeds all binary logic; ultimately, how they enhance novelty *while being* recognizable in a certain culture. In this way, she argued about the 'metaphors we live in' insofar as we are ourselves metaphorical structures, by relying upon splicing practices, rather than on isolation, and by interacting *with* the world in a complex way.

Haraway's metaphors like *cyborg*, *FemaleMan*, *Oncomouse*, tend to shed light on the permeability of the body and the inseparability of biology from the 'external world', as has been shown in biotechnologies. By drawing on technological bodies and embodied technologies, Haraway has been stressing how different *forms of life* have been transformed into *maps of life*, and then, have become *maps of reality*.

Another feminist cognitive psychologist, Elizabeth Wilson (1998), has indicated how the naturalized antibiologism in the current critical analysis has tended to look only 'outside the science' (for instance, toward environment and culture) to obtain sites of malleability, difference, and politics. Thus, such a critical habit has overlooked the potential of internally criticizing the scientific constructs themselves, which ground their neurological reductionism on the apparent surety of biological matter. Wilson's main concern is to show which *metaphysics* are revealed and which theories are enabled and foreclosed by the 'morphology of mind' in contemporary theories. For instance, her critique of the re-inscription of the Cartesian mind vs. body in the current identification of mind with brain is depicted through the metaphor of *decapitation* that is the dis-identification of the brain with the body in neuropsychology and cognitive science.

Thus, metaphor creates a space for possibility and temporal shifting *while* existing in the materiality of bodies and time. In this sense, it both *enables* and *constraints*,

by suggesting also a knowledge positioning in relation with the world, which is an active reality.

Between 'biopolitics' and the 'technologies of the self'

Foucault uses the term 'biopolitics' as synonymous to the power to regulate human worlds by the means of scientific disciplines and techniques; 'One might say that we shifted from the old right to *make* someone dye and *let* someone live, to the power of *making* someone live and *forbidding* someone to dye' (Foucault, 1998, p. 122). The French philosopher argues that the heterosexual norm operated for regulating reproduction by the means of various bio-powers concerns birth-rate, longevity, and public health. Hence, only compliant-malleable bodies can survive, while all the others are excluded, condemned to death or stigmatized as 'abnormal', that is, out of legal norm as well as out of human normality itself.

The important point here is how Foucault specified that this bio-power was a necessity for the regulation of bodies, in line with the economic processes of capitalistic societies. *Nonetheless*, his focus was on *how* these norms are produced and how the sexual device operates *in order to find crisis in its procedures of exclusion*. Therefore, he was not interested in class-struggle and in the Marxist revolutionary ideology (Simone, 2010). Furthermore, Foucault argued that 'a normalizing society is the historical effect of a life-based power technology' (p. 128). With respect to this, I interpret this 'life-based power' as a power for imposing and taking for granted a *one-only-way-concept of life*, rather than Foucault's rejection of life itself, in light of his next theorizing.

I will explain our point from this central opening by Foucault about technology in order to show how he started to focus on 'the care of the self' and 'the use of pleasure' (1988-90) as the possibilities of subjectivity (unfortunately, he did not fully theorize this point because of his sudden death).

Based on sexuality, Foucault argued on 'an aesthetics of individual existence' (based on what he called 'technologies of the self') aimed at the self-construction of the subject. In so doing, he seemed to re-articulate that exact humanistic dimension he has always been denying. In this sense, Foucault recovered an ethical perspective (absent from his previous works) that constitutes a fundamental philosophical turn.

The Foucaultian subject is always shown in light of social constructions, rather than as a one-and-for-all substrate. *Nevertheless*, he depicted subjectivity in terms of 'self-care', that is, a constant self-constitution practice Foucault had drawn from Socrates' physical and spiritual *paideia*. In this vein, after the exploration of subjugated-subjects since the XVIII century, he began to focus on entirely new forms of subjectivity by the means of *critical* reflections on self and historical present. These new subjectivities would enable different freedoms and creativities.

The concept of 'technologies of the self' introduced by Foucault is meant as practices *enabling* «[...] individuals to act - by themselves or by the means of others - on their bodies and their spirituality. By starting from their thinking, action, attitude, in order to produce self-transformation» (p. 13). Individuals, thus, recognize themselves as *subjects through the use* of these technologies, that is, they become aware of their active presence in the world and with other individuals.

This notion of technology also recalls Marcel Mauss' (1973) 'techniques of the body'. This concept emphasized the un-natural and learned characteristic of all gestures and behaviors concerning primary needs, such as feeding, rest, sexuality, and etc. that have been so long considered innate human behaviors. In this line, Mauss pointed out how corporeality and social life are inseparable and (as I will also argue following Merleau-Ponty) they are two moments of the same experience. Thus, the concept of *technique* becomes suitable with respect to how human beings

perform their bodies.

Now, by departing from the relevance of these *techniques of the body* in defining subjects in different cultural contexts, it could be heuristically fruitful to analyze how different societies have been regulating bodies, and not only them, through the construction of these techniques themselves. In this sense, this analysis might improve a historical/evolutionary perspective on how different cultures have been defining individuals as *social subjects*.

The most important point here in my view is the *tension due to* overcoming the Cartesian dualism of mind vs. body. In fact, techniques of the body are practices where the body is not only the expression, a sort of mouthpiece, but rather, the body gets a social ontology *through* them. Ultimately, it is *called into being* (technology of the self) along a complex intersection between *habitus*, *maschera* (mask), and *persona* (person).

In sum, psychology as an 'embodied science' might be founded on the constant interrelation between mind and body by inquiring the multiplicity of such interrelation itself. The focus of psychological analysis, furthermore, might be the plural and differentiated subjects in order to keep multiplicity as the starting-point for approaching how society shapes, produces, and dominates them.

My point is that we should disregard the ambiguity, rather than still question how to explain it, in order to ask different questions. That is, by reframing our problem. Simultaneously, psychological investigation could also account for different techniques of resistance to power, by starting from bodies, subjects, and their practices. In so doing, the subject lives as place of *struggle*, and *thus*, also of *transformation*.

Why Jasad?

The selection of Jasad (Quarterly cultural magazine specialized in the body's arts, sciences, and literature) was due to its *distinctiveness*. As visible in the homepage of

the website, it is “unprecedented in the Arabic region and language”. We focused on the first three issues, available online at the website (<http://www.jasadmag.com/>) in order to analyze Jasad’s cultural and political specificities.

In particular, our point is that the main pictures on the cover-pages and the whole rhetorical structure proposed in the Editorials by the founder and editor-in-chief of the magazine, the Lebanese poet and journalist Joumana Haddad, embody the core of Jasad’s mission. Thus, they allowed us to breathe the atmosphere, to walk on the field, to follow the native point of view of Jasad’s initiators.

Two images at the top of the webpage suggest a clear invitation addressed to the reader and the first is a *keyhole*, through which readers can partially see a flow of artworks representing female seminude bodies. The second image is the *broken handcuff* in its logo. These images recall two essential taboos; that which is intimate and private, and social rules and scripts. Hence, a first glance at the homepage seems to arouse an inquiring attitude, and a longing for a proactive discovering of what is behind/under and infringing on what is confidential. As such, the website is introduced as an *interlocutionary interface*.

This attitude is re-proposed in the text that clarifies the mission of the magazine. Moreover, the definition of the magazine as “unprecedented in the Arabic region and language” is strengthened by the more explicit aim “to contribute in breaking the obscurantist taboos [...] and in providing writers, researchers and artists with the freedom that they rightfully deserve”. Rhetorically, the oppositions between “until now” and “from now on”, and between “darkness” and the “light/right” make the magazine both space-time and socio-cultural turn-points.

Therefore, the native point of view proposes a communicative contract, a “call for discovering” that turns the accepting intralocutor in an interactive interlocutor.

The first issue: The first issue of Jasad (<http://www.jasadmag.com/en/prev1.asp>) is a real tribute to the body; both the cover image and the Editorial seem to celebrate the Body’s birth. Alongside the images, we immediately perceive the contrast between a well-bordered red spot and a black background. A more accurate look at the red spot shows a stretched body, shaped under a red sheet. It seems like a static body, even if certain dynamism is portrayed by the folds of the sheet. It is not clear if it is a male or a female body; it seems like a neutral body that is coming to the light from the darkness, a life-spot, a heart beating without any contextual connotation.

The sense of the image is made explicit in the *similitude* proposed in the Editorial (<http://www.jasadmag.com/en/editorialp.asp>); “Just like an embryo which creates its own light when it is seen by the light, the first issue of Body (JASAD) is born today”.

More specifically, the aim of this first issue is threefold. The first is to “give voice” to the body and this aim represents the “field” of the whole editorial and is enacted by several discursive cues. First, “body” is the subject of most of the verbs in the editorial, presenting both a positive-active (e.g., “A body which is constantly growing, continuously evolving”) and a negative-passive (e.g., “this body of ours is stolen away from our Arabic life”) value. Such an emphasized *agentivity* stresses the body’s awareness and moral responsibility; the body itself is presented as a living human being. As such, it carries out all the activities that any human being has to improve in order to survive and to grow up:

a) *Physical-physiological activities:* “A living body, which eats and drinks and breathes, which researches, questions and grows”;

b) *Developmental activities:* “which researches, questions, and grows; which transforms, reproduces, learns, and reflects”

c) *Cognitive activities:* “the body’s thinking is done through meditation, rumination, elucidation, enquiry, delving deep, experimenting, challenging, and rebelling”;

d) *Perceptive-sensorial activities*: “it is done through being awake, sleeping, dreaming, having visions, hallucinating, writing, sculpting, drawing, and dancing”;

e) *Higher moral and social activities*: the “body is, therefore, truly and gratefully indebted”.

The second aim deals with the “tenor” of the Editorial. In particular, the discursive construction is clearly oriented toward a high commitment of the reader; if s/he accepts the communicative contract proposed by the editor and shifts from a spectator to a co-constructive attitude. In relation to this, the author makes use of including markers several times, by the means of pronouns (“we” and “us”) and adjectives (“our”), ranging from a more limited belonging to a wider one. In the first case, the reference is to “we-Arabians”, showing a strong *embrayage* attitude; the reference to the Arabic world presupposes a “here-and-now” inclusion (for example, “They, in turn, can liberate our Arab body from its restricted and prohibited state”).

In the second case, the inclusive strategy goes beyond the geo-socio-political references and refers to “all the world”; it seems to propose a more widespread *embrayage*, in which everyone, even if non-Arabic, can meet and agree with each other (for example, “the body is the truth of us all: our individual truth, and our collective truth”).

The conjunction between “individual” and “collective” fights is made against any possible feeling to be “outside” the inclusion. In the next excerpt, the same theme is enacted by the connection between “us” and “all you”, by creating a link between a narrower and a wider inclusion (Example: “A body which has just been born to us, and to you all. Born of us, and of you all. Born from us, and from you all”).

The last excerpt also offers an example of discursive tools that are widely spread across the text; the *repetition* and the *tripartite list*. Both these rhetoric strategies represent a source for strengthening the power and the certainty of what is said by showing a well-structured argumentation and by enabling the interlocutor

to follow and to trust the text content.

A further rhetoric strategy is to approach readers by the means of a direct talk. Sentences, such as “In the first issue you’re holding in your hands”, “But don’t rush yourselves”, “Like I told you”, act to transform the editorial, a written intralocutory diatext (Mininni, 2003), into an interlocutory diatext. The reader is mostly addressed by metadiscursive index, the function of which is both to unfold the author’s intentions and to help the addressee to understand the enunciator’s perspective. In this way, the author tries to “take care” of the reader, so that the addressee can feel followed step-by-step.

The feeling of continuity, both in the themes of inclusion and in the construction of the relationship with the readers, is also discursively created through the “polisindeto”. The repetition of the conjunction “and” works as a real linking point of different experiences with the same focus, that is, the “body” (Example: “And it’s our identity, and our distinguishing feature, and our language, and our compass, and the path which leads to each and every one of us”).

The third aim is related to the “mode” of the discourse. The argumentative-rhetoric strategies of this first editorial co-exist in the real frame in which the body can take voice, that is, the magazine’s launch. As expected, the core metaphor used to represent the hopeful starting point is “travel” (Example: “The magazine sets off on its journey [...] passes through [...] stopping off [...] along the way [...] keeping its antennae tuned [...] takes a set route [...]).

The several verbs and expressions used to support such a metaphor contribute to the construction of the interpretative repertoires of the journal as an “adventure”. As any adventure, it starts with a current unsatisfactory situation that is connoted by negative adjectives (Example: “[...] creative writers and experiments. So that they, in turn, can liberate our Arab body from its restricted and prohibited state, and turn its

languages, its explorations and its manifestations into a doorway, opening out into freedom.”).

Thus, thanks to someone endowed with positive features, the negative situation can be overcome and new higher values can be embraced.

The second issue: Once born, the body (and the journal) has a new object; it has to survive (<http://www.jasadmag.com/en/prev2.asp>). In order to endure, each human being will try to solve two main functions, to defend and to go on/to construct. Within this new perspective, the editorial (<http://www.jasadmag.com/en/editorialp2.asp>) is clearly divided into two parts.

In the first part, the author tries to restart the trip just begun through the journal's launch, but seems to be willing to “adjust” the aim. Through some common rhetoric and discursive strategies, it explicitly advertises the topic of the second issue; the celebration of the male body.

This topic is justified and legitimated by both discursive and ideological matters. For the discursive, several strategies are employed in order to strengthen the enunciator's positions:

a) The *tripartite list*, as in the example of “A body born in those creative births of yesterday, today and all times”. In this case, this tool has an additional function, that is, to present a timeless and a long-time perspective. It seems essential as an anticipation of one of the main criticisms (imagined or acted) by others to the journal (this will be well explain below).

b) The value of *affective markers*, both the numerous adjectives and the verbs show a noticeable positioning and emphasize a clear polarization between positive (appealing, ingenious, conquering, grandeur, exhilarating, and outshines) and negative connotation (subjugated, blanked, out extolled, and absent)

c) Additional rhetoric figures, such as the *similitude* (Example: “like a cunning man killed by his slyness” and “just like the

Matryoshka Russian dolls”) and the *oxymora* are used, as in the example of “absent in its presence”. These figures try to explain the variety, the complexity, and the paradoxical side of reality.

As for the ideological matters, the mission of the journal is expressed by rhetoric strategies that work to present their position as “natural”; the imperative verbs (Example: “Let us, this time, be the voyeur and give...”) and the questioning.

In the excerpt, “Doesn't a man have his vagina and tunnels, just as a woman has her penis and erections? It's mandatory that we realize this duality, if we stop denying our mental and spiritual androgynity, to say the least.”, the question is accompanied by some expressions, such as “just as”, “mandatory”, and “the least”, aimed to naturalize the contents and to softly involve the reader to share the positions.

Furthermore, in the following lines, the editorial gains a pronounced dialogical structure. Both the use of the first person plural and the explication of some choices (example: “We've also added [...] we've made some alterations”) seem to construct the image of the enunciator as clear and transparent, making the addressees aware of the editorial mission.

At the end of the first part, a direct addressing of the readers (Example: “We would appreciate if you, dear readers...”) represents the high point of the climax in which the editor tries to co-construct the vision and the mission of the journal. Although the first part is aimed to construct contents and methods, the second part of the editorial, entitled “On the margin”, has a more “defensive” attitude. It is constructed using ten imaginary “adjacent couples” (???) (question-answer, observation-response, and etc.); it starts from the positions of an unspecified “someone” (“They said [...] asked [...] retorted [...] responded [...]”) and is continued by the more assertive “I said [...] replied [...] answered”. The second assertive part can also be constructed with questions, but they take a

rhetoric function. Most often, the second part of the couple has a provocative attitude, constructed using the syntactic construction (question, imperative) as well as informal lexicon. This construction seems to present the opposition between common sense, which sometimes appears as hypocritical and ridicule, and the attitude of the editorial, motivated by freedom and sincerity.

Conclusion

The *transparency* of representation and the *opacity* of feeling are crossed by the complexity of meaning-making that enhances the intelligibility of *nature(-)culture* and the heuristic value of its distinction.

The philosophical notion of *naturality*, rather than 'innaturality' or 'naturalism', detects the necessity to-be-immersed in the complex context of nature.

Thus, the body imposes the subject-immersed-in-the-world and it is *other* both from (a certain) phenomenological reductionism and from reductionism in the philosophy of mind.

The usual assumption is that the world is a given, solid object. On the contrary, the peculiarity of what is 'perceived' is ambiguity, being blurred, and context-sensitive. Nonetheless, it is not correct to consider feeling as *de-structured* and *un-shaped* per se, since it would imply that it cannot be meaningful without any theoretical system.

According to Merleau-Ponty, the 'perceived' is not constrained to any signifying operation since it is already structured in its own terms that are fluidity and ambiguity oriented.

Phenomenological and categorical aspects are distinguishable only in terms of *different* intentions of the *same* experience. Thus, Merleau-Ponty (2002) emphasizes the priority of the *un-determined* over the always new *determined*. In so doing, he compelled us to change our concept of experience itself, not as a *state*, but rather as *in-becoming*. Furthermore, he interrogated us about our concept of *constitution* itself.

Here is an epistemological radical re-configuration; the subject matter is not simply the 'body', it is also 'flesh'. Moreover, 'feeling' is not only 'perceived qualities', but is also vital need. In this way, it does not consist of passive qualities, but rather of active, dynamic properties, only because it is functional to life itself.

Hence, this point introduces Merleau-Ponty's proposal of 'flesh ontology'. In this sense, the embodied mind is the result of a circular (neither vertical nor horizontal-linear) concept of experience and its related knowledge.

This is a notion not fully embraced either by the Husserlian *plena* or by the philosophy of mind's *qualia*.

Most importantly is that the subject (and/as the scientist) is neither a *transcendent* thinker taking notes of qualitative experience, nor a *passive* domain which is deterministically modified by experience. Rather, the subject is *co-born* with a certain context of existence and is constantly synchronizing with it.

As a matter of fact, *sensation* is literally a *communion*.

Conflict of Interests

Authors have no conflict of interests.

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