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## Body as a Carrier of Manual Culture

Contemporary culture revolves around bodies. This claim can be examined against at least few possible backgrounds. First, there is a commercial context, as the images of bodies are used in advertising. Bodies are necessary for fashion. Clothes are being sold so bodies can be covered. The effigies of bodies, like toys and dolls, are also included in the trade of goods. Bodies need to be fed and taken care of. They often have to relocate so they need means of transport. They need to take rest in shelters. All of the above require advanced industrial organisation. This organisation, however, does not stop at meeting the basic needs of bodies. There is also an evident lifestyle side of our body-oriented culture. It is closely related to the commercial one, but manifests itself especially in the sphere of social media. It takes advantage on providing advice on proper maintaining of one's body. The array of advice given through various channels and portals is wide and covers almost every aspect that relates to the matters concerning bodies, starting from diet, going through health care and cosmetic treatments, ending up on leisure time activities. Some of the social platforms even provide users with possibilities to digitally alter images of their bodies in order to make them look more appealing to the audience. Furthermore, there are mass-produced objects and gadgets that serve for the purpose of gaining more control over ones body and optimize its effectiveness. Under this category fall devices that monitor vital signs and calculate calories burnt during physical activity. Other applications provide users with breathing and attention focusing patterns to follow, in order to relax or calm their bodies down.

The objective of these efforts is to cultivate a healthy, fit and beautiful body. Among those identifying the trend<sup>1</sup> Laura Mueller sums the attitude up by stating that "physical movement is a cure for weaknesses, and one need only exercise to 'get better'".<sup>2</sup> However applaudable the premises behind undertaking all kinds of physical activity could be, the drive directed at reaching this goal turned out to be prominent enough to result in a formulation of a critical reaction. This counter-movement, often found under the name of body positivity, rejected the idea of one and only beauty standard and instead focused on the acceptance of bodies as they are. The movement stressed the need of accepting all bodies "regardless of size, shape, skin tone, gender, and physical abilities"<sup>3</sup> and quickly gained a widespread attention, as attested by the fact that several beauty-product manufacturers decided to include models of different than usual body shapes in their advertising campaigns.<sup>4</sup> Advocates of the body positivity argue that omnipresent images of perfect bodies create the urge to remodel ones body which can subsequently result in depression or anxiety disorders in case of failing in achieving such a goal. Introducing images of different kinds of bodies, often seen as imperfect, into the sphere taken by the ruling beauty sandards, was an attempt at demobilizing

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1 This cultural phenomenon was widely explored in Eidos Volume 5: No. 4/2021 Physical Culture Issue.

2 Mueller, "The Will to Powerlift", 1.

3 Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body\\_positivity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_positivity), accessed 23 August 2023.

4 Ibid.

this urge and contributing to a more healthy society.

Both of these two stances – commercial and body positive – differ in defining what the right mindset for developing a proper relation to one's body should be. However, they share a common belief that the body plays a leading role in the contemporary culture. Even though the body positivity movement adopts a critical viewpoint with regard to beauty standards, it does not reject the assumption made by the commercial attitude that the images of bodies need to be shown publicly. The difference seems to rely mainly on the fact that the body positivity movement encourages advertisers to present not one or few, but possibly as many body types as there actually are. The movement even seems to put more stress than its commercial counterpart at the need of showing the body *as it is*, that is with all imperfections and without retouching. For the reasons mentioned let us call both of these stances the *body-fixed* perspectives. Such perspectives position the body at the very center of culture. From the body-fixed viewpoint the body becomes a category that attributes value to the actions undertaken for its advantage and also justifies them. Any new tendency within culture is desired as long as it benefits the body in some way. The body itself is a factor because of which things in culture happen.

The implications of such a state of affairs will not become visible until the relation between the body and the culture is properly apprehended. As long as it is deemed self-explanatory, it may seem unclear why would a body-fixed perspective be a cause for concern. It is even tempting to demonstrate that this is the way culture has always worked, from the very beginning of humanity. The agriculture emerged as a response for hunger, the architecture and tailoring – because of weather changes, and – after covering the basic needs – the fine arts, purely for satisfying the senses. If we were to abandon the body-fixed perspective would it not mean abandoning our culture as well?

## Body fixation

Before going further into this matter let it be settled what theoretical category the body we are talking about belongs to. A Body can be understood as purely physical objects that possesses certain properties such as mass, size, etc. It can be afterwards classified as a physical object with biological processes, thus belonging to the realm of animate nature. These scientific approaches pave the way for all sorts of medical, cosmetic or physiological procedures performed on the body. Still, they are not comprehensive when it comes to the issue in question, as we struggle to point at the cultural dimension of the body.

A significant endeavor aimed at illustrating this matter was made by phenomenology. Husserl's distinction between *Leib* and *Körper* shown that beyond the physical description of a body (*Körper*) there is an element of subjectivity rendered in the notion of a lived body (*Leib*). This element cannot be omitted by any perspective that goes beyond scientific explanation. Husserl notices: "It would be bizarre (...) to say that only the man's Body moved but not the man, that the man's Body walked down the street, drove in a car, dwelled in the country or town, but not the man."<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, it is the body (*Leib*) that makes all perception possible and enables interaction with the human surroundings: "[b]esides its distinction as a center of orientation, the Body, in virtue of the constitutive role of the sensations, is of significance for the construction of the spatial world."<sup>6</sup> A corresponding distinction can be found in the writings of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In *Phenomenology of Perception* he recognizes two modes of being: "being in itself, which is that of objects arrayed in space, and being for itself, which is that of consciousness"<sup>7</sup>. He nonetheless parts

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<sup>5</sup> Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: Second Book*, 35.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 62. (In the English translation *Leib* is rendered as "Body", with a capital, and *Körper* as "body").

<sup>7</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 407.

with Husserl at this point as the category of being in itself is broader than the notion of *Körper*, which does not include inanimate physical objects. A more recent take on this issue was developed by Piotr Karpinski, who ponders which of the two formulas, "to be a body" or "to have a body" is more correct in grasping the nature of the relation to one's own body.<sup>8</sup> The conclusions he ends up with are perhaps reflected in the disambiguity that emerges when the perspectives of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty are placed against one another, as we cannot fully rely on any of these formulas.

Within the category of being for itself Merleau-Ponty makes yet another differentiation, specifying the concepts of *own body* and *body image* (or *bodily schema*). Own body is a particular type of object, the one we do not perceive as located outside of us, but rather one that we experience continuously from within, as it is "an object which does not leave us."<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, body image is an ability to establish the connection between our own body and other objects located in the surrounding space, thus making any action viable. It is "a way of stating that my body is in-the-world."<sup>10</sup> This specific ability proves itself of being especially valuable in illustrating the cultural aspect of the body, as it gives theoretical ground for explaining the way a body directs itself towards external objects. The well-known example serves for clarifying this idea:

The blind man's stick has ceased to be an object for him, and is no longer perceived for itself; its point has become an area of sensitivity, extending the scope and active radius of touch, and providing a parallel to sight. In the exploration of things, the length of the stick does not enter expressly as a middle term: the blind man is rather aware of it through the position of objects than of the position of objects through it. The position of things is immediately given through the extent of the reach which carries him to it, which comprises besides the arm's own reach the stick's range of action.<sup>11</sup>

Body image (or bodily schema) is therefore a way of conducting any activity or undertaking any measures in the external world. However, the example of a blind man's stick shows something more, as it concerns the way external objects are *incorporated* into the bodily schema. At the very beginning, the stick was merely an external object for the blind man. After it had been handled to him, he needed to investigate its shape, size and weight by using his other senses. Only after such an examination was he able to use the stick for extending his senses further into the space and compensate for the lack of vision. As Lambros puts it, he "turns touch into sight".<sup>12</sup> The bodily schema is therefore a sort of expanding configuration. It can make use of objects already in its possession for further advancements. These ideas have been subsequently developed within the framework of the current known as the embodied cognition.<sup>13</sup> Vicente Raja, Zvi Biener and Anthony Chemero lecture this idea in the terms of cognitive processes that must be understood "as features of the whole body (including the brain) and its relations with the environment".<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, Hubert L. Dreyfus stresses the need of seeing the skills acquired by agents "not as representations in the mind, but as dispositions to respond to the solicitations of situations in the world."<sup>15</sup> If we were to sum up this cursory selection of the phenomenologist approach, one conclusion would come to the fore: the body in question is the body in action.

Let us now investigate if the study has shed some light on a theoretical concept of a body that lies beneath the body-fixed approach. We have argued that the body positivity as well as the commercial attitude share the common ground when it comes to the role of the body in

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8 Karpinski, "On the Relation with One's Own Body".

9 Ibid., 103.

10 Ibid., 115.

11 Ibid., 165-166.

12 Lambros, *How Things Shape the Mind*, 5.

13 Clark, *Being There*, Shapiro, *The Routledge Handbook of Embodied Cognition*.

14 Raja, Biener, Chemero, "From Kepler to Gibson", 147.

15 Dreyfus, "Intelligence without Representation", 367.

contemporary culture. We also stated that this role is central, meaning that the body is constitutive for the majority of various cultural endeavors and that these endeavors are being undertaken because of the body's needs and for its benefit. We can now attempt at reconstructing the characteristics of the body in such a cultural habitat. The feature that starts to take shape, the distinguishing mark of the body is *receptiveness*. As opposed to phenomenologist framework, where the body was a constant "movement towards the world"<sup>16</sup>, here a reversed course can be observed. The world of culture is at move towards the body. Every action, statement or product need to be validated on the grounds of its usefulness for cultivating the body. The body is scrutinized, inspected and studied for the purpose of uncovering all of its operating principles and having its every biological function precisely measured, so that it can be more accurately provided for. Here, a phenomenon of *reversed perception* occurs. Instead of struggling with acts of cognition to gain knowledge of the external world and find its place among material objects, the body itself becomes a subject of insight. The motion of reversed perception develops in counter to the body's perceptive mobilisation and aims at capturing the body just as the body captures its spatial surrounding in the acts of perception. Bodily schema becomes subjected to the sort of *anti-schema* that originates outside of it.

How have the body's perceptive arrangement became so prone to this amorphous force is the question that requires particular attention. After all, consciousness constantly encounters "other selves"<sup>17</sup> equipped with their own bodily schemas and shares cognitive abilities with them. That is why the cognitive activity of an other should not be spoken about in terms of the reversed perception. Let us once again refer to Merleau-Ponty for his explication of inter-bodily interactions which will guide us closer to the origin of cultural world and hopefully – also to the answer we are after.

To encounter the other self is to encounter the physical body in the first place. In Merleau-Ponty's approach perception is not given access to qualities other than size, shape or place occupied by an other body in space. In other words, consciousness itself is not perceptible: "I have only the trace of a consciousness which evades me in its actuality and, when my gaze meets another gaze, I re-enact the alien existence in a sort of reflection."<sup>18</sup> The consciousness of the other is therefore postulated or assumed only after the observation and analysis of the behaviour of another person has been conducted. "The other consciousness can be deduced only if the emotional expressions of others are compared and identified with mine, and precise correlations recognized between my physical behaviour and my 'psychic events'."<sup>19</sup> To discover the self in the other is then to recognize my own perceptive and cognitive abilities in him or her: "it is precisely my body which perceives the body of the other, and discovers in that other body a miraculous prolongation of my own intentions, a familiar way of dealing with the world."<sup>20</sup> After providing us with elucidation on the interplay of two perceptive selves Merleau-Ponty makes yet another remark that illustrates issues substantial to our searching – the objectifying gaze.

The other transforms me into an object and denies me, I transform him into an object and deny him, it is asserted. In fact the other's gaze transforms me into an object, and mine him, only if both of us withdraw into the core of our thinking nature, if we both make ourselves into an inhuman gaze, if each of us feels his actions to be not taken up and understood, but observed as if they were an insect's.<sup>21</sup>

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16 Ibid., 408.

17 Ibid., 403.

18 Ibid., 410.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., 412.

21 Ibid., 420.

This kind objectifying gaze should not be immediately condemned, as it can be seen as an integral stage of every process of discovering the other self. An insightful research on the process has been conducted by Tom Froese and Tomas Fuchs.<sup>22</sup> Their work aimed at uncovering the conditions for the possibility of "intra-bodily resonance" – an event during which two "embodied agents" are faced against one another, and through "a circular interplay of expressions and reactions running in split seconds and constantly modifying each partner's bodily state"<sup>23</sup> recognize themselves as sentient.

Nonetheless, the resemblance an encountering of the other self bears with the phenomenon we proposed to identify as a reversed perception needs to be pointed out. What is here similar is the rendering of the other as a specimen subjected to examination. There is however an essential difference between the reversed perception and the objectifying gaze. The objectifying gaze is namely a human gaze. Even though it withdraws from sanctioning its object as an outright participant of the shared consciousness space, it is still a gaze in the process of acknowledging the presence and intentions of the other. The same, however, cannot be definitely asserted about the reversed perception. It is namely the kind of perception that somehow remains detached from the other self. It is a sight without a body, a phantom-like force that operates independently of the principles that once set it in motion, a bodily schema in itself.

## Body projection

The world of objects constitutes the world of culture to no lesser extent than the inter-bodily relations of selves. Objects are of natural origin or they are man-made. This division does not cross the definite line between nature and culture as the man-made objects are always built from other artifacts or from the natural material. Some objects serve for manufacturing other objects. The prehistoric exemplars of tools often were natural objects themselves. In the prior considerations we saw that making sense of surrounding objects is one of the leading initiatives that the body undertakes in the world. It does not seem doubtful to state, that to leave the world of objects would also mean to reject the world of culture. Cassirer sums up this view by saying that "the concept of culture cannot be detached from the fundamental forms and directions of human activity: here 'being' can be apprehended only in 'action'."<sup>24</sup> The world of objects and the manufacturing of objects make for a promising solution to the matter we are occupied with – finding a theoretical category in order to fully grasp the meaning of the body-fixed approach and the reversed perception problematic. We have already concluded that the defining feature of the body-fixed approach is to be found in the body's receptiveness and that this particular feature is in contrasting opposition to the figure of the body in action, as presented in the phenomenologist perspective. The idea of an active, performing body refers not only to the body's cognitive abilities of perceiving surrounding objects but also and above all to its readiness for making use of them.

Ernst Kapp was among first thinkers who realised what significance the connection between the tool and the body bears for a philosophical reflexion. In his book *Elements of a Philosophy of Technology*, first issued as *Grundlinien einer Philosophie der Technik* in the year 1877, he introduced the idea of organ projection. Kapp argued that human being conveys „the form, functional relations, and standard proportions of his bodily organization“<sup>25</sup> to every piece of his manual work. Such a transmission is unconscious at the time of performing the labor, and only by facing the finished work is the human being able to learn something about his or hers own

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<sup>22</sup> Froese, Fuchs, "The Extended Body".

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>24</sup> Cassirer, *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms: Volume 1*, 80.

<sup>25</sup> Kapp, *Elements of a Philosophy of Technology*, 3.

constitution, as the „self-awareness is effected through the human being's use of and comparative reflection on the works of his own hand.“<sup>26</sup> The reflexion on the interconnection of body and tool was continued by Cassirer. Taking Kapp's idea as a starting point, Cassirer granted individual organs the ability to imprint their forming capabilities in the material world: „an individual limb of the human body does not simply work outward, but it creates an outer existence, so to speak, an image of itself.“<sup>27</sup> In this view, which ascribes a role of the spirit of an inanimate world to the body, its skills and talents like dexterity, strenght or artistry come into view. Through the very act of modeling physical substance the body can witness itslef as an organic variable that is capable of depositing an added value in the outer world, a quality that was not there before.

The act of forming a material world requires a force that mediates between the body's active attitude and the stillness of a modeled substance. Without such support it can happen only at the very basic stage of manual labor. The medium through which the body's effort is conveyed towards a particular objective is established with the discovery of tools. In Kapp's view a hand is the first tool and also a matrix for other modeling instruments or utensils. „Composed of palm, thumb, and fingers, the relaxed, cupped, splayed, rotating, grasping, and clenched hand, either alone or along with the bent or extended forearm, is the common parent of the hand tools named after it“.<sup>28</sup> The physiological organization of human upper limb is subsequently imitated in the variety of creations that serve for human interactions with the world: „[t]he crooked finger becomes a hook, the hollow palm a bowl. In the sword, spear, oar, shovel, rake, plow, pitchfork, one can easily trace the dynamic tendencies of the arm, the hand, and the fingers and their adaptation to activities such as hunting, fishing, planting, and harvesting“.<sup>29</sup> Kapp's presentation of tools as analogons of organs, fixed and preserved in certain positions, brings the idea of human influence on the world remarkably closer to the idea of the body in action. However, mere resemblance is not yet a sufficient explanation for the succesful using of tools. Keeping in mind the figure of a blind man's stick as an expansion of senses, we should direct our attention at the question what is precisely expanded with the application of tools, as they go beyond perceptive activity.

Cassirer indentified this category as belonging to the domain of human will, stating that the tool „sets itself between the first positions taken by the will and its goal“.<sup>30</sup> He saw the will as a force that intervenes in the world and drives a human being towards desired results. The will, however, was not seen as a pure drive that succeeds by making itself more and more stronger, but rather as an attitude which integral part consists of the readiness for fully comprehending the matter it aims at intervene in. The will „reveals itself not only in the ability to seize its goal but also in the particular ability to distance the goal from it and to leave it at this distance, letting it stand there“.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, Merleau-Ponty referred to the idea of motility. He argued that just as consciousness is an embodied perception in the natural world, it is an embodied habit in the world of culture. He then concluded that motility should be understood in the terms of "basic intentionality"<sup>32</sup>, as it is in the first place "not a matter of 'I think that' but of 'I can'".<sup>33</sup> The idea is closely related to the notion of bodily schema – a learned pattern of motoric functions the body performs in space without active participation of consciousness. It defines the acquisition of habit as the "rearrangement and renewal of the corporeal schema".<sup>34</sup> The will and the motility seem to be

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26 Ibid., 24.

27 Cassirer, "Form and Technology", 37.

28 Kapp, *Elements of a Philosophy of Technology*, 36.

29 Ibid., 38.

30 Cassirer, "Form and Technology", 30.

31 Ibid., 29.

32 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 159.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid., 162.

opposing one another. The first being a reflective operation, directed at achieving a well-defined goal, while the latter – an imprinted mode of behavior that can be repeated and reproduced, also unknowingly, even after the purpose for which it had been learned is gone. This apparent opposition is to be overcome in the act of using a tool purposefully. Both approaches to the body's mode of performing action – the will and the motility driven – converge when the whole process of manual endeavor is taken under consideration. Here the will acts as a catalyst for the development of the bodily schema, starting the cycle of repetition and initiating the formation of a new habit.

For the tool obeys its own law, a law which belongs to the world of things, and which, accordingly, breaks into the free rhythm of natural movements with a foreign dimension and foreign norm. The organic bodily activity asserts itself over and against this disturbance and inhibition insofar as it manages to include the tool itself in the cycle of natural existence. This inclusion still appears to succeed without difficulty at the relatively early stages of technological work activity. Organic unity and organic connection reinstate and reproduce themselves insofar as the human being continues to 'grow together' with the tool he employs, so long as he does not look upon the tool as merely stuff, a mere thing composed of matter, but instead relocates the tool into the centre of its function and, by virtue of this shifting of focus, feels a kind of solidarity with it. It is this feeling of solidarity that animates the genuine craftsman.<sup>35</sup>

The experience of an artifact differs from the experiencing a natural object. Being a result of manual labor, a man-made piece contains the intention of its maker, as it serves for a planned purpose and bears testimony to his craftsmanship, indicating that the certain set of bodily habits proved itself capable of successfully accomplishing the task. The manufactured object represents a special value of reflecting the process of its creation. "In the particular individual work that is created by his hands he has no mere thing before him; in it he sees both himself and his own personal activity".<sup>36</sup> Not only the craftsman is capable of perceiving this value. An artifact has an impact on the cultural world as a whole and also makes possible for other selves to recognize intentional action embedded in it: "[i]n the cultural object, I feel the close presence of others beneath a veil of anonymity. Someone uses the pipe for smoking, the spoon for eating, the bell for summoning, person that the perception of a cultural world could be verified".<sup>37</sup>

We have come to the point where we can see the body as an arrangement being capable of modeling its material surroundings, so that they adopt functions of the body's respectable organs. Through such operations the body gradually acquires additional resources for further processing the substance of the outer world. On this course of action the natural objects are being transformed into artifacts, marking the beginning of the second stage of the world of culture and thus completing the sphere of inter-bodily interactions we have already looked into.

## Reversed perception mirrored

From the deliberation on the processes the body goes through as it performs manual labor, and – on the results of this particular way of laboring, a new approach emerges. It is an approach different than that which was recounted as a body-fixed perspective. This rivaling stance, carrying the postulates from – both – Merleau-Ponty's and Cassirer's work, with reference to Kapp's explorations, is to be enclosed in the term *body projection*. We can now return to the problem that awaits us. It is the problem of a proper relation between the body and the culture. The disturbance of this relation was exposed through investigating the reversed perception effect. Until this point we

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<sup>35</sup> Cassirer, "Form and Technology", 40.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 405.

have only took a glance at the nature and functioning of this power. Few of its characteristics have been nonetheless mentioned. It has been identified as a scrutinizing and objectifying force that – contrary to the perceptive activity of the other self – has no tracable origin to the individual being. We have also argued that the body is somehow subjected to this force, meaning that the bodily schema, in a sense of perceptive, motoric and also volitive sets of habits, is encountering an *anti-schema* in it. As a result of this confrontation, the body seems to be experiencing disintegration of its operating capabilities and tends to withdraw from certain kinds of undertakings. The bodily schema no longer accomplishes plans and endeavors in the external fields, like the one of manual labor, but rather turns its interests towards itself instead, fulfilling and mastering the ideals of self-cultivation. The redirecting of the body's activity and turning it, so to say, inwards is accompanied by readapting and rewiring of the bodily schema for this new task. The transfer of a craftsman's intentions to a manufactured object no longer takes place, as the body itself is now *crafted* through various dietetic, physical or cosmetic procedures. Such ambitions are ultimately driven by the same impulse which guided the craftsman – an urge to form and to give shape in order to externalize own inner disposition and to witness it embodied in a standalone artifact. Even though the effort is no lesser than that of a craftsman, it seems to be doomed to failure, as the exteriorization of the inner drive does not take place anymore. Along with taking own body as a repository for intentional activity, a decline of the individual contribution to the world of objects occurs. The core of the problem is to be found here, as the sphere of artifacts plays significant role in the development of culture, establishing and supporting communication between selves. A man-made object represents intentions, aspirations and pursuances of a consciousness that was behind it – a consciousness that was also a part of a larger cultural formation. Such objects are then not merely gadgets or devices designed for serving certain purposes, but they have a mediatory role to play. The cultural contents embodied in artifacts is of cognitive value. Jean Lassègue emphasizes the collective aspect of technical activity by saying that "[o]nce an inherent norm is recognized in specific marks and gestures, these marks and gestures acquire a social status: the marks may then be interpreted as signs and the gestures as involving tools".<sup>38</sup> When encountering objects that belonged to past cultures, we learn something about the people that made them, which means we are able to recognize at least some of their motivations as our own. At the same time we can see that these objects were of vital significance, often representing fundamental laws, principles and beliefs of the cultures they originated from – a perspective that Mats Rosengren investigates in his comments on paleolithic art.<sup>39</sup> There can also be other classes of objects, like ones that served for mundane practices of everyday life, in any case, however, we come into contact with some kind of intentional value. With this depository of artifacts not being refilled, the inner movement of culture can no longer take shape.

The reason for the emerging of the world of objects has been identified with the dynamics of the bodily schema, the theoretical perspective embracing this phenomenon was brought forward as the body projection. With the analysis of the counter-movement, resulting in the decline of the manufacturing of objects, we can now see clearly the difficulty contemporary culture exhibits in recognizing the significance of the *body projection*. When the intentional activity of the self is not being transferred into the outer world, it is directed towards own body and remains conjoined with it in the gesture of self objectification. Manual labor is to a large extent absent in the present-day world. Of course, there are workshops and crafting enterprises, not to mention manual labor performed in the countries beyond the leading global economies. This labor, however, seems to be deprived of the cultural value it once had. Not often conversations about worthy of recommendation craftsmen are to be heard and the subject of craft and manual labor only rarely finds its way to mass

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38 Lassègue, "Technical Activity as Symbolic Form", 142.

39 Rosengren, "Cave Art as Symbolic Form".



media. Even the practice of making repairs around own household is in decline, as more and more devices of the daily use represent the level of electronical complexity beyon the reach of most people. Is there now any way we can head back towards manual culture? The question is perhaps in the need of a reformulation, as we do not intend to advocate for adopting ways of life from before the automation of production procesess. We would nonetheless argue that pointing at the necessity of rethinking the conteporary way a bodily schema is being developed and employed could be in many ways beneficial. Just as the results of manual labor served for mirroring the intentions of the self and the capabilities of the body, so must we reflect on a particular object the conteporary culture has transformed itself into. The deadlock of the body-fixed perspective consists in the fact that it finds itself incapable of deobjectifying the body. It is an obstacle that can be easily exposed, but is more demanding to deal with. Objects and artifacts have not been crafted with a view to deobjectify them at some point later in time. They were meant to be objects forever. When the forming urge that stood behind the creation of artifacts is directed at the body, treating it as just another malleable piece of substance, it operates in a similar manner. It objectifies the body with no intetion of reversing this process, not even seeing the need, and simply not having the right tools for such reanimation, as the task had never been set to it before. We should then put our hopes rather to the body projecting perspective and look for possible ways of implementing it in the contemporary culture. A reinvention of bodily schema seems to be converged with this assignement. Only with taking into consideration the shifts in approach of today's culture to the body will we be able to overcome its objectifying processes. A bodily schema that once incorporated own body into its operating arrangement should not become a subject of another scrutiny aimed at cautious resolving the seeming entanglement. This new bodily schema, a schema reinvented, is able to realise its own object-like features and to reflect on the clusters of habits that once set it in motion. It is on a quest to find the cure for objectification in the very sphere that brought it trouble in the first place. Remodeling of the bodily schema need to invlove learning how to make use of its composite character – the fact that it has an object-like side, acquired through the act of self objectification that is coupled with the intentional one. Acknowledging the complex nature of the bodily schema, constantly throwing itself outwards and referring back to itself in the act of organizing its reality, opens up possibility for considering the self objectification like a stage of a broader process, rather than a decisive outcome.

How does a postulate of manual culture fit into this perspective? We have already set aside the preindustrial, utopic vision of a craftsman. We will also refrain from presenting manual labor as an attractive or fashionable activity, worthy of portraing in social media. A reinvention takes into account the cultural surroundings, but abstains from repeating the self objectifying gesture. If the cultural space for performing manual labor is not to be found, it needs to be created. Our approach focuses on the acting body, a body that expands beyond its boundries with the assistance of objects, a bodily schema. A bodily schema is a body with a certain set of habits and possessing certain objects that it adopted as tools. It is an expansive arrangement. It expands by annexing object and areas of the outer world, at the same time adjusting and tuning itself in order to overcome their physical resistance. The origins of deterioration of this activity lie in the loosing of the field of manual labor. To be precise, it is not a withdrawal by choice, that contributes to this state of affairs, but rather the vanishing of areas where the work could be undertaken and performed. A demand the postulate of reinvention puts on a bodily schema, so that it can avoid reversed perception and overcome self objectification, is to reestablish this field. Being a spacially operating arrangement, comprehending the world as a three-dimensional stage for its acting, the bodily schema cannot face up to this task alone, as it requires additional form of activity – the one of volitive sphere. A certain expression of this viewpoint is to be found in Jared Kempling's take on the issue of phenomenology

of person.<sup>40</sup> While examining the possibility of embedding the active, embodied being within the conceptual framework of traditional transcendentalism, he comes up with conclusion that such phenomenology would have to involve Kantian reflective judgement in order to "capture person (as a creative *geistige* energy)",<sup>41</sup> capable of "creating a symbol of itself".<sup>42</sup>

Up until that point we were in a situation where the bodily schema, the body motility and the will, the intentionality used to work in a spontaneous manner, directing their forming abilities into the realm external to the body. They were not in the need of searching for their operating field. Of course, the outer world, the physical reality, did not suddenly disappear. The *field* however, the reality that is perceived and evaluated as for possible application of the forming measures, seems to be gone, since the body itself was positioned in that role. How does one reverse this order back? What is the possible way of reestablishing the field of manual work? Does it require deposing the body? So far, the bodily schema used to search for opportunities to leave an imprint of its presence in the world. It now needs to search for this world and reclaim its own operating field. Only then will the body be able to mirror the reversed perception, turn its gaze away from itself and become – not the reflected, but the reflective.

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40 Kempling, "Reflective Judgment and Symbolic Functions".

41 Ibid., 52.

42 Ibid., 48.

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