



BODY, HEALTH AND SOCIETY

Embodiment

OUTLINE

Revision: Foucault

Reading reflections

Examples

Phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty) vs.
Theory of Practice (Bourdieu)

Discussion

ORGANIZATION

- Synopsis
- Final work
 - Compilation
 - Topic
 - Deadline April 27th

DISCUSSION

What

- Is relationship between power and knowledge?
- Body politics?
- Is the relationship between individual and society?
- Is Foucault's focus (contrary to Douglass, Bourdieu...)?

DISCIPLINING BODY → DOCILE BODIES

(SCHEPER-HUGHES, LOCK 1987)

Culture as a discipline which provides code for disciplining of the individual body according to the needs of social and political order

- torture (colonialism, middle age, further?)
 - Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948
 - United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1987
 - new forms of power-knowledge (*of modern states) (Foucault: 1973, 1975, 1979, 1980)
- medicine, criminal law, psychiatry, modern sciences
 - changes in organization of the social and public life in industrial societies (disappearing of the traditional expression of individual and social dissatisfaction) → enabling medicine and psychiatry to gain a hegemony in taking care (and being responsible) for defining human discomfort

THE BODY POLITIC

(SCHEPER-HUGHES, LOCK 1987)

aspect of power and control in the relation between individual and social body

- social body is not just a social representation of a natural individual body, social and individual bodies are structured with power and control

Mary Douglas – Body politics and borders

- state of danger – widening social control
- the borders between an individual and society – blurring; around an individual and society are strengthening
- →→clean, strong, prepared, healthy society – through ... individuals

group regulation in vs. out

- witches, gypsies, disabled, religiously/ politically alternative

individual body regulation in vs. out

- beliefs connected with a loss of blood, semen, milk, tears

GOVERNMENTALITY

- the way of applying power
 - with 'knowledges of how to rule'
 - organised practices through which we are governed and through which we govern ourselves' (Dean 1999:18)

...the focus of governance from the nineteenth century has been upon the protection of the population through the 'materiality of power operating on the very bodies of individuals' (Foucault 1980:55)

techniques of power that bring life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculation. . .
[making] knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life'

the technico-political or bio-political register - identifies knowledges and techniques for actively controlling the population

- statistical knowledges such as health data that identify regularities within the birth, death and morbidity rates of the population and enable service planning

the anatomico-metaphysical register which is concerned with the development of knowledges that discipline the body through constructing the individual in a particular manner

- evident in knowledges which establish norms for presentation of the body and for

„the form of power/ knowledge, which creates an order, when people in western world are healthy, secure and productive“ (Dreyfus, Rabinow 1989: 116)

BIOPOWER (FOUCAULT 1977)



RITUAL HEALING

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3b-XBT5K6c>

EMBODIMENT AS A PARADIGM FOR ANTHROPOLOGY

THOMAS CSORDAS (*1952)

- How were the texts for reading?

Situating the reading

- time
 - space
 - discipline
 - methodology
- What is the text about?
 - What is the main argument?
 - Questions/ Comments?
 - √
 - +
 - -
 - ?



GUIDING QUESTIONS

CSORDAS, T. (1990). EMBODIMENT AS A PARADIGM FOR ANTHROPOLOGY. ETHOS, 18 (1), PP. 5, 7-12 (5-47).

What is embodiment?

What is the relationship between the body and culture?

How embodiment works in terms of perception?

How embodiment works in terms of practice (habitus)?

CASE: EMBODIED IMAGE IN RITUAL HEALING

- Case p. 14-15 → description of the event
- what is „preobjective“ in the healing process?
 - Function of the preobjective concept (Merleau-Ponty; 15 end – 16 beginning)
- what is „habitus“ in the healing process?
 - function of habitus concept (Bourdieu;17, 1. par.)
- → what the body reveal in the process of ritual healing? (15, last par.)
- → what is healing in the process of ritual healing? (16, 2. par)
 - Metaphor of tying; control; rescue (16 3. par.)
- how does Csordas interpret, what is a demon? (16-17)
- what is a motion-esthetic manifestation of something what is culturally defined as a demon? (17 2. par.)



<https://fineartamerica.com/featured/jesus-evicting-a-demon-arthur-robins.html>

SPIRITS AND THEIR BODILY MANIFESTATION

How can we explain a concrete bodily reaction connected to expelation of certain spirits?

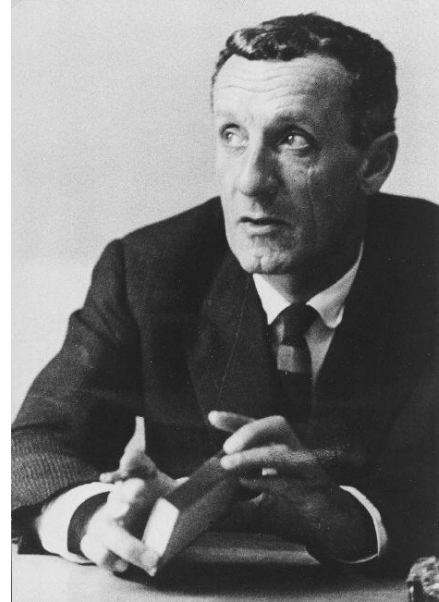
Demon of witchcraft (16-17)

Demon of masturbation (17)



EMBODIMENT: MERLEAU-PONTY VS. BOURDIEU

(CSORDAS 2015)



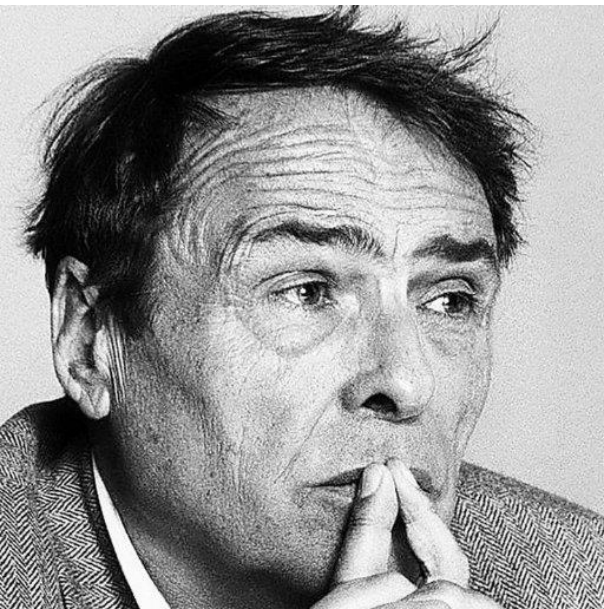
Preobjective

„Anterior to conventional means of expression, which reveal my thoughts to others only because already, for both myself and them, meanings are provided for each sign, and which in this sense do not give rise to genuine communication at all, we must ... recognize a **primary process of signification in which the thing expressed does not exist apart from the expression**, and in which the signs themselves **induce their significance externally** This incarnate significance is the central phenomenon of which body and mind, sign and significance are abstract moments.“ [Merleau-Ponty 1962:166]

Habitus

„a **collection of practices**, defining it as a **system of perduring dispositions** which is the **unconscious, collectively inculcated principle for the generation and structuring of practices** and representations“ [Bourdieu 1977:72]

„universalizing mediation which **causes an individual agent's practices**, without either explicit reason or signifying intent, to be none the less "sensible" and "reasonable." That part of practices which remains obscure in the eyes of their own producers is the aspect by which they are **objectively adjusted to other practices and to the structures of which the principle of their production is itself a product.**“ [Bourdieu 1977:79]



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How is Csordas' s approach different from the approach of Douglas and Mauss, Goffman, Bourdieu or Foucault?

- Symbolic body/social body; body techniques; normative of social situation; habitus-field; docile bodies...

Can you think about more examples of this theory application?

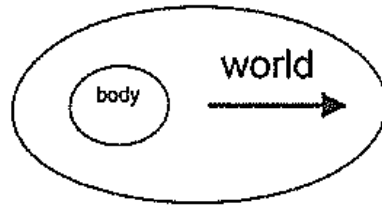
- In relation to ageing, gender, illness, eating, health, death.

AGENCY BOURDIEU VS. MERLEAU - PONTY

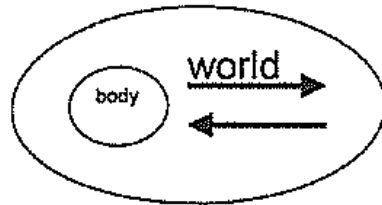
(CSORDAS 2015)

- Boulder
- Taste
 - Food
 - Physical activities

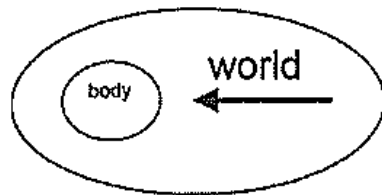
Figure 1. Elementary Structures of Agency in the Relation between Body and World



- Merleau-Ponty
 - locus: existence
 - mode: intentionality
 - vector: being-toward-the world



- Bourdieu
 - locus: habitus
 - mode: practice
 - vector: reciprocity of body-world



- Foucault
 - locus: power relations
 - mode: discourse
 - vector: world-upon-body

EMBODIMENT AS A PARADIGM

(CSORDAS 1990: 39-40)

- body as a basic point for the analysis of culture and self
- analysis of perception (of the preobjective) and practice (habitus) is grounded in the body → breakdown of the subject – object dichotomy
- thanks to that – possible to study, how are cultural object (self including) created/objectified not by upbringing during the childhood, but during the cultural life of an adult
- analysis would shift from perceptual categories and questions of classification and differentiation, to perceptual process and questions of objectification and attention/apperception.

NEXT CLASS

Presentation???

- **Topic**

- Body as a negotiation of cultural discourse about body

- **Reading**

- Martin, E. (1991) The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles, Signs 16 (3), pp 485-501.

- **Guiding question**

- What is a discourse in the case of Martin's approach?
- What is the relationship between cultural notions and scientific discourse as introduced by Martin?
- Is the scientific discourse of gender influenced/influencing the unequal distribution of power in society? How?
- How the nature-culture dichotomy in relation to body works in Martin's example?

- **Discussion question**

- Relation to the Goffman's, Foucault's and phenomenological approach to the body?