

RESEARCH

The Nature of Our Becoming: Genealogical Perspectives

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In the light of Philipp Sarasin's work in *Darwin und Foucault: Genealogie und Geschichte im Zeitalter der Biologie*, the article delineates a genealogically articulated naturally produced culture and a cultured nature and discusses the genealogical implications of a carnal, becoming self in a world that could rightly be justified "as an aesthetical phenomenon." The article demonstrates the historicity and processual materiality as a conceptual platform for a combination of the notions of experienced carnality and a socially constructed body, demonstrating such a historically embedded carnal body as a binding agent for the "social constructivist" and "biologist" approaches in sciences. Thus, the article builds a framework for the articulation of senseful, processual materiality on the backdrop of a nature-culture continuum via genealogy, suggesting the necessity for change of tone in the communication of human and life sciences via the understanding of a culturally endowed biology.

Keywords: genealogy; nature; culture; carnal body; becoming

1. Introduction

From the many authors dealing with the quite evident misrepresentation of nature and culture as two distinct spheres of existence (among them such prominent scholars as Rosi Braidotti, Bruno Latour and Philippe Descola), one research has caught my undivided attention—the reconsideration of Darwin as a genealogist in Philipp Sarasin's *Darwin und Foucault: Genealogie und Geschichte im Zeitalter der Biologie*.¹ The reasons for this are manifold, possibly just as complex as its topic—genealogy—itsself. Simply put, it is one of the rare academic studies, in the light of which the nature-culture continuum is considered not only in a conceptual manner but also through a demonstration of the possible practical implications for research in both human and life sciences via such a redistribution of culture as inherent in nature.

Moreover, even though the main topic of the book is not the body, taken in the context with an earlier work *Reizbare Maschinen*² Sarasin can also be demonstrated as one of the rare authors to engage in conversation the different accounts of embodiment and bodily discourse practices, by considering both social constructivism as well as the developments in life sciences, searching for connective structures and convergence points between the two.

In the following I will explore the conceptual framework of this connection, in the hopes of revealing a link between genealogy as a tool for the analysis and characterization of the human lifeworld and the ontological disposition of the carnal self, demonstrating historical carnality as a fruitful ground for further socio-ethical discourse analysis. Genealogy is, thus, revealed both as a methodological tool, as well as an ontological perspective.

As so often happens,³ the method employed necessitates its coincidence with the perspective on the themes it endeavors to cover, and a circular movement of

¹ Philipp Sarasin, *Darwin und Foucault: Genealogie und Geschichte im Zeitalter der Biologie* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2009).

² Philipp Sarasin, *Reizbare Maschinen: Eine Geschichte des Körpers 1765–1914* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2000).

³ Other examples include poststructuralism, structuralism, constructivism, etc. as both a method and perspective on social processes.

thought becomes somewhat inescapable. Hence, to demonstrate the ontological plausibility, as well as methodological usefulness of a genealogical perspective,⁴ the article employs both a metatheoretical approach (in describing genealogy), as well as genealogy as a method and an interpretational tool (to reflect on the genealogical aspects of the carnal self).

In short, it is a search for a justification of genealogy in the ontological disposition of humanity and the human self, as well as its significance in sciences in a broader perspective. First, I address genealogy, as well as Darwin and Foucault and their respective research lines. Here I go beyond the initial intention of Philipp Sarasin, who explores genealogy as a methodological tool, to consider the ontological implications of Darwin's work, viewed via such a genealogical prism. With this, Sarasin's work becomes significant not only as a meta-methodological exploration of genealogy but also as a source of inspiration for an ontological approach, in the direction of which Sarasin seems to point in the conclusion part⁵ of his study. The consequences of a genealogical connection of Darwin and Foucault are quite far-reaching—firstly, it offers a justification of a genealogical view of the human life-world in a broad context, breaching the chasm between life and human sciences and, secondly, allows to conceptually tie the *experienced carnality* with the historical *inscriptions on the body*, i.e., the research lines of phenomenology of the carnal body and social constructivism, both of which, inspired by Nietzsche, have largely gone in separate directions.

Then I turn to the ontological disposition of the carnal body⁶ and the carnal self as existence characterized by process and historicity, to explicate the ontological

⁴ Whilst still adhering to a Nietzschean "perspectivism" and methodological pluralism, which does not deny the applicability of other descriptive tools or ontological perspectives.

⁵ Sarasin, "Schluss: Biologie und Kultur," in *Darwin und Foucault*, 413–425.

⁶ I use the term "carnal body" as translation for the German "Leib", as the term "flesh" as a direct translation of "Fleisch" (*meat*) seemed insufficient in characterizing the *Leiblichkeit*—a word that has connotative ties with both "life" as well as "materiality" and thus points toward the "Sinnlichkeit" (being senseful) of the body. The terms "lived body" or "embodiment" are connotatively charged. A negative aspect for employing "carnality" could be its religious context, yet, same can be said about the German "Leib." *Carnal body—Leib, carnal self—leibliches Selbst, carnality—Leibsein.*

embeddedness of the genealogical approach. Today, various (largely new materialist) authors⁷ strive to provide a model of embodiment that could also justify social constructivism, to avoid both essentialism as well as the "disappearance" of the materiality of bodies in "discourse" and write materially embedded genealogies. Here I propose to add to this line of research, by considering the phenomenology of *Leib* (carnal body) in connection with Erich Fromm's distinction of *being* (considered as *becoming*) and *having* dimensions of human life, as such a potential perspective for a materially embedded genealogy, as it allows a non-essentialist conceptualization of a materially embedded carnal body self.

A historical, but materially conceived carnal body justifies genealogical analysis of the body on both societal and existential level, avoiding the still prevalent Matrix-like dualist paradigm of the current life and human sciences, without subjecting ones to the others, but considering both in the framework of a senseful, but immanent materiality.

2. On Genealogy

What is genealogy? Etymologically the word 'genealogy' (γενεαλογία) refers to a relationship as well as kinship and origin and usually is employed to denote the study of family lineage. This everyday understanding of the word 'genealogy' points toward the fact that for genealogy the present is more important than its research object—the past, which has the task to uncover the current discourse entanglement.

Similarly, as in the research of one's family lineage, where the inquiry is directed towards answering questions that researchers have about themselves, genealogy employs the past as a peculiar map of the present. When building a family tree, instead of being purely interested in the ancestors, one is more often looking for one's roots, i.e. it is a way of getting to know oneself. It might turn out that a coincidence or a fascinating personality has a much larger influence on one's personal

⁷ See Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), Elisabeth A. Wilson, *Gut Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), Elisabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). Elisabeth Grosz also considers Darwin with Nietzsche and Bergson in Elisabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2004).

story comparing to the rest of the family tree. Likewise, philosophical genealogy pays most of the attention to how the present of the becoming self is illuminated in the context of history.⁸

The first "genealogist" in philosophy is Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, whose work *On the Genealogy of Morals*⁹ is dedicated to genealogical investigations. In it, he searches for the origins of seemingly self-explanatory values (good/evil, good/bad, bad conscience) in the carnal memory. Even though his contribution is ambiguous in terms of historical accuracy and he has not developed a conceptual apparatus as a theoretical basis for his philosophy, his position is conceptually significant and seeds the ideas discussed here, particularly in context with the idea of carnality discussed in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.¹⁰ For the development of genealogy most important in Nietzsche's ideas are 1) the idea of manifold origins of phenomena, instead of the search for one origin or cause, which demonstrates Nietzsche as an opponent to the search for original causes that defend a linear (progressive) understanding of history and the process of civilization, 2) perspectivism or the idea of infinite viewpoints, 3) the idea of an indeterminate history of the present without a final cause and 4) the idea of carnal memory.

In the context of genealogy, Nietzsche's ideas follow from his broader disposition of a synthesis of nature and culture in the carnal body. Namely, Nietzsche's genealogical approach is in no contradiction with a "faith in Earth" and "remaining true to Earth," and the idea of genealogy is bound with a worldview maintaining the concrete materiality of culturally endowed bodies. Thus, even though the genealogical method has since been tied with the social constructivist approach in human sciences, its initial emergence in Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals* suggests that it

⁸ In this sense, genealogy has a lot in common with philosophical psychoanalysis (and schizoanalysis), which is why I find reading Freud, Lacan, Deleuze, and Žižek particularly illuminating. "The stories we tell ourselves" are often the ones holding the key to the meaning of our lifeworld.

⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, vol. 5, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, ed. Giorgio Colli andazzino Montinari (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag de Gruyter, 1999), 245–413.

¹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, vol. 4, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, ed. Giorgio Colli andazzino Montinari (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag de Gruyter, 1999).

might apply also to a carnally understood self since the phenomenology of the carnal body is also significantly inspired by Nietzsche.

Thus, already by Nietzsche we find that the nature-culture bond, which characterizes the carnal existence that is defined as "the big mind":

Der Leib ist eine grosse Vernunft, eine Vielheit mit Einem Sinne, ein Krieg und ein Frieden, eine Heerde und ein Hirt. Werkzeug deines Leibes ist auch deine kleine Vernunft, mein Bruder, die du "Geist" nennest, ein kleines Werk- und Spielzeug deiner grossen Vernunft.¹¹

Here Nietzsche attributes meaning in the sense of *Sinn*¹² to the carnal body, which stands in connection with a historical analysis of the cultural sphere via its historicity (an idea, which later develops in discourse analysis).

The idea of carnal memory is also closely tied with the idea of carnal/experienced body *versus* body as a machine or the social construction of an anatomical body image, which is also an essential division between *Leib* and *Körper* found in Nietzsche's texts and further elaborated in the new phenomenology of the carnal body.¹³ This idea is especially important to fund genealogy in the body and thus bind the spheres of discourse analysis and philosophical anthropology together, avoiding an antagonism between the historicity of body in social constructionism and the biologism characteristic for scientific research.

A senseful carnality is not imaginable without the concept of a non-reductionist, pluralistically interpretable world, conceptualized as an aesthetical phenomenon—a notion adapted from Nietzsche's statement: "[...] denn nur als aesthetisches Phänomen ist das Dasein und die Welt ewig gerechtfertigt."¹⁴ As the mind-body

¹¹ Nietzsche, *KSA*, 4:39.

¹² A world play of 'sense' as 'senses' and 'meaning' in German ties the word *Sinn* to carnality (*Leiblichkeit*) in the most serious manner.

¹³ As expressed in the works of Bernhard Waldenfels and Gernot Böhme.

¹⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, vol. 1, *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag de Gruyter, 1999), 17.

dualism mirrors a nature-culture division on a broader scale, here too the refutation of such a dualism with the development of a subjective, yet, senseful carnality mirrors the continuum of nature and culture via the historicity of human moral (i.e. symbolical) characteristics as part of a carnal memory, disposing carnality as a non-essentialist binding agent between social constructivism and biology.

By Foucault, the concept of genealogy is developed even further. In his work genealogy is developed as an indeterministic history of the present, which describes the emergence (*Entstehung*) and origin (*Herkunft*), but does not look for an original cause (*Ursprung*)¹⁵ and does not subject history to a general law constituting a linear developmental line, which would drive the understanding of history towards determinism, either by a teleological or an objectifying principle of causal relations (as subjecting everything to a natural law, for example, to the *Darwinist*¹⁶ principle of natural selection). It can be said that genealogy is the "vertical axis"¹⁷ of discourse analysis, and an expansion of the archaeological method¹⁸ that allows addressing the "temporal multiplicity"¹⁹ and "relations between multiple vectors of practice"²⁰ of the prevalent discourse relations and their interconnections, allowing to approach the complex multiplicity of the development of phenomena, without subjecting it to a reductionist worldview.²¹

¹⁵ *Herkunft* could also be translated as "descent" and *Ursprung* as "origin" or "causal origin." Nietzsche used these concepts with several meanings, see Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. D. F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 139–164.

¹⁶ I do not ascribe this understanding to Darwin himself, as will become clear in the further text.

¹⁷ Sarasin, *Darwin und Foucault*, 414–415.

¹⁸ "Archaeology wants to show structural order, structural differences and the discontinuities that mark off the present from its past. *Genealogy* seeks instead to show 'descent' and 'emergence' and how the contingencies of these processes continue to shape the present." David Garland, "What is a 'history of the present'? On Foucault's genealogies and their critical preconditions," *Punishment & Society* 16, no. 4 (2014): 371, DOI:10.1177/1462474514541711.

¹⁹ Colin Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 31.

²⁰ Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique*, 31.

²¹ See also Philipp Sarasin, *Michel Foucault: Zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius, 2010).

The author of *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity*, Colin Koopman stresses that Foucault's employed methods—archaeology, genealogy, and problematization should be understood as complementary.²² He describes genealogy as a critical method—a historical problematization of the present that expands the positions of archaeology in Foucault's earlier works. This view is also in line with my own, which seeks to combine the 'horizontal' and 'vertical' axis of discourse analysis, thus, seeking a conceptual bond between the plane of immanence²³ and genealogical analysis. This combination becomes possible through the analysis of the body without organs as a carrier of social residue (in a shift away from ego-centricity), which would also allow demonstrating the discontinuities of the historicity of the becoming self and the carnality in a broader sense. Such methodological exploration is a task for a further study of the material ontology discussed also here.

Even though Foucault refrains from the analysis of an experienced carnality (as it is considered in phenomenology or philosophical anthropology) and executes the analysis of a socially constructed body, a connection between genealogy and the conceptualization of carnality of the body is recognizable also by Foucault. In the article "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" Foucault states: "The body—and everything that touches it: diet, climate and soil—is the domain of the *Herkunft*."²⁴ Already here, as the quotation suggests, it is clear that, rather than being a "blank page," as suggested by Judith Butler,²⁵ the cultural inscriptions for Foucault function as a code that affects the body itself, i.e. its carnal existence on all levels, and, hence, a connection between "mere linguistic structures" and the objective materiality of the body must be sought after.

This stance—an immanence of historicity (ontology taken as a historical condition to the lived reality) is purported also by the Finnish feminist philosopher Johanna Oksala, who comments on the criticisms against Foucault's interpretation

²² Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique*, 20, 51–57.

²³ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell III (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 35–60.

²⁴ Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 148.

²⁵ "In a sense, for Foucault, as for Nietzsche, cultural values emerge as the result of an inscription on the body, understood as a medium, indeed, a blank page." Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge: New York, 2002), 166.

of the body in *Foucault on Freedom*,²⁶ *Foucault: Key Concepts*,²⁷ as well as *Feminist Experiences*.²⁸ She states that, although criticized for situating the body as fictitious, Foucault does not eliminate materiality from the conversation:

What Foucault suggests [...] is that it is in the body that the seeds for subverting the normalizing aims of power are sown. The body is a locus of resistance and freedom. [...] The body is never completely docile and its experiences can never be wholly reduced to normative, discursive determinants.²⁹

Locating freedom and resistance in Foucault, however, seems to be possible only by refuting any kind of dualism between pre-discursive and discursive understandings of the body, which sees historical inscriptions as part of *intercarnal* bodily being and does not assume even the potentiality of pre-discursive selfhood.³⁰ Here the possible usefulness of combining genealogy with carnal body phenomenology is exposed for accounts dealing with the analysis of social constructs.

Hence, although interpretations on Foucault's understanding of the body differ, it can be argued that, when the body is viewed outside of a dualism of pre-discursive vs discursive body, Foucault also draws into the conversation the lived materiality, namely, the flesh, and that for Foucault the body might also be the locus of resistance and freedom within the discourse construction process that occurs *with* the invention of the (anatomical) body.³¹

Johanna Oksala notes:

While Foucault conceived of the body strictly in terms of an object of disciplinary manipulation in *Discipline and Punish*, I argue that such a conception

²⁶ Johanna Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

²⁷ Johanna Oksala, "Freedom and Bodies," in *Foucault: Key Concepts*, ed. Dianna Taylor (Durham: Acumen, 2011), 93.

²⁸ Johanna Oksala, *Feminist Experiences: Foucauldian and Phenomenological Investigations* (Northwestern University Press. Kindle Edition, 2016).

²⁹ Oksala, "Freedom and Bodies," 93.

³⁰ Further exploration of the body as a locus of resistance in Foucault, see Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom*, 110–134.

³¹ Oksala, "Freedom and Bodies," 93.

does not underlie his account of the body in *The History of Sexuality*, vol. I, in which he presupposes a more dynamic understanding of the body through sexuality. He does not explicitly mention experience in this work, but his claim about bodies and pleasures presupposes an understanding of the experiential body insofar as pleasure can only be understood as an experience of pleasure, not solely as a concept or a practice.³²

Genealogy, hence, both for Nietzsche and Foucault can be exposed to demonstrate materially embedded "inscriptions in the flesh," which is where the figure of Darwin as a genealogist emerges.

3. Darwin's Legacy: An Aesthetical Selection?

Until recently sciences have mostly been predominated by a belief that aesthetics and indeterminacy belong to the linguistic and subjective lifeworld, positing an inconsistency between the sphere of culture and the objectified facticity of life sciences. It suggests a "Matrix" like situation—on the one hand, there are human sciences that research the way things constitute in the phenomenal world, but on the other—the rigid life sciences that decipher the noumenal reality. In the last decades this situation has started to change, yet, it is still far from a perfect solution, as a subordination of one or the other is most often expected.

It is, however, possible to show that discontinuity and indeterminacy—principles that allow a genealogical approach in the social sphere as a complex pattern of manifold discontinuities, are also inherent in the material sphere and can be found in the phylogenesis of living organisms and that it is possible to posit culture as originally present in nature.³³ Thus, genealogy and discourse analysis, also where it is directed toward the research of culture, could be embedded in material processes and confrontations met by the human being as part of the biosphere.

³² Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom*, 127.

³³ I use such dualist distinction only as a rhetorical element, to highlight the sphere that traditionally is deemed as "cultural" as an element of a nature-culture continuum.

As an example of a genealogical approach in nature research, Sarasin posits the figure of Darwin via a reflection on the driving processes of evolution—*natural selection* and *sexual selection*. In the works of Charles Darwin, natural selection is related to the struggle of existence—the principle of survival, which is often adhered to as one of the deterministic principles at the basis of the process of evolution. Sarasin notes the connection between the establishment of this principle (via an interpretation of Darwin) and the institution of the "age of biology,"³⁴ which is marked by the belief in life sciences as the objective tool for fully deciphering the human being.³⁵ If Darwin remained at this principle laid out in the *On the Origin of Species*,³⁶ he could duly be interpreted as a co-founder of biologization (as well as a reductionist and associated with largely racialized and eugenic³⁷ interpretations in biological research). However, one of the tasks of his work *On the Descent of Man*³⁸ was to supplement the previous position—he notes that he previously has made some mistakes, exaggerating the meaning of natural selection and admits the existence of body parts and other details that are unnecessary and have no significant meaning for survival:

I now admit, [...] that in the earlier editions of my 'Origin of Species' I perhaps attributed too much to the action of natural selection or the survival of the fittest. [...] Nevertheless, I did not formerly consider sufficiently the existence of structures, which, as far as we can at present judge, are neither beneficial nor injurious; and this I believe to be one of the greatest oversights as yet detected in my work. [...] I was not, however, able to annul the influence of my former belief, then almost universal, that each species had been purposely created; and this led to my tacit assumption that every

³⁴ Sarasin, *Darwin und Foucault*, 270.

³⁵ Sarasin, *Darwin und Foucault*, 269–271.

³⁶ Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (London: Murray, 1858). Available at "Darwin Online," accessed July 16, 2018, <http://darwin-online.org.uk/>.

³⁷ Sarasin, *Darwin und Foucault*, 271.

³⁸ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (London: John Murray, 1871). Available at "Darwin Online," accessed July 16, 2018, <http://darwin-online.org.uk/>.

detail of structure, excepting rudiments, was of some special, though unrecognized, service. [...] It is, as I can now see, probable that all organic beings, including man, possess peculiarities of structure, which neither are now, nor were formerly of any service to them, and which, therefore, are of no physiological importance.³⁹

Hence, he admits that nature produces also structures outside of a clear physiological "necessity" with no purposeful application⁴⁰ and that the development of such structures must also be considered. He continues this idea in describing sexual selection. For a significant number of species, the sexual selection is a double process—on the one hand, it is permeated by the struggle for existence and the natural selection—males show off their "lavish feathers"⁴¹ and fight for the chance to mate with a female—, but on the other hand, it is molded in response to the female choice in favor of the potentially most compatible breeding partner.

As noted by Sarasin, for Darwin at the basis of this process is a symbolical, not an indexical sign process.⁴² The signs that seemingly bear evidence, which male is potentially more suited for the breeding process, are not directly linked to the "objective situation"—the choice of the female is frequently in favor of what is deemed "different,"⁴³ hence, the results of sexual selection can often be surprising. I would argue that the conditions of the decision-making process (such as a free will) should

³⁹ Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 61.

⁴⁰ This concept is further justified by the contemporary notion in evolution theory and history. One of the most recent popular studies on the emergence of humanity—Yuval Noah Harari *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*—highlights this aspect of human evolution, stating that humanity can be viewed both as a success as well as a failure or a mistake of nature. (Another indication that such dichotomies—advantage vs disadvantage, success vs failure—could also be refuted via a genealogical approach, which refrains from utilitarian evaluation in the context of an assumed linear progress line and a dualist worldview.) See chapter "The Cost of Thinking," in Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2014).

⁴¹ Which is often still mentioned as a "rational" justification for sexism, citing natural order.

⁴² Sarasin, *Darwin und Foucault*, 281.

⁴³ For Philipp Sarasin this principle is tied to Derrida's principle of "difference." See Sarasin, *Darwin und Foucault*, 282. Sarasin notes the indetermination of "sexual selection"—the female often could choose a more beautiful male or avoid someone with good credentials for no apparent reason (see, 281). Hence, this process of semiosis is discontinuous and contingent.

not be considered significant—what counts here is that the need for a partner (which is funded in the first principle of natural selection) carries with it an inherent "possibility to choose" upon purely aesthetic criteria.

"Beauty" or other characteristics, serving as the driving force for this choice, are not directly correlative with the real reproduction capacity⁴⁴ and, thus, 1) cannot be easily interpreted in a reductionist context, namely, reduced to "merely" physiological reactions⁴⁵ and 2) implement a pattern of perpetual change, which in part constitutes the evolutionary track of a species—a track, which can hence be viewed as characterized by discontinuity and contingency on the one hand, and a potential for symbolical sense-making⁴⁶ and creativity in the form of aesthetic interactivity on the other. In this way the principle of "sexual selection" demonstrates the plausibility of culture as embedded in biology, i.e. the cultural is primordially inherent and present in evolutionary processes.⁴⁷

Understood in this way, the principle of sexual selection not only demonstrates nature and culture in a continuum,⁴⁸ but also tightly binds the carnality of existence with the genealogical axis of cultural change. That is, as the genealogical elements breaching nature-culture duality come into focus here in an evolutionary setting, a clear link between transformations of the body and the cultural process is established. Yet, the principle of sexual selection also refutes an idea of a mechanical,

⁴⁴ Sarasin, *Darwin und Foucault*, 280.

⁴⁵ And, thus, to avoid dualist contraptions, invites a vitalist or naturalist interpretation of some kind, where nature and culture are united and biological data are not reduced to chemical determination in a downward flowing fashion. See John Dupré, *Processes of Life: Essays in Philosophy of Biology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 72, for the necessity of non-reductionist view of processes of life.

⁴⁶ The "sense" that I here refer to in a Nietzschean context: "Einen neuen Stolz lehrte mich mein Ich, den lehre ich die Menschen: nicht mehr den Kopf in den Sand der himmlischen Dinge zu stecken, sondern frei ihn zu tragen, einen Erden-Kopf, der der Erde Sinn schafft!", Nietzsche, *KSA*, 4: 36–37. "Sense" demonstrates life conceptualized outside the "scientific discourse". E.g. My "carnality" is unimaginable without a "me"—a sensemaking process; yet, this "me" is a historically embedded, constructed, processual happening, not presuming an essence or a "spirit".

⁴⁷ Sarasin, *Darwin und Foucault*, 278.

⁴⁸ Cultural change is certainly not always evolutionary, but the underlying principles are not to be sought for in a "supernatural" or "transcendental" reality. "Sexual selection" as a principle enables cultural transformations as "possible," but the further transformations can multiply indefinitely and constitute the contemporary known civilizations, socioeconomic discourses, etc.

purely objective lifeworld, where the subjective consciousness is an insignificant correlate with no actual impact on the material surroundings (including the body). A refusal of a dualist worldview does not implement a reversal of the classical idealist view, and, thus, we can turn to the discussion of the ontological disposition of man.

4. The Carnal Embeddedness

What is lacking here still, to provide a conceptual apparatus for conceiving historicity in the carnal, experienced body, is an ontological model that would adequately portray the overlapping of nature and culture on an ontogenetic level. A classical phenomenological scheme usually interprets the human lifeworld through the prism of an intentional *I-consciousness*, positioning the human ego to be predominantly responsible for the foundation of the cultural sphere. The mechanistic and materialist worldview, developed in life sciences in the 19th century, however, conceptualizes a reversal of the usual dualism, whilst still maintaining a breach between spiritual and material realms. Both these schemes continue to operate in the form of social discourse, despite being found insufficient from both human and life science perspectives.

Parallel to these conceptual models, a third interpretation of the human disposition comes into focus—philosophical anthropology usually depicts the human being to be characterized by the inbetweenness of existence between the fields of nature and culture. Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Plessner, Scheler, and many others employ various terms for the characterization of an ontological disposition of a human being caught between a wish to transcend (infinity) and a wish to descend (finitude), caused by human self-awareness. Simultaneously, the current developments in life sciences, where most surprising discoveries of the mind-gut connection, genetic memory, epigenetic adaptations, and plant and animal behavior are currently made, also demand a change of the usual mechanistic view of the natural world.

This paradigm is detailed in the phenomenology of the carnal body (as developed by Bernhard Waldenfels⁴⁹ and Gernot Böhme⁵⁰)—an approach that could fit

⁴⁹ Bernhard Waldenfels, *Das leibliche Selbst: Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des Leibes*, ed. Regula Giuliani (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2000).

⁵⁰ Gernot Böhme, *Leib: Die Natur, die wir selbst sind* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2019).

genealogical analysis, as it posits a non-dualist, non-essentialist understanding of the human predicament, beyond ego-centricity. In this section, I suggest combining this model of carnality with the historicity of body offered by the social constructivist view, for modeling culture as mediated by the carnal existence itself, instead of attributing this function to the *I-consciousness* alone.

The phenomenology of the carnal body advocates a return to the experienced, lived reality in human science and reorganizes a materialist understanding of the self, by highlighting the undeniable pathical responsivity and givenness of the carnality of being human. Deriving from Nietzsche's view of the carnal body as the "big mind," Bernhard Waldenfels and Gernot Böhme situate a "senseful" carnality of the human being. The carnal body as the "nature that we are" acts upon its surroundings by the alienation of the *I-consciousness*. This self-alienation, which is possible only via the ego function or the *I-consciousness* creates a correlate or an image of the "anatomical body," which roughly corresponds to the body of social constructivism, as a historically transformative, linguistically embedded figure. Nevertheless, via this image, human beings enact real, physical changes in the world. Thus, the thought paradigms and discourses also affect the very core of our existence—the lived materiality.

Situating a carnality of the human self means that the cultural inscriptions adhere to the totality of the material self, which is (as life science suggests) largely preconscious. Thus, the body is permeated by symbolic processes that also co-constitute its materiality, allowing us to view carnality as a naturecultured site that could be historically and socially co-constituted ontologically *before* an intentional *I-consciousness*. Here, the carnal body itself becomes the site of inbetweenness, instability, and history.

This model of the carnal body as an inbetweenness seems, however, to be lacking an essential attribute⁵¹—i.e. despite positing the *I-consciousness* inherently *after*

⁵¹ That this is, indeed, the case, is evidenced by the strong critique of social constructivism employed by the authors of the new phenomenology of the carnal body, as well as the ethical direction against invasive technologization that these researches are taking. A post-ego-centric view of culture production processes could, perhaps, avoid conflictual opposition between "Leibsein als Aufgabe" and technological advancements, as the ontological situation where "Leibsein" is already only possible through active effort, already indicates that a "return to nature" is entirely impossible

the carnality of existence, it does not explain, whether culture is to be thought as ontologically *before* the *I-consciousness*. That is, it is clear that from a phenomenological standpoint the *I-consciousness* is often only a silent spectator of the cultural process—for example when playing the violin or writing an article, the music or the words are often "in the fingers" of the musician and writer, who can play or write, and at the same time ponder upon the lovely weather, the sweating of the hands or the angry face of the examiner, showing that cultural processes can happen outside of the conscious ego-centered "mind" and are carnal even "auf den höchsten Gipfeln des Denkens."⁵² However, the possibility for such an action to occur could well be only mediated by an *I-consciousness* via the cognitive revolution, thus, positing the carnal self as the "receiver" of cultural inscriptions, rather than a co-producer of these, which would once again posit the body as a "blank page" of pre-discursive matter, for the inscriptions of history.

In context with the legacy of Darwin, explored in the third part of this article, a modified conceptualization of the carnal body comes forward—the possibility of culture here is firmly embedded in nature itself, before the *I-consciousness*, and is, in fact, an enabling factor for an *I-consciousness* to develop. With a conceptualization of the principle of sexual selection as evidence for a world as a nature-culture continuum, characterized by discontinuity and creative flow of forces, biology becomes a plausible source of creativity, variability, and transformation. Biology itself has historicity, and human history is deeply connected with our genetic and epigenetic path through the times.

In line with research pointing towards the lack of purposefulness in the cognitive revolution,⁵³ the principle of sexual selection, viewed as a symbolical process,

and perhaps not desirable, because of the inherent alienation experienced by our species. On the ethical stance of carnal body phenomenology: Gernot Böhme, *Leibsein als Aufgabe: Leibphilosophie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* (Kusterdingen: Die Graue Edition, 2003) and Gernot Böhme, *Invasive Technisierung: Technikphilosophie und Technikkritik* (Kusterdingen: Die Graue Edition, 2008).

⁵² Waldenfels, *Das leibliche Selbst*, 246.

⁵³ Chapter "The Cost of Thinking," in Harari, *Sapiens*.

allows attributing historicity to the carnal body through the formation of culture viewed as part of the nature-culture processes. Thus, the phenomenology of the carnal body escapes a new kind of dualism, where all active effect upon the world would only be ascribed to the medium of *I-consciousness* (at least in a historical context). "Cognitive revolution" here does not constitute a source of cultural activity, which is present also in species that lack "civilizational" self-awareness.

Here Foucault's expression of genealogy and the body also comes into play: social constructs are nowhere near trivial language games. They are often quite rigid codes that cannot be breached by an individual will, which accounts for the immersion of subjects in social realities. The individual self is a 'residue of a socius' (as per Deleuze).⁵⁴ On an individual, ontogenetic level the same structure of biology mediated by culture applies to the carnal body, and with it—to the becoming of the carnal self. This has consequences for science and ethics,⁵⁵ as it allows forming a theoretical bond between human and life sciences, without a subordinating meaning to deterministic physiological accounts.

In the phenomenology of the carnal body, the *experienced*, pathical⁵⁶ and responsive carnality vs the socially constructed corporeality, mediated by the *I-consciousness*, is usually characterized by the formulas *Leibsein*—"carnal-body-that-we-are" and *Körper haben*—"body that we have."⁵⁷ Hence, the socio-ethical consequences of a model postulating the historicity of the carnal body can be demonstrated via the

⁵⁴ "The socius is not a projection of the body without organs; rather, the body without organs is the limit of the socius, its tangent of deterritorialization, the ultimate residue of a deterritorialized socius." Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley et.al (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 281.

⁵⁵ Interesting for genealogy could be a meta-problematization of social interests (such as mind/body problem or gender issues) in context with the ego-centric ontological disposition. Are we predisposed to show interest in some questions?

⁵⁶ Pathical is not to be equated with passivity. Passivity is included in the discussion, yet, pathos is always also linked with passion—that which takes over, overwhelms. A creative force, *before* conscious, controlled action. *Leibsein* is not a passive being, but rather a *Leib-werden*, a process. On pathos: Bernhard Waldenfels, "The role of the lived-body in feeling," *Continental Philosophy Review* 41, no.2 (2008): 127–142. DOI:10.1007/s11007-008-9077-6.

⁵⁷ Böhme, *Leibsein als Aufgabe*, 26.

existential modes of "being" and "having", articulated by Erich Fromm, with an addition of the mode of "becoming" to implement the factor of historicity. I will be briefly exploring these modes in the following discussion of the possibilities to avoid the ego-centricity of humanity.

5. Having and Becoming: Ego-centricity and the Posthuman Perspective

In the works *To Have or to Be?* and *The Art of Being* Fromm postulates two existential dimensions, unalienable for every human being—the modes of *being* and *having*.⁵⁸ This seems a self-evident and even trivial formulation—it is clear that our physical existence, expressed by *Leibsein* (carnal being) anticipates being, and, in contrast—human self-awareness anticipates intentionality, which allows viewing our physical being in the form of "having a body". However, in Fromm's view, these modes of existence are not equated with nature vs culture duality—both existential dimensions are permeated by culture. The mode of being represents the creative, active, processual love of life, whilst the mode of having represents objectification (in the form of *existential having*⁵⁹), as well as consumption, mechanization, and accumulation of things, in the form of *pathological having*.

Here, I propose to view the division of *having vs being* as a template for understanding the carnal self in the context of a nature-culture continuum and an aide for a conceptual connection of the ontological disposition of humanity with socio-ethical considerations. On the one hand—the displacement via the *I-consciousness* always already anticipates "the civilizing process" experienced by humanity. It is a process embedded in the very structure of our carnal self, but only mediated via the *I-consciousness*. The mode of *having* is, therefore, a mode only attributable to humans. The mode of *being*, in contrast, corresponds to the responsive carnal existence, which is, nevertheless also permeated by culture and mediated *via* the carnal body itself. I would also suggest that a more adequate formulation of the mode of

⁵⁸ Erich Fromm, *To Have or to Be?* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), Erich Fromm, *The Art of Being* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1992).

⁵⁹ Fromm, *To Have or to Be?*, 85–86.

being would be to reinterpret it as the mode of *becoming*, which could also represent the historicity of the carnal body—love, sorrow, pain, but also language and creativity are all characteristics available to most species on earth, all part of the nature-culture continuum of the carnal existence.

The possibility to recapture *being* as *becoming* is further strengthened by Fromm's statement in *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*:

The subject matter of the "science of man" is *man*: man as a total biologically and historically evolving being who can be understood only if we see the interconnectedness between all his aspects, if we look at him as a process occurring within a complex system with many subsystems.⁶⁰

Here we see an emphasis on man as a process and *being* as an activity. In the case of humanity, *becoming* also includes the mode of having as a correlate enabled through the *I-consciousness*. Part of nature, yet, alienated via self-awareness, *I-consciousness* allows transforming our lived experience via civilization.

Moreover, in the light of the previous discussion, the possibility of both modes of existence being culturally mediated becomes compatible with the historicity of the carnal body, where culture is conceptualized as inherent in nature. The possibility of viewing *being* and *having* as ontological, rather than psychological categories (via the concept of the carnal body) is supported by Fromm's expressions. An indication of "man" as a carnal being is given, for example, in *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis*:

When he thinks he grasps reality it is only his brain-self that grasps it, while he, the whole man, his eyes, his hands, his heart, his belly grasp nothing—in fact, he is not participating in the experience which he believes is his.⁶¹

Given such a framework, the inbetweenness experienced by a human being is exposed as a cognitive function of self-perception, rather than an ontologically

⁶⁰ Erich Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1992), 115.

⁶¹ Erich Fromm, *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), 109.

embedded characteristic—i.e. the duality of existence is perceived, rather than lived. Thus, *being* and *having* can be reconceptualized within a nature-culture continuum as culturally mediated, but carnally embedded domains of existence, where *having* is nevertheless an ontological correlate of *being as becoming*, similarly as *Körper Haben* is only a perceptual self-alienation of the carnal self, which facilitates (but does not exhaust) the civilizatory processes and the social constructions of human societies.

Human life is, thus, permeated by an entanglement of the modes of *having* and *becoming*, impossible to separate or even to discern. Although the entanglement of body and mind has become common knowledge in the course of the 20th century, in the field of ethics as well as everyday life, the concepts of responsibility and freedom are often still characterized through the prism of mind-body dualism. A popular science book by Peter Wohlleben, *Das Seelenleben der Tiere*,⁶² is a great example of the general attitudes. His work acknowledges animals having feelings and thoughts, yet, makes a distinction between "free" or "real" feelings, which have no physiological or instinctual ground, and feelings "necessary for survival" in describing animal behavior.

Such attitudes are, of course, not constrained to the characterization of plants and animals and are prevalent in many instances, where a choice between "physiological explanation" and a "spiritual" one is demanded—is this person hormonal or angry? Is the depression clinical or a case of melancholic sadness? And is this gender characteristic a biological fate or a culturally programmed response?⁶³

A genealogical understanding of the carnal self in terms of *becoming*, historicity and nature-culture continuum might alleviate the fear of connecting physiology with ethics and allow to accept the becoming self in all its complexity.⁶⁴ Carnal

⁶² Peter Wohlleben, *Das Seelenleben der Tiere: Liebe, Trauer, Mitgefühl—erstaunliche Einblicke in eine verborgene Welt* (München: Ludwig Buchverlag, 2016).

⁶³ In the last analysis, the whole judicial system is built upon a belief in such a distinction.

⁶⁴ It is still commonly accepted that a material grounding (such as hormones) that functions as an enabler of a feature might alleviate its meaning, rendering the feeling or emotion 'fictitious'. In the case of reversed dualism, the whole human lifeworld sometimes is thought to be characterized by fictitiousness.

characteristics might be inheritable, yet, they are not fixed as a biological fate, but historically transformative, and "innateness" does not constitute an imperative.

Fromm proposes that an ethical existence calls for a return to the mode of being, by refraining to fall into *having*.⁶⁵ This is also partly in line with posthuman discussions today. In a similar manner, Braidotti expresses the role of becoming in social constructivist views in connection with the concept of carnality:

Living matter—including the flesh—is intelligent and selforganizing, but it is so precisely because it is not disconnected from the rest of organic life. I therefore do not work completely within the social constructivist method but rather emphasize the non-human, vital force of Life, which is what I have coded as zoe.⁶⁶

A difference between transhumanism and posthumanism could, in fact, be defined through the modes of having and becoming—where transhumanism accentuates ego-centricity and mechanization, posthumanism calls for a shift away from anthropocentrism (whilst also employing the possibilities granted by self-awareness⁶⁷). Why should we assume that a dualist paradigm praising the possibilities granted by "the mode of having" is dangerous?

In contrast with the phenomenology of the carnal body, Braidotti's posthumanist stance calls for post-anthropocentric experimentation instead of a return to nature. This is also made possible by admitting a historical carnal self—might it be that a return to nature is impossible (and in an evolutionary sense "unnatural"), but the unethical technologies are linked with the transhumanist attitudes of an ego-centric discourse entanglement?

As demonstrated by the relationship of the carnal body and the image of a body-we-have, the nature-culture bond is a double bind. It is, of course, nothing novel to admit that what exists in language exists also in real life. Discourse

⁶⁵ Fromm, *The Art of Being*, 1992.

⁶⁶ Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 60.

⁶⁷ See chapter "Global Warning," in Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 57–67.

analysis has therefore never been about mere 'stereotypes' and 'biases,' rather, it has focused on practices and their genealogical entanglement. Ironically, in this case, the discourse formation of dualist nature-culture distinction, in which also a mind-body dualism is embedded, is precisely the main driving factor structuring the life experiences in the contemporary Western society. Hence, whilst ontologically incorrect, the distinction of mind and body and nature and culture is also the reality we are living, and, not only that—it is also one of the main contributors to the fact that today's world (often characterized by the name "Anthropocene") is a world, where humanity has also invaded every other part of the biosphere and transformed it according to its cultural codes by "intelligent" (or not-so-intelligent) design. Unwittingly the civilization process repeats the 'ego' alienation of the carnal body, however, on a broader level of the biosphere.

The alienation of culture and nature is precisely the factor that enables permanent change and transformation of the sphere deemed as *natural*. In the act of self-alienation, the carnal body constructs a mechanical "anatomical body" and enacts real, affectual change upon its own carnality via this socially constructed image, and, accordingly, "nature" is also alienated and objectified and, in effect, transformed and "acted upon." In both these processes humanity realizes a seemingly paradoxical act—a link is established by assuming an initial divide, which is non-existent, yet conceptually necessary for an invasion of the ego-culture structure upon the assumed "natural" sphere.

Here the "historicity" of carnality comes forward: as the civilizatory movement of the having dimension inscribes in the carnal body, carnality is transformed in a very real and material manner—from *just* "transformative" (via nature-culture continuum) it becomes "historical" in a developmental (yet discontinuous) sense and can be traced genealogically. The food we eat, the climate we live in—are all nature-cultured phenomena, yet, their implementation and production are often enabled via the "having" orientation. The implementation itself, however, again, transforms and influences the very real materiality of the carnal body (also in an inheritable, but not deterministic way). The concept of a historical carnality could, thus, allow

disposing of the deterministic viewpoint of evolutionary psychology,⁶⁸ and substituting such accounts with genealogical analysis of narrower spaces and times, without essentialist or imperative implications.

Moreover, the possibility of such an invasion also provides sufficient justification for stating that no such divide has existed, or else the two realities could never collide. As an *I-consciousness* is a necessary part of what being human for most of humanity entails, this alienation is somewhat unalienable. Hence, a valid question is, whether a truly postanthropocentric posthumanism is even possible? Yet, various examples show that an all-too-human alienation has disastrous effects—starting from depression, caused by alienated work⁶⁹ to the fascistic attitudes toward human life as "bare life"⁷⁰ by controlling powers⁷¹ and the current climate crisis.

A traditional ethical solution is found in the devaluation of the body in traditional dualism, however, the thought patterns brought about by Enlightenment have proven that the postulation of an uninterested aestheticism or a reason *without* flesh is an act of violent self-elimination.⁷² When a reason without flesh is assumed, carnal existence outside of the realm of uninterested reason is devalued and becomes a mere object for manipulation, commodification, and acquisition. Science systematically unveils life as materially embedded, and this objectification necessarily leads to a devaluation of all life, including the sphere of "mind", which also falls subject to the objectification of the discourse of science. Hence, it is also not surprising that

⁶⁸ Further: John Dupré, *Darwin's Legacy: What Evolution Means Today* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 77–98.

⁶⁹ Johann Hari, "The Real Causes of Depression," How To Academy, February 4, 2018, video, 01:25:50, <https://youtu.be/Hfl3Yh7fS4g>.

⁷⁰ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

⁷¹ *A Lack of Women in Asia*, directed by Antje Christ and Dorothe Dörholt (2018; Cologne: Bildersturm Filmproduktion). <https://archive.org/details/ALackOfWomenInAsiaDWDocumentary>.

⁷² Fromm explores sadism in connection with the mode of *having*. This connection has also been discussed in context with "uninterested" reason, for example, Jacques Lacan, "Kant with Sade," *Écrits*, trans by B. Fink. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 645–668, Gilles Deleuze and Leopold Sacher-Masoch, *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty & Venus in Furs*, trans. Jean McNeil and Aude Willm (New York: Zone Books, 1991). Nietzsche explores the *Socratic* principle, which resembles the mode of "having" as an alienated reason. Nietzsche, *KSA*, 1.

if a society highly values the calculative intellect,⁷³ it finds its way towards alienated work, consumption, and praise of the "constructed anatomical body." Discourse formations for praising the correlative body-image and the dualist view of transcending humanity via objectifying reason are strands of alienation enabled by the mode of *having*.

Yet, as the alienation of the "anatomical body image" via *I-consciousness* is unavoidable, the question remains—to what extent can humanity shift its focus toward a posthuman *becoming*, as suggested, for example, by Rosi Braidotti? And is there a middle ground⁷⁴ or does "being human" necessarily anticipate "building a house of corpses" as suggested by the allegory of Lars von Trier's *The House that Jack Built*,⁷⁵ and will end in a self-elimination via alienated reason?

6. Conclusion

The word "natural" is still often associated with the notions "determined," "fixed" and "stable" and the natural is often excluded from the field of history, using the ahistorical character of nature as a landmark for the division between life science and culture, despite conventional knowledge of evolution and historical transformations of organisms, depending on changes in living conditions, climate, cultivation, etc. The deadlock of objectification and alienation enabled by alienating "the body" and

⁷³ A concept used by Erich Fromm, referring to the "marketing character" of capitalism. Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976), 75.

⁷⁴ It seems that the acceptance of a carnal self enables critical posthumanism without alleviating the significance of human *I-consciousness*. The details of such a possibility are, however, a task for further study.

⁷⁵ The movie tells the story of a serial killer with a dream of becoming an architect (not unlike Hitler—whose passion for architecture Fromm highlights in *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*). During the culminating scenes of the movie, the sociopathic Jack builds a house of his victims' corpses. Symbolically it functions as a powerful illustration of the connection of violence towards flesh and the objectifying function of the mode of having. See, *The House That Jack Built*, directed by Lars von Trier (2018; Hvidovre: TrustNordisk). Erich Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, 426. Although a metaphorical link between "building a house of corpses" and the process of Western society can be seen, the fact that this same society has become increasingly eco-conscious and technological advancements might also be the only solution for the problems caused by this same advancement again suggests the previously mentioned entanglement of *becoming* and *having*.

"nature" as objects outside of processual historicity suggests that no such duality can be thought of as ontologically plausible.

In contrast, the theory of phylogenesis as a genealogical process opens the opportunity for a biologically justified cultural history of body and nature. Nature and culture are not contradictory or supplementary entities—they are rather co-constituted in a nature-culture continuum.

Thus, the work of Darwin, considered as genealogy, is one of the possible perspectives for explicating processuality of the carnal body as embedded in a historically transforming nature-culture continuum.⁷⁶ Furthermore, the symbolical character of sexual selection might not be the sufficient evidence for the creative and cultural character of life *before* I-conscious mediation, but functions as a demonstration of such a possibility and, thus, enables conceptualizing genealogy in the context of a nature-culture continuum.

Moreover, Foucault's approach can also be viewed in the context of carnality. Both systems collide—individuality might not be free or self-determined, and the focus on the self as a "civilized" and "cultured" ego might be exaggerated, based on how culture as a production code creates and determines the carnal self (*leibliches Selbst*), where the human *I-consciousness* is in a constructed entity. However, the ingraining of culture (including civilizatory factors) in the carnal body provides a basis for a non-reductionist view on physiology and materiality via a discontinuous nature-cultured life. It becomes apparent that there is no clear "freedom zone" of culture or "determination" of nature—life is a complex and processual production of forces.

The source of culture shifts away from the human ego, which is entangled in the clutches of the historical culture constructs. Freedom and creativity are rather embedded in the carnal body itself, in the potentiality of culture, which permeates every aspect of human life. In this way, it is possible to think of human carnality as permeated by discontinuity and un-fixedness (an *aesthetical phenomenon*) and

⁷⁶ Rosi Braidotti, "Post-Anthropocentrism: Life beyond the Species," in *The Posthuman*, 55–104.

simultaneously admit possible determination through the human ego, which is, in turn, determined by the prevalent cultural constructs.

A historically transformative carnal body functions as an anchor, a materially embedded yet transformative site for the ontological understanding of the human self. This reconfiguration of the carnal body allows us to reconcile social constructivist (poststructuralist) discourse analysis, which mainly relies on the historicity of the body with the phenomenological concept of the experienced carnality.

Becoming of the self is, hence, never an *only* cultural or *only* biological process. The carnality of being is a discontinuous flow of life forces, a naturecultured production process,⁷⁷ characterized by creativity and difference (i.e. life as an aesthetic phenomenon) as well as historicity. In the context of this, the genealogical approach reveals history as one of the main interpretational tools for understanding processes of the nature-cultured flow, i.e. the non-fixedness of the nature-culture flow can be anchored to a 'vertical' axis of being—the historicity of the carnal body, which allows the concept of *becoming* to come into focus.

The postulation of the carnal self is not novel, as it is vastly explored by the representatives of the new phenomenology of carnal body, yet, a historical carnality is thought to be a conceptual way for synthesizing the many research strands in life and human sciences, evidently indicating a need for reconceptualizing the human being based on a nature-culture continuum. Might there be a place for a self beyond essentialist analysis and the duality of a pre-discursive and a discursive body? It is thought that such synthesis, bringing together the phenomenological insights of the carnal body with a social constructivist view in a concept of a historical, processual⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Here, the dual co-production of nature-culture scenes should be noticed: on the one hand, an underlying coproduction of nature-culture on an ontological level (the world *is* naturecultured), but on the other, a recent merging of the spheres of "civilization" and "the rest of naturecultured spaces" (possible via the immanence of nature-culture). A detailed account of the way these naturecultured processes work in the light of humanity's objectifying function and a possibly *pathological* having directionality could be subject of a further study, in context with posthumanist ethical concerns.

⁷⁸ It is, unfortunately, out of the scope of this article to address other factors that suggest the possibility of making sense of social constructivism and carnality as compatible theoretical models, especially in the light of life sciences. In a further elaboration, the processual character and the porousness of the "outer" boundaries of a material body should also be considered to suggest that the genealogy of the

and non-essentialist view of carnality could be useful for a genealogical analysis of the social discourses and their ethical evaluations, as a way to demonstrate the facticity of history "in the flesh" and, thus, the inescapability of a genealogical approach in the analysis of the carnal self. That is, applying a prism of nature-culture continuum and historicity of the carnal body, genealogy is revealed as a method that not only describes and characterizes the societal relations of bodies but also reflects the culturally permeated materiality of bodies.

Such disposition of the human self could also simplify the relations between human and life sciences,⁷⁹ as it is also in line with the current developments in experimental science, where the link of nature and culture is established through empirical research in the fields of genetics and epigenetics (by establishing the possibility of genetic memory), in anatomy (for example, by establishing the mind-gut connection) and zoology, which reveals many surprising features of the animal "cultures" and where evidence indicates that culture exists much more on a "spectrum" than through a distinctly human *I-consciousness* established by a cognitive revolution.

What is most important here, however, is that this conceptualization of carnality in connection with social constructivism grants the possibility to find a middle ground between the pessimism of a lost spirituality and a biologization of cultural processes. That is, a genealogical outlook allows us to view the world as a historical and aesthetical (and in this sense—"senseful") phenomenon, simultaneously also refraining from a dualist worldview by stripping the plane of immanence of reductionist determinism.

body is not only a methodological approach but also highlights the intercarnal way in which bodies as selves *become* and *are* in the world. Currently, I am working on an article, considering this processuality of life and its compatibility with a model of a carnal self to further elaborate on this idea and account for the porousness of the carnal body self. For a view on the processuality of life and a processual approach to the philosophy of biology, see John Dupré and Daniel J. Nicholson, "A Manifesto for a Processual Philosophy of Biology" in *Everything Flows: Towards a Processual Philosophy of Biology*, ed. by Daniel J. Nicholson and John Dupré (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 1–45, for social constructivism in biology, see Dupré, *Processes of Life*, 40–54.

⁷⁹ A non-reductionist view might suggest that the discursive interrelatedness of bodies in society has also a downward flowing influence upon the biological plane of analysis. Dupré argues for such a non-hierarchical interconnectedness between different planes of analysis (for example, biology and chemistry). See an example of the market-people relations in Dupré, *Processes of Life*, 72–74.

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