

Chapter 7
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1 Somatic Film: Background, Classification, Education

What is somatic film? Think of all the films that you watch so that your body is actively present, not only the romantic films that warm your heart. Think of your bodily presence during films that raise the hair on the back of your neck, send chills down your spine, make the soles of your feet itch, and/or make you jump out of your chair.

I am interested in our *bodies watching film* (the eye is also part of the body, as much as the brain, of course) — and the way in which the film industry targets it, which has been far more witty than film studies or film criticism in understanding the central nature of the body in film reception. This is not to say that film studies haven't noticed that people who watch movies have a body (although sometimes it feels like it), but the body is still peripheral when film is discussed, a bit like a thing of people interested in body philosophy. It does not do justice to its real presence.

I will delve into different examples to clarify some of the basic aspects of physicality in film viewing, while also discussing the background of our strong reactions to film, for which we human beings have to thank our mammal brains (*Background*). I will discuss somatic film as a category of its own which, partly due to the strong somatic development of film lately, one can start to see as something that differentiates it from other types of films (*Classification*). Although all films have something somatic about them, the somatic side of films is sometimes central, and there is no reason to believe that viewers would not (at least often) realize that they consume these films with their body. I will discuss somatic film history not extensively, but enough, I hope, to make the point that somatic film has been around for a while, and that the concept is needed. I will also inquire into the learning processes at stake. When we watch films, we learn about our bodies, about what we feel is disgusting, for example, and about our boundaries, from (our fear of) death to our reflections on what it might feel

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like to lose a limb (*Education*). I see this as something that could be connected to, for example, Stoic philosophical practice, where the search for one's mind-body boundaries was a key to understanding the self. Is it possible to think that the (Greek and Roman) Stoic philosophers gave us a preliminary framework for discussing somatic film? One could also think of the care of the self as proposed by the same Stoics and later discussed by major contemporary thinkers such as Michel Foucault and Richard Shusterman as something that has could help us frame somatic film viewing.

AQ3

1.1 Background

Once or twice a week, while watching a film or TV series, our dog suddenly attacks the screen. I have turned down the volume to test the effect of sound on her, but she continues to attack horses, dogs, and other animals – and sometimes a human, like the fire chief in Roman Polanski's *The Firemen's Ball* (1967).

AQ4

A dog's breed may influence its reactions to TV. Hounds, whose olfactory sense is stronger than their visual sense, do not react as much to television as herding breeds, such as terriers. Ruska (our dog who we adopted at the age of 3) is a mix between a Jack Russell and Parsons Russell terrier. Sometimes, she checks to see if undesired visitors that she saw on the screen have disappeared behind the TV. She doesn't recognize a horse, dog, or cat on my mobile or my computer screen, but our technically relatively advanced television makes her lose her mind.

In any case, dogs have better visual ability than most of us give them credit for. I often hear the comment that dogs are not able to make sense of TV. However, they are more like us than we think. For example, they are able to recognize their own species by looking at an animal's face, although the visual ability of the approximately 400 breeds of dogs in the world vary considerably.¹

What is interesting, in the way the dog acts, is that when I raise my voice (too often angrily) and say "get away from there," she often does it. This would be a sheer impossibility with a horse, cat, or another dog somewhere in "real life" while walking outside. Doesn't she take the animals on TV seriously?

During a film where there are many of these encounters, and, importantly, many of my negative reactions, she often goes to her own basket and turns around to avoid seeing the moving images. She seems to have some kind of control over her aggression towards these film animals, something lacking in real life when we meet rabbits or

squirrels outside our home. It isn't that she would *understand* that the animals on TV are not real, but they definitely do not seem to be in the same category as "real" animals, partly, and I am just guessing here – because they never come off from the screen. To quote animal behaviorist Nicholas Dodman, some dogs "have been desensitized to television. When they see a dog [on TV], they [may] think, 'Those guys just hanging out on the television. They never actually walk around.'"²

Increasingly, I feel that my reactions to the manipulations of a film are not much different from those of my dog. Sometimes, they are about the nearly magical make-believe world of fiction. Kendall Walton's classical text on make-believe discusses the way "the barrier" separating our sense of the real world and the fictional one "appears" in some cases "to be psychologically transparent."³

Charles is watching a horror movie about a terrible green slime. He cringes in his seat as the slime oozes slowly but relentlessly over the earth destroying everything in its path. Soon a greasy emerges from the undulating mass, and two beady eyes roll around, finally fixing on the camera. The slime, picking up speed, oozed on a new course straight towards the viewers. Charles emits a shriek and clutches desperately at his chair. Afterwards, still shaken, Charles confesses that he was "terrified" of the slime. *Was he?*⁴

Walton's answer is no, but his text spurred reactions by other theorists, some of whom adopted the third view that film audiences are just "irrational, incoherent, and inconsistent" in their relationship to fiction.⁵ Some others followed Walton in believing that fear must include a belief that one is in danger and that audiences are so not terrified about what they see on film.⁶

Notes on quasi-emotions (in Walton's case quasi-fear) raise an age-old interest in reactions to fiction, which takes us all the way back to the early theories of aesthetic experience, like Bharata's (500BC–500AD) theory of *rasa*. Rasas, or emotive atmospheres, are based on an idea that was later repeated and philosophically refined on the Indian continent by many thinkers, especially the eleventh century Kashmiri philosopher Abhinavagupta). For the *rasa* theorists, the emotive effects of theater (fear, love, and hate) are a reflective version of everyday sentiments. The skilled work of the artists absorbs and elevates (real memories of) perceptions and emotions to a higher level into a parallel world, which is based on a higher consciousness, a reflective attitude, which also makes the heightened experience possible (in the original scripts also religiously rewarding). Fear, according to

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these thinkers, is not fear, but a stunning, reflective version and experience of it.⁷ Through the bliss of *rasa* the audience enters another divine stage of consciousness.

Although I am not convinced that Walton meant it that way, Walton and his “idea of make-believe” have been criticized for our actual lack of choice when facing manipulative fiction. Noël Carroll writes that Walton makes it sound like we could really choose when we enter the mode of make-believe. “I could [so] elect to remain unmoved by *The Exorcist*; I could refuse to pretend I was horrified. But I don’t think that was really an option for those, like myself, who were overwhelmingly struck by it.”⁸

Sometimes, though, film audiences do not encounter make-believe when they are strongly affected by moving images. Looking at Walton’s example, one can ask if it is only fictional make-believe that moves Charles. Even the reader can share Charles’ disgusted reaction, to some extent, when trying to understand what Walton is talking about. However, Walton did not explain the narrative context.

To continue on this path of questioning, it might be helpful to look at examples, where we can see a film’s physicality at stake without the disturbance of narrative, fictional world-making.

The slime in Walton’s example is not just a work of fiction for us. Like Ruska, my dog, we are mammals that react to *seeing* things, of course, without forgetting the strong role of music and sound effects such as in horror movie experiences. We see a slime *moving*. Maybe we even hear the noise it makes as it oozes. Some (like Carroll⁹) think that monsters are popular because we want to learn about them (I have no objections to this); but their victorious presence in film is at least partly about something more than curiosity for the unknown, as their hair-raising impact is so dominant, when we see them. At the moment, when we have been well scared, I don’t believe we are experiencing a desire to know more about monsters. We might rather feel like escaping.

In my body philosophy talks, I have used an example from the stunning Tamil film industry, a clip from the 2010 movie *Endhiran*, directed by S. Shankar, and starring Rajinikanth. It perfectly shows film’s special quality as somatic stimulation. Although most of my listeners are not from India or that part of the world (e.g. Iran, South East Asia) where Kollywood (in Chennai, the Tamil film industry; or Bollywood, the Mumbai film industry, Lollywood (Lahore), etc.) films land in the mainstream, which means that the cinematic “language” does not appear “natural” to “read,” the action still appeals to the viewer somatically.

In the clip, Chitti, a robot played by superstar Rajinikanth, saves a woman, jumps on fast-driving cars, uses multiple guns at the same time, and is so invincible that some viewers might laugh a bit. The clip is 2 or 3 minutes of action. It is absolutely unrealistic, yet comprehensible for anyone, regardless of their prejudices, and stimulating to watch. One sees Chitti, for example, stopping a car with his hands (one can hear the bump), trucks crashing, and bullets going through metal and Chitti himself.

Afterwards, I ask about the audience's bodily reactions to the film, although this is not necessary, as I see people reacting with their feet, rapidly moving their heads, and becoming physically intense during the screening. Not much make-believe about a physical world is constructed, as the clip is so short.

One could, of course, do this even more stoically from an aesthetic point of view, and show just 5 seconds from one of the most vicious punches in the face in Martin Scorsese's *The Raging Bull* (1980) or a scene from any horror or gore movie where someone's skin is cut.¹⁰ It is our relationship to the *seen* that makes movies so effective in a way that is different from other arts.

Current brain research leads us to understand the background for this and other bodily issues involved in watching film. In "Modily Map of Emotions," Lauri Nummenmaa, Enrico Gleran, Riitta Hari, and Jari K. Hietanen report on their tests with film audiences in Finland, Sweden, and Taiwan, in search for emotional "somatosensations" from reactions to the seen and show that they can be mapped quite accurately. Feelings of love were expressed in the chest area, anxiety in the stomach, and shame, besides these places, in the head.¹¹ We have to thank the somatosensory receptors that are spread around our body and that become activated in different situations, when we think of our abilities of coping with the environment and its many challenges,¹² and the way we observe the complex web of sensational impulses we encounter in everyday life. While watching film, the way in which the areas of the brain that support certain functions in the observer become activated when we see another person's actions and feelings of the same type, is what keeps our bodies intense when we watch even a short silent clip of something that *touches* us.

The mirror neurons of humans as well as monkeys are the base for our emphatic relationship to the seen. This explains many things in our relationship to moving images. One of the strongest most central things we react to is when somebody grabs something.

This is where Vittorio Gallese, Michele Guerra, and Frances Anderson land in their *The Emphatic Screen: Cinema and Neuroscience*.

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They ask why movies fascinate us and how they “engage” us.¹³ The answer is the liberated embodied simulation that film is, and that actually makes it so different from other arts. Close-ups increase our desire to “reach out and actually touch the image.”¹⁴

Gallese, Guerra, and Anderson write about mirror neurons:

The discovery of mirror neurons in the brain of the macaque, followed by that of mirroring mechanisms in the human brain [...] has shown that there is a neurobiological foundation for a direct modality of access to the meaning of the behavior and experiences of others. This direct access is independent of the explicit attribution of propositional attitudes such as desires, beliefs, and intentions that are typical of classic cognitivism’s standard notion of intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity is not completely covered in the linguistic-inferential mechanisms of the so-called “Theory of Mind.” [...] The discovery of the mirror mechanism in both animal (birds and non-human primates) and human brains opens a new evolutionary scenario that acknowledges “motor cognition” as a cardinal element for the appearance of human intersubjectivity. We do not necessarily need to metarepresent the purposes and motor intentions of others in linguistic form in order to understand them. Most of the time we do not explicitly attribute intentions of others; simply we just understand them. When we are present while others are doing something, we immediately comprehend most of their sensory-motor and emotional intentions without the need to explicitly represent them linguistically.¹⁵

And, we are “present” in situations we view on film, as our eyes and bodies are not “aware” that we are only watching a film. Mirror neurons activate us both when we execute a motoric action, for example, grab a hammer, and when we just gaze at someone else doing it.

The way we reach “a certain degree of comprehension,” as Gallese, Guerra, and Anderson put it,¹⁶ is totally visual, and so it is natural, really *natural*, that the slime “scares” Charles in Walton’s example, and that it would maybe scare him even without the film as a whole as a context, with the broader narration. This system described here is also so natural that we create empathy for the characters in the film, as this is one of the functions of the mirroring mechanism.¹⁷

Gallese, Guerra, and Anderson trace the historical theoretical approaches from Robert Vischer’s dichotomy of seeing and active looking (already Winckelmann actually proposed that in addition to

just looking, there was a more physically “touching” way to gaze at sculptures¹⁸) to Aby Warburg.¹⁹ They note how quickly filmmakers learned to achieve an impact on the bodies of the spectators, and how we are not much different from monkeys and apes that share our visual neuroanatomy, as Asif Ghazanfar and Stephen Shepherd show in their study.²⁰ They present a new take on cinema and the neologisms of “neurofilmology,” “neurocinematics,” “psychocinematics,” and “evolutionary cinematics,”²¹ which I truly welcome.

This accent on the brain-body system shares the same aesthetic accent that characterizes works such as Vivian Sobchack’s *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (2004), where Jane Campion’s *The Piano* (1993) takes on a rather suspect central role (although in Sobchack’s work brain research does not yet explain reactions). Chapter 3 of Sobchack’s *Carnal Thoughts*, “What My Fingers Knew?” features the tactile reactions and bodily responses that viewers have to the film, from the way the sensitive fingers of the protagonist are presented (especially when she plays the piano) and the horrifying way in which one is chopped off, where we feel an itch in our own fingers.²²

Interestingly, Sobchack, who otherwise boldly focuses on the body, cannot break ties with the “highbrow” which I think *The Piano* represents, both in bourgeois fashion and by gaining respect on the art scene. Why then choose *The Piano*? And, why do Gallese, Guerra, and Anderson focus so much on directors like Ingmar Bergman? As most highbrow films are so much less physical, one could even ask, as scholars, are they seriously after the body in the film, or are they interested in having a salon chat with highbrow film theorists about “art film,” with an accent on the body? Of course, for example Torben Grodal is right in claiming that Alain “Resnais’s *Last Year in Marienbad* violated basic emotional and cognitive schemas” through its experimentality that had to do with modes of representation,²³ and this surely created some of its bodily buzz too, but *The Piano* and Bergman’s films raise more than the question of whether some people (like Gallese, Guerra, Anderson, and Sobchack) are overtly focused and oversensitized when they watch films that they consider to be somehow monumental, “art” or “culturally significant.”

I cannot come up with any other reason than the classical cultural hierarchy proposed by the originally (Western) Central European system of art (later more broadly European and then Global) that then in the end also became the home for highbrow film, a system that conquered the world and overshadowed many other cultural

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systems.²⁴ Thinking of the way our bodies are stimulated by even mainstream popular action, horror, and semi-pornographic cinema, this choice renders their ideas with unnecessary categorical weakness. Film as popular culture is the “avant-garde” of somatic film. One can, of course, guess that the reason might lie in the training of these scholars, who might, following arthouse traditions (and more broadly the Western art tradition), accentuate the cognitive side and the aesthetics of the film to the extent that the main focus, the body, becomes overshadowed even in the hunt for good examples for research on somatic film.

I can better understand how Laura Marks, in *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* focuses on the way “tactile epistemology” and “embodied perception” bind the viewer to the viewed world.²⁵ Stressing the haptic over the visual might be one of the key features in connecting worlds and discussing memories, places, and displacement in the works of the Black Audio Film Collective and Trinh T. Minh-ha, among others. Marks shows the importance of sensuality, what she calls “tactile images” in cultural reflection, memories, and intercultural dialogue. This is one meaningful standpoint. She discusses a certain way of doing political art film and the way its somatic sides are needed for its effect. There are no claims about an overall interest in how things work for the mind, body, and/or body-mind. Here art house film has a meaningful role, which is not the case for Gallese, Guerra, Anderson, and Sobchach.

Turning to the meta discussion about the body and film, I feel that first of all, what is still somehow lacking is the observation that some films have really made a cultural tradition out of body stimulation, and, secondly, that after more than 100 years of film we really maybe even should now finally come up with a classification for “somatic film.” Although all film has some somatic effects, I would rather reserve this category for the films that base their effectiveness on strong bodily reactions, like itching, jumping, skin orgasms, or disgust, to the extent that the film would not really work without them.

Of course, credit is also due to experimental film. One should not forget that Jan Švankmajer worked with Czech surrealists on film from a tactile point of view. In particular, his famous adaption of Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Fall of the House of Usher* (*Zánik domu Usher*, 1980) includes textures that he hoped to stimulate the viewer somatically (and they do, at least to some extent). (Point for Gallese, Guerra, and Anderson, who mention this.²⁶) The strange muddy forms in the work testify to the experimental spirit of the Prague scene at the time.

AQ9

Still, the arrival of the train in Louis Lumière's *L'arrivée d'un train à La Ciotat* (*The arrival of the train at La Ciotat*, 1895), which must have felt very physical at the time, to the chills-down-the-spine created by Masaki Kobayashi's *Kwaidan* (1964), there is a difference that is not hard to recognize from the physical reactions one gets from watching Yen Woo-ping's Jackie Chan kung fu film *Drunken Master* (1978), where the protagonist is endlessly kicked and hit in such a *woodywoodpeckerish* and *bugsbunnyesque* manner that our bodies have a hard time coping with it tactilely. The same goes for horror films where slime crawls on skin and bodies are mutilated. In the last examples, the body itself is really the mechanism that supports the film. It is entertainment with our bodies at the center of the enterprise.

AQ10

It is actually quite perplexing, if one thinks that art house films have grabbed such a big chunk of our discussion of film and the body, but of course, all in all, the body is still too much on a periphery in film discourse. What I find most intriguing is the way one cannot really escape the body's presence in the consumption of film.

AQ11

My body felt a bit mixed-up following the blood ballet played out in John Woo's *Hardballed* (1992) and I might have jumped out of my chair once or twice, at least my head did some fast turns when the protagonist, played by Chow Jun-fat, threw a hot pot of tea at a group of Triad members, and when he saved a baby from a burning house. And, I felt an itch, as I watched the staged danger faced by the infant. I had the same reaction when he climbed down, as the camera nicely showed both the height and the way his hands nearly slipped from the rope. In *Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol* (2011), it is somatically very stimulating to watch Ethan Hunt (played by Tom Cruise) climb on the impressive windows of Burj Khalifa (828 metres) in Dubai (United Arab Emirates). This scene was so strong that when I visited Dubai I could still feel an echo of this itch in the soles of my feet when I looked at the skyscraper from the ground.

This does not mean that art house classics do not touch our bodies, and I want to accentuate that I am in no way criticizing Sobchack, Gallese, Guerra, or Anderson for their work on, for example, *The Piano* in any other way than that the focus was too much on art film to really, truly build the point of the presence of brain and body in the filmic experience. Art house classics *touch* me as much as they touch them.

AQ12

Heaviness, of course, really overwhelms me when I watch (one of my favourite films, i.e.) Ingmar Bergman's *Smultronstället* (*Wild Strawberries*, 1957). It produces anxiety that marinates my whole body

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during the film. An old academic (this is, of course, my not-so-distant future), remembers during a long, anxiety-driven car ride through Sweden (which is my second home country), his not so simple and easy youth, and the web of problems that he had with his partner, who, he realizes, finally, was very, very important for him – too important to lose. It is a long and emotionally complicated filmic story to watch – also for my body. The protagonist recalls and reflects on his failures in life, while facing growing senescence. The film also takes a poetic attitude towards the Swedish language; Bergman is more of a poet than his viewers might have so far understood, and at times this makes me feel physically uncomfortable, as also the words cut deep.

Hardboiled and *Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol* are not about the same thing, although one might like to label them just as films like Bergman's. Films they are, of course, but from a somatic point of view, these entertainment films come closer to our amusement park experiences than the European highbrow tradition of painting and literature that Bergman embraces and adapts into film. They are more about instant somatic reactions. Woo's and Brad Bird's films exemplify the way commercial feature films build on somatic stimulation to a much greater extent than most art house films. It is not just that they are full of witty choreographic thinking (if one wants to find a highbrow connection, it would be dance that here comes close to them, not classical theatre) and that the use of camera and the effect production is executed with great skill. You could change a lot in them, from romance to the countries and buildings visited (and destroyed) but you could not take away the dynamic physicality and the action-driven shock-effects, as these features are at the very center of why people watch these films. As our bodies react actively to all filmic violence, one could ask if somatic reactions to film are actually the base also for the pleasure the viewer gains from violence on screen. People tend to discuss only critically film violence, but maybe the way the viewer is at times both the beater and the victim, and the way we so reflect on both sides of the action, while extending our empathy, might be one of the keys for understanding the role of violence in film experience.

If immediate somatic stimulation is commonplace in contemporary film, one wonders whether the audience knows consciously when it seeks for it? It is impossible to prove, but watching people being excited when they go into the movie theater, where the presence of both sound and image is strong and intense, and how happy they are about moments when they jump out of their chairs, makes me feel that if they were qualitatively interviewed, they'd buy my intuition that consuming

somatic film is often conscious and that they enter the cinema even mainly for somatic reasons.

Both of the films mentioned, would be easy targets for the classical cultural critic, whom I'd rather call a (Weimarian) cynic (in Peter Sloterdijk's footsteps²⁷) who cannot see the value in "other cultures" like the lowbrow (that s/he in some form consumes himself/herself too, if nothing else, through trashy chocolate or any art form where s/he is not a connoisseur). They too often think that entertainment provides an object and/or a tool for passive consumption.²⁸ If one thinks of James Joyce's *Ulysses* – which I partly enjoy intellectually and re-read some parts like "oh, yes, here he experiments with X," understanding the historical situation in which it was written – or, to take a film example, Alan Resnais's *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* (Last Year at Marienbad, 1961), an intellectual-reflective odyssey, where cracks in the cinematic language are a big deal, as models of *active viewing* (and reading), then I suppose it is understandable that one thinks of more somatic films that activate us through the body, as *passive*. However, it is by no means a sincere way of discussing movies of the type I have mentioned, and it is not fair to choose only one criteria for active/passive. Why not also talk about active/passive in a somatic way?

AQ13

The active viewer is very much an active body in films like Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill* (2003) (which is too often viewed as nothing more than an intertextual game), in *Ichi the Killer* (2001) by Takashi Miike or Johnny To's triad films that significantly change both the rhythm (from meditative – triad bosses talking and eating – to very fast and surprising action, thus producing a shock to the body) and experientially pierce the body of the viewer through raw violence. I wouldn't say that these films are for everyone or that everyone should watch them (but I also wouldn't say that about Bergman or *The Piano*, although I really like them), but these are somatic films par excellence.

The somatically excessive moments of this type of film also provide us with the possibility to reflect on our own physical boundaries (death, pain, loss of limbs) and thus stimulate reflectivity in our bodies, thinking through the body (to borrow Richard Shusterman's expression). Even more: they become present in our bodies, intensively during the film – and sometimes after. I recall my experience of the Burj Khalifa, and how that affected my real encounter with the building, but also, anyone who watches a couple of Charlie Chaplin films in a row cannot escape the way slapstick takes a small hold on how reality is viewed, at least a moment after the films. For example,

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when one sees a banana, after a Chaplin film, it becomes something that one might slip on.

Much of the success of film is surely based on the viewer's desire to become somatically shaken up. And, as I already expressed, I don't think all the billions of moments when someone went to the movie theater (or turned Netflix on) to see a *body shaker* would just be about non-conscious bodily involvement.

1.2 Classification

In "Musical Frisson" (2000)²⁹ a witty article on the body and listening to music, Jerrold Levinson uses a term with a French origin, "frisson," which translates into "chills" in English,³⁰ and applies it to musical aesthetics in a way that truly relates to what we discussed in part 1.1. He is interested in somatic reactions to music. Levinson's main question concerns the role and meaning of somatic reactions to our encounters with music, and in a way that I think is useful to pick up here. Traditionally, at least Western intellectuals and academics have not yet really viewed them as very important, but it is good to note that film is not alone in its relative lack of the presence of the body in theoretical discourse.

Most of us have experienced waves of pleasure on the skin. These experiences are sometimes called "skin orgasms," and also Linda Williams mentions them in her classical film study "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess" (1991).³¹ Levinson brings up certain works of mainstream European and/or Western music where skin orgasms are typical for the reception. One "classical" piece of music that sends chills down the spine is Brahms's *String Quintet in G op. 111*; another better known by a much larger group of bodies, is *The Final Cut* by the British progressive rock band Pink Floyd.³² Levinson's text is a beautiful call to think about the body in music, and while reading it, I remembered my bodily experience of *The Wall* (1979; another Pink Floyd work).

AQ14

When one thinks of it, the music of the wealthy and educated (Western) Central European upper class of the early modern period that many of us are accustomed to call classical music, or the British pop tradition, might not even be the strongest contenders for somatic music. Soma can be more central in other traditions, and even more a conscious practice. At least, my spine radiates and the hair on my skin raises when I listen, especially at high volume, to Carnatic (South Indian) music, such as (the contested modernizer) T.M. Krishna's music. The hypnotic drumming that mixes with high-pitched,

sometimes excessively extended tones, have a great effect on my body; the organically living/beating drums cast a greater spell when I hear this type of music live. The Japanese "lute," the *biwa*, also has an uncanny impact on me, and it easily fibrillates by back. Traditional Japanese music has played an effective role in the film industry, partly due to the reflective cultural traditionalism of some of the film makers of the 1960s, in particular, Masaki Kobayashi and his film *Kwaidan* (1964), which is just one in a long list of reflectively traditionalist films on the history of Japan, spiced up with philosophical and social perspectives.

Kwaidan is one of my favorite films. But it took a long time before I realized why. One of its (alluringly) disturbing elements is its careful, museum-like following of another, already passed cultural reality, a traditional Japanese one, and the way in which the visually weird sides for the modern (wo)man, from the blackened teeth of upper class women to the lighting of the traditional cities³³ (something Kobayashi and his crew also work on in *Harakiri* (1962)) are presented. One of the main manipulation tools (I am thinking of the aesthetic manipulation of the viewer) in the films is the use of classical Japanese instruments. Both in a filmic, more exegetic way, and in a modernizing way, Toru Takemitsu, who we have to thank for the music, is a real master. Ghosts and uncanny situations (they became so common after this film that they basically created an entire genre) were portrayed auditorially with the help of Japanese classical instruments, and often, the instrument which by itself somehow stimulates my spine, is the *biwa*. The audio track of the dreadful section on *Dan No Ura*, a true historical battle (1185) between the Minamoto and Taira clans, which is the origin of many of the ghosts in the film, is comprised of traditional Japanese music, and really pinches my body. It produces a kind of a semi-violent pleasure, like the scratching of rap records did in the 1990s, while at the same time, hand in hand with the sometimes surprising, but most of the time just intensifying images, it works to dramatize and intensify the entiring experiencing human being, body and mind together, body-mind.

Music that raises hysterical reactions in the audience (strings, or the type of growing or deceasing use of cymbals, which is used by composers like Krystof Penderecky and Kaija Saariaho) and the use of "too low" and somehow abject-driven low sounds are central methods for film-makers and film-composers. The role of music can be more central in cinematic storytelling than what film fans have so far realized.³⁴ Some horror films without sounds do not work at all.³⁵

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When films stimulate, control, and/or challenge our bodies, the mind is not very free for intellectual play. As highbrow has with force distanced itself from everything intellectually "easy," and mostly worked at least traditionally by keeping its distance from the "lower senses" and has stressed reflectivity more than "aggressive" stimulation, it is not hard to understand that the body and its role is one of the things that easily functions as (one) divider (among many) for high and low when applied to film or music.

It is also useful to remember that when other forms of stimulation are and have been discussed, our bodies can be approached in a variety of other ways artistically. They can be stimulated by telling stories, beauty/ugliness, and/or narrative suspense (a feature we started with). Rude words can make some viewers blush, even more when one watches films with parents. And, the narrative, when drawing people in, can make the stomach muscles so tense that it can feel like a workout, and in the end when the excitement has been solved, it calls to mind the last minutes of a soccer or hockey match.

Walter Benjamin drew a parallel between hectic factory work, amusement parks, and shock-driven film.³⁶ The new "art form" of the 1930s became more than just a part of not the entertainment industry and art scenes; it transmitted a tradition that gurus, shamans, and tricksters had worked on for ages, a tradition that worked on taking our breath away and affecting us holistically through illusion. Culture has a long and broad history of somatic takes. Think of dancing to the energetic drumming in Tansanian or Nigerian musical forms. Some of the thoughts that Benjamin had on film's "new" (through fast pace and action) shocking way of touching us might not have been that new, but a reminiscence of the older popular culture traditions and shock conventions that men with Benjamin's stature did not encounter (at least as "culture") before film – like street theater in Naples (for sure an inspiration for Totò and probably a historical background to some of the Marx Brothers slapsticks), Punch and Judy, and circus. But, even in sculpture, it is not always about just form and/or ideas. Here, we can think about Ernst Barlach's statues, which Martin Heidegger mentions when he discusses the presence of *stone* in sculpture, that sensually and materially uncovers our world.³⁷ or any other use of material in sculpture or architecture that reveals the nature of the material (e.g. Gaudi), sculpture sometimes has a very somatic presence. Film has in a very fresh way come up with new forms of somatic stimulation. And, their presence in our everyday life is surprisingly dominant if one thinks about it. Sculpture might have stimulated us somatically

and occasionally has there been circus in town, but now some people engage with somatic film nearly every evening.

Many films are like workouts and they might even, in the end, affect our diet: we do not feel like eating certain things after extreme gore and/or horror films. Some films that we see in the movie theatre cause vertigo. *Spider-Man 3*, where we are swung through a vertically extended city on strings at high speed with the protagonist is a good example of this type of somatic audience manipulation. I recall feeling even a bit dizzy when I came out from the film theatre after seeing it.³⁸

After all this, does it not sound reasonable to say that there are somatic films, and not just that there are films that stimulate us somatically, but that there are many of them, and it is a tradition already, a cluster of conventions that we might not have studied as a whole, something that could be classified even, as, like already mentioned, "somatic film" – and that this could/should become more acknowledged by us?³⁹ It's not that I want to overshadow other classifications and/or genres (or whatever ways of making sense of the variety of film we have), but to add one more extra layer to our understanding of film. As much as we have films mixing the high and the low, or comedy and horror, we could claim that some films are both somatic as well as, for example, horror.

The fascinating thing, I think, is that our bodies read films (like my dog) although they have never heard of fiction. (Well, of course, our brain cells have, and this connection, as presented in the beginning, is crucial for the whole enterprise, but that is a different thing.) Somatic film has a long, long history – and a strong presence in every decade of film history, but, of course, even a stronger, dominating presence with today's technical potential and methods. It might just be that we have yet to reach a new level of understanding, considering brain research and body philosophy, but that film itself has just crossed a line that has made us understand what it is ultimately about. Film now is teaching us in unforeseen ways.

One early instance of somatic film, and maybe the first old film that I remember seeing in a very somatic state, in my childhood, is Harold Lloyd's slapstick comedy *Safety Last* (1923). In the film, the character that Lloyd plays hangs in a life-and-death situation from a pointer of what the films calls "the 12-story Bolton building" (which in real life actually was the International Savings Building in Los Angeles California). Chaplin's work has always struck me as very, very physical, and one can count them in the bursts of laughter that his short films produce, besides the incredible, acrobatic dance-like acting. Countless examples show that some parts of films, and some

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whole films, are really somatic to the extent and that the label looks meaningful to use.

I would still like to set aside romance, laughter, and pornography from the main use of the concept of somatic film. In some sense pornography totally uses the somatic, but it is no longer interesting as a topic, as its make-believe is somewhat on a zero level (it mostly presents everything as if it would be just true and documentation), and its use is different from the way we enter worlds in feature films. Pornography is somatic on such a basic level that the sense of awe we feel in the heights in *Spider-Man 2* (2004) is missing, and it does not really categorize as "film," although in the old days, some directors had aspirations to make real stories out of it. Of course, it represents a large sub-genre, as people consume a lot of pornography, but in essence it is not film, but mostly just pure visual stimulation, and, of course, we might learn by studying its physical effects more closely. Romance and the already discussed narrative suspense also deal with the body, but their effects are not much different from books or other arts. This leaves us with films that aim to make an impact as the main part to be understood so that the classification makes sense.

I mostly enjoy the moments when I live through cinema more with my body than with my "intellect." The Middle Eastern (think of Christianity) and Central/Southern European accent (philosophy, the art system) on the division of the body and the mind has maybe "helped" to keep us unaware of the role of the body in film, but I am sure that most of us have nothing against this framing. One can even wonder how we started to reflect so much on everything else except for the body in the arts and philosophical thinking.

The art system is relatively young. One could say that it didn't take shape until the mid-eighteenth century, and gained maturity close to the mid-nineteenth century. It bound together the aesthetic cultures that upper class Central European males considered to be high class in early modern times⁴⁰ and helped people to see that painting and poetry were about the same thing (this, of course, created a broader community of artists and changed the arts, as they suddenly shared aims and an idea of "themselves"). And, important to note, at the time the body was not very much appreciated, but often debased. Also, there was no film.

This added to what John Dewey traced back to the Greeks, the "people" whose written thinking reflected the world view of non-working free males,⁴¹ and the men who did not suffer from having their souls "twisted following physical work," as Aristoteles nails the problem children of culture in his critique of the theater of the slaves.⁴² The fun thing about Aristotle is that he says slaves need a different

type of theatre as their souls are distorted by physical work, and perhaps this is still echoed in some of the elitist writing on film, where the tastes of the uneducated are often referred to as somehow connected to their different lives, that is, "consumerist" and "passive" and lacking in education.⁴³

In *The 7 Lively Arts* (1924) Gilbert Seldes wanted to defend slapstick film, against the slowly emerging highbrowization of film culture, where many films started to look like bourgeois theater plays.⁴⁴ For Seldes, film was original and had its own form of entertainment very different from the theatre, partly due to its different nature. He hints at its somatic potential by his focus on slapstick.

Walter Benjamin believed that *Shock*, which employed montages, close-ups, and the artistically anti-theological nature in, for example, film (it was not into praising original works of art, but copying right from the beginning), was a new key concept for understanding the culture "we live in." It formed a threat to the old art culture, with its cult-driven nature.⁴⁵ Although Benjamin did not make the body the stage of his text, it is relevant to note, that the factory work in his descriptions as much as in Charles Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936) had the shocked and ragged body sometimes in focus (this also applies to "fast traffic" that Benjamin writes about⁴⁶). The lack of a major presence of the body in Western philosophical traditions at the time was maybe the only reason for not including it in the reflection. The body needed stimulation that resonated with factory work, intense street life, and traffic – and their daily shocks, Benjamin could have written. Benjamin also claimed that amusement parks were important for the holistic picture of society and its aesthetic needs.⁴⁷ He must have thought about the body.

These, of course, form a very important analogy for what we have discussed in relation to somatic film. One goes to the amusement park for physical action. In film, the critical reaction towards the late 1920s talkie was often directed at its much stiffer nature which was evident if one looked at the slapstick comedies that had been around a few years before that.⁴⁸ There must have been a feeling of loss in the circles of film enthusiasts in those times, as more and more, slapstick had to give way to verbal recitals and intellectually dramatic scenarios. Of course, it sometimes came back in new forms. Dario Fo writes beautifully about Totò, the Italian clown and actor, who just hijacked many of the physical street theater methods that were typical for classical Neapolitan culture, for his comedy films.⁴⁹

In any case, throughout the history of film, people have suddenly fallen, and buildings have exploded and thrown people around, but the

speed of the images and the rhythm of films have become faster. New threats appear once in a while, along with new heights of challenges to our somatic coping, and they make themselves "heard" in the audience. I still remember when the permissible amount of violence in films jumped a level in the 1990s, and how that felt. Now I am trained for far fiercer challenges. With new horror, everyday pornography, and hectic action, we have entered a stage that old viewers of film and moving images would have had a hard time coping with. In this sense it is also important to note that the consumption of pornography or shocking news might change what is possible to deal with in somatic film.

Does this relate to the way we face endless debates, information, and culture about the body in relationship to sport, sex/gender, and food? (This perspective is a key component in the birth and development of the discussion about somaesthetics.) Think of all the diets that surround us, tai chi and yoga, and gyms and Pilates.⁵⁰ Jörg Scheller talks even about a bio-aesthetic turn of *entelechy*.⁵¹ Anorexia and body anxiety steer the behavior of the masses.⁵² For decades, many of us were not aware of the fact that we had a living body that guided our emotions and thoughts. Now, things have changed. Has the development of somatic film nothing to do with this? Our bodies watch films. They thrive on the chills down the spine. They gain "skin orgasms." They feel itching in their hands and in the soles of their feet. Bodies are being touched, mutilated, hit, and sexually stimulated in film like never before.

AQ15

One of my favorite classics in cultural theory, Herbert Marcuse's philosophical, but quite hippiesque *An Essay on Liberation* (1969), which is one of the main books steering classical leftist theory into contemporary liberal thinking with its more holistic approach (including race, gender, and popular culture), is full of bodily remarks, just at the advent of alternative cultures and the new rise of the really somatic film that came around at the time (as described earlier). Marcuse, who used to be (and later again became⁵³) an advocate of nihilist, cynical intellectualism, where highbrow art and traditional scientific world-views were the last threshold of resistance against easy hedonism and consumerism, appreciated in a slightly a utopian way the new potential of popular culture and its interest in sensuality and sensual practices. He lived in California at this time, and could comment on the early days of the hippie movement, not its stranding in other states and countries through the commercialized distribution of revolutionary "Americana." Marcuse does not mention film, but he writes enthusiastically about sensual music and long hair. Although he did not seem to understand that he was writing

really a lot about bodily issues, he believed that these cracks in the Western cultural system (the negative dialectics that he picked up from Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer) could have the potential to create the growth of real change. Film could be easily inscribed into Marcuse's work. It had only just made it to a new level somatically, one that changed closer to the millennium. Georges Franju's *Eyes without a Face* (1960) still raises disgust in today's viewers as it shows bizarre and truly disgusting operations. In *Repulsion* (1965), Roman Polanski took the body of ("too") beautiful Catherine Deneuve and her fears/disgusts and made it the focal point for experiencing moving images in a way that shocked audiences at the time. And, finally, George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) brought living corpses and their violent shock effects into mainstream culture. Perhaps Benjamin, if he'd live in this era, would have walked home and written in his diary: "I felt physically uneasy in the cinema. What's going on?"

The "care of the self" which I think we should consider has some sort of a role here, accompanied these new film practices. The concept was coined by Michel Foucault in his *History of Sexuality*, where somatic practices of self-care entered the modern canon of philosophy and idea history. Foucault was inspired by Greek stoic self-care. When the concept of care of the self is raised, one can quite easily imagine a harmonious new-age scene, maybe something like a hot yoga studio – maybe even a cheesy one, in the worst place. But care can be different, as anyone who has done hard craving sports knows. We use film in various ways. When do you look at horror films? Probably not when you are really tired and feeling fragile emotionally – or when your close friend just died. But there are other moments in which you might want to be shocked, and we change our appetite for culture and its somatic sides following what happens in life. Benjamin thinks that the new art forms were created to resonate with our everyday, but it is often the opposite. I will only watch a fast-paced action film when I'm feeling slow. When I am hyped up by hectic work I take a filmic "downer" – not Marguerite Duras's *India Song* (1975), as it craves focused thinking too (one has to really be in the right mood), but maybe *The Piano*. It is more like: when I have been eating too heavy stuff, I order a salad.

It would be too much trouble (and the wrong context) to work out a taxonomy of somatic film, but it wouldn't be hard to sketch up a list about it: horror, action, disgust, and nausea are tags that relate to straight sexual stimulation, and feelings of fear, shocks like jumping out of the chair, reactions of disgust and dizziness, maybe even close to

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vertigo. One could focus, accordingly, on the sexual organs (such as the nipples or anus), the back and the neck, the feet (ready to run), and the stomach, to make somatically wider our conceptions of aesthetic experience, which even in Dewey's work, where the body's role is accentuated, have no detailed account. At least at some point, if we want to really understand film, we need to somehow work out a detailed taxonomy of its physical effects. Getting back to the Stoics, whom I will soon give a larger role, we need to learn about the way people consciously work to intensify and to stimulate *physis* (φύσις; Greek for nature, with an accent on our natural development, and growth) through film, without forgetting how much professionals in film work on helping them with this.

It is not a coincidence that people in sports have considerably greater bodily self-consciousness. I love reading *Sports Illustrated*. The authors are well aware of the bodily tensions of whatever practice they cover from rest to warming up, or gazing intensely at an ice hockey match. They write about how watching sport relieves tensions when there are fights and goals (and they use words like "cathartic" to describe this).

Since movie critics do not usually write about somatic reactions, they could learn from sports journalists. Vivian Sobchack notes this⁵⁴ and I just don't understand why she can find this in sport but not really step into the world of a somatic popular film (I still owe this to her). The feeling when a really good thriller, like *The Rear Window* (1954) massages our stomachs might actually connect to our reactions to a game – like mine during a Finland vs. Canada ice hockey match.

Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* is in many ways an interesting movie somatically. A man sitting in a wheelchair, a good analogy of the viewer who sits without any possibility to move "in the film" and help people in distress, witnesses a ruthless murder. The killer realizes that his act has not gone unseen. The bodily tensions that follow, based on narrative make-believe, good close-ups, and intensifying music (by Franz Waxman and Leonard Bernstein) follow this in a way that makes the viewer troubled intellectually (did he ...? will he ...?) but also somatically.

Rear Window proceeds through our fostered empathy for the protagonist and stimulates us in a traditionally artistic way, using extremely effective narrative suspense both textually (the manuscript, the discussions) and visually (the close-ups and changing perspectives). It is a great example of a suspense-based somatic film. It does not impose on us nearly anything through reactions like disgust or strong imagery.

Thrillers are physical but they often lack the immediate somatic

stimulation of the types discussed earlier, although we become surprised once or twice with a hand wielding a knife or something similar. It is different from what I'd call *shock-based somatic film*. Some horror-films that "negatively" surprise the audience belong to this category. There is, of course, a difference in surprising people and testing the limits of what the audience "can take." The famous cutting of the eye in Luis Bunuel's and Salvador Dali's *An Andalusian Dog* (1929) was a surrealist strategy to stimulate our unconscious, and even more, our ideas on it maybe, but today's excessive torture scenes and bloody, ethically unfair mistreatment of various people that take shape for example in Takashi Miike's *Ichi the Killer* (2001) or Dario Argento's *Suspria* (1977) are about going over the line stimulation-wise, to make us reach a moment when we feel like "this is it, I've had enough." The Stoic philosophers who eagerly discussed and practiced self-care and some sort of self-analysis (not psycho-analysis, though), constantly dealt with their boundaries. Looking at their work and practices might help us to find a new twist in the road to understanding what films, sometimes very somatic ones, are all about.

1.3 Education

When discussions about new media erupted in the 1980s and even more in the 1990s, we often felt perplexed about the effects of media. The experiences that they provided through their culture were often more important for the discussion than the technical details they often worked harder with. In 1995, Derrick de Kerckhove proposed that new media culture had developed something close to phantom limb experiences. He wrote that we react to organs or bodily extensions in film as if they belonged to us.⁵⁵ In the beginning of this book, we found some explanations for this in the parts observing the findings in brain research. But well, it is said that he too often uses the phantom limb concept. It is not a bad metaphor, though, as long as one accepts that it is just an allegorical way to relate to the topic. Interestingly, although he also worked in new media, that was not what advanced these issues. We are still not sitting with VR helmets on at home, although this was what the media theorists of the 1990s dreamt about. Even if our domestic tech has developed, we often look at moving images with less advanced technology visually speaking – from a laptop screen or even a mobile phone. But, everyday popular culture and feature films have taken a much more pioneering role somatically. The masses desire to feel those "phantom limbs" but in more classical ways, as, for example, members of TV audiences.

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For me, Toshiya Fujita's *Lady Snowblood* (1973) offers a quintessential "phantom limb experience," when the protagonist, magically played by Meiko Kaji, cuts off her enemies' hands. Sometimes, as I watch the film, I really feel an itch in my hand when a hand is cut off on the screen. My mind knows that I am watching a film, but some parts of my brain and my hand, the thinking part of my body, live through these losses as if they were part of "real life."

Kevin Tavin and Mira Kallio-Tavin have accentuated the role of excess in learning about ourselves⁵⁶ and extreme works of art, in Zhu Yu's *Eating People* (2000), in which where the artist claimed (and actually lied) that he really ate a fetus; in one way or another, they make us confront our boundaries as human beings and thus have some sort of educational value.⁵⁷

This attitude can increasingly be found in contemporary art education.⁵⁸ I guess they show another, related position towards the boundaries that the Stoics challenged and that Foucault, among others, wrote about. The early philosophical ideas and practices (philosophy was a philosophy of life then in a major part of Southern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa) of care of the self were somewhat connected to medical practices. But they sound sporty too. How could one learn to know oneself, to reflect better on oneself (Foucault asks)?⁵⁹ The care-system of the Stoics was both research (of oneself and human boundaries all and all) and a kind of a reflective sport, a method of training where philosophical thought and practical ethical praxis met. As a proponent of sadomasochism, Foucault accentuates the excessive training methods mentioned. They had a strong auto-communicative tenet. The aspiration was to grow control, self-control more than anything else. And, to do this, one needed to learn about limits. The mentioned examples take up even absurd situations and practices that today only raise eyebrows. One is found in Plutarch's work⁶⁰ where excessive sports exercises are immediately followed by anti-culinary, anti-hedonistic practices, where one asked the slaves (sigh) to prepare a table of delicacies, which was then just gazed upon.

Foucault focuses on the self-reflective power of these practices. *Speculator*, a self-reflective human being, was the aspiration, the focus, and the goal for this sometimes absurd fostering of oneself. According to Foucault, Seneca, the philosopher, applies *excitere* (lat.) to all of these Stoic bodily practices. *Excitere* means shaking or agitating. Aren't these really good words for our use of somatically excessive movies?

No doubt, we occasionally enjoy or learn from testing our boundaries through film. We might want to learn about monsters

(as Carroll says), but we also want to learn about ourselves – and in various ways, not just psychoanalytically (this line of thought dominated many studies about horror in the old days) but also somatically. We are a body and we have bodies, as the phenomenologists say, and we note and reflect on the boundaries and the very nature of our bodies through filmic enjoyment, horror, and disgust. Our mindsets, as much as our body-sets, are constantly trained and tested for the still unknown. I have never been in a big fire, but I have some ideas about it that I have gathered from film.⁶¹ The same applies to extreme forms of sex and violence.

We know that people watch movies and television differently. How about their different somatic ways of connecting to somatic film? We need to really, really take up a new aspiration on how to learn more about these practices, from interviewing people to maybe keeping our own bodily film diaries. I recall that the different interpretative strategies presented in John Fiske's *Television Culture* (1988)⁶² once stunned me, and I understood how, as an individual and part of different groups of people (Nordic, male, working class), I saw moving images differently from someone else. Who would write the same kind of a book about people's bodies while watching films?

My body is rarely shaken in my non-cinematic everyday life. Of course, there are heights offered by a variety of pleasures, like delicacies. It is not that my life is boring, but I am not chased by violent criminals. I realize, however, that film, together with the gym, sushi, my toilet visits (these are really underrated pleasures) and sex is one way to be holistically alive, the body being sometimes even challenged. Just as moving images are taking a much stronger hold of us than ever before it is hard for us to realize where reality ends and film begins. This is not to rely solely on Baudrillard's idea that too many images make us see the world through a framework created by them,⁶³ but to remember that even if we are rational animals, our bodies, which are very receptive with the help of our brains, do not know about the distance we emphasize that separates film from what happens on the street and in the bedroom. This should not just touch our ideas on the body-mind, but also the whole idea of (aesthetic) experience. While, for example, John Dewey described well the organic (naturalist) base of our experience of culture, he (as he did not have brain science to work with) lacked an understanding of the way the body is stimulated by culture, and even more, he did not follow his holistic theory of experience, which was supposed to rethink the role of art in human life, to its messy end: films and other images are all over the place, also where we do not expect to find them, in the everyday.

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Art educators could find a new niche if they would be ready to train themselves in Feldenkrais, yoga, and/or somaesthetics, to accompany their already existing profession. Yoga teachers help us to understand what happens when we are upside down. Could someone not help other people to understand what happens somatically when they watch film?

Two millennia ago, Seneca wrote that people travel too much, as most things happen inside of us.⁶⁴ Practically speaking the same is, of course, written in chapter 47 of the Tao Te Ching, where we are reminded of the need to turn to the soma: "The Master arrives without leaving/sees the light without looking/achieves without doing a thing."⁶⁵ Sounds like a good old movie evening with "passivating films"!

Conclusions

Contemporary brain research explains many of our reactions to film. The film industry has produced a whole category of films where these reactions are central. I would like to call this "somatic film." There is no reason to believe that we do not, at least sometimes, choose somatic film for somatic reasons. But films also educate us. We learn about our somatic boundaries. Our attitude towards film has to change if we want to understand somatic film. Too many scholars are looking only at highbrow film, although popular film is much more somatic. We need to look more at popular film to understand the role of the body. More research is also needed, not just on the category, but on the variety of somatic responses we have. The new perspective on film offers, also, a variety of educational and scholarly possibilities.

Notes

- 1 Dominique Autier-Dérian, Bertrand L. Deputte, Karine Chalvet-Monfray, Marjorie Coulon, and Luc Mounier, "Visual Discrimination of Species of Dogs (*Canis familiaris*)," *Animal Cognition* 16, no.4 (July 2013): 637–651. See also Liz Langley's interview with Nicholas Dodman on dogs watching TV in *National Geographic*, January 10, 2015. "Why Do Dogs Watch – and React to – TV?" <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2015/1/150111-animals-dogs-television-pets-science-tv-behavior/>
- 2 In Langley's interview (see previous footnote).
- 3 Kendall Walton, "Fearing Fictions," *The Journal of Philosophy* LXXV, no. 1 (January 1978): 5.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Colin Radford, "Tears and Fiction," *Philosophy* 52 (1997): 208–213.
- 6 Walton writes: "It seems a principle of common sense, one which ought not to be abandoned if there is any reasonable alternative, that fear must be

- accompanied by, or must involve, a belief that one is in danger." Walton, "Fearing Fictions," 6–7. Still, Walton's example shows real reactions, not pretended ones, as Alex Neill nails it in his article "Fear, Fiction and Make-Believe," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 49, no. 1 (Winter 1991): 47–56.
- 7 Bharata Muni, *The Nāṭyaśāstra: English Translation with Critical Notes* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1984). For Abhinavagupta's more philosophical interpretation of the *rasa*, where the role of the audience is expanded, see Raniero Goli, *The Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1956).
 - 8 Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror; or, Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 74.
 - 9 Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror*.
 - 10 Especially, in Anglo-American mainstream film, one weird repetitive formula of this type is the rape scene, which makes the viewer react somatically to the unpleasant scenario. On this, see Sarah Projansky, *Watching Rape: Film and Television in Postfeminist Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2001).
 - 11 Lauri Nummenmaa, Enrico Glencan, Riitta Hari, and Jari K. Hietanen, "Bodily Maps of Emotions," *PNAS* 111, no. 2 (2014): 646–651.
 - 12 For more, see Kaisu Lankinen, Eero Smeds, Pia Tikka, Elina Pihko, Riitta Hari, and Miikka Koskinen, "Haptic Contents of a Movie Dynamically Engage the Spectator's Sensorimotor Cortex," *Human Brain Mapping* 37 (2016): 4061–4068.
 - 13 Vittorio Gallese, Michele Guerra, and Frances Anderson, *The Empathic Screen: Cinema and Neuroscience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), viii (Murray Smith's preface).
 - 14 *Ibid.*, xxiii.
 - 15 *Ibid.*, 3–4.
 - 16 *Ibid.*, 5.
 - 17 *Ibid.*
 - 18 See, for example, Yanping Gao's analysis on what he calls Winckelmann's "haptic gaze": Yanping Gao, "Winckelmann's Haptic Gaze: A Somaesthetic Interpretation," in *Aesthetic Experience and Somaesthetics*, edited by Richard Shusterman, 71–86 (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2018).
 - 19 Gallese, Guerra, and Anderson, *The Empathic Screen*, 5–8. For early work on film mentioned by Gallese, Guerra, and Anderson, where physicality is somehow taken up in the aforementioned sense, see, for example, Hugo Münsterberg, *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study* (New York – London: D. Appleton and Company, 1916). Thinking of books that are not mentioned, Ute Holl's, *Cinema, Trance, and Cybernetics* (Berlin: Verlag Brinkmann & Bose, 2002) comes close to the problematics, from time to time. See also Jennifer M. Barker's *Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009). Cognitive sciences have lately become increasingly usual partners for art theory and aesthetics. Although not a film book, Giovanni Matteucci's *Estetica e natura umana*, which focuses on expression, discusses in depth the cognitive background for some of the issues that have traditionally been thought about only from the point of view of philosophy and the humanities, and serves as a book aiming to

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- understand the biological background for aesthetics. Giovanni Matteucci, *Estetica e natura umana* (Roma: Carocci, 2019).
- 20 Asif Ghazanfar and Stephen Shepherd, "Monkeys at the Movies: What Evolutionary Cinematics Tells Us about Film," *Projections* 5 (2011): 1–25.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 47.
- 22 Vivian Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 53–84.
- 23 Torben Grodal, *Embodied Visions: Evolution, Emotion, Culture, and Film* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 9. In his "evolutionary bioculturalism," Grodal attempts to synthesize emotions, reactions, and aesthetics in an impressive way.
- 24 See Max Rynänen, *On The Philosophy of Central European Art: The History of an Institution and its Global Competitors* (Lanham: Lexington Books (an imprint of Rowman and Littlefield), 2020). See especially chapter 1 for the development of the system. For the "Western" system, which quite naturally became the destiny of quite a lot of film already from the early days of moving image, see also Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001); Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *History of Six Ideas* (Warsaw: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1980); Paul Oskar Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics," Part I, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12, no. 4 (October 1951): 496–527; and Lydia Goehr, *Imaginary Museums of Musical Work: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- 25 Laura Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000), 138.
- 26 This historical discourse, by Gallese, Guerra, and Anderson, leads to seeing the history of film in a new way. Gallese, Guerra, and Anderson, *The Emphatic Screen*, 170–172.
- 27 Sloterdijk (1983) recalls that cynics were actually, in the beginning "barking dogs" (the etymological root of the concept) that did not respect people in power and that opened their mouth about issues that they were not hoped to. Another type of cynicism came up in late-nineteenth century in Weimar (then spread out to the whole Western world), where intellectuals had a more of a nihilist (and I think often unfair) attitude towards (other) culture(s, like entertainment). See *The Critique of Cynical Reason* (London: Verso, 1988).
- 28 See, for example, Bernard Rosenberg and David M. White, eds., *Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1959).
- 29 Jerrold Levinson, "Musical Frissons," *Revue française d'études américaines*, 86 (2000): 64–76.
- 30 There is a natural scientific background to Levinson's study. Jaak Panksepp did empirical research work on chills in the 1990s. Jaak Panksepp, "The Emotional Sources of 'Chills' Induced by Music," *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 13, no. 2 (1995): 171–207.
- 31 Levinson, "Musical Frissons," 65; Linda Williams, "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess," *Film Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (Summer 1991): 2–13, note on page 5. Another great take on the excessive physicality in film, which takes up things like this, is Carol J. Clover, "Her Body, Himself: Gender in the

- Slasher Film," *Representations*, no. 20, Special Issue: Misogyny, Misandry, and Misanthropy (Autumn, 1987): 187–228.
- 32 Levinson, "Musical Frissons," 67–69.
 - 33 Here, we echo Junichiro Tanizaki's aesthetics-driven essay *In Praise of Shadows*, where he takes up the role of blackened teeth in the holistic nature of traditional Japanese (although he does not point it out: upper class) culture. Junichiro Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows* (Chicago: Leete's Island Books, 1977). See also Hiroshi Yoshioka's "A Cultural Approach to Sex-related Disgust: Rethinking Shunga and other "perversions" in the twenty-first century," in *Cultural Approaches to Disgust and the Visceral*, edited by Max Rynnänen, Heidi Kosonen, and Susanne Ylönen (London – New York: Routledge, forthcoming). Yoshioka discusses the way these blackened teeth look disgusting for contemporary Japanese people.
 - 34 For a great take on the, sometimes even, sneaky role of film music, see Susanna Välimäki, *Miten sota soi? Sotaelokuva, ääni ja musiikki* (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2008).
 - 35 The support of music is, of course, important to other arts too, for example, dance and music.
 - 36 See Benjamin's notes on, for example, factories and Tivoli in his *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1997).
 - 37 Martin Heidegger, *The Origin of the Work of Art*, in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1975).
 - 38 Thank you Sari Tervaniemi for convincing me to come to the movies to see the film.
 - 39 I have already presented the concept in an earlier, sketchy version of these thoughts, "Sending Chills Up My Spine: Somatic Film and the Care of the Self," in *Art, Excess, and Education: Historical and Discursive Contexts*, edited by Kevin Tavin, Mira Kallio-Tavin, and Max Rynnänen, 83–197 (New York: Palgrave, 2019).
 - 40 See Rynnänen, *On The Philosophy of Central European Art*; Shiner, *The Invention of Art*; Tatarkiewicz, *History of Six Ideas*; Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts"; and Goehr, *Imaginary Museums of Musical Works*.
 - 41 John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Pedigree Books, 1980), chapter 7.
 - 42 Aristotle, *Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), Book 8: 1342A.
 - 43 Herbert Gans's *Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste* (New York: Basic Books, 1974) is a good example of this type of hierarchical thinking. For more, see the critique of Gans and other critical theorists in Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (London: Blackwell, 1992).
 - 44 Gilbert Seldes, *The 7 Lively Arts* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1924), 310–312.
 - 45 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility," in *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, edited by M. Jennings, B. Doherty, and T. Levin, 19–55 (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008).

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- 46 Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire*, has Benjamin describing with awe, for example, the fast and fragmentated nature of modern traffic, where, for example, signs, lights, and other vehicles that one meets, have a sort of shocking role, which resembles the nature of film.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 Not just Seldes writes about this: look also at Henry Parland's film essays: Henry Parland, *Idealrealisation* (Helsinki: Söderströms, 1929).
- 49 Dario Fo, *Totò: Manuale dell' attor comico* (Firenze: Vallecchi Editore, 1995).
- 50 See, for example, Richard Shusterman's reflection on this in *Thinking Through the Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
- 51 Jörg Scheller, *No Sports! Zur Ästhetik des Bodybuildings* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010), 65.
- 52 Henri Hyvönen, "Care of the Self, Somaesthetics and Men Affected by Eating Disorders: Rethinking the Focus on Men's Beauty Ideals," *The Journal of Somaesthetics* 6, no. 2 (2020): 64–81.
- 53 Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Towards a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (London: MacMillan, 1979).
- 54 Sobchack, 2004, 53–54.
- 55 Derrick de Kerckhove, *The Skin of Culture: Investigating the New Electronic Reality* (London: Kogan Page, 1997).
- 56 Kevin Tavin and Mira Kallio-Tavin, "The Cat, the Cradle, and the Silver Spoon: Violence in Contemporary Art," *Studies in Art Education: A Journal of Issues and Research* 56, no. 1 (2016): 426–437.
- 57 For more on the active use of the body in contemporary art in China, see, for example, Hubert Chuan, *The Body at Stake: Experiments in Chinese Contemporary Art and Theatre* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2013). The book consists of interviews with contemporary artists.
- 58 See, for example, Juuso Tervo, "Pedagogical Sacrifices: On the Educational Excess of John Duncan's Darkness," in *Art, Excess, and Education*, edited by Kevin Tavin, Mira Kallio-Tavin, and Max Rynänen, 129–144.
- 59 Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: The Care of the Self* (Part 3) (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 189–210.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 The main problem of big fires in films is, of course, the fact that in real fires one cannot really see much. I owe this point to fire chief Tommi Leppioja.
- 62 John Fiske, *Television Culture* (London: Methuen, 1988).
- 63 Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).
- 64 Seneca, *Moral Letter to Lucilius*, letter 104. C. 65. Wikisource: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Moral_letters_to_Lucilius/Letter_104.
- 65 Lao-Tzu, *Tao Te Ching* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1988), 47.

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