

The body articulated as a paradigm

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Abstract

This thesis regards “articulation”, a notion that Bruno Latour employs, to discuss the ways by which the body is involved, affects and is affected by other entities, human and non-human. It is that the body is to be found in the making while learning to be affected, whether addressed as a singularity or as assembled from the elements that constitute its discourse. By exhibiting how the body is involved in these processes, through the presentation of examples, different ways to realize the body are disclosed. On the one hand by bringing forth these examples the scientific, technological and artistic cases presented become vessels to go through and see how articulation processes take place. These processes render the body sensitive to layers of difference. On the other hand, while following Giorgio Agamben this time, the examples realized as means of presentation make intelligible the referential claim¹ of “the body” when it is investigated, the article “the”, which is to be found included in the articulation process describing Latour’s “body talk”. This forms a type of search which addresses the position of the body in terms of its ongoing capacity for modification. As soon as the body is investigated as an entity by means of paradigm, in the way Giorgio Agamben defines it, a content of analogy is being formed, an ontological condition described by an “exclusive inclusion”².

¹ Judith Butler. “Foucault and the Paradox of Bodily Inscriptions.” *Journal of Philosophy* 86 (11): 601–7. <https://doi.org/10.5840/jphil198986117.1989>, 602.

² Giorgio Agamben.: *What is a Paradigm?* Lecture at European Graduate School. August 2002. Full lecture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9Wxn1L9Er0&list=PLBE227E32DBC7CA58>

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Introduction

In the following text I will attempt to engage in the discourse about the body, its ontological status and how it is “articulated”.

“The position that the body is constructed is one that is surely, if not immediately, associated with Michel Foucault.” This is the opening phrase that one can find in the article “Foucault and the paradox of bodily inscriptions”³ of Judith Butler. It is also the phrase (as well as the title) that made a friend of mine suggest this text to me so I could continue writing the following essay. When it comes to talking and describing the body it is a collaborative attempt; we also need the experience of someone else.

Therefore, by starting to read that text I soon arrived at the point in which Butler poses a question regarding the status of the body in Foucault’s theory, a question which has to do with the terms “construction” and “inscription”. The first word we find in the opening sentence and the second is mentioned in the title of Butler’s text. Butler argues that the term “construction” would suggest that the body might be realized as “the occasion, the site or the condition”⁴ of the process of construction. According to Butler, this would suggest that the body is constituted as being ontologically distinct from this process of construction. Also, Butler explains that while for Foucault the body is situated within the context of its cultural inscription at the same time the fact that it is “inscribed” describes that exactly the process of inscription is implied as being external to the body. Consequently, the body is seen as ontologically external to these processes.

That means that if we accept to use these notions of “construction” and “inscription” then this would signify that the body is registered, “constructed” or “inscribed” into something, into some ontological position which it did not occupy before. Butler continues to say that for Foucault there is no ontological independence of the body outside the mode of inscription of discourses/power regimes and the figuration of history. Therefore, according to Butler, the implied ontologically external body is figured as a blank and empty “site” or “surface” which is waiting to be “inscribed” or “constructed” by the cultural and historical process. For Butler, Foucault’s theory would refrain from claiming this opposition regarding the status of the body, between an external and internal ontological dualism; hence, the paradox emerges. However, I believe that

³ Ibid., 601.

⁴ Ibid., 601.

there could be a different way to make this ontological condition possible, of a body which is constituted while it is embedded and while it interacts with different modes of discourses, ontologically realized inside but at the same time also outside of them.

To try to do that I would like to bring two texts together; the first one is by Bruno Latour "How to Talk About the Body? The Normative Dimension of Science Studies" and I would propose to follow Latour's word "articulation", as a word which involves the body in different ways to talk about it. The second one is the first chapter of Agamben's book entitled *The Signature of all Things* which is called "What is a paradigm?" In this text, in order to approach the way Latour describes the notion of "articulation" and its function I choose to present some examples. I hope that these examples may function on the one hand as containers or presentations for the reader to get in touch with the notion of "articulation" in the making, as it takes place and while it unfolds within these stories. On the other hand, the fact that these stories are examples – or in other words paradigms – might constitute them also as the instance for looking at Giorgio Agamben's text and thus to realize the body as a paradigm and situate it at the same time inside and outside of its ongoing articulate ontological state.

This is not an attempt to intervene, substitute or adjust the notion of "articulation" to Foucault's theory but to investigate different ways for discussing the body, which might allow and create some space in order to contemplate its possible ontological position and realization.

The advertisement in Munich subway

In March 2022 in Munich and while waiting for the subway, I was looking at the advertisements displayed on the walls of the station. Something resembling the following message was written on one of the two banners in front me: "Don't cry, mom will fix the cell phone". The picture above the slogan depicted the face of a girl, probably around eight to ten years old, with pigtails almost screaming while crying. This is a situation we may have witnessed taking place before us. There could be a child refusing to stop complaining until distracted by the screen of, say, a mobile phone. This scene might be repeated daily, thus establishing a way of realizing the world through forming similar behavioral patterns and habits. The task that is repeated is on the one hand what mainstream technology commodities propose through the contribution of their formal and informal rules. A use of

technology, of a “technological/technical composition”, working here and now is thus identified. That means that the little girl in this case is in contact, or rather is unsatisfied because she is not in contact, with a technological apparatus that is able to shape and affect her experience directly and on the spot. This apparatus is, in the above example, the mobile phone from which one makes calls or connects to the internet and will need to be repaired in case it malfunctions. On the other hand, what is not included in the instructions for using the phone is that one could use it to make their child calm down for the next few minutes so that the parent can occupy themselves with something else for a while. It is a side property of the phone that extends the scope of its possible use and which the above advertisement aptly hints at.

This example discloses the potential use of technological products that are intended to engage and shape the user's everyday life directly. What is presented in the above advertisement is a composition of interacting elements; of images, explicit and implicit suggestions, words, aesthetics and labor among others, located in the subway of Munich while the ad recipient is likely to have just a few moments on the platform to come into contact with.

We could also notice that these “interacting elements”, assembled in the above case, are embedded in a broader “network” of relations and elements, such as legal processes, political decisions, technological, scientific and artistic practices that in turn form the character of the example I am presenting. I refer to the process of producing the advertisement from the technical part to its placement in the subway, the policies of the advertising agency and, even more generally, the legislation followed by the country in question, related to the display of advertisements. As conditions, the above elements make this advertisement possible. Yet, another relationship that is evidently suggested in this advertisement is the most obvious one, the one formed between the act of crying and the process of repairing the mobile phone. This is where the central message of the advertisement is manifested and this is most likely what the person who created intends to communicate, that is, to draw our attention to the necessity of the repair that leads to the proper functioning of the device. Is the non-functioning device really the cause of this girl's distress? Perhaps not, but that is what this advertisement presents. Whether or not this particular argument, that repairing a mobile phone is a matter of necessity is valid or not, is to be

judged by people involved in these circumstances. That is what we are called upon to decide as recipients of the advertisement in question. While we are placed in networks of elements we are called upon to make collective and individual decisions given certain criteria and depending on circumstances, where small interferences and vibrations are likely to end up, as in the example of the advertisement, upsetting an individual. At this point if there was for some reason an interruption in the supply of spare parts for the mobile phone and the repair was not currently possible, then the girl's distress would be likely to continue⁵. This sensitive, complex and wide network contains this advertisement and at the same time also supports and constructs the internal narrative presented. Within this activity the way I ultimately perceived this situation as a recipient of the advertisement in the Munich subway was through my experience, through my body, looking at a message that involved the possible experience of another body.

The body is affected

Could we regard the advertisement example as a meeting point of possible emerging questions? If I assume that there is something more there, beyond the statement that is printed on the banner of the advertisement, then a possible question which arises is not only whether it is indeed necessary to repair the phone. There is a direct implication of a bodily need which is affected by the possible repair of this apparatus; therefore one could ask in what sense is the body defined by being affected by this/these elements? This necessity concerns the relationship that develops between the technological/technical composition and the body⁶. This is what Vinciane Despret suggest when she describes the story about "Hans the

⁵ Bruno Latour and Catherine Porter in their book "*An inquiry into different modes of existence*" differentiate between that which circulates a "network" and the elements by which this "network" is composed from, highlighting the significance of a seemingly coherent unified and functioning "network" opposed to the possible interruption of its circulation "network interruption". It is then that the different elements have to be examined and "knitted together" in order for the circulation to continue. Accordingly the various intertwined relationships, factors and element that are involved in the "network" are exposed. Bruno Latour and Catherine Porter, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).

⁶ Jim Johnson. "Mixing Humans and Nonhumans Together: The Sociology of a Door-Closer." *Social Problems* 35 (3): 298–310. <https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.1988.35.3.03a00070>. 1988.

clever horse"; that affection is a matter of learning⁷. Learning through Hans that the way he could count numbers was by noticing small, almost unconscious human movements and thus we learn from a horse something about human bodies. At the beginning of this text "The Body We Care For: Figures of Anthro-po-zoo-genesis", in which we find the story about Hans, Despret includes a quote from William James: "What really exists is not things made but things in the making". One of these "things in the making" could be the human body which learns to be affected and is affected. In the advertisement the human body apparently expresses a need. But from whom is this need expressed? It is not the person depicted that speaks, nor her parent, but a third party, it is an enacted speech designed by the advertising team. This suggestion is made by a third party and in order to stand in front of the recipient, a multitude of technical and technological means have been brought forth with which this third party has materialized this particular image. In this way a technological medium is presented to communicate the repair, another technical/technological process, of a technological medium, that is the mobile phone, and this "composition" addresses and appeals to evidently through/and within the body of the person depicted and ultimately to the recipient.

So, to summarize there is an example, presented as a field of possible questions in which its components are exposed, those that constitute it. From these elements we single out the human body which learns to be affected and affects, related to the composition of technique/technology that through "third parties" in this case, is developing also by being affected and while producing effects, processes in the making.

Articulate subjects

Through studying these relationships Bruno Latour brings out the word "articulation"⁸, which he first describes as "layers of differences". Latour in

⁷ Vinciane Despret. "The Body We Care For: Figures of Anthro-po-Zoo-Genesis." *Body & Society* 10 (2-3): 111–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034x04042938>. 2004.

⁸ About "articulation" Latour says: "The main advantage of the word 'articulation' is not its somewhat ambiguous connection with language and sophistication, but its ability to take on board the *artificial and material* components allowing one to progressively have a body."

his article⁹ "How to Talk About the Body? The Normative Dimension of Science Studies¹⁰" in order to explain how articulation works he differentiates between "articulate" and "inarticulate subject". He chooses an example to show how a human body is trained to "have a nose", that is to differentiate between fragrances. While getting to know how to distinguish between different odors the person learns how to be affected, therefore becomes an "articulate subject", whereas before interacting with the "technical composition" according to Latour was an "inarticulate subject". One part of this articulation process concerns the body while it interacts with the apparatus, which in Latour's story is the odor kit. At this stage of the process, as we see in the text, the phrase "having a nose" is significant as this is the body part which is trained. At the same time the odor kit becomes something like an extension of the body; Latour describes it as being coextensive with the body since it is training the body to be affected. The kit as a substance and properties had an effect on the body rendering it sensitive to odor differences. The kit, Latour says, is part of what is to have a body.

Moving on, this process articulates the body as well as the odor kit, which is that the body also affects the odor kit. This is taking place both on a material level and on the level of description, since the odors are products of a chemical process and their properties are modified and subjected to change. The way we eventually realize them is through these processes of change every time there is an outcome in the form of a product. On the one hand, Latour demonstrates that the process of articulation functions in a way that something is added to the body by means of registering differences to the world this body realizes¹¹. On the other hand, by theorizing the body in this way, within processes of bidirectional articulation, the traditional relationship between a subject registering an object through "accurate statements¹²", that is through absolute distinction between right and wrong sentences that the subject ascribes to the object, is out of use since the object affects the subject through the process of the articulation as much as the subject affects the object.

⁹ This article by Bruno Latour was first written for a symposium organized by Akkrich and Berg in Paris, September 1999, 'Theorizing the Body'; it was revised in January 2000, November 2002, October 2003.

¹⁰ Bruno Latour. "How to Talk about the Body? the Normative Dimension of Science Studies." *Body & Society* 10, no. 2-3 (2004): 205-29.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034x04042943>.

¹¹ Ibid., 209.

¹² Ibid., 211.

I would like to present some examples that I believe disclose some sets of conditions that render processes of articulation possible.

While keeping Latour's text in mind we might see how by recognizing different modes and manifestations of articulation, processes of affect are realized, which contribute to the formation of the body. This is not an attempt to finally categorize entities that occupy fixed relations of "subject" and "object" since the processes of becoming sensible to something and affected by something are formed by the layers of differences taking place within an articulation process¹³. That means that they are formed from the different ways the body is informed when being in contact with networks of apparatuses and practices like the odor kit above. These sets of practices involve the conditions that designate how a body is articulated and is in the making.

Biomedica and Personalized Medicine

The following example concerns the body in the making in the field of biotechnology in which we can see how the body is situated in articulation processes or otherwise within layers of differences. This example might also be useful since Eugene Thacker, who is the author of the text I would like to mention below, talks about biomedica.

The fact that the biological body is coupled with the word media brings out the type of relationships Latour is talking about. This would not correspond in regarding the body only as medium to be manipulated through the use of technology but that the body could be seen both as medium and as mediated¹⁴. There is a material manifestation of technological-scientific processes which are constructed while dealing with the body as a medium. Biomedica is an example in which one can realize the body as being

¹³ "If we use this model, we will find it very difficult to render the learning by the body dynamic: the subject is 'in there' as a definite essence, and learning is not essential to its becoming; the world is out there, and affecting others is not essential to its essence." Bruno Latour. *"How to talk about the body? The Normative Dimension of Science Studies."*

¹⁴ Eugene Thacker. "What Is Biomedica?" *Configurations* 11 (1): 47–79.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/con.2004.0014>. 2003. "In its character as a medium, the body both remediates and is remediated. The contemporary, technologically constructed body recalls and rivals earlier cultural versions of the body as a medium. The body as enhanced or distorted by medical and cosmetic technologies remediates the ostensibly less mediated bodies of earlier periods in Western culture." Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999) 238.

articulated and while it is in the making in a very practical and pragmatic way. At the same time biotechnology could be seen as a type of discourse in the sense Foucault would describe this term; a scientific field that produces and works through practices that are constructed within the nexus of culture. What kind of body is the biomedica articulated body? Is this a different body from the one we had before?

In the text "What is biomedica?" the body in the making is a body which comes into contact with the technological-scientific field of biotechnology and is regarded as one with the technological/technical composition. If "the training of noses" example, which Latour uses to designate the function of the articulated subject, realizes the body through the relationships formed between biological entities, technological apparatuses and language, then here in Thacker's text we again have the same composition. However, one can now see very clearly how one element leads directly to the production of the other.

The science of biology in the field of genetics, when it meets biotechnology, is in fact working with information and with the body. The body is treated as a medium to receive and react to information. In this sense Thacker suggests that biology is the new medium and that through technological and technical methods and practices like gene and protein prediction, while working sometimes with DNA as a digital computational code and other times as a fully biological material, biomedica raise the question of "what a body can do?"¹⁵ That is precisely the technical articulation of the biological body. The digital and computational extensions formulate biomedica as a "merged outside-inside-body" that is perceived and realized through technology and while technology is simultaneously "embodied". In his text, Thacker asks: "How does biomedica conceive of the body-technology relationship?" in order to give the following answer. "In biomedica the biological body never stops being biological; it is precisely for that reason that the biological body is inextricably "technological."

But what does it mean that in biomedica the biological body is technological by never stopping to be biological? The articulation here might again suggest, that the body in the making is articulated by being affected and while it affects technological and technical compositions. In other words, it is because of the difference that exists between biology and technology that the articulation process is taking place. We could see that this is

¹⁵ Eugene Thacker. "What Is Biomedica?" *Configurations* 11 (1): 47–79.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/con.2004.0014>. 2003.

partially involved in the question that Thacker poses; this difference creates the particular type of relationship in terms of the context of biotechnology as an emerging realization of the body which registers this difference. This is what signifies the technical operation of the biological¹⁶.

There are different propositions which are produced and emerge through this mode of articulation process, within this particular scientific-technological field, compared to the odor training sessions presented in Latour's case, that is different sets of conditions are produced and shape the network of biomedicine. In both cases there is a body being produced, in the process of being in the making and this is a different body from the one before the articulation process took place, a different kind of body located in the same place, the same body. The "difference" is taking place inside the same body, making the body affected by this "difference". It is in this sense that the body in the making is articulated while affected by differences¹⁷.

I would like to present the next example in order to look at another layer of articulation of the relationship formed between the body and the technological-technical composition, in which Klaus Hoeyer investigates personalized medicine in Denmark¹⁸. Personalized medicine is a medical model that shifts the provision of health services from the generalized set of patients to smaller groups. Through data collection and assigning individuals into groups this model's "aim is to arrive at a form of medicine that works for the individual"¹⁹. Again, in the following example the body is presented but this time as a biological entity and as an individual. In this case we might see how the body is articulated by a "mechanism of cultural construction"²⁰ which is "external" to the body. However, the body is important for the realization of the project of personalized medicine as the

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ About "affected by difference" Latour says: "Articulation thus does not mean ability to talk with authority – we will see in the next section that authoritative talk may be employed to repeat always the same thing – but being affected by differences." Bruno Latour, *How to Talk About the Body? The Normative Dimension of Science Studies, Body & Society*, 210.

¹⁸ Klaus Hoeyer. Data as promise: Reconfiguring Danish public health through personalized medicine, *Social Studies of Science* 49, (4): 531–555.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312719858697>. 2019.

¹⁹ Ibid., 535.

²⁰ This phrase can be found in the article "*Foucault and the paradox of bodily inscription*" of Judith Butler. Butler uses this term to indicate the operation of "history" which is seen as externally inscribed in the body. I quote this phrase to highlight this seemingly external operation.

main “internal” factor which makes this “mechanism” function. In the creation of the values emerging through the practice of personalized medicine the body is the operator and the medium that is operated. These values are of cultural significance in the sense that they could be understood as a signification of the articulation process that is produced while the body is learning to be affected, while it is constituted as the corporeality of these “external” processes. Could we say that the articulation as a process connects external and internal processes in the same body?

Hoeyer investigates the ways that personalized medicine attracts significant investment in the population sciences, particularly in data-sourcing initiatives. Government initiatives often in collaboration with private corporate providers reach out to intervene in the current ongoing health care models and construct public health policies by proposing personalized medicine as a title that promises individual care. At the same time, as Hoeyer demonstrates in his article, personalized medicine classifies people into different kinds of groupings “inscribing the population in the individual²¹” while data is what circulates this network. Hoeyer reminds us that we have the opportunity to question such initiatives produced in the field of public health policy. Among other things he states: “Intensified data collection might not just be interesting for what it allows authorities to do and know, but also for how its promises of future evidence can be used to postpone action and sidestep uncomfortable knowledge in the present.” At this point Hoeyer looks beyond the implementation of technique/technology and how it functions within medical practice and refers directly to the policies that shape how health care systems are managed, which in order to function need structures capable of providing a large stream of population data. It is not only that the human body is treated as a resource of data, but as Hoeyer designates in the epilogue of his article, that this data function as information and also as a promise. A promise of “better”, more improved medical care that will take care of the body with greater diligence and precision. But perhaps we can see that this assignment to the future is intervening in the present. As mentioned above Hoeyer, while considering the potential benefits of personalized medicine, challenges emphatic policy making which focuses on data harvesting initiatives while avoiding

²¹ Klaus Hoeyer. Data as promise: Reconfiguring Danish public health through personalized medicine, *Social Studies of Science* 49, (4): 531–555.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312719858697>. 2019. 532.

discussion of the already existing need for managing the costs of medical care and applying the current knowledge available regarding such issues. Through the investment in techniques and technologies that initiate programs such as that of personalized medicine, an imaginary body situated in the future is realized. An imaginary body that due to its material non-existence, which requires only what is attributed to it and is fed by investment, shapes and articulates the body in the present. This is why Hoeyer tries to incite us, as readers of his article, to become sensitive towards the present state of the body.

Body attributes: something more than a body

These examples are different but in both we can see ways in which the body in the making is composed as being involved in different situations and practices of affect. It is important to note that the body is involved in these practices as physiology. At the same time the fact that it is involved in these practices as physiology includes the body in relationships of affect and situates it in the processes of articulation. That is why Latour says that bodies are our “common destiny”²². The part of the body which corresponds to physiology is an essential one for the process of articulation to take place. However, if the body is seen only as physiology, then this will impose limits in the way we talk about it and we will be compelled to talk in physiological terms alone. This does not negate the fact that the body emerges and belongs to physiology as well. We can realize it empirically as an individuality which is to be distinguished from an adjacent body and as a materiality that includes and can be divided into separate elements such as organs, muscular system, nervous system, skeletal system, glands, categories and subcategories. This is the point where physiology points to another direction outside of its territory.

In science studies these categories support and function as structures enveloping an “objective knowledge”²³. This does not mean that the body is

²² Bruno Latour, “How to Talk about the Body? the Normative Dimension of Science Studies.” *Body & Society* 10, no. 2-3 (2004): 205–29.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034x04042943>. 209.

²³ Isabelle Stengers, *The invention of modern science*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 2007

to be regarded as “objectified”²⁴, but that the changes, reformulations and additions that take place in these studies make evident that it is an ongoing process of identification and reassessment of what a body is and how its seemingly solid and compact borders dissolve into a world of attributes. It is this “objective knowledge” that we find produced in the field of biotechnology. As Eugene Thacker explains, it is through the interaction with the aforementioned categories, when either digital or computational applications make it possible, through new compounds or treatments, to influence or “optimize” the body in such a way that the human body could be regarded as something more than a body²⁵. There is an ontological merging taking place. The body is “something more”²⁶, that is an attribute. The same applies in Hoyer's case, only here the body is presented to be the full human body in the role of the patient affected by the effects of Danish health care policy efforts, while the “merging” takes place “outside” of the body. Following, it is in the use and collection of data deriving from the body that the whole project is built upon. It is that again the human body obtains an “upgrade” or “optimization” of its invisible “prosthetic body part”; that of the health care services and its practices. The more the institutions dealing directly or indirectly with the body are “optimized” or “upgraded” the more the body will also have the capability to be “optimized”, “upgraded” and situated within the temporal context that these processes take place. Therefore, the realization of a “something more than a body” could be regarded as an intertemporal condition emerging throughout these discourses that take place between body and institution, between the occasion of its presentation and its reassessment, between the body and the different ways that it is affected and affects.

Progressively the body becomes more while it is brought within a relationship, in contact with something that initiates an articulation process and while it brings forth the means by which this articulation process is formulated. It becomes more not strictly or exclusively in the sense of constantly accumulating external or internal attachments. An interaction which at first might look like a scientific-technological reduction, a translation into something that appears to be seemingly less, might as well

²⁴ Bruno Latour, “How to Talk about the Body? the Normative Dimension of Science Studies.” *Body & Society* 10, no. 2-3 (2004): 205–29.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034x04042943>. 226.

²⁵ Eugene Thacker, *What is Biomedicine*, 2003, What a body can do?, 49-54.

²⁶ The “something more” corresponds to the mediation of an entity and to the relationship formed between this entity and the body.

add to the world of the body.²⁷ As Annemarie Mol²⁸ points out what we might think to be a single object could appear to be more than one.²⁹ In a similar note a CAT-scan of a person's brain could be regarded as a mediated technical display for articulating what is to have a body while at the same time they are different objects from the body parts that they display. These processes do not eliminate the rest of the body but by disclosing scientific-technological presentations they may render us as patients, doctors, readers or writers sensitive to different ways of perceiving and talking about our bodies.

The physiology of the body that we perceive is not consistently unchanging precisely because the historicity not only of the physiology but also of the conditions that shape our access and the ways in which we perceive this physiology are changing. The two faces of Janus³⁰ mentioned by Latour in the introduction of his book *Science in Action* could be seen as a representation of this relationship which is like being enclosed within a "black box". This makes the body an outcome produced by and rooted in scientific and technological debate, rendering the body "something more" than a fixed category accounting for a determined material form. Could we see this attribute of "something more" as a quality of the "black box", as an example which could be presented to describe the change of the conditions affecting the way we perceive our physiology?

One of the characteristics of this "black box", a term which is used initially by cyberneticians, in Latour's text is that as an imaginary boundary it encloses some sets of techniques or commands which are too complex while the user is concerned only with their input and output. In the text of Latour, the "black box" or the "black boxes" are the double helix of DNA and the Eclipse MV/8000 computer, on which a computer scientist developed programs to represent the 3D image of the DNA. Unless there is a good

²⁷ Bruno Latour, "How to Talk about the Body? the Normative Dimension of Science Studies." *Body & Society* 10, no. 2-3 (2004): 205–29.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034x04042943>. "There is no primary quality, no scientist can be reductionist, disciplines can only *add* to the world and almost never subtract phenomena.", 226.

²⁸ Annemarie Mol, *The body multiple*, Ontology in medical practice, Duke University Press 2002. Preface.

²⁹ Ibid. "But a plaque cut out of an atherosclerotic artery is not the same entity as the problem a patient with atherosclerosis talks about in the consulting room, even though they are both called by the same name.", preface.

³⁰ Bruno Latour, *Science in action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015, "Science in the making' on the right side, 'all made science' or 'readymade science' on the other; such is Janus *bifrons*., 4.

reason for them to be re-opened, like a malfunction or a problem which affects their operation, they are “unproblematic and certain” as Latour says³¹. But as Latour narrates snapshot-stories describing the process of their production in his text, we see that it is precisely this process that depends on and was formed through discussions, disagreements, controversies, political decisions regarding funding, plan, trust and deadlines among many others. This is not to say that scientific and technological devices are to always be dismantled exposing all of their “constitutional” parts, however material or immaterial they might be, in order to be understood in them self; but that these stories, which show that within scientific processes there is always something besides them, along with them, add to the talk about the body by disclosing the intimate connections between devices and practices. These stories disclose that the scientific-technological conditions that articulate the body belong as much to the “hard” materiality and as much to the “subjective” realizations of the bodies that articulate them. Thus, these examples bring into contact the physiological body and the phenomenological body³², “the subjective lived-in embodiment”, both of which are seen equally dependent on the technical-technological-scientific compositions and devices in order to be articulated. Eventually, the body acquires the attribute of “something more” precisely because it is and has a body and as soon as this bifurcation of the physiological and the phenomenological body is put aside³³.

It is in this manner that articulation processes leave behind the idea of “accurate statements”. Latour instead of using statements to describe articulation processes brings forward the term “propositions”³⁴. We have seen how the body in the making is not determined in terms of accuracy, in terms of presenting one definite end to the story, something that statements seek to employ, but on the contrary, it is affected and affects through differences, through different propositions. As Latour mentions articulation favors differences and contrasts as well, not to be perceived as

³¹ Ibid., 3.

³² Bruno Latour, “How to Talk about the Body? the Normative Dimension of Science Studies.” *Body & Society* 10, no. 2-3 (2004): 205–29.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034x04042943>, 208.

³³ Bruno Latour, “How to Talk about the Body? the Normative Dimension of Science Studies.” *Body & Society* 10, no. 2-3 (2004): 205–29.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034x04042943>.

³⁴ The word ‘proposition’ conjugates three crucial elements: (a) it denotes obstinacy (position), that (b) has no definitive authority (it is a *pro*-position only) and (c) it may accept negotiating itself into a *com*-position without losing its solidity. Ibid., 212.

ends but as additions. Articulation as a process described by propositions regards this progressive composition. The body by being engaged in these processes accounts for what it does; something that Latour refers to as “body talk”.³⁵

Latour in order to proceed in providing more explanation about the “body talk” in his text follows Isabelle Stengers and Vinciane Despret. Eventually in order to define his theory about the body Latour summarizes Stengers’ and Despret’s political epistemology in eight features. In the seventh one, as in all of the features, the articulation is taking place within the “scientific”. The articulation process is described as moving from less articulate to more articulate propositions³⁶. To explain this type of movement from less to more articulation, Latour points to a differentiation between two versions of generalization; one that achieves generality through a local success while eliminating other versions and another that allows the connection of differences, maximizing articulation³⁷.

It is important here to mention that there is a close relation between generalizations and examples. When choosing a subject matter to be discussed and investigated, models are defined and generalized. The subject of matter can also function as an example. In many cases the definition of this subject matter is subjected to modification, something which is particularly common in scientific practices. Examples in this sense carry a capacity to be modified from the moment they are defined as such while at the same time they provide the potential to be understood through these modifications. Articulation processes are maximized as Latour points out when these modifications are allowed to take place which results to the production of differences. Could this describe the ontological position of the body in the making? Could it be realized outside and inside of this modification state, since precisely it is in the making every time it is defined as a body, as soon it is investigated as an example? Perhaps taking a closer look at the notion of the example will help define this position.

³⁵ Bruno Latour, “How to Talk about the Body? the Normative Dimension of Science Studies.” *Body & Society* 10, no. 2-3 (2004): 205–29.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034x04042943>, 206.

³⁶ Ibid. 220.

³⁷ Ibid., 221.

The Paradigm

The example or otherwise the paradigm is a notion which has also been subjected to modification as we can see in the two following cases.

Isabelle Stengers (1993) in her book *The invention of Modern Science* explains how the philosopher of science Thomas Samuel Kuhn develops how he interprets the way the “paradigm” functions for science. The paradigm can be used as a model through which scientific communities acquire autonomy, establish historicity and at the same time form a sense of “self-care” towards themselves³⁸. As Stengers explains Kuhn's use of the paradigm, that emerges as a tool from the category that he called “normal science”, was intended to ensure the autonomy of scientific communities by connecting their members through shared practices and by attempting to prevent the disqualification of science from the “inquisition” of the social sciences, which were challenging notions of “objectivity” and “autonom”³⁹. Therefore for Kuhn, through the use of paradigms, knowledge becomes intelligible by depending on practical and theoretical models, thus determining “appropriate” questions and defining “scientific progress” by means of a common practice⁴⁰. Dispute and controversies are included and expected in his model within these “autonomous” scientific clusters. Stengers argues that this autonomy that Kuhn has had to protect forms an attitude of non-transparency and alienation in the way scientific communities communicate and manage their practice. She advocates for transparent and inclusive communication practices as much as possible, since she is pointing out that scientists are part of the social web in which also she participates.

Giorgio Agamben in his book *The Signature of All Things* in the first chapter “What is a paradigm”⁴¹ attempts to unfold the meaning of this word in a different way. He initially mentions that this notion is used by Michel Foucault, whom Agamben follows in all of his work, but that nevertheless this notion is never defined precisely. According to Agamben, Foucault was aware of the function of the notion of paradigm in Kuhn's work but chose to

³⁸ Isabelle Stengers, *The invention of modern science*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 2007, The Sciences and Their Interpreters, 3-20.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Isabelle Stengers writes: “Worse yet, the scientist's subordination to the paradigm of his community is not a fault. According to Kuhn, what we call “scientific progress”— the cumulative process thanks to which ever more phenomena are becoming intelligible, technologically controllable, and theoretically interpretable — depends on it.”, 4.

⁴¹ Giorgio Agamben. *The Signature of All Things: On method*. New York: Zone Books, 2010.

refrain from it, while he would use different terms to address similar significations that Kuhn's paradigm would define⁴². Agamben develops and defines the notion of the paradigm in a different way than Kuhn had and suggests this modified notion of paradigm as means to approach his own work as well as for the work of Foucault.⁴³ Agamben argues that the paradigm is not about a dichotomy, a reduction or induction from a particular to a universal, from a phenomenon to a part of it or vice versa, but that it creates a content of analogy moving from singularity to singularity⁴⁴. The etymology of the word also reveals its meaning when we see that this "para"⁴⁵ indicates something that is next to something else, something that, as Agamben says, can be more knowledgeable. What can be more knowledgeable is not individuality within a plurality or an external general principle but the paradigmatic relation when it is established between a phenomenon and its intelligibility. The paradigm shows that it belongs to a class but because it exposes and defines it, it is at the same time excluded from it. Agamben formulates this relation as an "inclusive exclusion"⁴⁶. Agamben describes it in a lecture he gave at the European Graduate School as follows:

"The intelligibility of the paradigm is never presupposed, on the contrary, the specificity of the paradigm resides precisely in the suspension of its immediate factual reference and in the exhibition of its intelligibility as such in order to give life to a new problematic context." ⁴⁷

Agamben approaches this word in an ontological sense, para-ontologically as he says to make another reference to the first compound of the word paradigm. In contrast to the function of this notion presented by Kuhn this word for Agamben does not refer to an attempt or intention to formulate

⁴² Such as "epistemological figures" or "thresholds of epistemologization". Giorgio Agamben. *The Signature of All Things: On method*. New York: Zone Books, 2010, 15.

⁴³ Giorgio Agamben. *The Signature of All Things: On method*. New York: Zone Books, 2010, 32

⁴⁴ Ibid., 31

⁴⁵ "Para" → "Παρά" is a preposition meaning "from, close, next to, besides".

⁴⁶ Giorgio Agamben.: *What is a Paradigm?* Lecture at European Graduate School. August 2002. Full lecture:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9Wxn1L9Er0&list=PLBE227E32DBC7CA58>

⁴⁷ Ibid.

autonomy, but rather it is reconstituted once again available for common use.

The attempt to describe an ontological position cannot by any means signify an end, especially since we were following Latour's text. I believe that this position would function more as a proposition since if described differently this will affect its location resulting to another realization, a different articulation.

To return to the question posed before the presentation of the paradigm; that which would situate the body in the making inside and outside of its ontological position could be the notion of the paradigm as Agamben defines it. Every time the body verbalized is investigated, this body is excluded from its factual reference to exhibit its inclusion by means of articulation. The body in the making is included by belonging to different classes, belonging to generalizations, becoming something more and as soon as we are talking about "the body" this signifies its exclusion to make the above inclusion intelligible, to constitute its making.

The raft of Medusa



Théodore Géricault, *The Raft of Medusa*, 490 cm x 716 cm 1818-1819, Louvre, Paris.

As we saw the main characteristic of the example is to make something intelligible but at the same time because of its exhibition outside of its immediate reference a new problematic context might be presented. I would like to present a last example which belongs to the field of art, which is usually successful in making things intelligible by regarding them as paradigms.

This is the painting by Théodore Géricault called *The Raft of Medusa* created between the years 1818-1819. This well known over life size painting (491 by 716 cm) represents a scene of what followed the shipwreck of the frigate “Medusa” on the way to Senegal in 1816. An improvised raft was used by the remaining crew of approximately 146 people who did not have the chance to get in the life boats, abandoned without provisions after the ones in the life boats cut the ropes which were connecting the two vessels. Most of those on the raft died because of exhaustion and the lack of provisions, the rest resorted to cannibalism eventually resulting in only ten surviving. Géricault through experimenting with many drawings and different concepts⁴⁸ decided to present and paint the moment when the rescue ship (the Argus) is seen way back in the horizon approaching the raft.

This horrible event was already popular on the news of that time by the time Géricault started his painting⁴⁹ resulting to a political scandal in a French post-Napoleonic conservative society⁵⁰. The painting was seen as having a political significance which resulted in it being presented as having a different title from the one intended when exhibited for the first time at the Louvre. The title in the exhibition was *Scene of shipwreck*, avoiding the

⁴⁸ “Initially he was convinced that the project could be achieved only through a sequence of several paintings, that the event could be narrated only in terms of its temporal dispersal, its inherent dislocations”. Jonathan Crary. “Géricault, the Panorama, and Sites of Reality in the Early Nineteenth Century.” *Grey Room* 9 (October): 5–25. <https://doi.org/10.1162/152638102320989498>. 2002, 14.

⁴⁹ Jonathan Crary. “Géricault, the Panorama, and Sites of Reality in the Early Nineteenth Century.” *Grey Room* 9 (October): 5–25. <https://doi.org/10.1162/152638102320989498>. 2002, 13.

⁵⁰ Albert Alhadeff. “A “Horrid Catastrophe”” *Theodore Gericault, Painting Black Bodies*. Routledge, 184. “The moment of liberalism had vanished. In the interim, an angry surge had swept Paris, and by mid-winter whatever flames might once have fanned and illumined post-Napoleonic hopes—fervent declamations favoring liberal and abolitionist views including embattled cries against capital punishment and the cruel and all too frequent use of the guillotine, as well as the abuse of the mentally ill— had been extinguished or rather, squashed. Right-wing politics had taken over, accusations and recriminations ruled the day, the voices of conservative ideologues rose above the din.” 2020.

immediate reference to the name of the ship. One of the reasons the shipwreck was a political scandal was also because it became known as a subject of the slave trade. In the painting this becomes evident from the way Géricault eventually placed a black man at the top of his pyramidal composition above the rest of the people on the raft.

It might be useful here to talk about this particular figure that appears in the painting and is placed at the top of the composition that Géricault has made. His painting came to be regarded as a piece of work which represents class conflict and political struggle⁵¹ since the moment it was first exhibited, and this figure became a symbol of this conflict. Albert Alhadeff makes a thorough investigation regarding the black bodies presented in Géricault's work in general and in the *Raft of Medusa* in particular. In the first chapter of his book he follows published articles from the time of the painting's first exhibition to demonstrate in what extent the represented black body became a subject of discrimination particularly in a time described from intense racism⁵². This black man becomes a symbol of abolition and hope from the moment the painting was exhibited. For Alhadeff this figure is an example to investigate in depth not only the way Géricault approaches the debate of racial inequality and discrimination of his time, but also to present how the idea of Otherness is addressed in Géricault's work. In Alhadeff's case the particular black body presented in the painting of Géricault is a paradigm. It becomes for him the way to investigate a variety of issues which all correspond and ground in this black body in order to become intelligible.

However, the reason for this painting to be an example capable of corresponding to the discussion of the body in the way addressed in this essay is by forming relationships while locating the body in the particular situation in which it is presented and through the specific context that is constituted by the painting as an artistic format and practice. That means that it is not only because the particular black body, at the top of Géricault's composition is an example, it is because this body is an example among others. In a very obvious way this becomes evident because of the multitude of the bodies which are painted, some of which have been instances of different investigations⁵³, all corresponding to the organization

⁵¹ Frank Anderson Trapp and Eitner Lorenz. "Géricault's 'Raft of the Medusa.'" *The Art Bulletin* 58 (1): 134. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3049482>. 1976.

⁵² Albert Alhadeff. *Theodore Géricault, Painting Black Bodies*. Routledge, 14-38.

⁵³ Such as the figure of the "father", who is positioned at the front, closest to the spectator, as well as the disproportion in the number of men and women presented on the raft.

of the theme: *The Raft of Medusa*. This one black body is located within a composition which discloses all the elements included. The body as a paradigm in our case would not be the general bodies neither the collective nor an individual one. It would be every singular body which is articulated. This is a process which includes the body of the spectator as well, expanding the composition to the space that it is presented. It is that at the same time the painting articulates the body attending and represented; something which is translated and interpreted according to the spectator. In this sense the painting is an apparatus that articulates as a created medium and as an entity that affects by its presentation.

Consequently, the painting by being a representation of an actual event creates a content of analogy. This is established between a horrifying reality, its depiction, the painting's title and all the elements of that painting, in containing them and while the title is contained by them. Assembling the composition and rendering this particular organization meaningful makes the painting an example of the event by exhibiting the intelligibility of its constitutional parts.

The represented bodies bear historical and political connotations beyond the event that the painting is referring to but also by being painted bodies refer to the ways that they were created. Géricault in order to create his painting attempted to gather as much information as possible regarding the actual event. He interviewed the remaining survivors, collected journalistic images, had one of the survivors who was a carpenter make a small scale model of the raft so he could try it out on water, visited hospitals to look at dead bodies to study the color of their flesh and even included corpses in his studio so he could get used to the experience of living with them⁵⁴. However, it becomes evident looking at the painting that the represented bodies do not resemble the condition that the actual bodies must have been in the middle of the sea.

It is important to note that even if the bodies depicted are presented as reduced to a state of fighting for their survival, driven away and excluded from the network of society and law they maintain and constitute the way to understand them—they becomes intelligible. This is taking place precisely because they are presented by means of a paradigm, in a context that art can provide. It is for this reason that all the elements of this painting

⁵⁴ Jonathan Crary. "Géricault, the Panorama, and Sites of Reality in the Early Nineteenth Century." *Grey Room* 9 (October): 5–25. <https://doi.org/10.1162/152638102320989498>. 2002, 14.

correspond to the paradigm of the title, since all of them structure the way to perceive it, which will again refer to the individual cases.

The represented body in this way is articulated by the elements which are located beside it as well as by the conditions that it was brought to be represented, the conditions in which the painting was produced. Eventually, the relationship between the painting and the event is to be brought forth not only in terms of references and accuracy but also because of the differences. It is not that the difference between the event and the painting is the result of the constituted content of analogy; it is because of this difference that the analogy is formulated. It is in this way that the paradigm is a method of investigation and not an attempt to generality.

Conclusion: The body articulated as a paradigm

What does it mean to realize the body articulated as a paradigm? As we saw it is not to be found a priori, superior or standing alone and only evidently defined. That is because it is involved in relationships, it is affected and it affects and to realize it within its ontological manifestation, as it is articulated through these processes of affect, is to regard it each time while it is modified. The body is situated in the conditions that articulate it and through these conditions it is included and it is in the making. Within these conditions it is to be regarded as multiple since it is articulated in a plethora of differences according to the instances within which it interacts. The paradigm could constitute a method of investigation and a method to be investigated. From the first example of the advertisement in Munich to the last one of *The Raft of Medusa* we can see cases of bodies included, in the making of their different modes of articulation. These bodies are to be found within conditions and networks of affect that make these bodies “something more”, something which signifies what is to have body. However, as far as the body is to be indicated as a singularity in the form of a paradigm to be investigated, it is excluded from its initial reference, to disclose and exhibit the ways by which it is articulated, the ways it is included. This might suggest for the body not to be situated within a seemingly unresolved opposition between interior and exterior but rather to be these differences making them intelligible by being “para”, beside them.

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