META: RESEARCH IN HERMENEUTICS, PHENOMENOLOGY, AND PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY
VOL. XVI, NO. 1 / JUNE 2024: 279-325, ISSN 2067-3655, www.metajournal.org

Symposium on Richard Shusterman's *Philosophy and the Art of Writing*

Richard Shusterman
Florida Atlantic University
Stefano Marino (ed.)
University of Bologna
Elena Romagnoli (ed.)
University of Pisa

Questions by:
Valentina Antoniol (University of Bari)
Anna Budziak (University of Wroclaw)
Marta Faustino (NOVA Institute of Philosophy)
Marcello Ghilardi (University of Padova)
Thomas Leddy (San José State University)

Abstract

In this Symposium we present to the readers of *Meta: Research in Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, and Practical Philosophy* a long and detailed discussion of Richard Shusterman's last monograph, *Philosophy and the Art of Writing* (Routledge, London & New York, 2022, 142 pages). The Symposium, edited by Stefano Marino and Elena Romagnoli, includes a short Introduction by the two editors, the papers of five expert scholars of philosophy (Valentina Antoniol, Anna Budziak, Marta Faustino, Marcello Ghilardi, Thomas Leddy) who have read Shusterman's book and have asked him specific questions on various passages of the book, and finally Shusterman's original replies in response to the different papers of all authors. The topics addressed in the Symposium include, among others, the influence of Foucault's aesthetics of existence on Shusterman's somaesthetics, Shusterman's views about the relation between Western and non-Western forms of philosophical thinking, the question of the relation between philosophy and literature, the role played by ideas of "the art of living" and "the art of writing" in the context of Shusterman's thought, the relation between everyday aesthetics and pragmatist aesthetics/somaesthetics.

Keywords: Richard Shusterman, philosophy, art of writing, art of living, literature, somaesthetics

Introduction

The question concerning the relationship between philosophy and literature certainly represents an evergreen and apparently endless debate. However, in particular, after the questioning—during the nineteenth and then especially the twentieth century—of a certain idea of philosophy as "rigorous science," namely as a sort of specific *Wissenschaft* that was supposed to be capable to provide the unquestionable foundation and exact explanation of the scientificity itself of all other sciences, the question of what distinguishes philosophy from literature and, in general, other kinds of writing, became much more impellent. In fact, *philosophia*, as the human research of the *sophia*, originated as a theoretical but also a practical knowledge, namely as a form of knowledge strictly connected to the broader idea of a "way of life"; only later, over the centuries, it became structured as a specific discipline in the modern academic sense. With regard to the aforementioned question concerning the relationship between philosophy and literature (that, as is well known, has basically shaped at least a part of the development of Western thought ever since Plato's famous critique of poetry), it was particularly a trend of twentieth-century philosophy, associable to some famous manifestations of so-called "French Theory" (Derrida, Lyotard) but also to some expressions of critical theory (Adorno), hermeneutics (Gadamer), neo-pragmatism (Rorty), post-metaphysical thinking and "weak thought" (Vattimo), that questioned and (partially or totally, depending on the different authors) blurred the clear distinction between philosophy and literature. On the one hand, this intellectual operation had the merit of freeing philosophy from its confinement into the idea of its supposed reducibility to a rigid and scientific application of a method; on the other hand, however, the question of what makes philosophy specific, of what distinguishes it from other forms of the "humanities," remains open.

Richard Shusterman's last authored monograph, entitled *Philosophy and the Art of Writing*[1], addresses these and still other questions by arguing that philosophy, while strongly influenced by literature, retains anyway its specificity in its irreducibility to language and to the linguistic dimension,

inasmuch as it is always connected also to bodily knowledge and embodied practices. Philosophy, for Shusterman, is thus *a way of life*. However, Shusterman's rediscovery of the fundamental idea of philosophy as an "art of living" (which is basically at the center of his original disciplinary proposal, called somaesthetics and "baptized" in the late 1990s) does *not* imply any denial of the centrality of the "art of writing" for philosophical thinking. On the contrary, as Shusterman convincingly shows in his book, the relevance of writing in literature has contributed to a development in the field of philosophy as a practice of self-knowledge and knowledge of the others, while, at the same time, going beyond the mere dimension of language and opening up to the investigation and understanding of extra-textual and extra-linguistic dimensions.

Philosophy as an "art of living," in Shusterman's view, is thus nourished by the comparison with the "art of writing" as developed by the literary tradition, with which it is historically intertwined, although distinct. From this point of view, it is notable how Shusterman holds on a fine balance the specificity of philosophy as a practice of living, without, on the one hand, narrowing philosophy to a mere specialized field restricted only to academic interests, and without, on the other hand, completely dissolving its boundaries with literature—thus also taking distance from Rorty's famous conception of philosophy as just another "kind of writing," to which, however, Shusterman's thought is in other respects indebted.

Shusterman's book *Philosophy and the Art of Writing*, that is at the center of the symposium that we present here to the readers of "Meta," traverses not only references to classical philosophers and literary figures in the Western tradition (Augustine, Montaigne, Wordsworth, Kierkegaard, etc.) and more recent figures belonging to the twentieth century (Bataille, Blanchot, Eliot, Russell, etc.), but, constantly animated by a genuine multi- and inter-cultural attitude, it also weaves a dialogue with non-Western forms of reflection on these topics. This is specifically the case, for example, of the Chinese tradition of philosophy and writing practice, through a precise comparison with Chinese calligraphic and writing techniques. Through clear and precise references to past and

present authors of the Western tradition and also figures of non-Western traditions, the historical node of philosophy as a way of life is thus welded onto Shusterman's somaesthetic reflection on philosophy understood not only as an intellectual and spiritual practice, but also as one that takes into account bodily and embodied aspects.

Based on this wealth of references, our idea for this symposium was to involve some esteemed colleagues with different backgrounds, who, on the basis of their specific research interests (although also united by a common interest in somaesthetics), could highlight different aspects of this nodal topic. With this intent, we are glad to present here the contributions of Valentina Antoniol, Anna Budziak, Marta Faustino, Marcello Ghilardi, and Thomas Leddy, followed by a series of long, detailed and generous responses by Richard Shusterman. It is our hope, with the present work, to highlight some of the aspects that form the stimulating relationship between literature and philosophy, also in light of new possible developments in the field of somaesthetics and its dialogue with other sources.

1. **Valentina Antoniol: "An Embodied Dialogue: Shusterman's Analysis on Philosophy, Self-care, and the Art of Writing, through the Echo of a Somaesthetic Foucault?"**

One of the reasons why Richard Shusterman's last book is important is because it manages to connect, with refined accuracy, what various authors have not only distinguished, but also divided and opposed. Indeed, Shusterman moves, with fluency, between different philosophical and literary traditions. Not only that, the relevance of *Philosophy and the Art of Writing* also lies above all in the originality with which the relationship between philosophy and literature is read, interpreted, and argued, starting from a specific, and theoretically fertile, understanding of these two fields. Whereas philosophy is understood, in a pragmatist sense, as an embodied way of life that can be linked to what the ancients called self-care, literature is investigated from an

understanding of writing—or, more precisely, the art of writing—as a propulsive technique with regard to such self-care. In this direction, Shusterman's effort leads him to explore various possibilities (and difficulties) through which the art of writing can contribute to philosophy. Or rather, although philosophy is an art of living, a work for self-transformation, and not a specific form of literature, nevertheless, writing can have a self-meliorative function with respect to this same self-transformation.

In this regard, it seems to me to be striking the openness with which this relationship between philosophy and literature is investigated, a relationship centered on the form-dialogue. It is, moreover, within the bosom of this openness—which defines a new, hitherto little-explored development of Shusterman's somaesthetics—that the analysis of Foucault's thought is situated. To be precise, Foucault does not occupy a prominent position in this work. Other authors are given significantly more space for discussion. Yet, Foucault's importance seems to leak out beyond the lines that are dedicated to him. Is not Foucault the very author who, since the 1980s, has made his mark on philosophical thought and (unexpectedly) set a turning point in his own production by using Greek, Roman and Christian antiquity to investigate philosophy as an art of living and self-care? Did not Foucault himself recognize the importance of writing as an exercise of subjectivation and thus the centrality of the relationship between writing and the exercise of self, which recognizes the centrality of the body?

Shusterman shows that he recognizes these aspects and, in doing so, fits fully, and in a way that is not to be taken for granted, into a strand of analysis of Foucauldian work that is undoubtedly worthy of further study. Therefore, based on this consideration, I would first like to ask Shusterman how much Foucault's work has influenced his analysis and perhaps even constituted one of its primary references.

Yet, I would also like to go beyond that question. While it is true that, in certain way, Shusterman's work is in the line of Foucauldian thought, we can also say that, assuming its importance, it offers an effective continuation of it within a somaesthetic framework. Therefore, turning the perspective

around: in a retrospective analysis of Foucault's reflections on the relationship between philosophy and writing in terms of the transformation of the self, can we perhaps say that Foucault can be understood as a somaesthetic thinker or, more precisely, as a thinker who fits into the field of Shusterman's somaesthetics? Or, in a softer way, can we say that Foucault offered a practical and ameliorative approach to philosophy as an embodied way of life, based on a recognized centrality of the body?

2. Anna Budziak: "Restoring the Self through Writing: Wisdom, Knowledge, Emotion"

Philosophy and the Art of Writing reminds us about the problematic nature of time-sanctioned disciplinary borderlines by putting forward new arguments for Jacques Derrida's view of philosophy as a form of literature, while also regarding literature as a form of philosophizing or, to use Hans Georg Gadamer's words, by emphasizing this "curious proximity between philosophy and poetry" (Gadamer 1986, 130). It also partakes in the philosophical practice of enlivening scholarly theorems with examples derived from literature, as in the tradition comprising Richard Rorty's interpretations of Vladimir Nabokov and George Orwell, Martha Nussbaum's readings of Henry James and Marcel Proust, and Alexander Nehamas's consideration of Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*. However, in crossing the same two fields, Professor Shusterman takes us along a very different path. With his book's central problem variously modulated—from "philosophy and literature" to "philosophical and literary writing" to "philosophy and writing"—he considers the art of writing in its confessional, fictional, and sensuous modes, constructing what seems to me a conceptual narrative. Chapter One counters the assertions of philosophy's superiority to literature—with dialogic philosophy claiming a monopoly on truth whilst (in truth) defending the idea of the self as determined by pure rationality—and it explains how somaesthetics recognizes the physical properties of writing and its potential to change the self. Then, Chapter Two uniquely demonstrates how confessional writing helps to establish a sense of the unified

self, yet only to destabilize it by making the authors of confessional pieces conscious of several discrepancies. Professor Shusterman alerts us to the rift between human language and the Word of God (in St. Augustine's Confessions), between the objective and the subjective selves (which was Montaigne's dilemma), and between the textual and the existential selves (in Kierkegaard's diary), and he also highlights the self's multiplication in William Wordsworth's many revisions of a poetic text. Chapter Three further explains how the comforting illusions of the self's unity and individuation become dispelled through literary language. And then, Chapter Four takes the opposite course, arriving at a temporary restoration of the poet's self as embodied and engaged in the act of scripting with ideograms.

I would like to respond—to Chapters Four and Three, specifically—not only with questions but also with a handful of reflections which *Philosophy and the Art of Writing*, a seminal book, has provoked. In his discussion of writing with ideograms, Professor Shusterman highlights writing's universality, the fact that it is comprehensible in the whole of China (and, as one notes, intelligible to the Japanese readers of the kanji system). He also emphasizes its somatic and affective immediacy, with the brush revealing a calligrapher's bearing and mood; and he stresses that, in Chinese tradition, the writing style is characterized by corporeal attributes—it is described as strong or sick, fleshy or sinewy—thus becoming a form of self-expression. Yet, at the same time, perhaps contrariwise, the poet-calligrapher's contemplation of nature, he observes, can become a form of self-contemplation. Professor Shusterman further proposes that the critical appreciation of an artist-calligrapher's style can be systematized within a sixfold conceptual matrix—with the calligraphers' unique individualities judged against the time-sanctioned forms of ideograms; their elitist sophistication against their writing's democratic comprehensibility; their spontaneity against trained automatism; their characteristic idiosyncrasies (those that make a calligrapher identifiable) against their fleeting little quirks; and finally, their controlled execution of ideograms against the haphazard effects that might have evaded a

calligrapher's control. In this account, Chinese writing becomes an art with a complex aesthetics, invalidating, as Shusterman explains, the Aristotelian division between poesis and praxis—a part of "the Chinese culture of the brush" as opposed to "the Western culture of the stylus."

Would it, however, be possible to see this Eastern-Western contrast as less severe—as limited to the opposition between the hand-written and the mechanically recorded? And then, can a similar pattern of appreciation be used—or a different one devised—for the Western art of writing, such as in medieval manuscripts? I am thinking of the art of writing as depicted in the image of "Saint Gregory with Scribes" carved in the ivory cover of a sacramentary—portraying the pope engrossed in his writing, with a dove, symbolizing divine inspiration, perched on his shoulder (in Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). Alternatively, it brings to mind the writing on pages of the evangeliary, framed by ornamental borders and decorated with the larger-size fleuronné initials—the testimony to the scribe's artistic sense as well as to the dreariness of the task. Such work required immense patience, drawing on the energy of the copyist, who would then put a note in the ending colophon, which can be read as him exhaling a breath of satisfied relief: "Laus tibi sit Criste, / hic liber explicit iste" (included in the 1381 military treatise from Bologne, now, in Jagiellonian Library, Kraków, Ital. fol 149), amounting, on the above interpretation, to "Thank Christ, the book ends here." It also required physical stamina. Several manuscripts contain a formula disabusing the reader of an illusion that, for a clerk to write efficiently, only a skilled hand, rather than general fitness, was necessary—a formula stressing that the whole body was busy at work: "Qui nescit scribere, nullum putat esse laborem, quia quo tres digiti scribunt, totus corpus laborat"—"though three fingers do the writing, the whole body labours."[2] In this context, one also thinks of a lecture by Hélène Cixous, given at the NYS Writers Institute on 24 April 2007, which—albeit separated from those manuscripts by several centuries and a huge cultural gap—connects to them through her insistence on the writing's somatic aspect and its pictorial quality: "I write with my hand," she explains, "never using a

computer, […] I write like a painter." Then, one also thinks of Roman Opałka's *Counted Pictures*,[3] or of David Jones's art, including—amidst his painted inscriptions—a decorative script ending Eliot's Christmas pamphlet for the year 1954.

This brings me to T. S. Eliot, discussed among the authors considered by Professor Shusterman in Chapter Three. Professor Shusterman explains how Georges Bataille, by foregrounding the themes of sexuality and death, considers the states of non-individuation; how Maurice Blanchot reaches towards reality resisting categorization; and how Bertrand Russell and Eliot propose to replace factual knowledge with wisdom, each of them creating an idiolect for the states of awareness too complex and instantaneous to be rendered discursively. It is Eliot, in particular, to whom I would like to refer. My first query merely concerns a qualification. Professor Shusterman considers Eliot amidst the authors whose work "defies the […] divide between philosophical and literary writing." One ought to remember that, earlier, he eloquently explained Eliot's non-dichotomizing position in his *T. S. Eliot and the Philosophy of Criticism* (Shusterman 1988) and "Eliot as Philosopher" (Shusterman 1994). However, I wonder whether, now, Eliot's position is not beginning to appear more complex. While, in the 1920s Eliot disapproved of philosophy as mere "logomachy" (Eliot 2013, 411) practiced in isolation from the lived world, he also insisted on literature's specificity, stressing that these two types of writing should be kept apart, and noting impishly that the "poet makes poetry, the metaphysician makes metaphysics, [and] the bee makes honey" (Eliot 2015, 254). Likewise, when writing to I. A. Richards, he distinguished between "philosophy as philosophy" and "philosophy in poetry" (Eliot 2013, 506); and he experimented with translating from the language of philosophy to the language of poetry (in his neo-Scholastic *Animula* and phenomenological *Triumphal March*). Yet, even if he proved that one could perform a philosophical experiment in a poem, he remained adamant that poetry could not replace philosophy, for poetry's "function," in contrast to philosophy's, "is not intellectual but emotional, […] it provides 'consolation'" (Eliot 2015, 254). (And, with these words, incidentally, he defied the

aim that the imprisoned Boethius pursued when he was facing his execution and seeking *The Consolation of Philosophy*.) Would, therefore, a qualification be acceptable that, in his pronouncements, Eliot remained far from rigorous about the relationship of literature and philosophy, regarding them neither as polarized nor as conflated?

My second question (in fact, a set of them) is about the relationship of wisdom and emotion. It might seem that, to Eliot, it is emotion that is the business of poetry, whilst in Professor Shusterman's discussion it is wisdom that is stressed. Professor Shusterman demonstrates how Russell uses the non-declarative language of fiction to communicate the wisdom of cognitive skepticism and how Eliot uses poetry to convey the wisdom of humility or, to use Richard Shusterman's words, "the humility of cognitive fallibilism." Yet, it seems that, especially in his later, religious period, Eliot insisted on the knowledge of emotions, on what one might describe as an introspection involving careful, notional, almost catechetic discriminations in identifying emotions and attitudes as co-existing, rather than merged. To him, it would be an objectified knowledge of emotions—such as the Thomistic notion of conscience, *cum alio scientia*—that mattered. Hence my queries. With my first question, I invoke my reading of Professor Shusterman's book on Eliot: how is the Eliotian wisdom identified, in *Philosophy and the Art of Writing*, as an acceptance of a cognitive mistake related to wisdom understood, in *T. S. Eliot and the Philosophy of Criticism*, as prudence, phronesis, or the practical wisdom of acting benevolently? The other question is about the functions of poetry: how might its two functions—communicating wisdom, as stressed in Professor Shusterman's *Philosophy and the Art of Writing*, and evoking emotion, as underlined in Eliot's essay—stay connected? Would that be right to surmise that Eliot—if intimating that no reassuring knowledge is possible (the conviction espoused, as Professor Shusterman demonstrates, by Russell, Bataille, and Blanchot)—did, nevertheless, believe that poetry should recreate emotions in the hope of giving them their names and, thus, increasing our objective knowledge of the passions of the self?

3. Marta Faustino: "Blurring the Lines Between Truth and Fiction: The Art of Living and the Literary Self"

My contribution for the discussion of Richard Shusterman's short but thorough and illuminating new book will be focused on its first chapter, the theme of which is the much debated and controversial question of the relationship between philosophy and literature. Even though Shusterman is committed, throughout the book, to the idea that the connection between philosophy and literature is stronger and more intimate than what is often assumed (such that it is wrong to assume a deep and necessary divide between the two), he proposes a way to differentiate the two fields, while at the same time preserving the close connection between them and emphasizing literature's invaluable contribution for philosophy—or, at least, for a certain conception of philosophy. According to Shusterman, already in the first lines of his preface to the book, "philosophy is more than literature and literary theory, because it is more than language. It is more than language because its love and quest of wisdom is not merely a verbal affair; it is a way of life" (x). As he further explains, "the philosophical life cannot be merely verbal" or discursive because wisdom requires not only "a set of wise truths or sayings" but also "wise ways of feeling and acting in the world" (x). As such, while literature would be enclosed in language, having in the written words their whole scope, purpose and aim, philosophy would go beyond words and have its proper field of practice and actualization in the nonlinguistic and nonliterary realm of life, specifically as a practice devoted to self-knowledge, self-cultivation and care of oneself and others. Literature—that is, words, discourse, language—would simply be a means to an end that must necessarily lie beyond them. Accordingly, even if philosophy does express itself in words, the philosophical life is infinitely more important and valuable than philosophical works, texts or theories—a conception of philosophy that, as Shusterman illuminates, was inaugurated by Socrates, remained dominant throughout the whole antiquity, found multiple expressions in modern philosophy (from Montaigne and Spinoza to Kierkegaard,

Nietzsche, William James and John Dewey), and was recently revived by the work of Pierre Hadot, Michel Foucault and the emerging field of somaesthetics, of which Shusterman himself is one of the main proponents. For all this authors and schools of thought, Shusterman claims, philosophy is "an embodied way of life, rather than a mere genre of theoretical discourse" (14).

Having suggested this significant way of distinguishing philosophy from literature, Shusterman goes on to emphasize the crucial role that literature—or language, discourse, theory—nevertheless plays for such a conception of philosophy. Literature is important first of all because the philosophical art of living is grounded on complex philosophical theories that justify and guide a specific way of life. As Hadot had already explained, if it is true that "no discourse […] deserves to be called philosophical if it is separated from the philosophical life," it is also true that "there is no philosophical life unless it is directly linked to philosophical discourse" (Hadot 2002, 174). Totally in line with Hadot's account, Shusterman concludes that "there is no essential opposition compelling us to choose between philosophy as theoretical writing and as artful, embodied life-practice" (15) for they complement and reinforce each other when wisely combined. In this context, a second reason why literature is fundamental for philosophy as an art of living is that it is itself a tool of critical self-examination, -transformation and -cultivation and hence a privileged means for taking care of oneself and others.

Even though Hadot, as well as Foucault, had already stressed the importance and prevalence of writing as one of the most important and common spiritual practices in ancient philosophy, Shusterman's account of the relevance of literature for the art of living is somewhat wider, insofar as he tries to encompass as many philosophical epochs as possible and, as such, the multiplicity of ways in which philosophers (and philosophical writers) have used literature to serve their own processes of self-fashioning, -creation or -cultivation. Reducing the centrality of reason and truth (and even of self-knowledge and -examination, when it comes to later authors) in this process, Shusterman argues that literature is crucial for the art of living insofar as it enables a field of imaginative exploration

of multiple representations of the self, that when recorded in literary form (a narrative) are both durable and shareable with others (including one's own future self). The representation of those literary possible selves would serve the project not only of self-cultivation, but also of self-understanding and -improvement, insofar as one can "fictionally assume and critically assess" those selves, while at the same time "guarding one's real or ideal self apart" (18). While protecting the privacy of the author, Shusterman contends, "the created textual persona can significantly reshape the author's own lived self and subjectivity, impelling her to bring her actual, personal self to conform more closely to her textual identity" (18-19). This is a further reason why, according to Shusterman, literary artists should be included in the field of philosophy (20). Indeed, according to the conception of philosophy that Shusterman endorses, philosophy would not even correspond to a specific discipline or profession anymore, but rather encompass anyone who truly cares for herself and others, devoting her life to self-examination and -cultivation and to the critical challenge of established beliefs "through a rigorous and disciplined mode of living" (17), in which artists and literary authors would no doubt be included.

Having given this brief overview of Shusterman's main arguments in the first chapter of his book—which to a great extent determine the framework in which the whole book will be developed—I wish to express three main concerns, which are deeply interconnected and relate to Shusterman's proposed distinction between philosophy and literature, on the one hand, and the definition of the kind of self that literature should enable the (philosophical) art of living to attain, on the other.

First, as much as Shusterman's proposed distinction between philosophy and literature sounds appealing and compelling when we think of ancient philosophy and a series of other philosophers who did indeed think of their activity in close connection to life, having its transformation as an aim, the fact is that the conception of philosophy as a way of life or an art of living does not describe or represent all possible philosophies or philosophy as such. Many philosophers did not conceive (let alone practice) philosophy in this way and, as

Shusterman acknowledges, such a conception and tradition of philosophy is nowadays mostly forgotten or neglected in most philosophy departments, where philosophy is researched and taught as a theoretical and often abstract discourse, with no apparent relation to one's life or practice. Philosophy as a way of life or an art of living is a way of understanding philosophy that contrasts (and competes) with several different others. If we consider other possible ways of defining philosophy—including the dominant one—Shusterman's proposed distinction between philosophy and literature will no longer apply and we are thus left with no possible criterium to distinguish the two. Evidently, as Shusterman argues, philosophy is necessarily a species of literature, in the sense that its medium of expression is language, the written text. But this applies to a wide variety of fields, including virtually all academic disciplines (anthropology, history, sociology etc.), as well as natural and applied sciences, law, medicine or journalism, among many others. Would they then all be literature, without a criterium of distinction of any of them and specially not of literature as a specific field with a particular identity different from any of its subspecies?

Second, literature can also be a way of life. The idea that philosophy is distinguished from literature because in contrast to literature it is not exclusively linguistic might thus not make full justice to literature. Many authors have made of literature and writing their way of life, engaging in processes of self-transformation and cultivation through their writing. Shusterman evidently explores this at length, especially in the third chapter of his book. However, he seems to assume that *because* some writers did see literature as a way to fashion their selves and improve or perfect their ways of life, they can appropriately be called philosophers (or, at least, philosophical writers). An alternative way to consider the question would be to acknowledge that there are several ways to engage in self-cultivation through writing, such that one would be philosophical and the other literary (even if in some authors there could be an undistinguishable overlapping between the two). I find it significant that even though Shusterman focuses exclusively on authors who straddle the line between the

literature/philosophy divide, he still writes two separate chapters on *literary philosophers*, on the one hand, and *philosophical writers,* on the other. Perhaps the difference between philosophy and literature becomes clearer when we consider the adjective rather than the noun. What does it mean to say that a certain text or work is *philosophical*? And what does it mean to say it is *literary* or *poetical*?

This takes me to my last and perhaps most relevant concern, which is more specifically related to the risks of associating philosophy to any process of self-cultivation or self-transformation, without further qualification or specification. Besides literature, which Shusterman explores at length, several other disciplines and practices promote processes of self-transformation, among which religion, psychotherapy, self-help and coaching. I find it disturbing that there is no criterium we can use to distinguish these different processes of self-transformation, or that we should consider a philosopher anyone engaged in such a process, who is equally committed to a critical attitude towards established beliefs and a disciplined mode of living, as Shusterman suggests (17). In the case of literary self-cultivation, that Shusterman magnifically describes, what is at stake is the creation and experimentation of different possible selves, an aesthetic experience which no doubt can produce self-improvement insofar as one is critically assessing and testing those selves and thus revising and refashioning one's actual self accordingly. As interesting, valuable and relevant this process might be, can it really be considered philosophical, especially if we take the tradition of the art of living as our guiding thread? Philosophical self-cultivation or askesis implied, for the ancients, a conformation of the self to universal reason and a surpassing of the self on the basis of its tension towards truth or wisdom. It is this tension towards truth or wisdom that ultimately seems to characterize the philosopher and philosophical self-cultivation, unlike other processes of self-transformation, including the literary one, which do not necessarily have truth (or wisdom) as its primary goal, aim, or motivation. As Shusterman shows, writing can, in general, play a crucial role for self-cultivation, but it's hard to think it can be characterized as philosophical if

it does not retain what Foucault called its *ethopoietic* function, that is, its capacity to be "an agent of the transformation of truth into *ēthos*" (Foucault 1997, 209). For sure that, as Shusterman shows, there have been writers who thought of their work in this way and thus straddled the line between philosophy and literature, but they still seem to have been more the exception than the general rule. My last question would thus be if by blurring the lines between philosophy and literature in this way—and specifically when we think of both as potential tools of self-cultivation—we don't risk also blurring (or even cancelling) the distinguishing mark with which philosophy has always (even etymologically) identified itself—namely, its pursuit of wisdom and tension towards the truth.

4. Marcello Ghilardi: "Forms of Writings, Forms of Subjectivity"

Shusterman's book *Philosophy and the Art of Writing* (2022) offers an insightful view about the relationship between philosophy and literature, intertwining those forms of intellectual practice and using them as mirrors to reflect each other. In a very original and interesting way, he writes a final chapter dealing with a field that has been generally neglected by Western philosophers and aesthetics scholars: the art of writing in Chinese thought. In fact, this topic is not a new one for Shusterman's speculation, because he had already argued how deep and useful can be the Chinese classical thought in order to shed a light on a somaesthetic reflection, *ante litteram* (Shusterman 2012a, 200-209). Not only the Confucian and Daoist tradition favor an anti-subjectivist and anti-dualist idea of experience, but they also foster a fundamental role of the body (*shen*) in order to understand the processes of the heart-mind (*xin*) and to enhance or harmonize the behavior of oneself.

Thus, Shusterman pays attention to the fact that "writing with a brush involves the same materials as the Chinese art of calligraphy […]. The masterful use of the brush in traditional Chinese writing is obviously an act of somatic skill different from the Western use of the pen" (94-95). Far from being a simple historical of sociological curiosity, this fact can be seen as truly important to understand and deploy a

profound collusion between the way a culture transmits a form of writing and the way its heirs can follow a path of thought and self-cultivation.

By assuming the notion of writing in a wide (also "Derridean") sense, could we say that the very form of writing (i.e. ideographic or alphabetic, but also conveyed by brush or by pen) has a paramount importance to generate and transfer a particular way of depicting, describing, and understanding the world? Or, in the end, we cannot find any connections between the way we write and the way we think? Generally, linguists have focused much more on the spoken word and the grammar of different languages, than on the styles of writing and its materiality. But it seems that a philosophical consideration about the act of writing can elucidate a sort of circularity—not a simple linearity—that links the acts of thinking, speaking, and writing. Usually, we believe that, first, we think; then, we speak and we say what we thought; finally, we can write down what we have spoken about. So, is it meaningful to elaborate a philosophical insight about the possibility that Western thought developed in a peculiar way, *due to the alphabetical form of writing*? For instance, the couple body and mind, or body-mind (or *soma* and *psyche*) can be composed in the adjective "psychosomatic" to express the intertwining of both dimension (for instance, in a disease). But the particular performance of syllables and letters reproducing sounds seems to produce a split between the material, "bodily" aspect of a word and its invisible, "spiritual" counterpart. Can we find here, *in nuce*, a graphic genesis of the platonic distinction of visible and intelligible, already inscribed in the alphabetic form of writing? In other words, is a concept a byproduct of alphabet?

Apart from the alphabetic practice, i.e. using ideograms, a different path seems to be developed and many things change. For instance, the term *shenxin* 身心 ("bodymind") can be read as a hendiadys, and we could say the same about the binomial expression *shengsi* 生死, "life-death" (not "life *and* death"). The art of writing appears thus as a whole perspective, that fosters a peculiar orienteering in the world or, better, shapes the world before we can take a distance in order to forge the notions we want to use to better understand it.

When the author argues that "Technologies for composing texts (oral utterance, pen, pencil, brush, typewriter, or computer) are not merely external instrumentalities for recording thoughts but tend to shape the thoughts they present" (116), is it correct to think that he is pointing towards a similar perspective? Far from defending a hard interpretation of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and suggesting that the structure of a language or a form of writing *completely* determines its speakers' and writers' cognition and perceptions, we should probably pay much more attention to the fact that our thought exploits the resources of the form of writing in which it is expressed, and in this sense it is actually conditioned by them.

So, the way we write gives rise, or enhance, *a particular form of subject*. Avoiding any form of cultural essentialism (that leads some scholars to speak about *the* Chinese culture, *the* Japanese mind, *the* Western worldview without considering internal dissents of exceptions), are we allowed to think about the art of writing as a way of molding not only a single subject, but also a whole culture or philosophical tradition?

5. Thomas Leddy: "Questions on Writing, writing, conversation, everyday aesthetics, cruel underlying reality, and the ineffable"

I very much agree with Richard Shusterman on the close relation between philosophy and literature and that the boundary land between these too is rich and worth exploration. We also agree on a pre-linguistic feature of experience that literature, and in my view, art in general, is peculiarly apt at capturing. My few brief comments and questions will therefore be primarily friendly. Shusterman also shows a healthy distrust for philosophical professionalism. As a professor who is entering into retirement, I too am beginning to distance myself from some ideals of professionalism. Looking back over my career, one of the things I have enjoyed the most was, in a sense, becoming friends with the great philosophers and also great philosophical writers through reading and teaching them. I came to PhD work in philosophy somewhat indirectly by way of a detour. I received my BA in Philosophy, but my MA was in

Humanities, an interdisciplinary program at San Francisco State University. I returned to philosophy to get my PhD at Boston University. But the detour made me aware of the writers I was reading, even the philosophers, as writers. In subsequent years, after I gained a position in philosophy at San Jose State, I taught seminars on Plato, Aristotle, Hermeneutics, Hellenistic Philosophy, Kant, Nietzsche (several times), the American philosophers, and Aesthetics, which is still my area of specialization. Now I find myself asking questions about what "career" means to me when it is no longer necessary to publish in the professional journals or to always meet the expectations of gatekeepers with regard to my writing. This very essay I am writing now is an experiment in non-academic writing aware of itself as writing responding to reading. But then if philosophy is, or should be, as Shusterman argues, a way of life, I cannot limit my concern here to the question of how to write in my retirement years but must address the question of how to live.

The conjunction of Somaesthetics, a sub-discipline which Richard himself has established since the 1990s, and the idea that philosophy can be the art of living are central to Richard's text. The aesthetics of everyday life is central to my text. Whereas Richard and I may both be considered pragmatist aestheticians, (my own advocacy was inspired by Richard's *Pragmatist Aesthetics*), I am more closely associated these days with the emerging subdiscipline of aesthetics called "everyday aesthetics," Richard more with somaesthetics. These two often overlap and supplement each other, so much so that they may well be two different names for the same thing. Most of my questions to Richard come out of my thinking about this area of philosophy. I will address them to Richard in the second person.

1. Why do you choose writing over conversation as the focus of your study? Wouldn't centrality of conversation be more appropriate for a somaesthetic approach. To be sure, the human body is the center of all of our experience, even including the most "internal." Yet we can clearly distinguish between bodily activities that are focused on the body and those that are not. Writing, although it involves moving fingers across a paper or keyboard, does not normally reflect on such movements. The body is to a large extent bracketed out of our experience of

writing. Towards the end of your book you discuss East Asian calligraphy from a somaesthetic perspective. Writing is more somatically focused in the case of calligraphy. Are you posing calligraphy as an ideal for writing that is focused on the soma and on the art of living?

2. The term "writing" plays an important role in your text. By writing is meant something like "Literature." You are not referring to the kind of writing a typical professional philosopher does. There is a lot of writing that is not writing. Call this Writing (W). Writing (W) is a subset of writing. At the same time, you imply that philosophy is a kind of literature. Could we simply say that philosophy and literature have important overlaps?

3. Writing (w) is an important part of the life of most philosophers. It is not necessarily something everyday, but it can be. There are aesthetic features to writing, as there are to any experience. For example my writing experience today can be disjointed or it can be a unified whole. I can find it beautiful or ugly. This is also true for what I write. Whereas you focus on Writing (W), the aesthetics of writing, in the sense of ordinary writing done by everyone else is worth considering in itself.

4. You make a strong distinction between imaginative writing (particularly the imaginative writing called Literature) and the kind of philosophical writing associated with professionalism. The latter is not seen as Writing. If writing is putting words to paper, philosophers do it also in other contexts, for example in writing notes to friends, commenting on social media, keeping a dream journal, writing to do lists, and so forth.

5. Sometimes you speak of philosophy just as a kind of writing. At other times it is clear that some philosophers are not Writers. A Philosopher who is also a Writer is someone who is concerned not only with truth but also with style. Are you suggesting that philosophy would be done better if, in general, it was written with style? Sometimes philosophers have been admired for their unique style, for example Nelson Goodman, and yet would never be considered Writers. Or is there something wrong with the distinction between writing and Writing?

6. You discuss Socrates, who did not write. Why not follow Socrates as the ideal for a philosopher who approaches wisdom? He did not favor either writing or Writing since he wrote nothing (except for his last few days in prison when he sought to put Aesop's fables into verse.)

7. What is the relationship between your writing of this book and Writing? What are you trying to do with your explication of the various philosophers and philosophically-inclined Writers? On one level you are simply doing a survey of the field, namely that of the relation between writing and philosophy, one in which there are many overlaps. In that regard your book is almost a model of good professional behavior … something that a graduate student could follow. For example, you accurately describe the theories in the field and put them in historical context. And you use a wide range of author quotes which themselves are well-cited. But I believe you want to be read differently, i.e. more as a Writer.

8. On a deeper level you may be setting up a series of masks in the mode of Kierkegaard, each philosopher/writer discussed being a mask that you successively put on and take off. While reading your book I found myself wondering "why spend time with Kierkegaard given that, although a Writer, he is clearly far from pragmatism?" The answer, I hypothesized, is that you are inspired by his method and prefer to present your own views indirectly by way of sympathetic accounting of the various writer-philosophers you discuss. I think you are imitating Kierkegaard by taking on a series of masks. You then leave it up to your reader to synthesize "Shusterman" or "Shusterman's view" from paying careful attention to each of his masks, as we often do with Plato, whose various characters may also be seen as masks.

9. Now I turn to places in your philosophy which overlap central concerns of my own. In the aesthetics of everyday life there is an ongoing debate between those who stress the ordinary as ordinary (Yuriko Saito, Kevin Melchionne), those who stress functionalism of artifacts (Allen Carlson, Glenn Parsons, Jane Forsey), and those who stress ways in which the ordinary becomes extraordinary (myself, Kalle Puolakka, Frederick Potgeiter). Your discussion of Bataille leads me to

think that you would identify more strongly with the latter group than with either of the first two (assuming that "Bataille" is one of your masks.) Sticking at the level of the ordinary as ordinary may fail to get beneath appearances. Sticking with functions, for example whether something's look fits its function, fails to leave the domain of literal language.

10. Still, I wonder about the choice of Bataille. Aren't the ideas we approve of in Bataille readily available elsewhere without the baggage of his fantasies of sex and death? I am thinking of Pierre's mother's preparation of him "for his ultimate experience of transgressive, death-related sex" which will be with her. (67) I find myself torn in reading about Bataille, attracted to the first half of what you say about him, but not to the second. You quote Bataille that "moments of intense communication which we experience with that which surrounds us—whether it is a matter of a row of trees, of a sunlit room—are in themselves ungraspable" (61) This seems compatible with everyday aesthetics.

11. Would you agree that there are both moderate and extreme versions mystical experience. A low-level one might be the feeling of oneness with a flower that suddenly takes on emergent aesthetic properties. At the same time I want to recognize sublime moments as coming out of everyday aesthetic experience. I will return to this issue later.

12. I have argued in my book (Leddy 2011) that the true experts of everyday aesthetics (in the applied sense) are artists. I would include Writers in that category. This is because Writers manage to transcend language in its ordinary uses. You have spoken of pre-linguistic realms of meaning and of their neglect, for example in "Beneath Interpretation." In a sense, literature is great at getting at pre-linguistic meanings, and if Wittgenstein is right, it is the pre-linguistic meanings that give meaning to our world. This realm of the prelinguistic is closely allied with what you call "soma" since it is aesthetic and focuses on the senses.

13. Some philosophers believe that everyday aesthetics is just descriptive. Others, however, believe that there are ideals of everyday aesthetics […] that everyday aesthetics ought to promote certain better ways of living. This second

approach is in accord with your emphasis on Wisdom and with the idea of *Philosophy as a Way of Living*. Would you favor seeing your view as an ideal of everyday aesthetics?

14. You note that Eliot and Russell, as well as Bataille and Blanchot, thought that the deeper level of reality revealed by literature was horrifically dark, cruel, and unfathomably senseless. (59) Assuming that you are using these authors as masks, what are we to take of your own view of this deeper level of reality? Doesn't it conflict with an Eastern sense of underlying reality as found in Taoism or Zen Buddhism?

15. Your last two chapters pose a dilemma. With regards to "Expressing the Ineffable" the ineffable as understood by the four writers/philosophers seems particularly dark […] Schopenhauerian, even. This is especially true for Bataille and Blanchot, as I have already suggested, but could also be said for Eliot and Russell. Although the first two are professed Nietzscheans they are perhaps not Nietzschean enough. Nietzsche encourages us to say "yes to life" to our embodied selves. Although he might be seen as Schopenhauerian when he writes his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, and thus deeply pessimistic, he later becomes much more optimistic. Nietzsche notoriously associates the denial of life with Christianity. Bataille writes novels in which he promotes a kind of extreme sinful behavior as though we is over-reacting to Christianity while still deeply under its influence. By contrast, your last chapter, dealing with Daoist and Confucian attitudes towards calligraphy, exhibits a much more positive attitude to life. There is nothing particularly dark about following the Dao or following the path of the ancient sages. The Chinese escaped this dilemma because they, for the most part, escaped Christianity and the concept of sin. I would think your last chapter would be in opposition to the four Westerner's approach to the ineffable. The Chinese philosophers you discuss accept the ineffable but do not portray it as your Western thinkers do. For every Yin there is a Yang. There is a sweet side to the ineffable as well as a dark side. It may be necessary for Writing in the West to frequently deal with the dark side (this, for us, gives rise to the sublime), but something is lost in missing the sweet side. It is not always lost by the West, as can be seen in

the Western fascination with beauty and love as much as with ugliness and death. It can be seen in Plato, Montaigne, Shelly and Wordsworth, among your authors.

16. Let me suggest that an appropriate slogan for a Nietzschean everyday aesthetics/somaesthetics would be "Carpe Diem." If we live for today then we cease to worry overmuch about our past mistakes and our future fate. Our ordinary world exists between two extraordinary and paradoxical kinds of event: birth and death. In one case something seems to come from nothing, and in the other nothing from something. Although both kinds of event are extraordinary, our ordinary lives are conditioned by their necessity. Christianity seeks to deny this necessity in denying that we will ever die.

6. Richard Shusterman: "Philosophy and the Art of Writing: Responses to a Meta Symposium"

Before addressing the five symposium papers discussing my book *Philosophy and the Art of Writing*, I am pleased to make two preliminary points. First, I express my thanks to Elena Romagnoli and Stefano Marino for organizing the symposium and to the authors for their attention to this book. Second, for readers interested in further enlightening critical perspectives on the book, I note the symposium devoted to it in *Metaphilosophy* 54 (2023), containing papers by Eli Kramer, Charles Johnson, and Randy Auxier, followed by my response. Having two symposia in two journals whose names begin with "Meta" could be a cause for confusion, but I am grateful for them both, particularly because my book concerns key metaphilosophical issues. My response in this symposium will discuss the five papers in the alphabetical order of their authors' names.

1. Valentina Antoniol is kind to call the book "important," and right to recognize that the book's core theme of philosophy's use of writing to do more than words can do, to help one live a philosophical life, is a theme that can usefully connect philosophers and writers who are rarely connected. Such thinkers struggle with the same constellation of capacities and limitations of philosophy as a textual practice that serves a

more than textual vision of philosophy, that serves philosophy as fully embodied way of life. She is also right to see that Foucault's work on the philosophical life is central here, although he is not one of the eight authors who get detailed individual study. The book was contracted for a series that severely limited its length. If I had had more space, I would have liked to include Foucault and Nietzsche and William James and Wittgenstein.

Dr. Antoniol, who is an accomplished expert on Foucault, asks "how much Foucault's work has influenced [my] analysis" and whether I think Foucault can be understood as a somaesthetic thinker." I suspect she already knows the answer but I am happy to have the opportunity to reassert here (what I have frequently claimed before) that Foucault has been an extremely important influence on my vision of philosophy as a way of life and on my idea of somaesthetics. I first introduced somaesthetics in the context of Foucault's idea of philosophy as an aesthetics of existence, and I described him, along with Dewey, as one of the paradigmatic prophets or progenitors of somaesthetics. He deserved that praise because he worked significantly in all three branches of somaesthetics: the analytic (descriptive and theoretical), the pragmatic (melioristic methodologies), and the practical (actual body practice) (Shusterman 1997, ch. 6; and Shusterman 1999).[4]

One could say that Foucault was even more influential than Dewey in my work on somaesthetics and philosophy as a way of life. My somaesthetic study of sex obviously owes an enormous debt to Foucault. Dewey's discussions of sex and gender were very limited and did not treat sexual practice as a significant factor in shaping the self and its subjectivity (Shusterman 2021b). It was Foucault who demonstrated the importance of the sexual dimension in one's aesthetics of existence, in one's shaping and care of the self as an ethical and aesthetic project. I could have never written *Ars Erotica: Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love* without the model of Foucault's four-volume *History of Sexuality*. My *Ars Erotica* book was an attempt to complement Foucault's project by treating cultures and topics that Foucault neglected and by

correcting some errors he made with respect to Chinese sexology (Shusterman 2021a).

Of course, I also bring to my study of eroticism a different sensibility than Foucault's. Despite my appreciation of experiential intensities and transgression, I am more appreciative than Foucault with respect to the aesthetics of tenderness and ordinary pleasures. My sexual experience has been for the most part heterosexual, and I imagine I have spent more time understanding and listening to women than Foucault did. Marriages (but also divorces) encourage such listening. Despite my military past (or perhaps because of it), I have spent more than a decade on a project of performance art with the Man in Gold that works to deconstruct the image of masculinity along with the logocentrism of philosophy. He is the philosopher without words. Born in France through collaboration with a Parisian artist, Yann Toma, the Man in Gold is the protagonist of adventures that are described in a bilingual book published in Paris (Shusterman 2016). I wish I could have discussed the Man in Gold with Foucault, and I very much regret that I never met Foucault, who died before I read any of his texts. In 1984, the year he died, I was still a hardcore analytic philosopher of the Austin and Wittgenstein analytic tradition, who had an Oxford doctorate supervised by Austin's literary executor (J.O. Urmson) and whose moral tutor was the renowned Wittgenstein scholar Peter Hacker. Ironically, it was my work on these analytic philosophers that prompted my engagement with French theory. Bourdieu, who admired those philosophers, liked my use of their ideas, and invited me to his center in Paris for the year of 1990.

Recognizing that my work somaesthetics is "an effective continuation" of Foucault's line of thought, Antoniol further asks whether I see Foucault as a somaesthetic thinker. My foregoing remarks show the answer is evidently yes. Somaesthetics is a pluralistic field of research that studies somatic theories and practices, including those that the particular somaesthetic researcher does not practice or endorse. Somaesthetics argues for such pluralism because it recognizes that persons are different—in sex, gender, age, ethnicity, tastes, capacities, and limitations. One size does not fit all.

Foucault and I offer different orientations within the somaesthetic field, and mine is more explicitly pluralistic than his, both with respect to aesthetic tastes and with respect to the role of reflective consciousness, physiology, and neuroscience in somaesthetic perception. My somaesthetics also differs from Foucault's somatic theory by having a detailed, ramified structure or architectonic that is articulated into three branches, each having three dimensions, whereas Foucault's "aesthetics of existence" does not have that structural aspect. Another way where my somaesthetics differs from Foucault's embodied aesthetics of existence is that he works with the concept of *body* rather than *soma*. Foucault locates subjectivity and agency in the self or subject, not the body, per se, which is, for him, mere material for shaping. In other words, borrowing terms from German phenomenology and philosophical anthropology, Foucault sees the body as *Körper*, a material thing rather than *Leib* (the living, purposive, sentient body) but also rather than the soma, a concept that embraces both *Leib* and *Körper*, that is, both embodied, subjective, perceptive agency and a material object in the world among other material objects. The soma resembles Spinoza's dual aspect notion of body, but somaesthetics gives that notion a new name (namely "soma") to distinguish it from the usual concept of body as mere object, as mere material for the shaping powers that society exercises in creating subjects (Shusterman 2011; and Shusterman 2020).

2. Anna Budziak's article makes no mention of Foucault but ranges impressively over the book's four chapters and its multiple key authors. A distinguished T.S. Eliot scholar, she generously calls this book "seminal" while kindly recalling my early book on Eliot, who is the major focus in her comments and challenging questions. However, she also raises an important question about the contrast between European literature and the Chinese literati tradition of writing with its three perfections (poetry, calligraphy, and painting). Professor Budziak is surely correct to point out that some forms of Western writing involved a visual dimension, and she gives the example of an illustrated evangeliary as an example. I have long argued for the importance of the visual element in Western

writing, for example in "Aesthetic Blindness to Textual Visuality" (Shusterman 1982). But we have no European tradition like the Chinese writing tradition of three perfections as forms of self-knowledge and self-cultivation. The monks who were illustrating the gospels were focusing on the words of God, unlike the Chinese literati, who were focusing on their own mortal poetry; and the monks were doing their illustrating to serve God, not primarily for self-knowledge and self-cultivation.

If Budziak wishes to blur the distinction between European and Chinese writing, then she conversely wants to bolster the distinction between philosophy and literature in T.S. Eliot's work. We can and do, of course, make such a distinction. We can point to his poetry and then contrast it to his philosophy doctoral dissertation on F.H. Bradley and his early academic philosophical writings in *The Monist*. They are obviously different genres with different styles. But what I maintain is that Eliot's writings do not suggest a dichotomous divide between philosophy and literature but rather a continuum with a considerable area of overlap, especially in Eliot's texts in literary theory or philosophy of criticism. As I write in *Philosophy and the Art of Writing*, "Despite the vagueness and porosity of their borders, this book argues for a distinction between philosophy and literature (including literary theory), while conversely arguing for literature's priceless contribution to philosophy" (x). Part of what I meant in affirming that Eliot's work "defies the presumption of a dichotomous divide between philosophical and literary writing" (58) is that he wrote in both genres, though his strictly academic philosophical writing was confined to early in his career. Eliot, as argued in the earlier book I devoted to his critical thought, took a very pragmatic view of distinctions; he claims they should not "be taken too seriously, as final psychological or philosophical truth, when they are merely analyses of pragmatic validity, to be tested by their usefulness" (Eliot 1957, 189). Of course, he recognized a distinction between poetry and philosophy, just as he recognized a distinction between literary criticism and philosophy. But these distinctions too were pragmatic rather than absolute, and the different practices were deeply intertwined. If Eliot was

criticized by John Dewey for not maintaining a strict distinction between philosophy and literature by claiming "the 'truest' philosophy is the best material for the greatest poet" (Dewey 1987, 323),[5] then he also famously asserted that literary criticism, though distinguishable from other fields because it is "an activity which must constantly define its own boundaries; also it must constantly be going beyond them," into other fields, mingling with and absorbing them (Eliot 1957, 215).

Budziak is surely right that for Eliot, as for most lovers and theorists of literature, emotions are crucial to the function of poetry. My book insists on this important function, which Eliot explains through poetry's giving us the language for better understanding and feeling emotions that are still inadequately felt and expressed. Through their verbal and affective skills, poets create "the capacity of the language to express a wide range, and subtle gradation, of feeling and emotion" (Eliot 1957, 22–23 and 37–38). The poet develops language through "an attempt to extend the confines of the human consciousness and to report of things unknown, to express the inexpressible" (Eliot 1957, 169). Poetry educates our emotions; it expands our affective knowledge. Perhaps Budziak's surprising question of whether I reject such knowledge derives from her misunderstanding of what I mean by "cognitive fallibilism." She seems to assimilate it to skepticism, whereas it is the Peircean contrast to skepticism, its pragmatist answer to Cartesian doubt. Cognitive fallibilism does not deny that we know things, but merely asserts that our knowledge is fallible in the sense that it can, in principle, turn out to be wrong. Human humility with respect to knowledge is not that we are miserably ignorant but that we cannot, as humans, achieve the absolute certainty of the Gods-eye view of the universe. For Eliot, then, as I read him, it is human wisdom to recognize the fallibility of our knowledge (and action); and it is faith in the divine that can redeem the hope for eventually achieving higher perfection in knowledge and feeling than we can currently achieve in our mortal, sinful state.

I heartily agree with Budziak's conclusion that connects wisdom and emotional knowledge. As I assert in the book, "For Russell, as for Eliot, wisdom requires a 'comprehensive vision'

that includes 'not only intellect but also feeling" (83). Sharing their view, I believe that an important part of the wisdom that poetry can provide should include an education in emotions. This means gaining a better understanding of our own emotions and a better sympathetic understanding of the emotions of others (whose lives and feelings may be very different from our own). But it also means learning to recognize and to master the proper emotions that generate proper actions and attitudes for the different contexts and conditions of life.

3. Marta Faustino's article highlights my book's linking wisdom and emotions. She notes how I emphasize this connection right from the outset. I quote from her, quoting me: "philosophy is more than literature and literary theory, because it is more than language. It is more than language because its love and quest of wisdom is not merely a verbal affair; it is a way of life" (x) […] [and] "the philosophical life cannot be merely verbal" or discursive because wisdom requires not only "a set of wise truths or sayings" but also "wise ways of feeling and acting in the world" (x).

Dr. Faustino correctly notes that the book's project was largely inspired by the work of Pierre Hadot and Michel Foucault on the philosophical life, a topic on which she has done excellent research. Her text emphasizes the Hadot influence, which I indeed happily acknowledge, although my sympathies are closer to Foucault's account of the philosophical life because he highlights its distinctive aesthetic and somatic dimensions. She also appreciates that my account of the uses of literature for the philosophical life is "wider" than Hadot's and Foucault's because it covers more cultures and historical ages. Their center of attention was ancient Western culture, including early Christianity, where the philosophical life was extremely central to the idea of philosophy. But it is important to recognize that Hadot and Foucault also studied the continuing traces of the philosophical life as manifested in modern times and as expressed beyond the narrow framework of academic philosophy, for instance in literary artists like Goethe and Baudelaire.

Faustino raises three interrelated concerns about the way the book explores the philosophy/literature distinction

through its focus on the idea of the philosophical life. First, she points to the obvious fact that there are other ways of practicing philosophy which are not so essentially embodied and expressed through one's bios as the models that Hadot, Foucault, and I study and privilege. Well aware that I recognize that "such a conception and tradition of philosophy is nowadays mostly forgotten or neglected in most philosophy departments, where philosophy is researched and taught as a theoretical and often abstract discourse, with no apparent relation to one's life," she surely grasps that Hadot and Foucault know this too. We all realize that philosophy is an essentially contested concept that comprises different methods and practices, and (as I stress in *Philosophy and the Art of Writing*) also includes many different literary genres. Philosophy as a way of life is only one of those practices. But it is the one that most attracts me, because I find it the most challenging, authentic, and meaningful direction for my own life as a philosopher. It is also the practice of philosophy that seems to provide the clearest most pragmatic way of distinguishing philosophy from literature, because philosophy as a way of life is more than words and writing.

Faustino misunderstands me if she thinks the motivating aim of my book was to provide a firm distinction between philosophy and literature. The aim was rather to show the ways that writing functions in philosophy as a way of life, because that is the form of philosophy that I practice in my own life; and it is useful to see how writing can serve such a life by examining the lives and writings of distinguished thinkers who belong to the broad "philosophy as a way of life" tradition. I sought to explore through this book how writing can contribute to my philosophical life and to others who wish to live a philosophical life. My aim was not to insist on a sharp distinction between philosophy and literature.[6] I hoped the Preface of my book had made this clear, when I wrote "Committed to the philosophical life, in theory and practice, I acknowledge this book belongs to that life" (xii). Perhaps Faustino fails to appreciate the main thrust of my book because she focuses only on its first chapter, which deals with the issue of distinction.

The second issue concern Faustino raises also concerns the philosophy/literature distinction. "Literature can be a way of life," she remarks. This is certainly true in the way that nursing, painting, athletics, connoisseurship, or politics can be a way of life. Such lives do not have the same millennia-long, thematized, and theorized tradition that the philosophical life has; and some of these life-callings or lifestyles were probably influenced by the ideals, models, and values of the ancient influential philosophical life tradition. Foucault, for example, claims that in modern times both artists and political revolutionaries continue in different ways key elements of the philosophical life tradition, essentially by bravely manifesting their alleged, often unconventional truths through the way they live (Foucault 2011). However, I would also claim that the ancient philosophical life borrowed or continued key elements of the warrior life ideals (such as brave heroism and endurance) which were central to Greek culture and expressed in the most ancient and most formative masterpieces of Greek literature that predate the discipline of philosophy. The job of giving a neat classification and precise definitions and individuating distinctions for the lives we differently label philosophical, literary, artistic, revolutionary, religious, sagely, soldierly, etc. does not seem a fruitful exercise for my own philosophical life. In this I am following ancient tradition. Advocates of the ancient philosophical life would describe the job of making those fine distinctions and definitions as more an exercise in grammar or philology rather than the demanding practice of real philosophy as pursuing and manifesting wisdom in the conduct of one's life.

So here again, we return to the essentially pluralistic and contested nature of philosophical practice. It certainly includes the field of philosophical grammar, a field to which I have not been ashamed to contribute. In fact, I proposed a philosophical grammar for the concept of the philosophical life, suggesting that it should be seen as gradable range concept rather than a clearly bound categorial concept. I treat this issue in detail in *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life* (1997). Permit me to cite below a passage from that book which also addresses Faustino's third concern,

namely that my emphasis on melioristic self-examination, self-cultivation, and self-transformation does not do justice to the connection of philosophical life to "the pursuit of wisdom and tension toward the truth," even though she quotes passages from my book where I characterize philosophy in terms of truth and wisdom: "'its love and quest of wisdom is not merely a verbal affair; it is a way of life' […] because wisdom requires not only 'a set of wise truths or sayings' but also 'wise ways of feeling and acting in the world'."

In *Practicing Philosophy*, after examining the philosophical lives and writings of three great contemporary philosophers (Dewey, Wittgenstein, and Foucault), I faced the question of defining the philosophical life. I argued that just as philosophy is an essentially complex and contested concept, so

> "the concept of philosophical life is likewise essentially complex and contested," and not only in its requirements of what it reads and writes.
>
> Philosophical life is further complex and contested in having dimensions apart from writing, which, as we saw, can be exemplified in rival ways and different degrees by different philosophers. Complex, contested "range concepts" like that of art or democracy are more usefully treated with a logic of gradations than of categorical "Yes-No" demarcations. Futile debates about whether a particular government is really democratic can be transformed into more specific, answerable questions like: "Is it more or less democratic than some other regime and with respect to which dimensions of democracy?" The gradable approach thus directs us to more fruitfully concrete questions of how to render the problematic government more democratic.
>
> In thinking about philosophy and the philosophical life, such a gradable approach makes more sense. I can imagine someone who worked on philosophical theories of truth, meaning, or personal identity but did nothing about relating this work or any other disciplined thinking to the project of self-improvement. […] By the gradable approach, undertaking a philosophical life would not suddenly turn him into a *real* philosopher but simply into *more* of a philosopher; while leading that life with greater scope and devotion would make him still more of a philosopher. In this sense, one might consider Wittgenstein more of a philosopher than Frege or Quine, even if not a better or "truer" one. (…)
>
> The gradability of a multidimensional range concept also accommodates the fact that though the practice of philosophical life is open to everyone, those with more knowledge of philosophy's tradition can, *ceteris paribus,* practice it more fully and richly.

> Prizing useful pliability, pragmatism favors the gradable approach in preferring projects of melioration to rigid demarcation. Precisely defining the philosophical life (and its aesthetic model) is less useful and interesting than exploring strategies for practicing philosophy as ameliorative, aesthetic self-realization (Shusterman 1997, 63-64).

I hope this long citation helps relieve Faustino's concerns. If I devoted more attention to her comments than to those of the other contributors, it was because her comments were more extensive and critical.[7]

4. As Faustino focused on the book's first chapter, so Marcello Ghilardi concentrates on the final one, which he finds "very original and interesting" in the way it introduces the Chinese art of writing into the study of the philosophical life, whose tradition is generally defined and studied as a distinctively Western philosophical genre. But self-knowledge, self-cultivation, and self-transformation in the pursuit of wisdom also runs deep in Asian cultural traditions. Dr. Ghilardi understands how the book's study of the Chinese literati tradition continues my earlier work on Chinese philosophy as inspirational for the project of somaesthetics, citing my use of Confucian and Daoist thought regarding the somaesthetics of perception and action in my book *Thinking through the Body* (Shusterman 2012b, 197-215). I wholeheartedly agree with his view that we should be wary of essentialist generalizations about Asian cultures because they are often very different. Even if East Asian cultures developed through the strong influence of China, those cultures often significantly differ from China's (which is also pluralistic rather than uniform). Recently I illustrated these national divergences with respect to chopsticks and eating styles. Although China, Korea, and Japan all use chopsticks as the key eating utensil, these cultures differ distinctively in the style of their chopsticks and their eating styles with them, sometimes even to the point of strongly criticizing the eating style of these other cultures. For example, the Japanese sometimes characterize the Korean eating style as primitive and dog-like because Koreans do not use their hands to raise their rice bowls near to the mouth when eating with chopsticks (as Japanese do), but instead leave their bowls on the table. The Japanese critique this Korean

failure to hold and raise one's bowl in eating as similar to the way dogs eat from bowls by lowering their heads. Koreans critically reply by analogizing the Japanese raising of the rice bowl to the gesture of begging with a raised bowl (Shusterman 2023, 139-151).

Ghilardi is correct that I think that our language shapes our philosophical concepts and views. That is one reason why I introduced the term *soma* in developing somaesthetics, rather than speaking of "body-mind" as John Dewey did to combat the powerful dualistic tradition in Western philosophy that runs from Plato through Descartes and still thrives in contemporary thought. Claiming he did "not know of anything so disastrously affected by the tradition of separation and isolation as is this particular theme of body-mind," Dewey complained that "we have no word by which to name mind-body in a unified wholeness of operation" that characterizes human life. He therefore appealed to locutions like "body-mind" or "mind-body" to assert their oneness. But the duality of words remains; and although the hyphen connects the terms, it also visually separates them, suggesting residual distinction rather than fused unity (Dewey 1984, 27). The term "soma" escapes this difficulty by avoiding the terms "body" and "mind" that are indelibly marked or defined by dualism.

Ghilardi's remarks on language's influence on thought are mostly directed to the question of how the Chinese language or way of writing influences philosophical thought. He wonders whether the Chinese use of ideograms in writing instead of the Western practice of writing by phonemes could have had an important influence on Chinese thought. In particular, he speculates whether its use of ideograms frees Chinese thought from the Western, phonetic style of writing which creates "a split between the material, 'bodily' aspect of a word and its invisible, "spiritual" counterpart. Can we find here, *in nuce*, a graphic genesis of the platonic distinction of visible and intelligible, already inscribed in the alphabetic form of writing?" I tend to agree but would describe this differently. Western language and writing prioritize the phonetic or sound but recognize that, for the most part, the connection between a word's sound and its meaning is altogether arbitrary; This

leads Western thinkers to ground the meaning of a word by appeal to an idea in the mind that is associated with and evoked by the phonetic sound that represents it. Here is the source of our representational theories of language, knowledge, and mental life more generally. This centrality of the idea (as immaterial and located in the mind) supports the traditional mind/body dualism.

The primacy of the image in its writing further frees Chinese theory from our Western tendency to distinguish sharply between language and painting. Chinese ideograms are not what Ghilardi calls an "alphabetic practice" but more a painterly writing practice based on bodily action, because the characters are formed not simply in terms of a visual form but more importantly in terms of the order and direction of strokes of the brush. As there is no Chinese alphabet, traditional dictionaries were ordered by how many strokes the ideogram contained; and when characters had the same number of strokes, they were ordered in terms of the ordered primacy of particular strokes, beginning with the horizontal stroke (from left to right) that signifies the number 1: i.e., –. There are other ways in which Chinese language differs significantly from Indo-European languages and that find expression in different tendencies of philosophical outlook and doctrine than those predominant in Western thought. Chad Hansen provides a rewardingly detailed study of these topics (Hansen 1992, 30–54).

5. Thomas Leddy's contribution is the final text that calls for response in this symposium. Professsor Leddy correctly claims our philosophical views have a great deal in common, and he generously notes that his advocacy of pragmatism was inspired by my book *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, published in 1992. I happily recall that Tom has been a friendly and insightful critic of my work even before that book. Consider, for example, his paper discussing my treatment of organic wholes, which he published in 1991, when he was more a Nietzschean than a Deweyan (Leddy 1991). Because we are friends, and because he seems fed up with academic philosophical writing and considers himself (by "entering into retirement") no longer bound by its professional norms, Tom felt free to write his text in an unconventional form for a philosophical essay. He does this

explicitly, avowing: "This very essay I am writing now is an experiment in non-academic writing aware of itself as writing responding to reading." His text is a combination of personal confession and a list of sixteen questions addressed to me personally and directly, using the second person "you."

I am glad that Tom feels comfortable in addressing me and my book in that informal way because it demonstrates his recognition of the pragmatist pluralism and open-minded tolerance that I believe we share. However, some of his sixteen questions are very complex, some seem repetitive reformulations, and some of them are not at all clear to me. To clarify and answer all of them in my published response would be too long, tedious, and otiose for readers of this journal, so I will not address them all nor discuss them one by one in the order Tom lists them. Instead, I confine my comments to where Tom's remarks are clear to me and where my reply seems most helpful. I'm sure that Tom will graciously understand, and readers will be grateful.

Tom admits that his questions are largely motivated by his interest in everyday aesthetics, and he notes the overlap between somaesthetics and everyday aesthetics. I appreciate Tom's work in everyday aesthetics, and I believe his approach to the topic in his fine book *The Extraordinary in the Ordinary: The Aesthetics of Everyday Life* is superior to the alternative approach that instead highlights the ordinary as ordinary. In fact, my studies of the powers of mindfulness to reveal the extraordinary in the ordinary (through examples from Zen life in Japan) take the same approach as Tom's (see, for example, Shusterman 2008; and Shusterman 2012b, 288-314). For that reason (and taking up another of Tom's questions), I would also prefer an approach to everyday aesthetics that is more than simply descriptive. The pragmatist impulse is meliorative. Description may be the first step (and is often a necessary first step) in the task improving our experience of everyday activities. We need to know what we do and how we do it in order to see how we might do it differently and better. But I don't see how we can be satisfied with our everyday activities and our ordinary experience as truly described in our largely unhappy world, a world where the everyday lives of too many

people suffer from too much poverty, pain, injustice, oppression, and war. Pragmatism has the melioristic ideal that our everyday experience should be better and that philosophy can help by enabling us to see and understand things better, which includes perceiving more clearly our problems so that we can address them with more intelligence. For this reason, discomfort is an important factor in somaesthetics; it serves as a stimulus for improvement.

Along with the considerable overlaps between somaesthetics and everyday aesthetics there are some differences. One is a difference in scope. Somaesthetics, as Alexander Kremer and others have argued, is not just a subfield of aesthetics; it is a broader philosophy (Kremer 2022). In fact, it is an interdisciplinary research field that extends beyond the discipline of philosophy, for example in the field of Human-Computer Interactive Design (see Höök 2018). This implies that while there are overlaps between somaesthetics and philosophy, the two fields are not the same. In any case, *Philosophy and the Art of Writing* concentrates on writing and the philosophical life rather than on somaesthetics per se, which comes into focus only in the final chapter. The book's concentration on writing aimed to complement the way the tradition of the philosophical life emphasizes nontextual ways of displaying one's philosophical views and art of living through one's behavior and appearance. Consider, for example, the way Diogenes the Cynic (as Foucault describes him) displays the truth of his philosophy by his scandalous behaviour and primitive way of life, or the way I have experimented nontextually with the askesis of self-transformation through the performance art of the Man in Gold, the philosopher without words.

I now turn to some of Tom Leddy's other questions. Why did I focus on the philosophical use of *writing* rather than on *conversation* (which is more like everyday discourse), and why did I not take Socrates as the philosophical ideal? On the first issue, *Littera scripta manet*. Unlike conversation, the written word remains, so writing can better preserve and sustain philosophical ideas, even if, as Plato argues in the *Phaedrus*, dialogue is better for clarifying issues. In fact, Socrates became

what he is for philosophy through the written testimony and creative interpretations of him in the writings of Plato, Xenophon, and others who immortalized him in textual tribute. Writing is undeniably central to the tradition of philosophy and even to the tradition of the philosophical life. That is why writing is the focus of my book.

Tom draws some hastily articulated distinctions between what he calls writing and Writing or writing and literature. I find those distinctions too vague and confusing to address them with any clarity. What I can say is that I see a continuum between writing that is more literary and writing that is more philosophical, just as there is continuity between literature that is more factual and literature that is more concerned with imaginary worlds. As I argue in the book and as many others have shown before me, fictionality does not adequately distinguish the literary from the philosophical, because there are philosophical fictions and masterpieces of literary nonfiction. I also maintain that a philosopher should be concerned with good writing rather than merely with truth. There are at least two reasons why good writing is important for philosophy. First, the philosopher should not only care about her own knowledge of truth but should want to share those truths unselfishly with others, convincing others why those truths are true and how they could beneficially guide our conduct. Good writing is more attractive and more persuasive than bad writing. Second, if philosophy is understood as a critical meliorative art of living, then working to improve one's writing is a form of working on oneself, an askesis or perfectionist discipline, "a form of spiritual practice" in the painstaking struggle and rigorous critical revision of one's writerly expression. That is how the prizewinning novelist Charles Johnson understood my approach in *Philosophy and the Art of Writing*: "Where else in life do we get the chance—the privilege and blessing—to lovingly selflessly go over something again and again until it finally embodies exactly what we think and feel, our best expression, our vision at its clearest, and our best technique? (Johnson 2023, 408).

Good writing, as I understand it, includes good style. But there are a variety of good styles, including good

philosophical styles. I cannot pretend here to outline their variety. This is partly because style, as I have argued elsewhere, is not a matter of superficial cosmetics or external covering that we simply add to something given, here philosophical content. We sometimes distinguish between substance and style in writing, but we cannot fully separate the two. Good style goes deeper than mere surface ornament and partly shapes the content it stylizes. I would affirm, however (to answer another of Tom's paper), that the writing of professional philosophers would be better, *ceteris paribus*, if it had better style. It would be more attractive, more communicative, and thus (*ceteris paribus*) more persuasive. Style is something one can usefully learn from writers with whom one disagrees, even when those disagreements (in substance and style) are severe. We learn as much from bad examples we choose not to follow as from the good examples we emulate. As Confucius put it long ago in the *Analects*: "When I walk along with two others, they may serve me as my teachers. I will select their good qualities and follow them, their bad qualities and avoid them" (Legge 1893, 66).[8]

This point leads directly to another complex issue that Tom's questions raise: the *meta*-issue concerning the relationship of my writing in this book to the kinds of writing that the book studies in the various authors it explores. Tom writes: "What is the relationship between your writing of this book and Writing? What are you trying to do with your explication of the various philosophers and philosophically-inclined Writers? On one level you are simply doing a survey of the field, namely that of the relation between writing and philosophy, one in which there are many overlaps. In that regard your book is almost a model of good professional behavior […] something that a graduate student could follow. For example, you accurately describe the theories in the field and put them in historical context. And you use a wide range of author quotes which themselves are well-cited. But I believe you want to be read differently, i.e. more as a Writer."

These questions strike me as problematically misinformed. They presuppose a sharp distinction between (what Tom calls) writing and Writing, but this distinction is

foreign to my thinking. I instead see a continuum of writing styles, ranging from the very literary, imaginative, or personally poetic way of expressing philosophical ideas and questions all the way to the very impersonal style of rigorous, linear philosophical argumentation. Along that continuum I see examples of attractive and unattractive writing. Near one end we find Montaigne as an example of very personal, confessional writing that has poetic grace and wit but that addresses very serious philosophical questions and critically surveys some of the traditional answers to them. On the other end, there is Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, which, although a work of rigorous, linear argumentation devoid of literary ornament, is nonetheless an example of attractive writing that powerfully expresses through its very austerity the personal poetic and philosophical attitude of its author.

I also would not favor a dichotomizing distinction between professional philosophical writing and writing that reaches an audience beyond academic philosophy, even if there seems to be a clear distinction of style between texts in professional journals of philosophy and texts in typical trade publications. Sometimes, however, we find interviews in scholarly journals or books that have a direct, conversational style that one finds in nonprofessional writing. In any case, I do not find it distressing that my "book is almost a model of good professional behavior," although I wish Tom would have told me what it lacked to become a genuinely or fully good model. I am happy to be read as a good professional philosopher, because I think the best professional philosophers should be good writers. My book notes that the hardcore analytic philosophy professor Bertrand Russell won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Even if the Prize was likely the result of his popular essays, there was a continuum in his writing between the popular and the more scholarly, which we can see in his bestselling *A History of Western Philosophy* and in his epistemological work, *Our Knowledge of the External World as a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy*, which was based on his 1914 Lowell lectures, given to the general public. Tom is right that my book points to the limits of conventional professional practice with its tendency to focus only on reading

and writing philosophy rather than more fully practicing philosophy as a deeply embodied art of living. But I also value the professional practice of philosophy in its conventional textual forms. I would not be here without it, and the thrust of my critique is melioristic rather than condemnatory. For that reason, some commentators have considered me too nice in my critique of the profession and instead prefer to condemn its elite as "assholes" (Auxier 2023, 403-424).[9] That is not my literary or philosophical style of meliorist critique and pluralistic, tolerant open-mindedness. I think less brutal means are more effective for genuine persuasion through careful analysis; a transformation of views and attitudes that comes from attraction rather than crushing attack.

Because he fails to fully appreciate my pluralism and fails to see that my book's core topic was not writing per se but the role of writing in philosophy as a way of life, Tom also fails to understand my interest in Kierkegaard. "While reading your book I found myself wondering 'why spend time with Kierkegaard given that, although a Writer, he is clearly far from pragmatism?'". Advocating pragmatism was certainly not the aim of the book. Its aim was instead to explore the use of writing in philosophy as a way of life. Kierkegaard was not merely a master of writing; he also lived an inspiringly singular and paradigmatic philosophical life. John Dewey also provides an inspiring model of philosophical life, one that is very different from Kierkegaard's and that I analyze along with Wittgenstein's and Foucault's as different contemporary paradigms of the art of living.

Tom, however, suggests an explanation for my interest in Kierkegaard: "you are imitating Kierkegaard by taking on a series of masks," with "each philosopher/writer discussed [in the book] being a mask that you successively put on and take off… You then leave it up to your reader to synthesize "Shusterman" or "Shusterman's view" from paying careful attention to each of his masks, as we often do with Plato, whose various characters may also be seen as masks." Tom's remarks here are insightful but also misleading. His genuine insight is that this book reflects my own personal views on how to live a philosophical life, but does so only indirectly through my

commentary on the views and lives of the authors I discuss. *Philosophy and the Art of Writing* offers no apology or analysis of my own *bios* in philosophy, something that I've occasionally attempted on a very small scale with respect to certain dimensions of my life (Shusterman 1997, 179-195; and Shusterman 2002).

Tom's remarks, however, are misleading in using the notion of mask to define this indirect approach. I am not trying to hide anything in the way that Kierkegaard tried to hide his very personal beliefs and his existential religious agons. Nor am I trying to win over converts by painting a romantic picture of what I write and who I am, although I know that dramatizing a philosopher's life can attract readers to that philosopher's texts. There is a powerfully long tradition of philosophical heroism that we can trace back to Socrates and the idea of *parrhesia*.[10] I admire courage and have a taste for romance. However, as announced in the book's Preface: "Above all, as a philosopher and a writer, I seek to be honest" (xii). I acknowledge that honesty, in writing and in life, is not always easy, even when it does not require impressively dramatic heroism.

NOTES

[1] Shusterman's book *Philosophy and the Art of Writing*, being the object itself of the present Symposium (and thus the text constantly taken into consideration in the Introduction and in all the papers), has not been cited in the Bibliography. The quotations from *Philosophy and the Art of Writing* are simply indicated by the page numbers in brackets.

[2] As brought to my attention by Barbara Salij-Hofman. For the first inscription, see Sosnowski and Tylus (2012, 158); see also Łanuszka (2020). On the second inscription, see Klint (2019, 22).

[3] As brought to my attention by Ilia Huniak.

[4] The connection between Foucault and my philosophical thought is explored in Antoniol and Marino (2024).

[5] I am citing from Eliot (1930, 601). In the same essay, Eliot suggests that "we terminate our enjoyment of the arts in a philosophy, and our philosophy in a religion—in such a way that the personal to oneself is fused and completed in the impersonal and general, not extinguished, but enriched, expanded, developed and more itself by becoming more something not itself" (Eliot 1930, 599). Here we see Eliot's flexibility of distinctions, even between the fundamental contrast of self and other.

[6] Such attitudes preoccupied with asserting philosophy's distinction reflect a traditional macho philosophical hubris, which I find increasingly disturbing, and which may have originated from the initial Socratic-Platonic drive to have philosophy replace the cultural hegemony of poetry in ancient Greece.

[7] Faustino's text derives from an even more extensive discussion that she delivered at a symposium (containing also four other papers) on *Philosophy and the Art of Writing*, held at the Culture Lab of the Nova Institute of Philosophy of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa on 26.4.2023

[8] The Ames and Rosemont translation of the passage (which they number instead as 7:22) goes as follows: "In strolling in the company of just two other persons, I am bound to find a teacher. Identifying their strengths, I follow them, and identifying their weaknesses, I reform myself accordingly." Ames and Rosemont (1998, 116).

[9] My more gentle approach in critique and persuasion is noted by the Italian philosopher, Salvatore Tedesco, where he explicitly contrasts my style to Nietzsche's by describing it as "a technique recalling Chinese acupuncture rather than Nietzschean hammering." See Tedesco (2013, 5)

[10] I discuss the tradition of philosophical heroism and *parrhesia* in two recent papers, Shusterman (2024a) and Shusterman (2024b). I have learned from my own publishing experience that in cultures where the marketing of philosophical books deploys newspaper and magazine articles as means of promotion, those articles often highlight interesting features of the philosopher's *bios* almost as much as the philosophical content of the book reviewed.

REFERENCES

Ames, Roger and Henry Rosemont (trans.). 1998. *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation*. New York: Ballantine.

Antoniol, Valentina and Stefano Marino (eds.). 2024. *Foucault's Aesthetics of Existence and Shusterman's Somaesthetics: Ethics, Politics, and the Art of Living*. London: Bloomsbury.

Auxier, Randall. 2023. "Philosophy as a Thief?." *Metaphilosophy* 54(4): 403-424.

Dewey, John. 1984. "Body and Mind." In *The Later Works of John Dewey*, edited by Jo Ann Boydston, vol. 3, 25-40. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Eliot, Thomas S. 1930. "Poetry and Propaganda." *Bookman* 70.

_____. 1957. *On Poetry and Poets*. London: Faber.

_____. 2013. *The Letters of T. S. Eliot, Volume 4: 1928-29*. Edited by Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden. London: Faber and Faber.

_____. 2015. "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca." *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition: Literature, Politics, Belief, 1927–1929*. Edited by Frances Dickey, Jennifer Formichelli, and Ronald Schuchard. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1997. *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Vol. 1: Ethics*. Edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: The New Press.

Foucault, Michel. 2011. *The Courage of the Truth*. Translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1986. *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hadot, Pierre. 2002. *What is Ancient Philosophy?* Translated by Michael Chase. Cambridge: Belknap.

Hansen, Chad. 1992. *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Höök, Kristina. 2018. *Designing with the Body: Somaesthetic Interaction Design*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Johnson, Charles. 2023. "The skillful means and meanings of philosophy: Attention and immersion in the philosophical art of writing." *Metaphilosophy* 54(4): 403-414.

Kremer, Alexander. 2022. "From Pragmatism to Somaesthetics as Philosophy." In *Shusterman's Somaesthetics: From Hip Hop Philosophy to Politics and Performance Art*, edited by Jerold Abrams, 44-60. Leiden: Brill.

Łanuszka, Magdalena. 2019. "The Old Annals of the Holy Cross: A Story about the Work of Medieval Scribes." In *The First/ The Oldest in the Collections of the National Library of Poland*, edited by Miłosz Sosnowski. Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa.

_____. 2020. *Rocznik świętokrzyski dawny – opowieść o pracy średniowiecznych skrybów* ["The Old Annals of the Holy Cross: A Story about the Work of Medieval Scribes"]. https://blog.polona.pl/2020/01/rocznik-swietokrzyski-dawny-

opowiesc-o-pracy-sredniowiecznych-skrybow/. Accessed 22 May 2023.

Leddy, Thomas. 1991. "Moore and Shusterman on Organic Wholes." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 49(1): 63-73.

_____. 2011. *The Extraordinary in the Ordinary: The Aesthetics of Everyday Life*. Peterborough: Broadview.

Legge, James (trans.). 1893. *Confucian Analects*. Volume I of *The Chinese Classics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Sosnowski, Roman and Piotr Tylus. 2012. *Co mówią stare rękopisy* [What do the old manuscripts tell us?]. e-Fibula. Wydział Filologiczny Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w Krakowie.

Shusterman, Richard. 1982. "Aesthetic Blindness to Textual Visuality." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 41(1): 87-96.

_____. 1997. *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life*. New York: Routledge.

_____. 1988. *T. S. Eliot and the Philosophy of Criticism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

_____. 1994. "Eliot as Philosopher." In *Cambridge Companion to T. S. Eliot*, edited by A. David Moody, 31-44. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____. 1999. "Somaesthetics: A Disciplinary Proposal." *The Journal of Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 57(3): 299-313.

_____. 2002. "Regarding Oneself and Seeing Double: Fragments of Autobiography." *The Philosophical I: Personal Reflections on Life in Philosophy*, edited by George Yancy, 1-21. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

_____. 2008. "Art and Religion," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 42(3): 1-18.

_____. 2011. "Soma and Psyche," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 24(3): 205-223.

_____. 2012a. *Thinking through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____. 2012b. "Body Consciousness and Performance: Somaesthetics East and West." *Thinking through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____. 2016. (with photo images by Yann Toma). *Les Aventures de l'homme en or / The Adventures of the Man in Gold*. Paris: Hermann.

_____. 2020. "Somaesthetics in Context." *Kinesiology Review* 9(3): 245-253.

_____. 2021a. *Ars Erotica: Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____. 2021b. "Pragmatism and Sex: An Unfulfilled Connection." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society: A Quarterly Journal in American Philosophy* 57(1): 1-31.

_____. 2023. "Chopsticks and the Haptic Aesthetics of Eating." *Comparative Everyday Aesthetics: East-West Studies in Contemporary Living*, edited by Eva K.W. Man and Jeffrey Petts, 139-151. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

_____. 2024a. "Somaesthetics and the Philosophical Life." In *Foucault's Aesthetics of Existence and Shusterman's Somaesthetics: Ethics, Politics, and the Art of Living*, edited by Valentina Antoniol and Stefano Marino. London: Bloomsbury.

_____. 2024b. "Foucault and Somaesthetics: Variations on the Art of Living." *Foucault Studies*.

Addresses:
Richard Shusterman
Florida Atlantic University
777 Glades Road, Boca Raton, Florida, USA
E-mail: shuster1@fau.edu

Stefano Marino
Department of the Arts (DAR)
University of Bologna
Via Barberia 4, Bologna, Italy
E-mail: stefano.marino4@unibo.it

Elena Romagnoli
Via P. Paoli n. 15. 56126 - Pisa (Italy)
E-mail: elenaromagnoli91@gmail.com