

Of physical education and use of the self: aesthetic-political exercises of the modern somatic culture¹

Zandra Pedraza Gómez*

Abstract: This article reviews the role of physical education and corporeal techniques in modern anthropology throughout the 20th century. The somatic education proposed by corporeal techniques—such as the Alexander technique, bio-energetic techniques, and Pilates method—is interpreted as an element of aesthetic politics, which offers the possibility of transforming physical education experiences and conceives aesthetic education through the expansion of qualities subjective to self-knowledge.

Keywords: Human Body. Kinesthesia. Aesthetic. Psychophysics.

1 Physical education in modern somatic culture

One of the most explored subjects in corporal studies is the one that stems from the reflections made by M. Foucault, concerning the ways of disciplining the body through anatomic-political technologies. Many authors and researchers in Colombia and other Latin American countries have carefully studied the question that establishes the normalization of resources employed during the second half of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th, specifically in establishments like prisons, nursing homes, hospitals, factories, and schools. In these establishments, the exercise of power was contingent specifically upon the body, which is understood as an organism obedient to anatomical and physiological principals. However, it is also capable of instilling in the individual a condition of docility and submission, which is a product of fear as well as of habit caused by the panoptic principal. It is understood that the power of discipline is effective because it causes individuals to carry out concrete activities that compromise movement as well as the subjective interpretation of the meaning of the activities being completed. Added to these tasks is the panoptic principal, which states that when individuals are being watched, they internalize a task until not only the way in which the task is performed but also the meaning the task has for the individuals becomes natural. In this way, subjective qualities are created that make people docile: little by little forming and transforming, until they have adjusted themselves and responded to the principles of social sanction that are ruled under a specific disciplinary regimen.

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* Ph. D. Historical and Pedagogical Anthropology, Frei Universität Berlin. Associate Professor of the Department of Anthropology. Universidad de los Andes. Bogotá, D.C. Colombia. E-mail: zpedraza@uniandes.edu.co.

Several authors have analyzed the types of power exerted in schools within this principle and in relation to Latin American studies of the body. I emphasize physical education studies among these.² It is clear that schools have been and still are, at times, a place and an institution where corporeal education is converted into a visible subject—one that is talked about, one for which programs and activities are designed, and one that is a main concern for the schools. Several academic activities relate directly to corporeal education, in both positive and negative ways, and through these, some of the activities performed favor certain aptitudes and control other aptitudes that do not follow an idealized norm.

Interest in physical education comes, in great part, from the relationship it has with the diverse pedagogic orientations that have characterized it, in keeping with capitalist production, with hygienic discourse, and with the use of time and training of the body within the parameters of health, discipline, and efficiency (ULMANN, 1966; SOARES, 2001). This indicates that physical education is one of the disciplinary mechanisms of modern anthropology (LE BRETON, 1990). However, it is important not to lose sight of physical education's main pedagogic purpose, which does not only encourage knowledge of the body and its multiple expressive or aesthetic possibilities, but also proposes to be an instrument of self-knowledge. The function of school "physical education" should concentrate on three areas. First, it should guarantee good health, even if this is understood as a result of hygienic practices—among which movement is included—or as a moral correlation for the adequate channeling of human passions through specific ways of organizing movement. A second function of physical education is the formation of character and personality through exercises that promote rhythm, work and teamwork, and motor abilities. Finally, exercises should balance and contrast the negative effects of urbanization and, specifically, of sedentary life—intrinsic of a panoptic regimen—and, therefore, of school itself (LARROSA, 1995). The gymnastic methods of weightlifting and sports became popular throughout the 19th century and in the 20th century became more popular due to scientific arguments generated by new physiological and medical knowledge (VIGARELLO and HOLT, 2005).

² These can be consulted, among others; Aisenstein, 1998, 2003, and 2007; Chinchilla, 2001 and 2002; García, 2003; Pedraza (comp.), 2007; Rodríguez, 2007; Soares, 2001.

Modern education programs emphasize lessons about the body. Early discussions about the educational character of human beings and the appropriate ways to contribute to human transformation, that is to say, through pedagogy, by giving the body attention and specific treatment, gained ground once it became a necessary subject and an essential element of academic formation. However, from Rousseau's naturalistic methods to the formalization of physical education through the conventions of calisthenics, military evolution, rhythmic gymnastics, acrobatic gymnastics, and sports, there is a concern that the body may come to be determined by a standardized form, consistency, resistance, and specific abilities. The moral, productive, spiritual, and cognitive configuration of each individual must be taken into account, and this has been the effort of modern somatic education, which also understands the possibility of altering the destinies of not only the individual but of society and the nation. These are the views of what I call modern somatic culture (PEDRAZA, 1998).

In this somatic culture, a number of activities come together to give shape, appearance, movement, and meaning to the human body. In somatic culture, we identify ways of understanding the body in its anatomical and physiological sense, and we employ these characteristics to affect human character through the acquisition of the urban canon, hygienic norms, adequate use of movement, or hyper-aesthetic experience. Less tangible considerations that also are part of the modern somatic culture include those which use the senses—sight, smell, touch, hearing—and must be taken into consideration to guarantee knowledge, correct understanding, and moral integrity. These objectives can be achieved by actions that seek to equal the meaning of what is seen as the object, what is smelled as the moral constitution, and what is heard as the truth. The effort to establish agreement between essence and appearance can be achieved from aesthetic considerations and experiences that must translate a person's moral and social conditions. Linked inseparably to these intentions are human properties and physiognomical expressions, personal appearance, dress, gestures, and gesticulations.

The ways of using the body categorized as physical education represent one of the ways in which modern somatic culture can be expressed. Its clearest characteristic is that it is strictly associated to school education and pedagogic knowledge (NOT, 1979), that is to say, it serves as a tool for intellectual formation, the performance of which is improved

precisely due to the effect of physical education (ULMAN, 1966, p. 42). This does not allow us to ignore that some of its modalities emerged and organized in environments other than that of a school, as was the case of military evolutions, acrobatic gymnastics, and rhythmic gymnastics. In spite of having been created outside the school, these modalities were adopted to strengthen the purposes of physical education throughout its evolution (SOARES, 2001).

The objectives of physical education should be understood as products of a contemporary effort to perfect the human condition, in particular, for the importance given to the body in this purpose and due to the properties recognized within the moral model of anatomy-physiology, which affect the intellectual, moral, or spiritual constitution of human beings. In this sense, physical education is considered one of the pedagogic resources that reveal the well-known body-and-mind duality of modern anthropology. There is also a relationship and direct communication between the physical and immaterial human features. This paradox has developed a critical somatic culture, just like the anthropological developments parallel to the dual anthropologies, which along with Alain, Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty, explore the characteristics of a unified conception of the human condition.

Physical education can be understood as a catalogue of pedagogic resources. In general, such resources are placed within the notion of pedagogic mechanism for they group together a set of procedures, in this case physical—in the strict sense—whose direct effect falls upon the anatomic and physiologic constitution. Since certain movements (practiced with required rhythm, intensity, periodicity, harmony, energy, and form) affect this constitution, this effect is not limited to physical health; it compromises the condition of the human being, especially, its moral features and character.

In particular, during the peak of physical education methods during the last two decades of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, these effects focused on several aspects among which the general condition of a person's health stands out. Physical education properties were less important than hygienic needs and interpretations. With the resurgence of evolutionary theories and later development of eugenicist principles, physical education experienced a peak. Its effects, besides falling back upon individual constitution, laid the grounds for national health and well-being (DÍAZ, 2001; HERRERA, 2001; PEDRAZA, 1997 and 2001, STEPAN, 1991).

In order to attribute similar social range to activities performed individually, these must be given adequate time and introduced as a main method to guiding one's life (BUITRAGO; HERRERA, 1999; PEDRAZA, 2001). It is thus possible to move away from idleness and vice because the regular practice of systematic movements requires order and discipline forms character, according to the modern temple's parameters of strength, honesty, sobriety, and morality. The increase in work capacity, therefore, is the result of an individual's improved health, motor coordination, mechanical mobility, rhythm, and a relationship with movements used in gymnastics, performed with the same desire. In general, the regulation of work time and, therefore, the increased availability of the population's time, emerged from the need to guarantee a social, and morally adequate use of the body, which conveniently channels individual energy towards social well-being and plots the dangers associated to idleness.

For women, in particular, motives such as acquiring a harmonious figure, overcoming the lethargy caused by the passivity of domestic life, and preparing for gestation, childbirth, and children, are added to the positive effects associated to physical education. The education of children has benefited them through stimulating principles of discipline, harmony, and coordination. With these aptitudes, the health of the senses has a solid base to improve knowledge and intellectual capacities. Other variants, such as sports practiced to stimulate the gifts of the industrialized and business elites, and the arrogant character of the capitalist, were motives that have received full attention.

The virtues derived from physical education should be understood as part of a somatic culture in which the formation of the individual is strictly linked to an education whose effects on the human condition come from the rational attitude with which techniques are designed and the body is exercised. Activities characteristic of physical education follow a format that creates and shapes the human in function of a group of social and symbolic needs to which one must adjust, and are guided by strict and defined parameters of output, efficiency, and efficacy. Physical education depends on a series of measures that convert the triumph of the activity and that, in keeping with its name, follow the principal of mechanical physics (PEDRAZA, 1996; VIGARELLO; HOLT, 2005).

Physical education may also be understood as a mechanism of bio-power. As part of this, physical education was introduced to the curriculum to attend to the needs and

deficiencies identified within several sectors of the population, which at the time were considered necessary to promote progress. In particular, physical education became part of the private and public health project, stimulated by Latin American countries between 1865 and 1945 (AISENSEN, 1998, 2003, 2007; CHINCHILLA, 2001 and 2002, GARCÍA, 2003; OLIVEIRA, 2007; RODRÍGUEZ, 2007). In its improvement, the discipline was influenced by the evolution of pedagogic perspectives and by the advancement of anatomical and physiological knowledge as well as the physiology of movement and hygiene, which together gave basis to its consolidation as a school subject.

2 Subjectivity emerges from the body

While physical education was being incorporated into the school curriculum as a subject that transmits experience through muscular strength, in other cultural scopes alternative forms of movement were being proposed, oriented less towards physical output and more towards appreciating expressive and reflexive possibilities of the body and the senses. These forms of education through movement allow us to examine the distinct facets of what meaning the body has as a modern anthropological instance and as a resource for self-comprehension and education of the human being. Although many orientations sought alternatives to the rigid discipline model of school education, others emerged from the advances of psychosomatic medicine and the vanguard artistic scene. Few were formally adopted by academic pedagogy, despite the search for an educational aesthetic with integrity and socially transforming capabilities (HARTEN, 1997; NOT, 1979), which has been one of the great dreams of pedagogy (WULF, 1985). It has flourished because it has been sustained, in good part, by the ideal of offering a somatic¹ education that is less restrictive and more apt to promote diverse forms of knowledge and experiences that favor knowledge and fairer and more humane social relationships.

In continuation, I explore how several alternatives of somatic education have detached from physical education or have emerged parallel to it throughout the past century. The essence of these orientations, expressed through a number of techniques that have expanded within the last decades, is the “use of self,” a notion that I interpret as one of the “technologies of I,” that is to say, a mechanism that, through the exercise of specific movements and an attitude attentive to them, stimulates subjective activity. These types of

technologies resort to corporeal exercise in order to awaken the conscience, increase self-knowledge, expand self-expression, and achieve self-comprehension. These aims are achieved by activating the sense of kinesthesia. By proposing these exercises, somatic education moves away from those that stimulate strength, rhythm, and muscular strain in physical education. Alternative body techniques seek to alleviate the kinesthetic anesthesia induced by schools and reverts its effects to educate integral, conscientious, and autonomous students in the sense that these promote emancipatory pedagogies (NOT, 1979) and, in addition, and they are capable of promoting creative, imaginative, and idealistic imaginations, as understood by utopist pedagogies (HARTEN, 1997).

This evolution of somatic culture corresponds to the apogee of vitalism, holism, and ecology, which began at the end of the 19th century. These currents were placed in effect to balance the negative effects of rationality, utilitarianism, and individuality, produced by not knowing and not giving value to subjective experiences as a possible and useful form of knowledge. Since then “integral thinking” tendencies have sought to give more epistemological strength to synthetic, organic, aesthetic, ecologic, and subjective perspectives (GLOY, 1996). In somatic education, this translates into the introduction of specific movement techniques and attentiveness to its effects.

The proposal of an organic somatic culture connected to such corporeal techniques, shares some of the principles of integral thought such as that of not reducing the explanations of the organic world to the mechanical laws of physical, chemical, and physiological regularities. This idea marks a distance between alternative corporeal techniques and physical education. An organic somatic culture prefers the comprehensive models that explain psychophysical feats according to biological considerations, namely, those whose effects fall upon the organism and cannot be reduced to a sum of partial results. This somatic education is inclined to accept an integral conception of life, whose principal of action is the formation of individuals aware of their organic condition, separate from their psychophysical complex.

Corporeal techniques capable of promoting this subjective constitution correspond to a technology of I. This technology “[...] allows individuals to carry out, by themselves or with the help of others, a certain number of body and soul operations, such as thoughts, conduct, or any way of being, obtaining a self-transformation with the purpose of reaching

a certain state of happiness, purity, knowledge, or immortality” (FOUCAULT, 1996, p. 48). In agreement to this, the use of the self, due to its technical psychophysical condition, offers “[...] nothing less than the perspective of a more rational domain of our conduct” (MEISEL, 1969, p. 18).

There is a similarity between this notion and those of the *technology of I, self-culture, and self-conscience*, which prevail over Foucault’s hermeneutics of the subject. It is worth pointing out that *use of the self* was proposed in 1932 by F. Matthias Alexander to describe “[...] the characteristic and habitual way of using and moving the body; the action of relating one part of the body to another in response to the circumstances and the medium” (BARLOW, 1986, p. 227). This use of the self is the objective known today as the Alexander technique, whose interest is *kinesthesia*, in other words, use. In *kinesthesia* it is important to point out that the use of the self does not end with what can be defined as posture; instead, it emphasizes expression in movement, in functioning. Through a kinesthetic conscience, it is possible to establish a “model of consciously structured use” (BARLOW, 1986, p. 117), which can be obtained by “[...] consciously projecting onto oneself a thought sequence that corresponds directly to what the master induces into his/her musculature” (BARLOW, 1986, p. 117), that is, a perception of the use. Kinesthesia modifies this perception: “the general sensation of existence and state of the body, which results from a synthesis of simultaneous and not localized sensations, of different organs and particularly the abdominal and thoracic muscles” (RAE, 1992)

3 Corporeal techniques as technologies of the I

The notion of use of self that constitutes the Alexander technique, has gained recognition not only as a tool for artistic formation, but also as a psychotherapeutic resource and a method of subjective expansion. It marks a milestone of the 20th century towards the progress of corporeal techniques. The diffusion of its principles occurred through prominent figures such as John Dewey (1928), who, among others, employed these principles in pedagogic practice and incorporated them into theoretic postulates. As you will see, the notion and practice of the use of self have given them continuity in other corporeal techniques that occurred later on.

Using the notion of the use of self, Alexander and his followers composed a technique with the main objective of achieving trustworthy sensorial appreciation. It is worth mentioning that this proposal is eerily similar to that of hygiene of the senses. In this case, its purpose is to correct the legacy of hygiene of the senses, for the Alexander technique privileges internal senses over external ones, particularly kinesthesia. The influence of phenomenological conceptions is evident here. The exercises are performed so students have correct experiences that allow a trustworthy sensory appreciation to occur; however, not from the outside world, but from within themselves. An effort is made to achieve general coordination of the psychophysical mechanisms, an expression of which is respiration (ALEXANDER, 1969), whose expansion is obtained from the principle of “primary control”: the correct use of the head and neck.

The idea that a group of repressed emotions creates a shell that constrains individual expression emerged in the 1940s. In 1927, Wilhelm Reich developed orgasm therapy, founded upon the idea of freeing respiration. From this perspective emerged the principle of bioenergetics, a principle that has been most influenced by the theory of use of the self. I resort to this notion, which was not used by researchers after Alexander, to consider that this “use of self” is present in the inherent principles of other techniques, which share with Alexander’s technique, the need to achieve a self-consciousness through movement.

Reich’s postulate is based less on movement than it is on energy, whose savings create a balance that translates, finally, into the constitution of more or less tense muscular armor: the shell. The purpose of Reichian therapy (orgonomic therapy) is to stop energy from linking to this muscular armor so that individuals may be able to free themselves from it. In Reichian therapy, respiration is key, restoring the capacity to “[...] devote oneself completely to the involuntary and spontaneous movements of the body” (LOWEN, 1975, p. 21), a capacity that is directly proportional to emotional health. Alexander Lowen’s advances in Reichian therapy, which gave origin to bioenergetics in the 1950s, can be illustrated by the recognition that: “[...] it opened the path to self-realization for me and helped me achieve my goal. It deepened and invigorated my concentration as a basis of my personality. And it gave me a positive identification with my sexuality, which has become the rock of my life” (LOWEN, 1975, p. 24).

Without doubt, it maintains harmony with the objectives and forms of expression of the Alexander technique. Bioenergetics employs, not in its method, but in the liberating and pleasant purpose of the orgasmic reflex to act upon the personality and conviction of the need to breathe deeply:

The person feels what it is like to be free of inhibitions. At the same time, he/she feels connected and integrated to his/her body; and through the body, to his/her environment. The person also experiences a sensation of well-being and inner peace. In addition, the person acquires the knowledge that the life of the body resides in its involuntary aspect.” (LOWEN, 1975, p. 28)

Bioenergetics clearly expresses that life of individuals is the life of the body, that individuals are their bodies. It also indicates that the task of individuals is to balance the principles of pleasure and reality, and give way to self-expression, spontaneity, and liberation from anxiety and tension. The technique must be understood as a voyage towards self-discovery, in which one finds identity and freedom through specific movements that allow sensory and rational perception of the energy's effect and in which tensions and blocks can receive a balanced charge and flow of energy.

Additionally, bioenergetics employs the positioning of the hands introduced by Reichian therapy, and recognizes that this facilitates “[...] the freeing of feelings and corresponding recuperation of memories” (LOWEN, 1975, p. 24). This does not solely transform therapeutic notions and the meaning attributed to the body, but also the emotional condition of corporeal life.

In 1949, Moshe Feldenkrais's main text was published, and in this text, the principals of his method were presented. The Feldenkrais method shares with those that came before it an interest in employing movement to transform conscience and the conscience to transform movement. However, it also adds physical and mental conscience “[...] to explore the maximum potential inherent in each person” (FELDENKRAIS, 1985, p. 20) and obtain a conscientious attitude that allows for change and combines forms of action to increase efficacy, comfort, and well-being. The movements proposed by this component of self-consciousness of movement serve to identify “[...] which sensations should be given attention and how to reach motor function, a more ample conscience of self and a more precise self-image” (FELDENKREIS, 1985, p. 21). Functional integration, the second technique of the method, also employs, as do bioenergetics, positioning of the hands so the

student may also acquire consciousness of the peculiarities of the body's neuromotor functions "[...] and when it's time, it allows the individual alternative ways to control motor functions" (FELDENKRAIS, 1985, p. 21).

In the ideological apogee of the appearance of a new conscience in which conception of the body is a central element, one finds the eutonia of Gerda Alexander. The technique emerged in the first half of the 20th century and is based on the work of Matthias Alexander and Moshe Feldenkrais, among others (HENROTTE, 1976). "Eutonia proposes a search adapted to the western world to help today's humans reach a deeper conscience of their corporeal and spiritual reality as a true unit" (ALEXANDER, 1983, p. 23). Its principal of action is muscular toning and it seeks to acquire a harmonious and balanced tone, through links between the tone and what is lived, in the:

[...] direct relations and constant interactions between tone and brain activity. The tone is postural, characteristic of clonal muscles as well as of the neurovegetative system and the set of physiological regulations, and is in direct interrelation to our psyche." (Alexander, 1983, p. 23)

The tone is converted, then, into a corporeal manifestation of the conscious and subconscious components of personality. Again, touch and contact are the main resources of the technique. The first allows the organism to be defined and live exteriorly to allow identification with the self (ALEXANDER, 1983, p. 30); the second, surpasses the visible limit of the body to experience "[...] a more live relationship with beings and things" (ALEXANDER, 1983, p. 30).

The last technique, recently revived, is the Pilates method, created in the first half of the 20th century. It is the result of the work of Joseph Pilates (1880-1967), a German who overcame his own health limitations and helped soldiers wounded in war to recover from their wounds. The method was created to increase flexibility, muscle tone, and the plasticity and conscience of mind and body. Its principles of concentration, centering energy, control, precision, breathing, and fluid movement, promote resources for physical and mental training, because these consider "[...] the mind and the body a unit, dedicated to exploring the human body's potential of exchange" (APARICIO Y PÉREZ, 2005, p. 21). The aim of reaching complete coordination between body, mind, and spirit is achieved through careful muscular effort exerted through stretching and strengthening. Among its benefits is an

increase in self-confidence and mental balance. The Pilates method emphasizes control as a fundamental tool of self-government.

In every case, the corporeal techniques described trust the integral effects of breathing, energy, conscience, and attention. From this point of view, they are no different from the principles of modern corporeal epistemology. Instead, their intention is to activate the I through motor resources and make these an active part of the tasks that shape the person, in the same order that it proposes Vieira's (2004) notion of mobility as a dynamic process of knowledge acquisition and an effective element of self-structure.

4 Towards an aesthetic politics

Since the social theory of the body³ was founded, in good part, upon the postulates of Michel Foucault for an interpretive analysis of power (DREYFUS Y RABINOW, 2001), with the intent to modify modern somatic culture resultant of the disciplinary and regulatory practices of the anatomic-political and biopolitical regimes. This is a reaction to the epistemological principles that such types of exercise of power have instilled in the body and can be understood as part of an alternative regime. Part of this regime includes the welcoming of subjective and aesthetic interpretations to modify the exercise of power and affect social order through an integral somatic education. I propose that this should be understood as part of an aesthetically political somatic culture.

To propose an aesthetically political understanding of the human condition, it is necessary to recognize, first, the *ethos* of human existence, that is to say, one's feelings, moral nature, and the beliefs that guide a person's or group's behavior are adjusted by a set of resources that are within reach to be used by self-government (ROSE, 2001). The result of this is a life that responds to its own will and personal conviction, which also constitutes a resource available for aesthetic-political exercise. These forms of self-government are increasingly within the hands of the people, especially in regimes in which the actions of the State are intertwined with discourse of global circulation, but also where the effect of

³ Somatic education includes a set of significant activities that explicitly involve the body and which are performed as part of the formal socialization and education process, at home and in school as well as in other contexts, so that a somatic culture may exist effectively as a practical form of life. The somatic culture, on the other hand, includes the web of practices and discourses that make up people's experiences and it is given meaning from a symbolic and practical point-of-view in the personal plane, and at times, in the social. With respect to this subject, consult Pedraza (1998 y 2002).

the formative practices of modern somatic education loses vigor, as occurred when physical education in schools was recognized for its individual and social meaning and utility.

The types of individual intervention in their own subjective constitution are, therefore, linked to the imperatives of good government. This has happened through an anatomic-political discipline, after individual disposition—the habitus—has been deemed possible for government. This occurs after the institutions and mechanisms that have made it possible are established, and forms of popular government are normalized in the States through biopolitical controls that give the disciplined habitus the possibility or maybe even the illusion of having realized one's interests. In this perspective, one's judgment of one's self is emitted in relation to the daily manifestations of life itself (ROSE, 2001). The fact that this ethical-political self-government may be based upon the processes of discipline and regulation proposed by M. Foucault, is added to the subjective situation of those who attempt to harmonize their corporeal condition (in this case, specifically, kinesthesia) with the self-modeled labor of the self. This type of corporeal labor is assimilated to forms of aesthetic intervention that also follow the scope of corporality.⁴

From an aesthetic-political point-of-view, this conception of the use of the self, the technology of the I, amplifies and surpasses the initial notion of bio-politics for it includes in its definition something more than the elements of popular regulation eminently oriented to the production and reproduction of biological life. Because of this, it marks a difference in the scope of a person's exercise. In the case of aesthetically political resources, the will of the emotional components of subjectivity are available to be shaped through corporeal work, without subjecting them to specific political-territorial regimes. In this way, corporeal labor is one of the privileged techniques of self-cultivation and, consequently, a form of contemporary individual control that allows people—at least subjectively—to model and govern their own lives, since they give people a sense of emotional control and autonomy. Simultaneously, this corporeal labor forms part of a set of self-monitored activities that can be and are activated for political exercise in globalized contexts, as happens with anti-systematic ecological movements.

⁴ This is also the case of alternative medical therapy resources (PEDRAZA, 2007) or aesthical-surgical interventions (PEDRAZA, 2003)

The critical intention of these exercises with respect to modern somatic culture is what is emphasized in this paper. That is to say, it shows, within these alternative corporeal practices, the intention to denaturalize the disciplinary labor of physical education in schools and exposes it to the effect of self-knowledge. The deep trends of modern somatic education should be erased through the forging of subjective qualities cultivated for and by the use of the self, allowing for a new somatic culture.

These corporeal techniques seek to balance the upsets that result from a life lived in function of productivity and mechanicism. Against these are the principles that were built as a basis for the development of physical education such as output, savings, and channeling of energy, hygiene, and health, control of time and sexuality, guarantee of healthy reproduction, the shaping of a female body apt for maternity. Modern somatic criticism encourages, with the use of the self, a model of education that follows the principles of pedagogic methods of self-restructuring. By doing this, it emphasizes the transmission and accumulation of academic knowledge and intellectual dexterity; in exchange, it suggests an increase in rational capacity through movement and the awakening of emotional and reflexive conscience through a use of the self that emerges from the liberation of corporeal subjections and follows a path toward freedom.

5 The aesthetic-political dimension of subjectivity in contemporary somatic education

In 1978, Moshe Feldenkrais, presented Masters and Houston's method of psychophysical reeducation, based on his principles and those of Matthias Alexander. At the same time, he also emphasized his capacity to guide readers toward self-reeducation, in a way and in subjects that were not part of scholastic and academic education. In this case, it concerned a "true" education, capable of guiding a person to a new period of personality growth.

Feldenkrais also presented a book on the *afspaending* method, a method of corporeal realization. Alexander Lowen published it in 1984, and it was different from contemporary orientations because of its interest in the body. Both works were about the pursuit of a healthy body: the objective of achieving a body apt for action and filled with life and sensitivity. The objectives of output and efficiency are evidence of the mechanical vision of the first, while the second is:

[...] capable of completely expressing the feelings and emotions of the individual, and completely responding to the feelings of others. A body is characterized by its beauty and natural grace, by the flexibility of its posture and freedom of movement. Physical strength, resistance, and effectiveness of movement characterize the efficient body; its tonic is action, which inspires the sensitive body to feel this way. (LOWEN, 1989, p. 7)

The expansion and continuity of the psychophysical methods of education for somatic education have been embraced in Colombia as part of what is considered artistic education, legally prescribed by Law 115 of 1994, which means they have become regularly practiced in physical education classes. Education of the senses and the increase in perceptive capacity that promotes the use of the self, is based on a reduction of muscular compromise, elimination of tension, and an economy that lessens speed and seeks to maximize sensation and conscience to achieve a refinement of perception capable of modifying the relationship with one's self and one's surroundings (FORTÍN, 2001). The immersion into a world of feelings that provides the exploration of kinesthetic feeling as “[...] a warp of the sensorial texture; the dynamic corporeal index of personality” (ALEXANDER, 1969, p. 37), is the basis for the technology of the I of this somatic education. In addition, the learning and practice of corporeal techniques occupy the time of an increasing number of people interested in processes of emotional reeducation, use of the body, and rehabilitation. As a complement to parallel therapies such as bioenergetics and homeopathy, this technology of the I offers an alternative to methods of physical care and corporeal care, which are promoted through academic physical education and culture of the body offered by gymnasiums, aerobic techniques, and active life styles. The correcting effect that it has on disorders caused by sports, physical exercise, and work and movement habits, is one of the paradoxical causes of its mass consumption. These techniques incorporate corporeal criticism to modern somatic culture, constituting a somatic education based on the constitution of a subjectivity that is strengthened by the effect of the use of the self.

The use of modern corporeal techniques is a resource for transforming the experiences that we have with ourselves. In this experience, the interest in expanding subjective qualities seems to have developed as a central quality, which identifies for whom the transformation of the self has begun. The somatic analysis (HENROTTE, 1983) is

introduced by a pedagogic means that builds and measures the subject's relationship to his/her self. This would be a way to reeducate people of a subjective device that seeks to modify the anthropological premises of the modern model particularly found in schools, that is, a means for building an alternative experience of the self, built by the school through physical education. However, it would also offer a subjective base to alter the effects of bio-political forms of life control.

Within the forms of somatic education subjectivity established as a corporeal criticism to modern somatic culture, the nucleus of pedagogic activity occurs in the inside as a kinesthetic place. This place must be recognized in the reflective task as an experience that gives basis to subjectivity. In the inside is what leads the individual through techniques of the use of the self, facilitating conscious experimentation of the wealth of emotions of which it is constituted and identifying them as the nucleus of subjectivity: as a psychophysical feat.

Exploration of the affective world and the somatic effort channeled through corporeal techniques demonstrates a specific side of what can be understood as an aesthetic political exercise. It seems as if it deals with the intention to offset the effects of discipline and regulation of biopolitical action from the government. Two of its technologies of larger reach, hygiene and school—whose existence result from the work of disciplining the body, and therefore, population regulation—are questioned through corporeal techniques that modify the experience of the self, a basis of our anthropology, therefore, the foundational dissociation of body and soul, to which physical education has given substantial support.

This exploration of the self and wealth of self-knowledge that stimulates aesthetic political movement techniques is also a mechanism that promotes, within individuals, the capacity to recognize the body and see themselves as vulnerable and exposed entities. Aesthetic political forms of exercise increasingly appeal to the power that propels, among other things, healthy lifestyles, upon which the principles of self-sensibility for the consumption of goods and services that feed precisely the subjective constitution and operate, in time, new interventions. They welcome a market of techniques, services, and products created to satisfy needs that flourish due to this new sensibility and in midst of an excessive offer, require specialized knowledge and choices. With this, the habitus built on somatic education flourishes and the aesthetic political content is discovered.

The true possibilities of emancipation that can emerge from corporeal techniques, conceived for a new somatic education and based on subjective expansion, must be explored in studies and investigations. What, without doubt, constitutes the transformation of modern somatic culture is the growing exploration of the possibilities of subjective knowledge that can be experienced through corporeal labor, and the trust that can be found in human alternatives emanates from it. The psychophysical interior is explored, exposed, and shaped through aesthetic political exercises, employing the particular conjunction of anatomical, physiological, and kinesthetic knowledge with a body of interpretation capable of deciphering the world of emotional experiences that emerge with this particular use of the self. These exercises encourage subjective qualities capable of reconnecting the fragmented and separately ordered somatic experiences in anthropology and pedagogic methods left by the Illustration.

De la educación física y el uso de sí: ejercicios estético-políticos de la cultura somática moderna

Resumen: Este artículo revisa el papel de la educación física y de las técnicas corporales surgidas a lo largo del siglo XX en la antropología de la modernidad. La educación somática que proponen técnicas corporales como la técnica Alexander, la bioenergética y el método Pilates, se interpreta como elemento de una estética-política que ofrece la posibilidad de transformar las experiencias de la educación física y concibe una educación estética a partir de la expansión de las cualidades subjetivas para el autoconocimiento.

Palabras clave: Cuerpo humano. Cinestesia. Estética. Psicofísica.

O uso de si e a educação psicossomática.

Resumo: O artigo explora o papel da educação física na antropologia da modernidade bem como o papel das técnicas corporais surgidas ao longo do século XX. A educação somática proposta pela técnica Alexander, a bioenergética ou o método Pilates são interpretados como elementos de uma estética política que oferece a possibilidade de transformar as experiências de si e concebe uma educação estética com base na expansão das qualidades subjetivas para o auto-conhecimento.

Palavras-chave: Corpo humano. Cinestesia. Estética. Psicofísica

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