

RORTY'S AND SHUSTERMAN'S NOTION OF THE SELF*

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ABSTRACT: *We live in the age of narrative philosophy. This is especially important pertaining to the notion of the self, since it is a result of our personal narratives, in which the combination of self-esteem and self-identity plays a decisive role. After a general survey of these topics, I will show Rorty's particular application of the narrative identity theory both on the individual and the social level. In the second main part I will summarize Shusterman's criticism on Rorty's notion of the self and his own description of that which is rather an internarrative identity theory.*

Introduction

If we speak about Rorty's philosophy in the context of identity and self-esteem, it is worth taking a glance at the psychological connections first. Not only psychologists but also John Rawls, evaluate self-esteem highly. Most psychologists and psychotherapists agree that *self-esteem means the most fundamental relation to the essence of our self*. It is not identical with self-concept, self-confidence, self-assurance, but it is a much deeper, mostly non-discursive and a very personal relation to our existence.

According to Maarit Johnson of the Psychology Institute of Stockholm University, who has been studying self-esteem for quite a long time, there are two main sources of self-esteem, an external and an internal one. The theory of external roots goes back to William James's (1842-1910) psychology (especially his *Principles of Psychology*, 1890) where he claims that everything that can be seen as part of me (my competencies, my appearance, my family, my wealth) may be regarded as the source of my self-esteem (see Johnson, 2008, 16). The theory of the internal roots of self-esteem goes back to George Herbert Mead's (1863-1931) views (especially *Mind, Self and Society*, 1934). He claims that individual self-esteem is created by the reflective judgements of the beloved others, which are passively accepted. Here

Mead emphasized, first of all, unconditional maternal care and love. As Johnson notes, the consequences of these original theoretical roots are present in newer theories of self-esteem (through the traditional psychodynamic and socio-psychological schools to the modern social and cognitive theories (see Johnson, 2008, 18-25), but they highlight other (mostly genetic and environmental) factors as well. Johnson underscores the dynamic view of self-esteem functioning. She emphasizes that both the internal and the external factors influence the development of our self-esteem, and she creates a dynamic matrix, which is a combination of high and low external and internal classifications of self-esteem, which results in four different human types of self-esteem.¹

Before we combine the views on self-esteem with the views of identity, we obviously must define identity. What is identity, with regard to the self? I consider the most persuasive definition regarding self-identity, that it is *authenticity in the sense of the overlapping of our words and actions. The more my words and actions overlap, the more authentic I become*. Heidegger's theory of the authentic and inauthentic mode of Dasein's being can be mentioned here as the ultimate existential-ontological basis of this concept of authenticity.²

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¹ The matrix is: high external-high internal self-esteem = *happy achiever*; high external-low internal self-esteem = *compulsive achiever*; low external-high internal self-esteem = *pleasure-lover*; low external-low internal self-esteem = *the needy* (Johnson 42-44.).

² If we take a quick glance at the philosophical background, then I am persuaded that it would be really difficult to offer a better general philosophical basis of self-identity than the one offered by Heidegger's *Being and Time*. Heidegger contends that *Da-sein's* fundamental existential structure is being-in-the-world, and it has two fundamental modes of being: the inauthentic and the authentic mode of being. In his opinion, everybody lives primordially in the former one, but everybody is able to become an authentic *Da-sein* if she understands that her life is basically a *Sein zum Tode* (*being toward death*). I do not want to delve into the

If we combine now the views on self-esteem with the views on self-identity, it is possible to create a more general thesis about the relationship between these two. *I argue that there is a mutual relationship between self-identity and self-esteem. They can strengthen each other if their mutual feedback is mostly positive, but they may also weaken each other if they give permanently negative feedback to each other.*

Richard Rorty

As it is well-known, Richard Rorty (1931-2007) is the founder of neopragmatism, and his philosophy can be characterized as an antimetaphysical, antiessentialist, antifoundational, pan-relationist, historical constructivism. In his opinion everything is a social construction, and all awareness is a linguistic affair (see PSH 48). The main pillars of human life (language, self and community) are contingent. We cannot recognize any final reality, we may only *describe* our radically timely and historical that is permanently changing world. Every human interpretation of our world is a narrative that cannot be universal, only general. Narratives, or in Rorty's words, "vocabularies," are essentially Wittgensteinian language games, which can be used (at a minimum) on three different levels: (a) as a wordplay; (b) as a form of life; and (c) as a culture. Rorty uses all three meanings (i.e., his vocabularies are *not* dictionaries) and claims that we live in the age of narrative philosophy, where, describing our situations, plans, actions, etc. we create not only ourselves, but also our society.

Accepting this short general survey of his philosophy, let us focus on selfhood. Rorty showed in his book, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (1989) these three things: what happens if we give up the idea of a philosophical "single vision"; what happens if we do not

want to combine the private and the public; and what kind of liberal utopia we could build from a liberal ironist point of view.³ In the second chapter of his *Contingency* book (after and before the chapters on the contingency of language and community, respectively) Rorty speaks about the contingency of selfhood. For the most part, Rorty sets out narrative identity theory, but the seeds of *internarrative* identity theory are to be found here as well, since he speaks of a multiple self. This latter view was worked out by Ajit K. Maan (*Internarrative Identity: Placing the Self*, 1997), and can be found much more in Shusterman's self-conception, as I will discuss shortly.

It is also important to note that Rorty admired Rawls's theory. I am persuaded that Rorty learned about the philosophical importance of self-esteem from Rawls' main book, *A Theory of Justice*⁴ (1971), and Rorty claims and defends it very consciously on the level of both the individual and the society.

³ According to Rorty, *liberal* means the people who „think that cruelty is the worst thing we do.“ An *ironist* is a person who, with Rorty's words „faces up to the contingency of his or her own most central beliefs and desires – someone sufficiently historicist and nominalist to have abandoned the idea that those central beliefs and desires refer back to something beyond the reach of time and chance.“ (CIS xv.)

⁴ „We may define self-respect (or self-esteem) as having two aspects. *First of all... it includes a person's sense of his own value*, his secure conviction that his conception of the good, his plan of life, is worth carrying out. *And second, self-respect implies a confidence in one's ability*, so far as it is in one's power, to fulfil one's intentions. When we feel that our plans are of little value, we cannot pursue them with pleasure or take delight in their execution. Nor plagued by failure and self-doubt can we continue in our endeavors. *It is clear then why self-respect is a primary good. Without it nothing may seem worth doing, or if some things have value for us, we lack the will to strive for them.* All desire and activity becomes empty and vain, and we sink into apathy and cynicism. Therefore the parties in the original position would wish to avoid at almost any cost the social conditions that undermine self-respect. The fact that justice as fairness gives more support to self-esteem than other principles is a strong reason for them to adopt it.“(Rawls, 1972, 440 – Emphases by A. K.).

details of Heidegger's existential analytic here, but it is worth emphasizing its main features in the time of the prozak culture and that of „interesting authenticity theories“.

In the first case, that is, on the *individual* level, Rorty regards the self as the *center of narrative gravity*, as self-creation by self-description. Just as Wittgenstein and Davidson showed the contingency of language, Nietzsche and Freud did the same regarding the self, according to Rorty. On the basis of their thoughts, Rorty rejects the traditional, metaphysically founded idea of a common human nature. He is an anti-dualist philosopher and cannot accept the soul-body (mind-body) distinction. In his opinion, our human life, that is our understanding-interpreting being, is always a linguistic one, and language is considered a human creation. Our language-games, our vocabularies, and our contextual truths are not found but rather made. We, as finite and historical beings, are only able to create narratives not only about the world, but also about the self.⁵ According to Rorty, we create ourselves (both our self-identity and self-esteem, because they are in mutual relationship) by telling our own stories, by re-describing our own narratives, but this story-telling is influenced very much by the contingent events of our lives. Freud showed us this contingent characteristic rather than Nietzsche, Rorty says.

When Rorty gave an interview for Joshua Knobe in 1995, he revealed the background of his concept of the self saying that:

"I think that Davidson's approach to intentionality, meaning, belief, truth and so on goes together with Dennett's stuff about the intentional stance, and I think, once you see the intentional stance, the attribution of beliefs and desires to organisms or machines as a way of handling the organisms and machines and knowing what they will do next, it is very difficult to think of the self in the way in which what

⁵ "(But) if we could ever become reconciled to the idea that most of reality is indifferent to our descriptions of it, and that the human self is created by the use of a vocabulary rather than being adequately or inadequately expressed in a vocabulary, then we should at last have assimilated what was true in the Romantic idea that truth is made rather than found. What is true about this claim is just that *languages* are made rather than found, and that truth is a property of linguistic entities, of sentences." (CIS 7)

Dennett calls "the picture of the Cartesian theater" requires you to think of the self. I think Dennett has a brilliant chapter in *Consciousness Explained* – Chapter 13 on "The Self as Center of Narrative Gravity" – and I think that view of the self is nicely integrated with the rest of Dennett's system and thus *a fortiori* with Davidson's system." (Knobe, 1995, 9)⁶

If we look at Rorty's view of the self from the point of view of self-esteem, it is obvious that self-creation is the most important dimension of his concept of the self. In his opinion self-creation is the best way of realizing the highest form of self-identity and self-esteem, which is manifested in the so called "strong poet". Who is the „strong poet"? The strong poet is the creator of a new vocabulary, as distinct from the scientist or philosopher in the traditional sense. In Rorty's interpretation, it does not mean only the actual poets and writers, but also the other types of artists, great scientists who invent new descriptions of the world, political thinkers who changed the world through their new descriptions (but not through their dictatorship or army). As Rorty says: "someone like Galileo, Yeats, or Hegel (a 'poet' in my wide sense of the term – the sense of 'one who makes things new')" (CIS 12-13). Not everybody will become a strong poet but the *possibility* is given for every human being, especially in a democratic society. The more liberal and democratic a society is, the greater the possibility of becoming a strong poet.

⁶ Daniel Dennett summarizes his views at the end of Chapter 13 this way: "Now if you were a soul, a pearl of immaterial substance, we could 'explain' your potential immortality only by postulating it as an inexplicable property, an ineliminable *virtus dormitiva* of soul-stuff. And if you were a pearl of material substance, some spectacularly special group of atoms in your brain, your mortality would depend on the physical forces holding them together (we might ask the physicist what the 'half-life' of a self is). If you think of yourself as a center of narrative gravity, on the other hand, your existence depends on the persistence of that narrative (rather like the *Thousands and One Arabian Nights*, but all a single tale), which could theoretically survive indefinitely any switches of medium, be teleported as readily (in principle) as the evening news, and stored indefinitely as sheer information." (Dennett, 430)

As I have already mentioned, in Rorty's opinion, just as Wittgenstein and Davidson have shown the contingency of language, so have Nietzsche and Freud done the same for the self. As we know, self-creation is Nietzsche's main goal, and it is manifested first of all in his perspectivism. What is this self-creation? It is a permanent overcoming of ourselves in a moral and interpretative sense. Remember Nietzsche's famous claim, "Werde was du bist! (Become who you are!)," and we may see that self-creation is always a permanent becoming_for Nietzsche. Even Zarathustra's whole intention, which is basically Nietzsche's intention, is also devoted to this purpose. The Overman, taken strictly in a moral sense, can also be regarded as one manifestation of this purpose. By giving permanently new interpretations of our self, we re-create our self, because the self consists only in our desires, beliefs and knowledge. Both Nietzsche and Rorty understand this permanent linguistic self-creation as a therapy, that is, as healing ourselves from the sickness of old views, especially from Platonism and Christianity. Rorty, however, does not want to use the concept of the "Overman," because it is still a residuum of metaphysics.⁷

Pre-Nietzschean philosophers said that the particular contingencies of individual lives are not important, and it is only the mistake of poets to speak about accidental appearance rather than essential reality. Contrary to this view Rorty emphasizes that Nietzsche

...*"saw self-knowledge as self-creation. The process of coming to know oneself, confronting one's contingency, tracking one's cause home, is*

identical with the process of inventing a new language – that is, of thinking up some new metaphors. For any literal description of one's individuality, which is to say any use of an inherited language-game for this purpose, will necessarily fail. One will not have traced that idiosyncrasy home but will merely have managed to see it as not idiosyncratic after all, as a specimen reiterating a type, a copy or replica of something which has already been identified. To fail as a poet – and thus, for Nietzsche, to fail as a human being – is to accept somebody else's description of oneself, to execute a previously prepared program, to write, at most, elegant variations on previously written poems. So the only way to trace home the causes of one's being as one is would be to tell a story about one's causes in a new language." (CIS 27-28, my emphases)

According to Rorty, Nietzsche suspected that *only poets* can truly appreciate contingency. The rest of us are doomed to remain philosophers, to insist that there is really only one true lading-list, one true description of the human situation, one universal context of our lives. Nietzsche believed that we are doomed to spend our conscious lives trying to escape from contingency rather than, like the strong poet, acknowledging and appropriating contingency (see CIS 28). Nietzsche thought that the important boundary to cross is not the one separating time from atemporal truth, but rather the one that divides the old from the new. In Rorty's opinion:

"He thinks a human life triumphant just insofar as it escapes from inherited descriptions of the contingencies of its existence and finds new descriptions. This is the difference between the will to truth and the will to self-overcoming. It is the difference between thinking of redemption as making contact with something larger and more enduring than oneself, and redemption as Nietzsche describes it: "recreating all 'it was' into a 'thus I willed it'." (CIS 29)

Despite of all this, Rorty prefers Freud to Nietzsche in some sense. He writes that the feature that makes Freud more useful and more plausible than Nietzsche is that Freud does not relegate the vast majority of humanity to the status of dying animals. Freud's description of unconscious fantasy shows us, Rorty says, "how to see

⁷ In Rorty's interpretation Nietzsche merely "hoped that once we realized that Plato's 'true world' was just a fable, we would seek consolation, at the moment of death, not in having transcended the animal condition but in being that peculiar sort of dying animal who, by describing himself in his own terms, had created himself. More exactly, he would have created the only part of himself that mattered by constructing his own mind. To create one's mind is to create one's own language, rather than to let the length of one's mind be set by the language other human beings have left behind." (CIS 27)

every human life as a poem – or, more exactly, every human life not so racked by pain as to be unable to learn a language nor so immersed in toil as to have no leisure in which to generate a self-description.” (CIS 35-36) For Freud, nobody is boring through and through, for there is no such thing as a boring unconscious.

At the same time, it is obvious that not every human being can be considered a *strong poet* (who is “only” the highest peak of self-creation for Rorty, that is that of self-identity and self-esteem), because the *strong poet* is a very rare phenomenon.⁸ Even she or he cannot live without other people, without the socio-historical context:

“Shifting from the written poem to the life-as-poem, one may say that there can be no fully Nietzschean lives, lives which are pure action rather than reaction – no lives which are not largely parasitical on an un-redescribed past and dependent on the charity of as yet unborn generations. There is no stronger claim even the strongest poet can make than the one Keats made – that he “would be among the English poets,” construing “among them” in a Bloomian way as “in the midst of them,” future poets living out of Keats’s pockets as he lived out of those of his precursors.” (CIS 42)⁹

⁸ “Autonomy is not something which all human beings have within them and which society can release by ceasing to repress them. It is something which certain particular human beings hope to attain by self-creation, and which a few actually do.” (CIS 65)

⁹ Rorty goes on to say here that analogously, “there is no stronger claim which even the superman (Overman – A. K.) can make than that his differences from the past, inevitably minor and marginal as they are, will nevertheless be carried over into the future – that his metaphoric re-descriptions of small parts of the past will be among the future’s stock of literal truths” (CIS 42). – At the end of this chapter Rorty draws his conclusions: “But if we avoid Nietzsche’s inverted Platonism – his suggestion that a life of self-creation can be as complete and as autonomous as Plato thought a life of contemplation might be – then *we shall be content to think of any human life as the always incomplete, yet sometimes heroic, reweaving of such a web.* We shall see the conscious need of the strong poet to *demonstrate* that he is not a copy or replica as merely a special form of an unconscious need everyone has: the need to come to terms with the blind impress which chance has given him, to make a self for himself by re-describing that impress in terms which are, if only marginally, his own.”

In the second case, that is on the *social* level Rorty speaks more clearly about the relationship between identity and self-esteem. Right at the beginning of his book, *Achieving Our Country* (1998), Rorty’s upbeat is the following train of thought:

“National pride is to countries what self-respect is to individuals: a necessary condition for self-improvement. Too much national pride can produce bellicosity and imperialism, just as excessive self-respect can produce arrogance. But just as too little self-respect makes it difficult for a person to display moral courage, so insufficient national pride makes energetic and effective debate about national policy unlikely. Emotional involvement with one’s country – feelings of intense shame or of glowing pride aroused by various parts of its history, and by various present-day national policies – is necessary if political deliberation is to be imaginative and productive. Such deliberation will probably not occur unless pride outweighs shame.” (AOC 3 – Emphases by A. K.)

Democracy has meant, first of all, human freedom and social justice, for Rorty. Both the idea of *freedom* and the idea of *social justice* were supported by him also at the end of the 20th century, in his book, *Achieving Our Country*, which may be regarded as his political testament (see AOC 45). In this book Rorty analyzed the history of the American Left. He distinguished the traditional, reformist Left from the new, cultural or academic Left. It is true that he acknowledged the latter’s positive results (e. g., the “closure” of the Vietnam War), but he regarded as the really progressive social and political movement considering the future of his country, the reformist Left, which was advanced by Dewey also.

We have to emphasize that social-democratic, reformist left-wingism is an organic part of Rorty’s liberalism. It is not a surprise of course, as the American concept of “liberal” means almost the same as “social-democrat” in Europe. In *Achieving Our Country* we can also find a suggestion for the essential question of our epoch: how

(CIS 43 – Emphases by A. K.) *These sentences contain also the metaphysical consequences!*

can a non-democratic society become a democratic one?

In Rorty's opinion, the solution for this acute problem is the common power of the interlocked top-down and bottom-up social initiatives, which reinforce each other (contrary to the Marxist solution which prefers only the bottom-up initiatives). (Cf. AOC 53-54)¹⁰

Rorty's opinions about self-identity and self-esteem are not accidental. We can find almost identical approaches in his different articles. I am persuaded that one of the best examples is his article titled „The Unpatriotic Academy,” where he says:

“Like every other country, ours has a lot to be proud of and a lot to be ashamed of. *But a nation cannot reform itself unless it takes pride in itself – unless it has an identity, rejoices in it, reflects upon it and tries to live up to it...* There is no contradiction between such identification and shame at the greed, the intolerance and the indifference to suffering that is widespread in the United States. *On the contrary, you can feel shame over your country's behaviour only to the extent to which you feel it is your country. If we fail in such identification, we fail in national hope. If we fail in national hope, we shall no longer even try to change our ways.*” (PSH 253-254 – Emphases by A. K.)

However, Rorty himself did not want to create a detailed political philosophy, for in his opinion it is not the philosopher's task. In a liberal democracy, it is much more the task of decent men and women, who “sit down around tables, argue things out and arrive at a reasonable consensus” (PSH 112). It is not the philosopher's task, for he or she creates theories on the most general level, contrary to the political scientists and politicians. There is a need in this field to harmonize more effectively the different and independent interests, views, and it must be done neither by philosophers, nor political scientists, but rather by politicians and by the people themselves.¹¹

¹⁰ Bujalos István offers a really detailed interpretation of *Achieving Our Country* in his article, „Rorty a baloldaliságról”. (In: *Filozófia a globalizáció árnyékában: Richard Rorty*. Ed. by Nyíró Miklós. Budapest: L'Harmattan – Magyar Filozófiai Társaság, 2010, 81-93.)

¹¹ All this is in conscious consistency with his interpretation of philosophy as cultural politics (Cf. PCP).

Richard Shusterman

Shusterman (1949-) is also a neopragmatist thinker. Shusterman became a pragmatist on the basis of Rorty's influence, after an analytic period, and they were also friends. They share several important philosophical views: anti-essentialism, pan-relationism and pragmatist meliorism. However, their philosophies differ mostly in connection with (a) appreciation of experience; (b) problems of the public-private shift and (c) the meaning of cultural politics. Speaking about “experience,” Rorty regarded it as some kind of residuum of traditional metaphysics, while Shusterman returns to Dewey's standpoint and, rightly criticizing Rorty, revives the role of experience in his somaesthetics, which is Shusterman's main pragmatist project.

Despite their differences, Rorty and Shusterman were also close regarding their concepts of the self. They both claimed that the self is thoroughly contingent, and they agreed that we live in the epoch of narrative philosophy. In addition, they both regarded self-identity and self-esteem highly important. What is more, Shusterman not only accepted Rorty's later philosophical tendency when he *aestheticized the ethical*, but also agreed with the

It is worth emphasizing here that the first paper („Cultural Politics and the Question of the Existence of God”) of Rorty's posthumous volume of his *Philosophical Papers*, which has almost the same title as the volume itself, *Philosophy As Cultural Politics* also strengthens his above mentioned views. Let us think about this title: *Philosophy As Cultural Politics*! Rorty shows already with his title that politics is the most important thing for him *in the public sphere*, but not in the private one. He handles every philosophy as a special type of politics. With this standpoint („philosophy as cultural politics”) Rorty *not only* draws the consequences of the latest development of European philosophy (early Heideggerian phenomenology, Gadamerian hermeneutics, late Wittgensteinian and Derridian approaches, etc.); he *not only* makes philosophy a kind of politics; he *not only* emphasizes that every human feature is a social construction, *but* he also directly connects philosophy and politics to morality. Social welfare and democracy, that is *social good* will be namely the *highest moral good, the main goal of philosophy understood as cultural politics* this way in the public sphere!

essence of Rorty's standpoint in his article, "Postmodern Ethics and the Art of Living" (PA 236-261). Shusterman's critique aims at some other characteristics of Rorty's aestheticized ethics.

Shusterman says first that "Rorty gives us... too narrow a picture of what constitutes aesthetically satisfying life and self-creation. For even when the ideal of the endlessly changing ironist is supplemented by the ideal of the strong poet..., the possibilities of aesthetic life remain too limited." (PA, 250) He immediately offers two other aesthetic forms of life: "a life devoted to the enjoyment of beauty" and a life, which "itself is an art". (PA 250 and 251.)

– Second, Shusterman says: "Just as one need not to be a rootless ironist to live the aesthetic life, so one need not take the path of the strong poet to create oneself aesthetically." (PA 253)

– Third, Shusterman says: "As Rorty's notion of the strong poet conflates artistic creation with innovative uniqueness, it similarly confuses between autonomy and original self-definition, freedom and uniqueness." (PA 254)

– What is more, fourthly, according to Shusterman, this is an elitist comprehension of autonomy and aesthetic life, and it cannot be offered to everybody. (See PA 255-257)

- In addition, fifthly, Rorty's aestheticized, elitist ethics is confined to the realm of the private ethics, and he absolutely excludes from that the impulses of the public *ethos*. (See PA 255-257)

– Plus this view of Rorty is realized in the framework of a "reductive linguistic essentialism," which harmonizes well with Rorty's radical textualism, but it is unacceptable if we speak about the central role of experience. (See PA 258)

In contrast, then, Shusterman revived Dewey's aesthetics in developing his somaesthetics and restored (rightly in my view) the central role of *experience*. This resulted in a new aesthetic view of ethics and the self as well. Shusterman, while developing aestheticized ethics within his somaesthetics, keeps the importance both of *authenticity* and *integrity of the self*, as the essence of self-identity. This approach is, nevertheless, not a monolithic unity, but *a unity of differences*, or as Hegel puts it, an "identity of identity and non-identity." This is in nice harmony with the classical definition of *beauty*, which was grasped by the Greeks as *unity in variety*. (See PA 252-254. – Emphases by A. K.) In Shusterman's words:

„The self-unity needed to speak meaningfully of self-enrichment and perfection is, however, something pragmatically and often painfully forged or constructed, rather than foundationally given. It surely involves developmental change and multiplicity, as all narrative unity must, and it can display conflict in its unity, just as interesting narratives do." (PA 249)

This kind of self-identity of the self is able to embrace even cultural shifts of postmodern style of living. Such lived unity "can even accommodate a self of multiple narratives, as long as these can be made somehow to hang together as a higher unity from the right narrative perspective, one which makes the self more compellingly rich and powerful as an aesthetic character." (PA 253)

Shusterman offers a personal application of this notion of the self in his philosophical essay which is strongly saturated with autobiographical content, „Next Year in Jerusalem? Jewish Identity and the Myth of Return" (PP 179-195):

„If the self is constituted by narrative and there is no one true narrative, then there is no one true self. This does not mean that any self-narrative is as good as any other; some are clearly better not only for explaining past action but for projectively fashioning better selves. Moreover, on the primitive logical level, a single self must

be presupposed as the referent needed to talk at all about self-narrative (and especially divergent self-narratives)... [But, the] substantive integrity of the self, the coherent fullness of a life, cannot be guaranteed by the referential identity of logic; it remains a task for the art of living. With respect to my Jewish question, such integrity remains problematic *and I experience myself as a rather multiple self*. To put it crudely, *there is an Israeli self (with an American background or penumbra)* whose Jewish identity is strongly and clearly defined through Israeli national culture. *But there is also a (recently reclaimed) American self (with an Israeli shadow)*, whose Jewish identity is mostly neglected, expressed only indirectly through its Israeli background when that occasionally gets foregrounded in my American life" (PP 185-186. – Emphases by A. K.).

Although the narrative identity and authenticity of the self is very important for Shusterman, he (as with most of us) is obviously looking for not only his self-identity, but also *the best ways to improve and enhance his self-identity*. „Who am I? Am I an American Jew or a Jewish American?" – asks Shusterman (PP 185-186), and he gives a postmodern answer, which ensures a unity of differences:

„*Golah* is central to Jewish identity partly because *aliyah* is, since it gives *aliyah* its precondition and point. If Jewish identity is best realized through *aliyah* and if self-realization is not performed by a single act but by a whole life of activity, then an intriguing possibility arises: a life of continued Jewish self-expression and self-realization through cycles of *yeridah* and *aliyah*, departure and return to Israel. (...) Its circular structure provides for flexibility and openness that are helpful in dealing with life's contingencies. Rather than making *aliyah* "a once and for all" affair (where any temporary turning back means a despicable fall), *recognition of the cyclical movement of departure and return enables us to integrate the periods of Israeli and golah living that fate may thrust on us, to weave them into a coherent narrative of continued Jewish commitment*" (PP 192-193. – Emphases by A. K.).

One of our American colleagues, Michael Ring emphasized in his lecture in Wrocław in 2012, entitled „The Aesthetic Cosmopolitan From a Neo-Pragmatist Perspective: Themes and Challenges in Shusterman," the dangers of aesthetic cosmopolitanism. Shusterman,

however, recognizes the danger of rootlessness and alienation, and he succeeds in overcoming it, when he underlines the importance of narrative integrity and authenticity, or in other words the importance of self-identity. Shusterman refuses namely the "Rortian non-self of incompatible 'quasi selves'," which does not have any "disciplined integrity" (PA 257), and he emphasizes especially the social determination of the self (cf. PA 255-257). It means that aesthetic life is *not identical*, for Shusterman, with aesthetic cosmopolitanism and does *not* imply any kind of rootless, absolute relativism, but rather a postmodern manifoldness and richness of experiences. Nevertheless, the view *does not mean* any boundless and idiosyncratic freakishness, but implies such an integrity of the self, such a unity of differences as goes together with exclusion of non-consistent elements. This results in the integrity of the self-identity.¹²

In this way, Shusterman emphasizes that a multiple self dwells in us, that is more than one self. Our actual re-totalization always decides provisionally for one of our selves, and these provisional unities of our self are always the results of new experiences, which are the negative experiences as Gadamer says; that is we gain them at the meeting points of cultures, sub-cultures, different forms of life.

However, this is already the essence of Internarrative Identity Theory! Internarrative Identity Theory says that we do not have only one unified self, but *we have multiple and embodied selves*. Ajit K. Maan emphasizes in her book (*Internarrative Identity: Placing the Self*) that sameness is body, the locus of the memories of home and ancestry and selfhood is self-representation. Identity is created "by *narratively mediating the sameness of their embodied selves and memories with the agency of self-representation*." (Maan 81. – Emphases by A. K.). It

¹² "Aesthetic unity is, in fact, easier achieved by ignoring some features, sacrificing potential richness precisely to insure unity against the threat of confusion through congeries of contingency." PP 195.

is not linear; it contains multiple beginnings; it emphasizes places and ancestral home.

In Maan's construction, the multiplicity of places and consequent multiplicity of voices are not to be negated, conquered, or marginalized, but these elements of our life are built in the emergence of our embodied selves.

Conclusions

One can live, of course, a whole life without an essential change of his or her self in a smaller, mostly exclusive community, even today (especially if a person does not have a flexible self). However, the greater and more dynamic a community is (e. g., not a village, but a big city or wide net of creative friends, etc.), the less "chance" the individual has to live such a life, one which goes without changing his or her self. In addition, the internarrative identity theory will be valid in the case of more and more people today, due to the inevitable process of globalization. We can regard Shusterman's life as such an example, but we can easily find such example, I think, also among us and close at hand. Some of us also live such a life, in which we have to re-totalize our self very often in order to choose from our multiple self development possibilities.

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