

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE



Master's Thesis

Frederik Langkjær

Between Reason and Affect

The Regulative Hope of Deliberative Politics

Supervisor: Lars Tønder

Submitted on: 1 August 2018

Abstract

Across the West, a debate has emerged over whether we are indeed living in a post-factual society. Do feelings and attitudes play a larger role in politics than reason and valid knowledge? Such a discussion gives rise to the fundamental political theory questions of whether feelings and reason constitute different categories and what moral principles should guide politics? In this thesis, I investigate the relationship between reason and feelings and their role in deliberative politics as it is described by Jürgen Habermas. I argue that reason is not communicative but embodied, implying that reason and feelings are not each other's opposites but are instead reciprocally conditioning. As this does not necessarily undermine the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics, embodied reason can be said to leave a hope for deliberative politics. Additionally, I argue that this hope can be elaborated into a regulative hope by reframing Habermas' theories of discourse and morality in a way consistent with embodied reason.

Contents

Introduction	1
Politics is First of All Feelings	1
Deliberative Democracy and the Role of Reason and Feelings	3
Chapter Overview	6
1 The Foundation of Deliberative Politics	9
1.1 Communicative Action and Rationality	10
1.2 What is Universal Pragmatics?	13
1.2.1 Speech Act Theory as a Point of Departure	14
1.2.2 A Critique of Austin's Conception of Meaning	15
1.2.3 The Rational Basis of Illocutionary Force	18
1.3 Mind versus Body within Universal Pragmatics	20
1.4 Discourse Theory	24
1.4.1 The Transcendental-Pragmatic Presuppositions of Discourse	25
1.4.2 Mind versus Body in the Discourse Theory	27
1.5 The Moral Desirability of Deliberative Politics	28
1.5.1 The Cognitive Content and Ontological Character of Norms	29
1.5.2 Discourse Ethics and its Justification	30
1.5.3 Mind versus Body in the Discourse Ethics	33
1.6 Summary	34

Contents

2 The Affect of Deliberative Politics	36
2.1 Antonio R. Damasio's Theory of Affect	38
2.1.1 Emotion and Feeling	38
2.1.2 Affect and Reason	40
2.2 Mind versus Body in Damasio	42
2.3 Brian Massumi's Theory of Affect	44
2.3.1 Reconceptualizing Affect	45
2.3.2 Reconceptualizing the Body	47
2.3.3 Thinking-feeling and the Techniques of Affect Modulation	48
2.3.4 The Political Implications of Thinking-feeling	49
2.4 Mind versus Body in Massumi	52
3 The Regulative Hope of Deliberative Democracy	56
3.1 The Reciprocal Conditioning of Reason and Feelings	58
3.2 The Disembodiment of Habermas' Theory of Meaning	64
3.3 The Reframing of Habermas	70
4 Conclusion	76
5 Bibliography	78

Introduction

Politics is First of All Feelings

On the 25th of July 2017, the Danish parliamentarian and member of the Danish Folk Party (DF) Peter Skaarup wrote a weekly newsletter carrying the headline: “Politics is First of All Feelings” (Skaarup, 2017a, my translation). In the newsletter, Skaarup argues that we should not underestimate or belittle the importance of feelings in politics. Feelings are a natural part of the human political being, which is why we are all experts in politics. It does not take a certain knowledge to decide politically what society should look like, as politics is neither scientific nor moral. It is neither about truth and falsity nor good and evil. It is about feelings and attitudes. In fact, feelings guide us in political questions and therefore they can be said to help us act rationally. Skaarup takes up this topic, it seems, because he is both indignant and worried. He is indignant by all the so-called political experts who, in his opinion, do not listen to the people but instead moralize and accuse politicians such as Skaarup of being populists. Furthermore, he is worried that the present contempt with politicians in Denmark is caused by the belittlement of feelings and a lack of responsiveness to these feelings among politicians. In the end, Skaarup encourages a move away from the opposition between reason and political leadership, on the one hand, and engagement with the Danes and their feelings on the other (Skaarup, 2017a).

Subsequently, Skaarup’s newsletter gave rise to a great deal of debate in the Danish media¹ because it was regarded as the latest contribution to a larger debate about the post-factual society, in which arguments and political decisions are based on feelings and attitudes rather than reason and valid knowledge

¹ See for example Skaarup (2017b), Baere & Drivsholm (2017a), Baere & Drivsholm (2017b), Kristiansen (2017b), and Arnfred (2017).

(Kristiansen, 2017a). Among others, the Danish professor in psychology Svend Brinkmann criticized Skaarup's point of view for being self-contradictory and dangerous to democracy. He argues that it represents irrationalism and reduces the political process to a matter of seduction; a politics based on gut feelings rather than factual and reasoned argumentation becomes a matter of emotional rhetoric, which is demagogical. According to Brinkmann, this irrationalism is based on the misconception that feelings and reason are opposites. Brinkmann argues that reason is always also emotional and emotions can be reasonable. Feelings are not unquestionable but that can be reflected upon and cultivated (Brinkmann, 2017).

Clearly, Skaarup and Brinkmann disagree about the nature of feelings and its relation to reason, which in turn causes a disagreement about what is democratic and undemocratic. I want to propose that this disagreement mirrors two well-known discussions within political theory: The discussion of mind/body dualism and the discussion of normative democratic theory. First, the discussion of mind/body dualism goes back to at least Plato and has taken various forms during history. However, the core of the discussion regards 1) an ontological question of whether mind and body are two fundamental and independent kinds of categories or whether they belong to the same fundamental category, and 2) a causal question of whether mind and body influence each other and how.² As reason is often coupled to the mind and feelings to the body, the two questions also pertain to these concepts (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016). Second, the discussion of normative democratic theory deals with the moral foundations of democracy, i.e. when and why democracy is morally desirable and what moral principles guide democratic institutions (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2006). On the basis of these discussions, it becomes possible to read Brinkmann's critique of Skaarup as a monist critique of a dualist point of view for not understanding that reason and feelings are a part of the same fundamental category and influence each other reciprocally. Furthermore, it becomes possible to read Skaarup's newsletter as a normative critique of political experts for not understanding that feelings should guide democratic politics and Brinkmann's critique of Skaarup as a normative critique based on the standpoint that reasoned argumentation should guide democratic politics.³

² By mind, I understand something conscious, mental, thoughtful, intellectual, and abstract. By body, I understand something non-conscious, material, tactile, practical, and concrete.

³ It should be noted that Skaarup and Brinkmann's discussion is only the latest concrete political discussion that mirrors the underlying political theoretic discussions. Among others,

I am motivated by this correspondence between Brinkmann and Skaarup and the political theoretic discussions on mind/body dualism and the moral foundations of democracy to investigate how they relate to each other. More specifically, I intend to investigate the relationship between reason and feelings and how this relates to democratic politics in order to reach a more thorough understanding and assessment of the statement: “politics is first of all feelings”. Due to the vast scope of the discussions on mind/body dualism and the moral foundation of democracy, I delimit the investigation by taking a point of departure in the German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas’ theory of deliberative democracy.

Deliberative Democracy and the Role of Reason and Feelings

Habermas’ theory of deliberative democracy is an obvious point of departure because it is one of the most discussed democratic theories in recent decades and because Habermas is one of the most important contemporary philosophers and theorists of democracy (Hansen & Rostbøll, 2012: 502). Furthermore, the theory is directly related to the question of mind/body dualism since it is based on a certain conception of reason that “jettisons certain premises of the *philosophy of consciousness*,” by which Habermas understands the philosophy of dualism (Habermas, 1994: 8).

In the essay “Three Normative Models of Democracy”, Habermas presents the notion of deliberative democracy as a normative model of democracy that takes elements from both the liberal and republican view (Habermas, 1994: 1). On the one hand, Habermas takes the liberal view to conceive of politics, i.e. citizens’ political will-formation, as a competition between private interests channeled into the apparatus of public administration guarded by equal political and civil rights. Consequently, democratic politics becomes a matter of bridging the society of private interests and the government of public administration by means of party systems and elections. Democratic politics becomes a matter of legitimating the use of political power (Habermas, 1994: 1, 3, 7-8). On the other hand, Habermas takes the republican view to conceive of politics as “the reflective form of substantial ethical life,” which is why politics does not only regard the relation between private interests and public administration but also

we could mention the discussion about populism and the people versus the elite in relation to e.g. the election of Donald Trump in America or the discussions during and after the Danish cartoon controversy in 2005 (Pedersen, 2017; Mahmood, 2013).

an orientation toward the common good or mutual understanding, which is the precondition for the praxis of civic self-determination (Habermas, 1994: 1-2). Politics is conceived dialogically as “contestation over questions of value and not simply questions of preference” (Habermas, 1994: 3). Consequently, democratic politics become a matter of politically organizing the society as a whole in the form of a decentralized self-governance by obeying the “obstinate structures of a public communication oriented toward mutual understanding” (Habermas, 1994: 3). It becomes a matter of “constituting society as a political community” (Habermas, 1994: 8).

Having established the liberal and republican views on democracy, Habermas emphasizes the advantage of the republican view compared to the liberal view as it

accounts for those communicative conditions that confer legitimating force on political opinion- and will-formation. These are precisely the conditions under which the political process can be presumed to generate reasonable results (Habermas, 1994: 3).

However, Habermas also criticizes the republican view for having a communitarian reading of public communication as oriented toward the self-explication of a prior shared ethos or collective self-understanding. In opposition to this, the deliberative view has a discourse-theoretic reading of public communication and political will-formation. This view draws legitimating force from “the communicative presuppositions that allow for the better arguments to come into play in various forms of deliberation [...]” (Habermas, 1994: 4). Habermas argues that communication entails inescapable presuppositions that, in principle, rule out all other forces than the force of the better argument, which is why it can be said to be impartial (Habermas, 1990: 87-89). In other words, the structure of public communication is not merely oriented toward mutual understanding within a certain ethical community but across communities. Because deliberative democracy seeks to institutionalize the inescapable communicative presuppositions, Habermas states that it discursively rationalizes administrative decisions. Deliberative democracy seeks to base the administrative decision on the force of the better argument, i.e. on *rational* will-formation (Habermas, 1994: 7-8). According to Habermas, this is morally desirable because it fits the legislative process of democratic politics better, as this process concerns how a matter can be regulated in the interest of all. The legislative process is concerned with justice, which Habermas describes as the

priority of moral over ethical questions, i.e. what is right over what is good. Consequently, it must not relate to a certain ethos from the outset but should be based on an impartial standpoint (Habermas, 1994: 5). Habermas acknowledges the liberal contention that there are certain interests that conflict without prospects of consensus, which is why they need a kind of balancing that can only be achieved by means of compromise and sanctions and not by means of ethical discourse (Habermas, 1994: 5). In other words, deliberative politics

takes elements from both sides and integrates these in the concept of an ideal procedure for deliberation and decision-making. Weaving together pragmatic considerations, compromises, discourses of self-understanding and justice, this democratic procedure grounds the presumption that reasonable or fair results are obtained (Habermas, 1994: 6).

On the basis of Habermas' three normative models of democracy, new possibilities arise for understanding and assessing the disagreement between Skaarup and Brinkmann. Skaarup's opinions exhibit a strong similarity to the liberal view. Where the liberal view conceives politics as a competition between given private interests with democratic politics as a way of channeling those private interests into the public administration, Skaarup suggests politics are a competition between given private *feelings* and democratic politics are a way of channeling those *feelings* into the public administration. For example, in the aftermath of the newsletter, Skaarup stated that

we live in a democracy and it is the citizens who decide, not any self-appointed experts. Therefore, we should take the opinions of the citizens as our starting point and those are based on feelings to a high extent (Kristiansen, 2017a, my translation).

That is, the democratic process should make sure that the public administration represents the private feelings of the citizens without radically contesting them. In this sense, Skaarup mirrors the "liberal skepticism about reason" (Habermas, 1994: 4). As for Brinkmann, his critique of Skaarup resembles the deliberative view. Where Habermas criticizes the liberal view for taking preferences as a given that are not possible to "change [...] in *insightful ways*," Brinkmann criticizes Skaarup for taking feelings as a given that are not possible to change by means of cultivation (Habermas, 1994: 4; Brinkmann, 2017). Furthermore, Brinkmann argues that democracy should be based on facts

and reasoned argumentation and that Skaarup's "irrationalism" is dangerous to democracy, as it reduces the political process to a matter of seduction. This indicates that he believes in the possibility of reaching mutual understanding and further that the political process should revolve around this possibility.

Thus, from a Habermasian perspective, it is possible to understand the statement "politics is first of all feelings" as being skeptical of reason, perhaps even misconceiving reason as morally undesirable. However, my own understanding and assessment of Skaarup's statements will require a critical attitude toward Habermas' theory. With that in mind, the guiding research question of this thesis is:

What characterizes the relationship between reason and feelings, and what role does it play with regard to deliberative politics?

Chapter Overview

The central argument of this thesis and the suggested answer to my research question is that reason is embodied implying that reason and feelings are not opposing but reciprocally conditioning. This does not necessarily undermine deliberative politics but instead leaves a hope of its possibility and moral desirability in a revised version supported by a reframing of Habermas' notions of inescapable communicative presuppositions and justice. The argument is elaborated over the course of three chapters. In chapter one, I elucidate the foundation of the notion of deliberative politics and the role of reason by analyzing Habermas' theories of meaning, discourse, and morality. On the basis of this analysis, I show how Habermas conceives of reason as communicative in the sense that it is made possible by the linguistic medium of communication and inscribed in the linguistic telos of mutual understanding. Consequently, it is crucial to deliberative politics. Throughout the analysis, I also show how Habermas struggles to reconcile Kantian transcendentalism, i.e. formalist, universalist, and essentialist impulses, with pragmatism, i.e. contextualist, communitarian, and historicist impulses. This struggle opens Habermas' conception of reason to a critique of privileging mind over body challenging the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics.

In chapter two, I pursue the potential critique of Habermas' conception of reason by investigating the phenomenon of the body through an analysis of affect-theory. First, I analyze the concept of affect from the point of view of the

American-Portuguese neuroscientist Antonio R. Damasio.⁴ Based on this analysis, I show how reason is conditioned by non-conscious bodily reactions in the sense that all experiences, and hence the conceptualizations through which we reason, are emotionally laden. This challenges the concept of communicative reason and the possibility of deliberative politics. However, I also suggest that Damasio's theory does not ultimately undermine the possibility of deliberative politics since his conceptualization of emotion and feeling is too reductive and simplistic, ending up privileging body over mind. Second, I analyze the concept of affect from the point of view of the Canadian philosopher Brian Massumi.⁵ Based on this analysis, I show how understanding and politics is not just a matter of communication but also a matter of non-linguistic, pre-reflective, and bodily capacities, which challenges the concept of communicative reason and the possibility of deliberative politics. Yet, I also suggest that Massumi's theory cannot ultimately undermine the possibility of deliberative politics because he hypostasizes the mind and privileges the body. He opposes his notion of affect to an intellectualist conception of meaning and intention and states that affect is resistant to critique, which is why it undermines the possibility of rational judgment.

In chapter three, I analyze the cognitive linguist George Lakoff and the philosopher Mark Johnson's concept of embodied reason and its role in deliberative politics. Through this analysis, I propose that the concept of embodied reason manages to take into account both Damasio, Massumi, and Habermas' contentions that reason is conditioned by non-conscious bodily reactions, that understanding is affective, and that communication is important to meaning. Embodied reason does not imply the autonomy of reason or affect. For the same reason, it does not entail a telos toward mutual understanding or a conception of embodiment as deterministic. Instead, I suggest that embodied reason integrates reason and affect as reciprocally conditioning in the sense that language use can give rise to different conceptualizations of feelings, and feelings are integral to reason as a part of our embodiment. Consequently, embodied reason undermines Habermas' conception of meaning, and hence the notion of the force of the better argument and justice. This neither necessitates that we throw out all of Habermas' thoughts nor implies that embodied reason

⁴ Damasio divides affect into emotion, which is a non-conscious, automatic, and innate bodily reaction, and feeling, which is the consciousness of one's emotion.

⁵ Massumi distinguishes between affect, which is a non-conscious, collective, and asigned bodily capacity, and emotion, which is a conscious, individual, and socio-linguistic fixation of affect.

ultimately undermines the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics. Alternatively, I suggest that embodied reason leaves a hope for the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics in a revised version. Our shared embodiment provides a partial frame of communality across cultures leaving a hope of reaching mutual moral understanding via deliberation. I call it a hope, as our shared embodiment, and with that morality, can be elaborated in both a communitarian and universalistic direction. The universalistic elaboration of morality can be supported by a reframing of Habermas' theories of discourse and morality in a way that is consistent with embodied reason. Rather than constituting cognitive possibilities, I suggest that his notions of the inescapable communicative presuppositions and justice constitute regulative hopes in the sense that our communicative interactions and moral deliberation are regulated by the hope of achieving agreement and moral progress, respectively. Thus, I suggest that deliberative politics is possible and morally desirable on the basis of the reciprocal conditioning of reason and feelings.

1 The Foundation of Deliberative Politics

Habermas distinguishes deliberative politics from the republican notion of politics on the basis of its discourse-theoretic interpretation of public communication that is not merely oriented toward mutual understanding within a certain ethical community but across communities. This is morally desirable, as it enables the establishment of justice or the priority of moral questions concerning the interest of all over ethical questions concerning ethical self-understanding. Thus, the notion of deliberative politics relies on two preconditions: The possibility of achieving mutual understanding (what I will call the possibility of deliberative politics) and the possibility of distinguishing moral from ethical questions and prioritizing the former over the latter (what I will call the moral desirability of deliberative politics). In order to satisfy these two preconditions, Habermas bases deliberative politics on a concept of communicative reason⁶, which is made possible by the linguistic medium of communication and inscribed in the linguistic telos of mutual understanding (Habermas, 1996a: 3-4).

In this chapter, I investigate the concept of communicative reason and its role in deliberative politics through an analysis of Habermas' theories of meaning, discourse, and morality. I focus especially on his theory of meaning as it lies in the core of his entire philosophy (Ingram, 2010: 75). Most interpretations and critiques of Habermas' work focuses on his action theory, discourse theory, moral theory, and democratic theory.⁷ I want to focus instead

⁶ Communicative reason denotes the inherent telos of communication toward mutual understanding, while communicative rationality denotes the quality of an action, which is oriented toward mutual understanding, and hence based on communicative reason (Habermas, 1996b: 4-5).

⁷ See for example Outwaite (2009), Brunkhorst, Kreide & Lafont (2017), and White (1995).

on Habermas' theory of meaning in this chapter because it is a necessary precondition for understanding his concept of communicative reason and its role in deliberative politics. Since communicative reason is inscribed in the linguistic telos toward mutual understanding, it is necessary to consider both what it takes to understand altogether and what constitutes meaning. Through an analysis of Habermas' theory of meaning, I argue that he struggles to reconcile Kantian transcendentalism, i.e. formalist, universalist, and essentialist impulses, with pragmatism, i.e. contextualist, communitarian, and historicist, impulses, which recurs in his discourse theory and moral theory. Furthermore, I argue that this struggle opens the concept of communicative reason and its role in deliberative politics for a critique of being dualist and privileging mind over body. Consequently, it contests the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics. This contestation is what I investigate throughout the subsequent chapters.

The chapter is structured in six parts. First, I give a short account of Habermas' basic distinction between the understanding-oriented communicative action, with its condition of communicative rationality, and the goal-oriented strategic action, with its condition of strategic rationality. Second, I analyze Habermas' theory of meaning as it is expressed in the essay "What is Universal Pragmatics?". This essay is rarely analyzed, however, it provides the most thorough account of Habermas' universal pragmatics, which constitutes a reconstructive language analysis that explicates meaning and forms the basis of his theories of discourse and morality. Third, I show how Habermas struggles to reconcile Kantian transcendentalism with pragmatism in his theory of meaning. Fourth, I analyze his discourse theory showing how agreement can be said to be rationally motivated by virtue of the force of the better argument. Furthermore, I show how the tension identified in Habermas' theory of meaning recurs in his discourse theory. Fifth, I analyze Habermas' moral theory, its transcendental-pragmatic justification, and the recurring tensions between transcendentalism and pragmatism. Sixth, I summarize the analysis of communicative reason and its role in deliberative politics, how this relates to the understanding and assessment of Skaarup's statement, and how this motivates the subsequent chapters.

1.1 Communicative Action and Rationality

In the introduction to his magnum opus *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas identifies reason as the basic theme of philosophical reflection. In the

light of 20th century scientific and philosophical insights, however, philosophy can no longer hope to explain the world as a whole or hope to trace such totalizing knowledge back to reason (Habermas, 1984: 1). The conditions of rationality can no longer be tied to ontologically substantive theories or transcendental aprioristic reconstructions. Instead, any theory that makes a normative and/or universal claim must be tested against empirical scientific evidence and rational reconstruction of meaning (Habermas, 1984: 2-3). In this sense, Habermas disavows dualist philosophies that abstract reason from epistemic experience. On the basis of this disavowal, Habermas divides rationality into strategic and communicative rationality. Strategic rationality relates to the non-communicative use of knowledge in goal-oriented action aiming to be successful, while communicative rationality relates to the use of knowledge in understanding-oriented communication aiming to be true, right, and sincere.⁸ However, Habermas argues that the communicative rationality is a more comprehensive type of rationality within which the strategic rationality fits. Consequently, it does not make sense to try to separate the two or see them as equally standing concepts. This is exemplified by the fact that explicitly expressed knowledge of linguistic utterances is implicitly expressed in strategic goal-oriented action, and hence it is always possible to translate a know-how into a know-that by means of reconstruction. In this sense, rationality relates to criticism and grounding (Habermas, 1984: 8-10). Because communicative rationality is more comprehensive than strategic rationality and constitutes the basis of communicative action crucial to deliberative politics, I focus on the former throughout the chapter leaving Habermas' action theory and thoughts about other types of rationality aside.

The conception of communicative rationality is developed through what Habermas calls a phenomenological approach (Habermas, 1984: 14). Taking this approach, one does not just ontologically presuppose the objective world but rather reflects on what conditions the constitution of the unity of an objective world. First, the world only gains objectivity if it counts as such for a community of speaking and acting subjects i.e. is objectified. Second, the objectification of the world is a necessary presupposition for communicatively acting subjects to reach an understanding of what happens in the world. Third, the communicative action, through which speaking and acting subjects gain knowledge of the world, simultaneously assure the subjects of an intersubjectively shared lifeworld, which

⁸ Truth relates to the validity of a fact, rightness relates to the validity of a norm, and sincerity relates to the validity of an intention (Habermas, 1998: 49).

is “bounded by the totality of interpretations presupposed by the subjects as background knowledge” (Habermas, 1984: 12-13). In other words, Habermas proposes a pragmatic epistemological realism in the sense that speech refers to the objective world but the meaning of this reference is symbolically structured and under intersubjective control as it is possible to both criticize and vindicate. Knowledge is open to critical testing and must be justified with reference to shared experiences (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2014).

Communicative action is an understanding-oriented type of action at both the level of ordinary language and discourse, which has a dialectic relation to the lifeworld since it simultaneously relies on and reproduces its background knowledge or understanding. When acting communicatively at the level of ordinary language, one performs a speech act in which the speaker presupposes that the universal validity claims of truth, rightness, and sincerity are and can be reciprocally vindicated. Hence, it establishes an interpersonal relation between speaker and hearer that entails an obligation on the part of the speaker to vindicate the universal validity claims, if necessary (I will return to this later) (Habermas, 1998: 23-24). These conditions of communicative action, i.e. the presupposition of validity, the possibility to vindicate validity claims, and the obligation to vindicate validity claims, if necessary, forms the basis of communicative reason or the inherent telos of communication toward understanding (Habermas, 1996a: 3-4). In other words, rationality involves evaluation in relation to something common or shared, which can be referred to by speaking and acting subjects when bringing about agreement. Consequently, Habermas’ conception of rationality presupposes the idea of responsible or autonomous subjects because they are the only ones who can make a choice between alternatives and ground that choice in a reasoned evaluation. This is also why rationality cannot be measured by the success of a goal-directed action. The success could be arbitrary or lucky as opposed to reasoned or knowledgeable. In this sense, Habermas’ conception of reason is proceduralist and deontological (Habermas, 1984: 14-15).

To summarize, rationality pertains to speaking, acting, responsible, and autonomous subjects’ use of knowledge in order to reach “communicatively achieved agreement [that] must be based *in the end* on reasons” (Habermas, 1984: 17). Thus, a thorough understanding of Habermas’ conception of reason requires a conception of meaning and argumentation, which is why I now turn to Habermas’ universal pragmatics and subsequently his discourse theory.

1.2 What is Universal Pragmatics?

In the essay “What is Universal Pragmatics?” Habermas presents his most comprehensive thoughts about the validity basis and illocutionary force of speech, which constitute the condition of the possibility of reaching understanding and rationally motivated agreement. Thus, it forms the basis of his thoughts about discourse, morality, and deliberative politics. One simply has to understand his universal pragmatics in order to comprehend his theory of deliberative democracy. In short, universal pragmatics constitutes a reconstructive language analysis, which aims at formulating the rules that a competent speaker must master in order to embed well-formed sentences in reality by means of utterances regardless of context (as opposed to the competence of producing sentences according to the rules of grammar) (Habermas, 1998: 47). It aims to show how universal validity constitutes the basis of speech, i.e. to identify the universal presuppositions of communicative action or possible understanding (Habermas, 1998: 21).

Validity denotes the guarantee that intersubjective recognition can be brought about under suitable conditions and validity claims are the implicit and explicit claims raised in speech that one’s utterance is valid. Habermas identifies three universal validity claims that one cannot avoid to raise, implicitly or explicitly, in the process of reaching understanding through communicative action: the claims of truth, rightness, and sincerity (Habermas, 1998: 22-23). Consequently, understanding is an ambiguous term stretching over the understanding of an object, the rightness of an utterance, and one’s intention. If understanding is reached it is also possible to bring about agreement, which is based on the intersubjective recognition of all three validity claims, i.e. the intersubjective mutuality of shared knowledge, mutual trust, and accord with one another. These ideas about agreement and understanding rely on two presuppositions. First, they presuppose that all the universal validity claims have a cognitive content in the sense that they can be known or judged somehow, i.e. grounded on good reasons or justified. This doesn’t mean that agreement is the default outcome of judgment. Instead, communicative action and understanding is often disturbed, which implies that the participants either switch to strategic action, break off communication, or continue communicative action at the level of discourse (I will return to this later) (Habermas, 1998: 21-25). Second, agreement and understanding relies on the ontological presupposition that utterances place sentences in relation to an external objective reality, a normative intersubjective reality of that which is socially recognized, and a subjective

internal reality (Habermas, 1984: 86-96; Habermas, 1998: 49). Consequently, the validity of an utterance depends on the evaluation of facts, norms, and intentions. Each of these relations to reality are thematized in the three pragmatic functions of utterance, which constitute the basis of all particular functions that an utterance can assume in different contexts: representation, production of interpersonal relation, and expression (Habermas, 1998: 49).

1.2.1 Speech Act Theory as a Point of Departure

In developing the universal pragmatics, Habermas takes a point of departure in J.L. Austin's speech act theory. First, speech act theory avoids the abstractive fallacy of analytic philosophy (Habermas, 1998: 25). That is, analytic philosophy focuses solely on the syntax and semantics of linguistics and only treats pragmatics, i.e. the use of language, ad hoc. Consequently, a formal analysis of the rule system of speech is not possible within analytic philosophy. It abstracts from pragmatics and ignores the importance of the possible employment of sentences to linguistic meaning, which is why it traditionally has singled out the representational function of language precluding itself from understanding the crucial role of language in producing interpersonal relationships (Habermas, 1998: 25-28, 54).

By formal analysis, Habermas understands a methodological procedure of rational reconstruction, which transforms a practically mastered pretheoretical knowledge of competent speakers into an objective and explicit knowledge (Habermas, 1998: 28-29, 35). In this way, Habermas retains an epistemic aspect in his theory without taking a behavioristic approach. The explicit knowledge of Habermas' reconstruction concerns the unavoidable presuppositions of communicative action, which is why the method of reconstruction has a certain resemblance with transcendental investigation. However, the transcendentalism of universal pragmatics (and discourse ethics) is a weaker version of the Kantian one, as Habermas does not aim to discover the a priori concepts of objects of experience as such. Instead, he aims to discover the "conceptual structure that enables us to employ sentences in correct utterances" on the basis of possible experiences of competent and knowing subjects (Habermas, 1998: 44-45). In other words, "a priori demonstration is replaced by transcendental investigation of the conditions for argumentatively redeeming the validity claims" (Habermas, 1998: 44). Thus, Habermas conceives of the conceptual structure as arising anew in every ontogenesis and applicable under the conditions of contingency. Relatedly, the status of reconstructions is hypothetical in the sense that they can

be tested against new experiences. In other words, they are fallible (Habermas, 1990: 32).

Second, Habermas takes a point of departure in speech act theory because it avoids the descriptivist fallacy (Habermas, 1998: 65). Because structures of speech can only be analyzed in an objectivating attitude, in which the structures of speech are treated as an object, many theorists are misled into thinking that communication only takes place at one level: that of transmitting content. Therefore, “the communicative role of an utterance loses its constitutive significance” (Habermas, 1998: 66). By contrast, speech act theory elucidates the performative status of linguistic utterances or the double structure of speech and thereby the centrality of utterances in producing interpersonal relations. Speech acts in their standard form⁹ have two components: an illocutionary and a propositional component. The propositional component concerns the content that the speaker and hearer want to come to an understanding on, while the illocutionary component fixes the sense in which the content is employed e.g. as a command, request, assertion etc. These components are uncoupled, which is why speaker and hearer must come to an understanding on two levels simultaneously. That is, they have to establish a relationship, which permits understanding, and identify something to understand at the same time. However, the established relationship or the illocutionary component cannot be objectified and performed simultaneously. One cannot perform an assertion and propositionally express that assertion at the same time. If one objectifies an illocutionary component within dialogue, one transforms it into a propositional component and introduces a new and non-objectified illocutionary component simultaneously. This double structure of speech constitutes the inherent reflexivity of language (Habermas, 1998: 63-65).

1.2.2 A Critique of Austin’s Conception of Meaning

Despite speech act theory’s acknowledgement of both the formal character of pragmatics and performativity in relation to meaning, Habermas criticizes Austin for separating the concept of meaning from the illocutionary component. On the one hand, Austin states that the locutionary act (the propositional component in Habermas’ terminology) “is roughly equivalent to uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense and reference, which again is roughly

⁹ This form consists of a mode of address *M* of the form “I hereby [performative verb]” followed by a proposition *p* (Ingram, 2010: 80).

equivalent to ‘meaning’ in the traditional sense” (Austin, 1962: 108). On the other hand, he states that the illocutionary act (or component in Habermas’ terminology) constitutes “utterances which have a certain (conventional) force,” such as promising, ordering, warning etc. (Austin, 1962: 108). Thus, Austin reserves the concept of meaning to the locutionary act and points to the fact that sentences with the same meaning can be uttered with different forces in different illocutionary acts. However, this distinction is unsatisfactory to Habermas, as the illocutionary component of speech acts also has a linguistic meaning (as opposed to a pragmatic meaning). That is, in an explicit speech act in standard form, the performative verb, which signifies the illocutionary component, also has a lexical meaning. Yet, the illocutionary component cannot be reduced to the performative verb and thereby linguistic meaning, as it also has a force, which only belongs to utterances and not sentences (I will return to this force later). Hence, we can distinguish between both a linguistic and a pragmatic meaning of utterances or performative expressions alongside the linguistic meaning of sentences or propositional expressions, which is why it does not make sense to “explicate the concepts ‘meaning’ versus ‘force’ with reference to the distinction between the linguistic meaning of a sentence and the pragmatic meaning of an utterance” (Habermas, 1998: 68). Instead, Habermas suggests differentiating linguistic meaning of expressions “according to the universal possibilities for using them in speech acts (and according to the corresponding validity claims) with reference to the original occurrence of such expressions” (Habermas, 1998: 69).

By the expression “original occurrence,” Habermas wishes to turn our attention to how the meaning of propositional and performative expressions are learned. These expressions are learned through different experiences, which is why they depend on different presuppositions. On the one hand, the meaning of the propositional component is learned through observation. Hence, the understanding of propositional content presupposes a sensory experience and observation of a certain phenomenon. That is, the hearer of a propositional sentence has to share the speaker’s presuppositions of existence, identifiability and predication of an object established through observation in order to understand it. On the other hand, the meaning of an illocutionary component is learned through the establishment of interpersonal relations, which is why the understanding of a performative expression does not presuppose but itself represents a communicative experience. The hearer has to assume the role of both the hearer and the speaker in the sense that it is only when the hearer

participates in communication and accepts the offer in the attempted speech act of the speaker that the illocutionary component is understood and an interpersonal relation is established (Habermas, 1998: 69-71). In other words, “illocutionary understanding is an experience made possible through communication” (Habermas, 1998: 71). Consequently, the different categories of meaning are learned through the experience of different uses of language or attitudes in various situations. Thus, Habermas suggests that we should differentiate categories of meaning with regard to the pragmatic functions of communication: the functions of representation, production of interpersonal relations, and expression (the latter corresponds to the meaning of subjective experience or intention, which Habermas does not explicate but only mentions) (Habermas, 1998: 72).

Furthermore, Habermas criticizes Austin’s conception of meaning for not capturing the fact that an utterance places a sentence in relation to three dimensions of reality. According to Habermas, Austin assimilates the validity claims of all speech acts and their components into the universal validity claim of truth derived from the correspondence theory of meaning (Habermas, 1998: 77-78). Consequently, Austin does not manage to realize that all speech acts raise three universal validity claims, one of which is thematized, i.e. raised explicitly, depending on the mode of communication. In other words, Austin conceives of all speech acts as explicitly raising the validity claim of truth (Habermas, 1998: 77-78). However, Austin was on the scent of the point that speech acts thematize different validity claims with his initial thoughts about restricting the locutionary act to constative speech acts and the illocutionary act to performative speech acts (a distinction he moves away from over the course of the William James Lectures compiled in *How to Do Things with Words*). Habermas sets out to reconstruct this adequately (Habermas, 1998: 73-75). As a result, he distinguishes between the cognitive use of language, which thematizes the propositional content of an utterance and thereby the validity claim of truth; the interactive use of language, which thematizes the interpersonal relation between speaker and hearer and thereby the validity claim of rightness; and the expressive use of language, which thematizes one’s intention and thereby the validity claim of sincerity (Habermas, 1998: 81).

The above critique of Austin leads Habermas to construe the meaning of speech acts as resting on acceptability conditions as opposed to truth conditions. Meaning is connected to validity in the sense that it rests on the willingness of the hearer to accept and recognize the validity of the raised validity claims

presupposing their cognitive character or the possibility of vindication (Habermas, 1998: 72-79). In other words, “*we understand a speech act when we know what makes it acceptable*,” which is why meaning is differentiated with regard to the pragmatic functions of communication (Habermas, 1984: 297). Thus, successful public communication, which is crucial to deliberative politics, relies on the competence of speakers to perform acceptable utterances. As we shall see below, this conception of meaning also plays a central role in establishing a telos toward mutual understanding and hence the concept of communicative reason.

1.2.3 The Rational Basis of Illocutionary Force

Having elucidated Habermas’ conception of meaning, it is now possible to return to the force of the illocutionary component mentioned above. This illocutionary force generates the interpersonal relation and hence constitutes a precondition for communication. In other words, the constitution of the illocutionary force is connected to the failure or success of a speech act.¹⁰ If a speech act is successful or accepted it has illocutionary force and “the hearer not only understands the meaning of the sentence uttered but also actually enters into the relationship intended by the speaker” (Habermas, 1998: 82). Thus, the acceptability of a speech act can be said to depend on a certain commitment that the speaker performing a speech act takes on so that the hearer can rely on her. When performing a speech act, for example a promise, “the speaker makes an offer that [s]he is ready to make good insofar as it is accepted by the hearer” (Habermas, 1998: 84). In making a promise, the speaker makes a commitment that she is willing to draw certain consequences for her action in certain situations. This commitment consists, on the one hand, of a certain content, i.e. the promise, and, on the other hand, of the speaker’s sincerity, i.e. the willingness to take on the commitment to the content. In case the hearer relies on the speaker’s commitment and believes that she will fulfill certain conditions, the speech act is accepted. “[T]hus, the illocutionary force of an acceptable speech act consists in the fact that it can move a hearer to rely on the speech-act-typical obligations of the speaker” (Habermas, 1998: 85). However, this definition of the illocutionary force does not explain what motivates the hearer to base her actions on the commitment of the speaker.

¹⁰ In the analysis of the illocutionary force, Habermas delimits his object domain to cases in which the speaker is both responsible for the failure or success of the speech acts and “not merely feigns but sincerely makes a serious offer” (Habermas, 1998: 82).

In relation to this, Habermas distinguishes between institutionally bound and unbound speech acts.¹¹ An example of an institutionally bound speech act is the performance of wedding, in which the speech act derives its illocutionary force from the force of established norms or speech-act-typical contextual restrictions. Institutionally unbound speech acts, however, cannot derive their illocutionary force directly from the normative background, as they only refer to general aspects of norms. In order to explain how established norms get their force in the first place, the institutionally unbound speech acts must gain their illocutionary force from somewhere else. This leads Habermas to trace the illocutionary force of institutionally unbound speech acts back to the hearer's response to the universally raised validity claims. Thus, Habermas argues that

the speaker can illocutionarily influence the hearer, and vice versa, because speech-act-typical obligations are connected with cognitively testable validity claims – that is, because the reciprocal binding and bonding relationship has a rational basis (Habermas, 1998: 85).

By this explication of the illocutionary force, Habermas connects the speech-act-typical obligation to the validity basis of speech. A speaker performing a speech act does not just take on a certain commitment or obligation but also thematizes one of the universal validity claims through the mode of communication. It is this appeal to a certain validity claim that determines the content of the commitment. Returning to the example of a promise, the promise is an instance of an interactive use of speech, which thematizes the validity claim of rightness or the ability of a subject to assume responsibility. This appeal to the validity claim of rightness causes the obligation of the promise (the speech-act-typical obligation) to take the character of an obligation to provide justification. As a result of the connection between the validity claim and the speech-act-typical obligation, the hearer can be rationally motivated to accept the offer of the speaker performing the speech act, as it is possible to cognitively test it. When performing a promise, the speaker immanently obliges herself to provide justification in the sense that she will indicate “the *normative context* that gives [her] the *conviction* that [her] utterance is right,” if necessary (Habermas, 1998: 86). If this immediate justification does not dispel an ad hoc doubt, however, the speaker can continue the communicative action at the level of discourse. Correspondingly, “in the cognitive use of

¹¹ The validity of this distinction presupposes the validity of John Searle's so-called principle of expressibility, which I will return to later (Habermas, 1998: 85).

language, the speaker proffers a speech-act-immanent *obligation to provide grounds*” and “in the expressive use of language, the speaker [...] enters into [...] the *obligation to prove trustworthy*” (Habermas, 1998: 86-87). It is in the guarantee of the speaker to redeem the raised validity claim, if necessary, by providing reasons that the rationality shows itself and not in the validity of the claim as such. Thus, participants of a dialogue can be said to hold each other rationally accountable.

To summarize, the orientation toward mutual understanding in public communication, distinctive to deliberative politics, rests on the communicative rational basis of the illocutionary force inscribed in the connection between the speech-act-typical obligations and the universal cognitively testable validity claims. That is, according to Habermas, a speaker always both raises universal claims to validity that can be cognitively tested and obliges herself to perform a test, if necessary, and vindicate the claims. Consequently, it is rational in communication to presuppose that the performed speech acts are true, right, and sincere, because the hearer can always ask for a vindication. In this sense, communicative reason constitutes a linguistic telos toward mutual understanding, as the illocutionary force moves the hearer to rely on the speaker and accept or understand the speech act.

1.3 Mind versus Body within Universal Pragmatics

Before I proceed with the analysis of Habermas’ discourse theory in order to complete the elucidation of the concept of communicative reason, I want to pause for a moment and suggest that the above analysis reveals how Habermas struggles to reconcile Kantian transcendentalism with pragmatism. More specifically, I want to suggest that the struggle results in a tension within his theory of meaning and the method of rational reconstruction. This tension is problematic, as it raises the suspicion that Habermas does not succeed in disavowing the dualism between mind and body in his concept of communicative reason but, instead, privileges the mind by retaining a residue of apriorism or some kind of universal commonness that does not take the body and its influence on meaning seriously (Aboulafia, 2002: 3-11).

First, Habermas’ struggle to reconcile Kantian transcendentalism with pragmatism constitutes a tension between factuality and counterfactuality within his theory of meaning. On the one hand, Habermas acknowledges that the understanding of meaning is dependent on intersubjective agreement. He acknowledges that meaning is dependent on a factual and contingent background of preunderstood meaning, which constitutes a common

denominator, a shared ethos, prior to communication. On the other hand, however, Habermas will not accept that this shared background becomes totalizing in the sense that there are parts of it that cannot, in principle, be explained or critically reflected upon. This would undermine the idea of rational accountability and the cognitive testability of validity claims, and hence the telos toward mutual understanding. In other words, Habermas requires meaning to be intersubjectively controlled, which is why he connects meaning to validity ensuring the counterfactual possibility of understanding (Ingram, 2010: 93-94).

In order to render counterfactual understanding, and hence intersubjective control of meaning, possible, Habermas needs to establish a space within the symbolically prestructured reality, from where one can distance oneself from the background knowledge and raise an internal criticism. This critical distancing is what Habermas attempts to establish by formally analyzing the reflexive nature of language, for instance in terms of the double structure of speech. There are in principle no limits to what can be thematized, objectified, and vindicated, if necessary, but this always entails an illocutionary component, which cannot simultaneously be thematized. A presupposition for this formal analysis of the double structure of speech, and thereby the illocutionary force, which is crucial to the concept of communicative reason, is the validity of John Searle's principle of expressibility. The principle states that

we shall exclude those explicit speech acts in standard form that appear in contexts that produce shifts of meaning. This is the case when the pragmatic meaning of a context-dependent speech act diverges from the meaning of the sentences used in it [...] [A]ssuming that the speaker expresses his intention precisely, explicitly, and literally, it is possible in principle for every speech act carried out or capable of being carried out to be specified unequivocally by a complex sentence (Habermas, 1998: 61).

However, the principle also creates a number of problems for Habermas. First, it stands in contrast to his critique of Austin's conception of meaning. Habermas criticizes Austin for not comprehending the relation between a sentence and the reality it is put into by means of utterance. By contrast, the principle of expressibility itself can be criticized for being too decontextualized, as it "exclude speech acts [...] that appear in context that produce shifts of meaning" (Habermas, 1998: 61; Lafont, 1999: 161). Furthermore, the principle runs counter to Habermas' aim to differentiate categories of meaning, as it can be criticized for de facto reducing meaning to pragmatic meaning. That is, the

meaning of the analyzed speech act should express the speaker's intention in the sense that what is said does not deviate from what is meant. This critique also pertains to Habermas' correlation between meaning and acceptability conditions and the statement that speech acts are only understood and successful when accepted. This seems to put a disproportionate emphasis on the illocutionary component and downplay the role of the propositional component in the conception of meaning (Lafont, 1999: 198-200). Finally, as we shall see in the subsequent chapters, Habermas' notion of experience is too confined leaving out important aspects, e.g. emotions, which causes his conception of meaning to become disembodied. He categorically distinguishes between the propositional component (what is said) learned through sensory experiences and the illocutionary component (what is meant) learned through communicative experiences. However, it seems artificial to distinguish between sensory experience and communicative experience, as observation must presuppose conceptualization learned through communication, and communicative experience must entail sensory impulses.

As a result of the critique of the principle of expressibility, Habermas elaborates on the notion of the lifeworld during the 1980s. However, Habermas cannot assign too big a role to the lifeworld in his conception of meaning, as he thereby risks relativizing the validity basis of speech and undermining the cognitive testability of validity and the intersubjective control of meaning. If communicative action is too dependent on a factual and contingent agreed meaning prior to action, the test of validity becomes relative to this preunderstood meaning. Consequently, the intersubjective control of meaning and the illocutionary force, and hence communicative reason and the possibility of deliberative politics, are obliterated (Lafont, 1999: 162-164).

Second, Habermas' struggle to reconcile Kantian transcendentalism with pragmatism results in a tension between contingency and essentialism within the method of rational reconstruction, through which the notion of the validity basis of speech is developed. As the validity basis of speech expresses a pretheoretical knowledge of competent speakers, "what begins as an explication of meaning aims at the reconstruction of species competencies" (Habermas, 1998: 35). By competence, Habermas understands a rule consciousness that makes a person capable of producing well-formed sentences and place them in relation to reality.¹² On the one hand, this rule consciousness should not be considered an

¹² This concept of competence is a revision of Noam Chomsky's concept of competence in order to investigate language use in competence-theoretic terms (Habermas, 1998: 47). For a

innate disposition but rather a result of a learning process, which can be rationally reconstructed (Habermas, 1998: 41). On the other hand, however, Habermas acknowledges that the conception of competence and its rational reconstruction entails an essentialist claim in the sense that, if the reconstruction is true, it actually corresponds to a universal competence (Habermas, 1990: 37). This raises a suspicion that Habermas, despite his critique of Kant's apriorism, retains a facultative understanding of reason, which is opposed to the pragmatist stance that "human cognizing powers are practical, *ad hoc* habits at best, not changelessly apt faculties that evolve effectively within nature itself" (Margolis, 2002: 33). The tension between the contingency and essentialism of rational reconstruction raises the following questions: What are the deeper structures of competence? Are they innate or acquired? And what are the criteria of being competent?

To summarize, Habermas wants to acknowledge the pragmatist insight that meaning relies on a factual presupposed background knowledge, which is learned through experience and constitutes one's competence. He wants to acknowledge that meaning is tied to conventions and historical contingency. At the same time, however, Habermas also states that participants of communication presuppose universal validity claims or the possibility of vindicating the validity of certain claims no matter which lifeworld one belongs to. Hence, meaning is tied to transparency and a universal structure that creates some kind of common denominator across lifeworlds that seems to give the notion of competence the character of innateness. By clinging to the notion of the validity basis of speech, Habermas therefore risks developing a conception of reason that abstracts from the factual and practically lived experiences of human beings (body) and privileges the counterfactual and idealized presuppositions of reaching understanding (mind). He risks abstracting from the influence of non-linguistic bodily experience on meaning and understanding, and how meaning and understanding might not always entail know-that and consciousness. In the end, this challenges the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics.

more comprehensive account of the relation between Habermas and Chomsky see Papastephanou (2012).

1.4 Discourse Theory

Returning to the elaboration of Habermas' concept of communicative reason, I have so far only treated it relative to successful communicative action at the level of ordinary language. However, because communicative rationality and the illocutionary force are so intimately connected to providing reasons, rationality can, according to Habermas, "be adequately explicated only in terms of a theory of argumentation" (Habermas, 1984: 18). This is because validity constitutes intersubjective recognition, which can be disturbed through the critique of the validity of a claim. Thus, the next step in the explication of communicative reason is to show how intersubjective recognition is brought about, i.e. how the validity of a claim to universality is vindicated through argumentation. By argumentation, Habermas understands

that type of speech in which participants thematize contested validity claims and attempt to vindicate or criticize them through arguments. An argument contains reasons or grounds that are connected in a systematic way with the *validity claim* of a problematic expression (Habermas, 1984: 18).

In other words, argumentation is a reflective medium, in which participants address the underlying warrants of a raised validity claim and assess them. In general, this is rational in the sense that one is willing to take on a reflective attitude and provide reasons for any expression or mode of behavior (Habermas, 1984: 18-20). However, parallel to his differentiation of different types of rationality, Habermas also distinguishes rational assessment or argumentation in general from discourse. This is a specific form of argumentation that only occurs "when the meaning of the problematic validity claim conceptually forces participants to suppose that rationally motivated agreement could in principle be achieved" (Habermas, 1984: 42). Agreement requires not mere understanding of sentences but mutual understanding, meaning, the acceptance of a validity claim for the same reasons, which is why it requires a certain level of generality or universality (Habermas, 1998: 321). Consequently, discourse is a reflective medium, in which *universal* validity claims are attempted criticized or vindicated. In theoretical discourse, the cognitive use of language is continued and the speaker attempts to vindicate the thematized truth claim by providing grounds. In practical discourse, the interactive use of language is continued and the speaker attempts to vindicate the thematized rightness claim by providing justification. In practical discourse, however, it is not the claim that the speech

act raises, which is in the process of being vindicated, but the normative background from where the rightness claim is derived. Finally, the claim to sincerity cannot be vindicated by means of arguments but only proven through subsequently consistent action (Habermas, 1984: 19-22).

1.4.1 The Transcendental-Pragmatic Presuppositions of Discourse

As participants of discourse attempt to reach a rationally motivated agreement, a discourse theory has to consider questions such as: “What makes some arguments, and thus some reasons, which are related to validity claims in a certain way, stronger or weaker than other arguments?” (Habermas, 1984: 24). That is, what brings about intersubjective recognition? Considering these questions, Habermas disavows a logic of argumentation referring to deductive relations between sentences, as this presupposes the correspondence theory of meaning, which he rejected in his universal pragmatics. This is because neither deduction nor empirical evidence can create agreement or intersubjective recognition, as deductive inference cannot reveal anything substantively new and the substantive content of an argument is always open to various interpretations within different frameworks. Thus, substantive disagreement cannot be resolved monologically through semantic analysis (Habermas, 1990: 63). Instead, Habermas argues that we need a dialogical and pragmatic logic of argumentation referring to the non-deductive relations between utterances. Besides the reconstruction of universal pragmatics, this logic is based upon the reconstruction of three levels of transcendental or inescapable pragmatic presuppositions of argumentation in relation to which the cogency of an argument, and thereby its ability to force agreement, is evaluated. These presuppositions are transcendental in the sense that they “must always (already) have [been] accepted, if the language game of argumentation is to be meaningful” (Habermas, 1990: 82).

First, at the logical level, argumentation aims at producing “intrinsically cogent arguments with which we can redeem or repudiate claims to validity” (Habermas, 1984: 25). In this context, logic is to be understood informally, hence, the cogency of the argument also depends on interrelated meanings of terms and background information that cannot be formalized such as induction, narratives, analogies etc. Thus, at this level, participants of argumentation must presuppose that they do not contradict themselves, that they are consistent, and that the meaning of expressions do not vary among the participants. Second, at the dialectical level, argumentation constitutes a procedure or a form of

interaction, which is subject to certain rules. That is, argumentation is a norm-governed practice including, for example, taking on a hypothetical attitude or organizing the interaction as a competition between arguments in the search of the better argument. Hence, at this level, participants of argumentation must presuppose that they are sincere and that they will provide reasons for wanting to criticize a raised validity claim, i.e. that they are accountable. Third, at the rhetorical level, argumentation constitutes a process of communication, which must satisfy conditions resembling an ideal speech situation and its general symmetry conditions. Consequently, at this level, participants of argumentation must presuppose that every competent speaker is included, that they have been granted equal opportunities to make contributions, and that they have not been under influence of any other force than the force of the better argument (Habermas, 1990: 87-89).

When evaluating the cogency of an argument and whether it is capable of rationally motivating agreement, one has to make an overall assessment taking into consideration all of the above levels and their presuppositions at once (Habermas, 1984: 26). In relation to this, it is important to note that the presuppositions are not constitutive of discourse in the same way that chess rules are constitutive of chess. A discourse can take place without the presuppositions being fulfilled by the speakers because they are merely reconstructions of what is implicitly adopted and intuitively known. The presuppositions are idealizations that must be assumed to be approximately realized in order for a discourse to be rational. Consequently, they function as a test of the cogency of arguments conducted by the participants of discourse. If the presuppositions have not been approximately realized, the discourse has not been rational, and hence the arguments of the discourse are not cogent. For the same reason, one should distinguish between the ideal content of the presuppositions and the actualization of this content under empirical conditions within conventions (Habermas, 1990: 91-92).

The idea of the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions is taken from Karl-Otto Apel who identifies them by testing whether a presupposition can be challenged without being deductively grounded on a formal-logical tautology and without performing a performative contradiction. A performative contradiction “occurs when a constative speech act $k(p)$ rests on noncontingent presuppositions whose propositional content contradicts the asserted proposition p ” (Habermas, 1990: 80). That is, a person cannot state that she does not exist without contradicting herself, as the meaningfulness of such a

statement presupposes the propositional content of what could be expressed: “I exist”. This idea is central because a person who contests Habermas’ rational reconstruction of the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions may find herself caught up in a performative contradiction when performing the contestation. In other words, it is central in justifying the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions to show that they are internal to argumentation and not imposed from a standpoint outside (Habermas, 1990: 89).

To conclude, the validity of a claim to universality can be discursively vindicated by means of the force of the better argument (when looking away from the claim of sincerity). The better argument derives its force from its impartiality, which moves the participants to rely on its reasons. This is why the vindication of the given validity claim is said to be rationally motivated. The impartiality of the better argument is derived from its cogency, which is evaluated by testing the degree to which the argumentation realizes the inescapable pragmatic presuppositions that cannot be contested without being caught in a performative contradiction or *petitio principii*. Together with the illocutionary force, the force of the better argument constitutes a *telos* toward mutual understanding in the sense that it moves participants of communication to accept the same claims to validity for the same reasons, i.e. to form opinions rationally. This *telos* is what constitutes communicative reason. Thus, Habermas’ theories of meaning and discourse establishes the possibility of deliberative politics.

1.4.2 Mind versus Body in the Discourse Theory

Because Habermas’ discourse theory is based on his universal pragmatics, the tensions between both factuality and counterfactuality and contingency and essentialism are present in the former too. First, as Habermas risks relativizing the illocutionary force of a speech act in relation to a factual background knowledge, so he risks relativizing the force of the better argument in relation to a background knowledge (Ingram, 2010: 146). Ultimately, this raises the question of whether it is possible to identify an argument that has force across different life worlds? Furthermore, Habermas states that discourses have to be carried through in practice in order to identify the better argument. At the same time, however, Habermas’ thoughts about the argumentation process does not mention affective factors but involves a dispassionateness toward the provided arguments and the search for truth. That is, if a person who has built up trust in a community provides an argument, this argument would probably have a

greater force compared to a situation in which a distrusted person literally provided the same argument (Ingram, 2010: 148-149). As we shall see in chapter two, this dispassionateness can be externally criticized, since our understandings are inherently emotional. In other words, the process of argumentation is influenced by forces that are not necessarily conscious, which is why it is difficult (or impossible?) to rule them out. This challenges the possibility of approximately realizing the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions. Second, the conditions of an ideal speech situation require a symmetry between competent speakers. However, Habermas' problem with providing criteria for competence raises the question of otherness and recognition, which threatens the presupposition of symmetry.¹³

Overall, Habermas seems to have a decontextualized and disembodied conception of discourse in the sense that he focuses on idealizations instead of lived experience. Where he considered the experiential basis of the differentiation of meaning in his universal pragmatics, he does not consider the experiential basis of the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions in his discourse theory. He does not consider the embodiment of discourse. However, as we shall see in chapter three, an experiential basis is necessary if the discourse theory is to remain useful. Thus, the character of Habermas' discourse theory supports the possibility of criticizing the concept of communicative reason for privileging mind over body, which in turn challenges the possibility of deliberative politics.

1.5 The Moral Desirability of Deliberative Politics

Having clarified Habermas' conception of communicative reason and, hence the foundation of the possibility of deliberative politics, I now turn to his moral theory and the foundation of the moral desirability of deliberative politics. To recapitulate, Habermas argues that deliberative politics is morally desirable because it fits the legislative process of democratic politics better. This is because the discourse-theoretic interpretation of public communication supposedly makes it possible to both distinguish moral questions concerning the interest of all from ethical questions concerning ethical self-understanding and prioritize the former over the latter. To make this distinction, however, Habermas first

¹³ For a more thorough discussion of recognition and Habermas see Taylor & Gutmann (1994).

has to establish moral cognitivism, i.e. the possibility of knowing or judging the validity of norms (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2018b).

1.5.1 The Cognitive Content and Ontological Character of Norms

In establishing moral cognitivism, Habermas turns our attention to the phenomenology of moral, i.e. our everyday moral intuitions, which must be brought into consciousness maieutically (Habermas, 1990: 45). In our everyday lives, we coordinate action according to obligations that “presupposes the intersubjective recognition of moral norms [...] which prescribe *in a convincing fashion* for a community what actors are obliged to do and what they can expect from each other” (Habermas, 1996b: 335). This coordination of actions according to obligations refers to some kind of validity indicating the cognitive content of norms and reflected in what Habermas denotes as moral feelings (Habermas, 1996b: 336). These feelings are moral in the sense that they relate to a normative expectation, which is valid for all competent actors. They express implicit judgements or evaluations. Hence, when one violates an obligation, one does not just feel resentment in relation to one’s subjective preferences or sentiments but in relation to some background of generalized expectations, which are referred to when explaining the wrongdoing and the feeling. In other words, the moral feelings of e.g. guilt, shame, loyalty, proudness etc. point beyond the particular sphere of what concerns individual persons in specific situations (Habermas, 1990: 48-49). It is this claim to general validity that gives the obligation its action coordinating ability, which in turn seems to derive its authority from the impersonality of the claim. Thus, in order to establish the cognitive content of norms, one also has to explain what it means to justify norms (Habermas, 1990: 50).

Before turning to the action of moral justification, however, it is important to note that one must not assimilate norms with facts, as norms cannot be said to be true or false but rather right or wrong. Their validity is different from the validity of facts (Habermas, 1990: 52-57). This is because norms refer to the social world and not the objective world, which is why the ontological character of norms are different from that of facts. Norms do not exist independently of validity as facts do. There is an intrinsic link between the social reality and normative validity, which does not exist between the objective world and propositional validity. Hence, “norms are dependent upon the continual reestablishment of legitimately ordered interpersonal relationship” whereas “state of affairs [...] must be assumed to exist independently of whether we

formulate them by means of true propositions or not” (Habermas, 1990: 61). In other words, the acceptability or justification of a claim to rightness makes a constructive contribution to norms in a way that the acceptability of truth claims does not do to facts (Habermas, 1996b: 351). Furthermore, this ontological difference makes it possible to distinguish between a social fact, i.e. an intersubjectively recognized norm, and its validity or worthiness to be recognized. There may be existing norms that have not been justified and norms that are possible to vindicate but have not been recognized yet, which might be caused by the fact that the recognition of norms is influenced by both rational insight and direct force. In everyday life, however, people expect that norms exist because they are possible to vindicate, which is a type of existence that is different from the existence of state of affairs. Because of this ontological character of norms, Habermas argues that the possibility of valid norms is directly connected to the nature of practical discourse, which is the connection I turn to in the following (Habermas, 1990: 61-62).

1.5.2 Discourse Ethics and its Justification

Regarding the validity and justification of norms, Habermas is not just a moral cognitivist but a strong moral cognitivist in the sense that he wants to bring about categorically or unconditionally valid norms. He wants to establish a moral point of view from where it is possible to give the right priority over the good with reference to an ever-wider community, as it enables equal treatment across individual and collective identities (Habermas, 1996b: 345). This idea of a universal morality is most famously represented in Immanuel Kant’s categorical imperative. In short, Kant conceives of the individual as free and autonomous when she is the legislator of her own laws. In order to be a free and autonomous citizen, one must be able to take on a moral point of view, from where one can legislate in the interest of all. However, according to Habermas, Kant poses this moral point of view in a monological and subjective manner, which overlooks the layer of traditions in which identities are formed, and hence it fails to establish categorical validity in a post-metaphysical world of value pluralism (Habermas, 1996b: 345-346). Alternatively, Habermas argues that the moral point of view must be operationalized discursively and intersubjectively. First, people who enter practical discourse are compelled to take on a we-perspective in order to examine whether a norm could be willed by all affected. Second, we must assume that argumentation, which is transcendental-pragmatically and rationally structured, is found in every culture or society (Habermas, 1996b: 353-

355). Habermas calls this proceduralist interpretation of the categorical imperative the discourse ethics principle (D):

Only those norms can claim validity that could meet with the agreement of all concerned in their capacity as participants in a practical discourse (Habermas, 1996b: 347).

This principle is hypothetically posited in the sense that it only specifies the condition that valid norms would fulfill if they could be justified (Habermas, 1996b: 354). Thus, in order to render (D) operationalizable, Habermas needs to show that it is possible to justify norms and that agreement within practical discourse in specific is possible given both value pluralism and the absence of a privileged position from where one can judge what is right or wrong. In other words, he needs a principle that can ensure that the norms that are accepted as valid in practical discourse deserve the recognition of all concerned and not just a certain ethical group. On the basis of these requirements, Habermas formulates the universalization principle (U), which prescribes that a norm is valid

when the foreseeable consequences and side effects of its general observance for the interests and value-orientations of *each individual* could be freely accepted *jointly* by *all* concerned (Habermas, 1996: 354).

This principle is a rule of argumentation, which is supposed to bridge the logical gap in non-deductive relations between utterances and test arguments in practical discourse exclusively, which is why it cannot regulate actions (Habermas, 1990: 63, 86). It is proceduralist and non-substantive in the sense that it does not prejudge the content of norms, and like (D), it is both dialogical and epistemic, as it is only “an intersubjective process of reaching understanding [which] can produce an agreement that is reflexive in nature,” i.e. an agreement based on a shared pretheoretical knowledge (Habermas, 1990: 67).

Having indicated that norms have a cognitive content and that agreement in general is forced by argumentation approximately realizing the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions in rational discourses, Habermas naturally turns to his discourse theory in order to justify (U) and the possibility of agreement within practical discourses in specific. Habermas argues that (U) can be derived from the normative content of the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions, thus refuting the suspicion that (U) should be ethnocentric. As it is unavoidable to presuppose that every competent speaker is included, that all participants have

been granted equal opportunities to make contributions, that all participants are sincere, and that no one has been under the influence of any other force than the force of the better argument when entering practical discourse, “everyone who seriously tries to *discursively* redeem normative claims to validity intuitively accepts procedural conditions that amount to implicitly acknowledging (U)” (Habermas, 1990: 93). In this sense, the justification of (U) is immanent to argumentation and not imposed from outside. However, Habermas emphasizes that this justification is not ultimate, as it is a hypothetical reconstruction of an intuitive pretheoretical knowledge, which can be more or less correct. Hence, it hinges on maieutic confirmation. The same goes for the status of the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions. They must always be up for discussion and criticism (Habermas, 1990: 97-98).

Furthermore, Habermas acknowledges that (D) has a great deal of limitations. First, its application is limited to practical questions that can be debated rationally in the sense that the participants of discourse presuppose the possibility of achieving agreement in principle “whereby the phrase ‘in principle’ expresses the idealizing proviso: if only argumentation could be conducted openly enough and continued long enough” (Habermas, 1984: 42). (D) needs to be applied on contingent content and, hence, it is only formal to the extent that it provides proceduralist guidelines. The application, however, is not dependent on a practical prudence prior to (D), as participants taking on a performative attitude in practical discourse implicitly claim to transcend all local conventions. This is because they presuppose the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions, which causes one to overshoot the local interpretation community and address a universal audience. Second, practical discourses are rooted in the struggle for recognition and are often distorted by the instrumental use of force (Habermas, 1990: 104-105).

Despite these limitations, Habermas still withholds that, on the basis of the universal pragmatics and the presuppositions of argumentation, it is possible to theoretically distinguish universal validity and moral questions from cultural values and ethical questions. In other words, he argues that, in principle, there are no boundaries of critique. Communicative reason inherent in communicative action enables thematization of any norm that we take for granted plus the evaluation of its validity through discourse, in which we take on a performative attitude and thereby presupposes the counterfactual possibility of achieving agreement, in principle, across lifeworlds (Habermas, 1990: 106-109). This is why deliberative politics is morally desirable.

1.5.3 Mind versus Body in the Discourse Ethics

Again, the tensions from Habermas' universal pragmatics can be traced in his discourse ethics, now in terms of a tension between moral and ethical questions. On the one hand, Habermas wants to establish a moral point of view, which can bring about unconditionally valid norms. He wants to establish a universal morality that abstracts from the context of ethical life, and hence can be justified without prejudging its own content, i.e. without deriving it from a prior ethos. He wants to disintegrate norms that can be justified in principle from norms that are only justified de facto. He wants to disintegrate validity from social facts. On the other hand, the moral point of view is itself fallible and norms are always potentially criticizable, which indicates that norms can never become entirely unconditionally valid but always entail some portion of historical contingency. Furthermore, the discourse ethics creates a motivational deficit, as it only regulates discourse and not action. It can only guarantee rationally motivated insight but cannot guarantee that this insight will motivate action. Thus, Habermas admits that there is a

remnant of the good in the core of the right [...] which reminds us that moral consciousness does indeed depend on a particular self-understanding of moral persons who recognize that they *belong* to the moral community (Habermas, 1996b: 343).

First, this notion of a moral community connotes the essentialism of the notion of competence suggested in the above. Second, the motivational deficit of discourse ethics requires that the procedure of the moral point of view is applied within the concrete and contingent context of the lifeworld, from where practical judgements derive their power to motivate. However, this creates a problem of mediating between morality and ethical life and translating insight into moral action. In an attempt to deal with this problem Habermas ambiguously states that

only those forms of life that meet universalist moralities halfway [...] fulfill the conditions necessary to reverse the abstractive achievements of decontextualization and demotivation (Habermas, 1990: 109).

In sum, this tension questions the possibility of separating and prioritizing moral and ethical questions, or the right from the good, and therefore questions the moral desirability of deliberative politics.

1.6 Summary

This chapter shows how communicative reason, according to Habermas, constitutes a telos toward mutual understanding by virtue of the illocutionary force and the force of the better argument, which characterize the public communication distinctive to deliberative politics. Furthermore, it shows how Habermas justifies the possibility of distinguishing moral questions from ethical questions and prioritizing the former over the latter by arguing that (U) is inherent to discourse, making deliberative politics morally desirable. If we apply this analysis to understand and assess Skaarup's statement that politics is first of all feelings, Skaarup seems to contradict himself performatively, provided that he considers feelings to be given and decisive to one's opinion. That is, by participating in the public communication, Skaarup is, according to Habermas, raising the universal validity claims of speech, obligating himself to vindicate them, if necessary, and presupposing conditions of general symmetry enabling the identification of the better argument. In other words, he presupposes that he can make his dissidents understand his statement, and hence convince them that politics is first of all feelings. However, this contradicts the statement itself, as opinions should be a matter of given feelings that cannot be altered by means of argumentation. In this sense, the statement is either flawed or misleading.

At the same time, the chapter shows that Habermas struggles to reconcile Kantian transcendentalism with pragmatism in his theory of meaning; the same problem recurs in his theories of discourse and morality, since they are based on his theory of meaning. This struggle creates a number of tensions within his thoughts, which can be summarized as follows: On the one hand, Habermas acknowledges the contingency of facts and norms, the importance of pragmatics, performativity, and the lifeworld in relation to meaning and understanding, and the importance of ethical life for motivating action. However, in order to resist contextualism, relativism, and ultimately moral barbarism, he strives to justify a notion of justice resting on a concept of communicative reason, which entails a degree of formalism, counterfactuality, essentialism, and universality. This, in turn, opens Habermas' conception of reason and its role in deliberative politics for privileging mind over body or of being too decontextualized, demotivated, and disembodied. The struggle raises the questions of whether he has more confidence in the possibility of critique and mutual understanding across ethical communities than is justifiable? Is it possible to sharply distinguish between moral and ethical questions? Is Skaarup's

statement more correct than misleading? These questions will guide the subsequent chapters.

2 The Affect of Deliberative Politics

As mentioned in chapter one, Habermas acknowledges that there is no privileged standpoint from where one can judge the truth, which is why political theory must take its point of departure in the lived experiences of people's everyday lives. The tensions within Habermas' conception of reason, however, opens the notion of deliberative politics to the critique of abstracting too much from these experiences. That is, Habermas risks to privilege his own standpoint in order to make deliberative politics morally desirable. He risks to both contradict himself and fail in legitimating deliberative politics in the sense that his discourse-theoretic interpretation of public communication reflects a certain type of non-explicated experience. In order to investigate this possible critique and to qualify the assessment of the tensions within Habermas and their consequences for the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics, I now turn to affect-theory. Affect-theory is a school of thought that seeks to ground cultural, social, and political theory in affect understood as the sensations, intensities, and movements of embodied human life residing outside of language and cognition by incorporating, among other things, neuroscientific, Spinozean, Deleuzean and neo-Nietzschean insights (Wehrs, 2017: 3, 39). Broadly speaking, affect theory criticizes rationalist theories such as Habermas' for undervaluing the fact that humans are corporeal creatures whose political beliefs are influenced by non-conscious affective processes, which we have to realize in order to break the structures of repetition, exploit their potential for renewal, and avoid harmful manipulation of our affective lives (Leys, 2011: 434-435).

In this chapter, I provide an analysis of the neuroscientist Antonio R. Damasio and the philosopher Brian Massumi's theories of affect, respectively, in order to elucidate the concept of affect, its relation to reason, and its role in

deliberative politics. The purpose of analyzing Damasio's work is to provide an insight into some of the neuroscience of emotion that has inspired affect-theory and to pre-figure the embodiment of reason that I treat more thoroughly in chapter three. I choose Damasio because his work is widely acknowledged for contributing significantly to the knowledge about the relation between affect and cognition and because his work is inspired by Baruch Spinoza's notion of affect, which also plays a crucial role in Massumi (Brinkmann, 2006: 370; Damasio, 2003: 11; Massumi, 2002: 15).¹⁴ Furthermore, Damasio's theory serves the purpose of conducting a test of Habermas' universal claims against empirical scientific evidence, which Habermas himself considers necessary (Habermas, 1984: 2-3). In the first part of this chapter, I analyze Damasio's work and argue that it provides important insights into the conditioning of conceptualization and reason by non-conscious reactions and our bodily being in the world, which are absent in Habermas. In the second part, however, I argue that Damasio's theory does not resolve the mind/body dualism, as his conceptualization of emotions and feelings is too reductionist and simplistic consequently privileging body over mind and leaving the question of the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics open.

As Damasio seeks to describe affect in terms of what is empirically realized, I supplement his theory with an analysis of Massumi's affect-theory, which does not seek to describe affect purely by means of scientific methods but provides a more elaborate philosophical conceptualization of the phenomenon (Clough, 2008: 3). I choose Massumi because he is one of the most influential affect theorists and because he provides a political theory based on a notion of affect that acknowledges the non-conscious conditioning of reason absent in Habermas (Wehrs, 2017: 39; Stanley, 2017: 97). In the third part of this chapter, I analyze Massumi's theory and argue that he opens the possibility of conceptualizing understanding and action in a non-linguistic, pre-reflective, and bodily way, which runs counter to Habermas' conception of meaning, understanding, and reason. In the fourth and last part, however, I argue that Massumi commits the same mistake as both Habermas and Damasio by conceiving affect as pre-subjective, asigned, and autonomous of subjective, linguistically signified emotion. He hypostasizes the mind similar to Habermas and privileges the body similar to Damasio. Nevertheless, Damasio and Massumi contribute by pointing to the embodiment and non-conscious

¹⁴ Among others, his work is acknowledged by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, who I will return to in chapter three (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 514).

conditioning of reason and the non-linguistic, pre-reflective, and bodily aspects of understanding, whose role in deliberative politics I pursue in chapter three.

2.1 Antonio R. Damasio's Theory of Affect

2.1.1 Emotion and Feeling

Inspired by Baruch Spinoza's thoughts about affect and the functional division between bodily reactions and the ideas of these reactions, the Portuguese-American neuroscientist Antonio R. Damasio conceives of affect¹⁵ as the substance of which body and mind are parallel attributes constituted by emotions and feelings (Damasio, 2003: 11, 133).¹⁶ By emotions, Damasio understands automatic reactions to emotionally competent stimuli that are necessary to the survival and well-being of an organism and precede feelings evolutionary and causally. They are bodily and public in the sense that they are accessible from a third-person point of view either immediately or by means of scientific probes, whereas feelings are private and only accessible from a first-person point of view. This is due to the fact that emotions constitute a lower level than feelings in the so-called homeostatic machine (Damasio, 2003: 27-30).

The homeostatic machine is an innate and automated machine that regulates life with the purpose of keeping the organism in an equilibrium, which is optimal relative to the survival and well-being of the organism. This regulation takes place on different levels of complexity, all relating to one another in terms of a nesting principle. Through the course of evolution more complex reactions have evolved and incorporated *some* of the simpler reactions. Hence, there is a hierarchy within the homeostatic machine that should be construed as a tree that branches out in different directions rather than as a skyscraper with more floors piled upon each other. At the bottom of the homeostatic machine are metabolic regulations, the immune system, reflexes etc. and at the top are emotions and to some extent feelings (Damasio, 2003: 31-37).

¹⁵ As mentioned in the introduction, Massumi's terminology differs from Damasio's. Where Damasio uses "affect" as a collective designation for "emotions" and "feelings", Massumi uses "affect" as something that resembles Damasio's "emotion", something non-conscious, autonomic, and bodily. Furthermore, Massumi uses "emotion" as something that resembles Damasio's "feelings", i.e. as a conscious signification of what Massumi calls "affect".

¹⁶ Damasio does not explicate what he understands by substance and attributes. However, it seems to me that he revises Spinoza's doctrine of parallelism. Damasio ties emotions to the body and feelings to the mind and construe them as parallel attributes of affect, whereas Spinoza ties extension to the body and thoughts to the mind that are parallel attributes of the same infinite substance (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2018a).

Damasio distinguishes between three categories of emotions based on their placement in the homeostatic machine. First, the background emotions are difficult to detect. They constitute our state of being but are different from moods, which denotes the sustenance of an emotion over a longer period of time. Second, the primary emotions are easy to identify and quite consistent across cultures, which is why they are usually what comes to our mind when we think of emotions, i.e. fear, anger, sadness, happiness etc. Third, the social emotions constitute shame, guilt, pride, jealousy etc. and have a subtler incorporation in the lower levels of the homeostatic machine. However, they are not social in the sense that they are learned or especially human but in the sense that they are triggered by a social situation of some sort. All emotions are innate, automatic, and non-conscious, though, they are not necessarily active from birth. Some are triggered by certain experiences and some may change the way in which they express themselves over time, i.e. their execution can be modulated (Damasio, 2003: 43-47).

Crudely put, emotions operate through a process divided into: 1) an appraisal-evaluation phase prior to the emotional response, in which the organism detects an internal or external emotionally competent stimulus 2) an emotional response of the organism to the emotionally competent stimulus 3) an immediate result of the emotional response in terms of a change in the organism's body state or in the brain structures that map the body, and 4) an ultimate result of the emotional response in terms of the organism's conscious feeling of something. More specifically, the brain has certain sites that are triggered by the emotionally competent stimulus, which in turn activate a number of emotion-executing sites. These sites cause the emotional state that occurs in the body and the brain regions, in which the emotion-feeling process takes place (the somatosensing regions). Almost all objects that surrounds the brain trigger an emotion, whether one becomes conscious of it or not, and even if one becomes conscious of the emotion in terms of a feeling, one might not know what triggered it (Damasio, 2003: 53-58).

As already indicated, Damasio conceives of feeling as the idea, representation, or perception of a particular body state or the brain's neural body maps. Feelings "translate the ongoing life state in the language of the mind," which is why they correspond to certain homeostatic reactions (Damasio, 2003: 85). However, feelings not only constitute the perception of the body state but also a perception of a certain mode of thinking, a "high-level operation in which a part of the mind represents another part of the mind"; and they emerge when

a certain intensity of these perceptions are reached in the brain's body mapping sites (Damasio, 2003: 86). Feelings distinguish themselves from other thoughts by their inherent relation to the body state and the homeostatic machine.

Furthermore, feelings differ from other types of perception because their object of perception is always inside the body. This means that feelings are linked to the emotionally competent object of the emotion-feeling cycle (the body state that results from the appraisal phase) and that the brain can act directly on the felt object. Consequently, the emotionally competent object and the brain map of that object constitute a feedback loop, in which they can influence each other reciprocally (Damasio, 2003: 91-92). In other words, emotion and feeling is undivided yet divided in the sense that they form part of the same continuous process but can be dissociated in two different segments by means of the "microscope of cognitive science" (Damasio, 2003: 28). For the same reason, feeling is not a passive process but "open[s] the door for some measure of willful control of the automated emotions" (Damasio, 2003: 80).

2.1.2 Affect and Reason¹⁷

As mentioned, Damasio argues that every experience of our lives is emotionally laden, even though we might not recognize it. Therefore, emotions influence the categorizations and conceptualizations of our experiences, i.e. the meaning and understanding of our experiences. They provide a signal, which "*marks* options and outcomes with a positive or negative signal that narrows the decision-making space and increases the probability that the action will conform to past experience" (Damasio, 2003: 148). That is, emotions are an inherent part of reason. They are integral to the conceptions we reason with and capable of non-consciously altering our reasoning, thereby structuring our will-formation to a certain degree. For the same reason, gut-feelings can be considered rational because they help people make the optimal decisions relative to survival and well-being (Damasio, 2003: 148).¹⁸

Following from the above, emotions are determinative to normal social behavior, including ethical and moral behavior. However, they are not the guaranteed cause of a certain behavior (Damasio, 2003: 155, 164). Humans have a consciousness about themselves and their emotions by virtue of their feelings,

¹⁷ Recall that affect is constituted by emotion and feeling, according to Damasio, which is different from Massumi's use of the term.

¹⁸ For a further account of Damasio's conception of the relation between emotion and reason see *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (Damasio, 1994).

which make them capable of navigating on the basis of their emotions and changing their circumstances in more favorable directions (Damasio, 2003: 167, 172). Nevertheless, Damasio argues that no matter whether one believes that ethical principles are mostly constructed or naturally given, “the reasoned cultural construction of what *ought* to be considered good or bad” is dependent on the emotional mark of experiences as good or bad relative to the well-being of the organism (Damasio, 2003: 159). Consequently, morality is partly bodily determined:

[...] many seemingly deliberate behaviors can be explained by prior conditions of our biological constitution, and that, ultimately, everything we think and do results from certain antecedent conditions and processes that we may not be able to control. But we still can say a categorical no, just as firmly and imperatively as Immanuel Kant would, however illusory the freedom of that no may be (Damasio, 2003: 175).

This stands in sharp contrast to Habermas in a number of ways. First, Habermas considers the moral feelings of shame, proudness, guilt etc. to have a cognitive content and pertain to the social world, which is why their normative validity can be discussed (Habermas, 1990: 45-50). On the other hand, Damasio considers shame, proudness, guilt etc. to be emotions that work automatically, non-consciously, and bodily; these emotions pertain to what Habermas would call the objective world, which is why their normative validity, in Habermas’ sense, cannot be discussed in the same way (Damasio, 2003: 143-144). Second, Habermas does not admit any non-conscious bodily aspects in his conception of reason and does not ascribe any determinative role to affect: “we call persons rational who can justify their actions with reference to existing normative contexts. This is particularly true of those who [...] neither give in to their affects nor pursue their immediate interests” (Habermas, 1984: 19). Thus, Damasio’s theory of affect provides the basis of an external critique in addition to the internal tensions in Habermas’ conception of reason. To the extent that decisions are largely determined by non-conscious, innate, and automated emotions, the ideas of autonomy, validity, and intersubjective control of meaning are challenged. Following from this, the concept of communicative reason inscribed in the linguistic telos toward mutual understanding and its role in deliberative politics is challenged.

To conclude, Damasio’s theory of affect convincingly suggests that reason is not autonomous but conditioned by non-conscious reactions and our bodily

being in the world because all our experiences, and hence the conceptualizations through which we understand, are emotionally laden. This points to weaknesses in Habermas' conception of reason and his argument for the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics, since he does not address the importance of non-conscious bodily reactions. In other words, Damasio's theory supports the critique of Habermas' conception of reason as being too transparent, disembodied, and dispassionate weakening the legitimacy of deliberative politics and suggesting that it needs revision. Furthermore, it supports Skaarup's statement that politics is first of all feelings in the sense that emotions non-consciously narrow our decision-making space and guide us in political questions via feelings.

2.2 Mind versus Body in Damasio

Before I go on to analyze Massumi's affect-theory, I want to suggest that despite the important insights that Damasio provides, his theory of affect does not definitively undermine the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics. This is because Damasio seeks to explain emotions purely by means of scientific methods, which causes him to underestimate the phenomenological aspect of affective experience and the partial constitution of emotions by meaning (Zeuthen, 2007: 129-130, 142). As a consequence, Damasio ends up privileging body over mind, committing the same mistake as Habermas just the other way around.

First, I want to argue that Damasio's ascription of emotion to bodily response and the brain's body maps and his ascription of feeling to the somatosensing regions of the brain underestimate the phenomenological aspect of the affective experience. From a phenomenological perspective, it is too simplistic and reductionist to ascribe psychological attributes to certain parts of the organism rather than the organism as a whole. In the experience of an emotion, it is the person as a whole who feels and not the person's brain (Zeuthen, 2007: 142; Bennet & Hacker, 2003: 69-73). The activity in the brain's body maps and somatosensing regions may well be the condition of possibility of feeling an emotion but it does not constitute the feeling of an emotion. The correlation between a person feeling an emotion and the localization of activity in the somatosensing regions of the brain does not show that the brain is feeling, but rather that the somatosensing regions of the brain are active when the person feels an emotion (Bennet & Hacker, 2003: 83).

Second and relatedly, I want to argue that it is phenomenologically misconceived to distinguish between having an emotion that can be observed from a third-person point of view and feeling an emotion, which is only accessible from a first-person point of view. To experience an emotion is not to perceive or observe one's body state by means of feelings. It is not to perceive one's body maps by means of the brain's somatosensing regions. One does not see, hear, taste, i.e. perceive, one's emotions but attend to them and notice them. In the affective experience, it is the person as a whole who perceives and not her brain (Bennet & Hacker, 2003: 91). In other words, having an emotion and feeling an emotion is integrated in the experience, which is why one does not distinguish between them phenomenologically.¹⁹ We experience our body states, brain reactions, circumstances, and beliefs simultaneously, which is why our understandings of our emotions are not only relative to our body and brain states but to our experiences as whole and unified situations (Bennet & Hacker, 2003: 209-210). If emotions were only constituted by the brain's mapping of bodily responses it would be possible and correct to state that a person is having an emotion in case a scientist provides evidence of an emotion by means of scientific probes, even though the person does not feel the emotion (Bennet & Hacker, 2003: 83). However, this would create space for paternalism or the contention of false consciousness. Further, if feelings were purely private and could not be experienced from a third-person point of view, every single person would be the only one to know about one's feelings. In that case, one would not know whether to express one's feelings sincerely and it would not make sense to discuss whether it was correct or incorrect that a third person felt happy or sad – only whether that third person was smiling, crying, and so on. Hence, it would create a slippery slope toward solipsism (Brinkmann, 2006: 376). In this sense, Damasio privileges body over mind. As we shall see in chapter three, however, the phenomenological and scientific levels are equally important to the understanding of the embodied mind.

Third, Damasio states that emotions are partly determinative of our decisions because they mark experiences as good or evil and because we strive for well-being, i.e. the good (Damasio, 2003: 164-167). In this sense, “the definition of good and evil is simple and sound” as it is biologically given independent of consciousness and possible to “discover” by means of feelings

¹⁹ In relation to this, it is noteworthy to remember that Damasio distinguishes between emotions and moods, which are the sustenance of an emotion, i.e. a body state, over a longer period of time. Over longer periods of time, it seems more plausible that one distinguishes between being in a certain state and feeling a certain way, also phenomenologically.

(Damasio, 2003: 172). On the one hand, I want to argue that this conception of emotion and its relation to good and evil is too simplistic. Body states do not simply inform us of how to understand them, nor do they reveal good and evil. A body state does not self-evidently constitute a certain emotion and a certain emotion is not intrinsically good or evil. Instead, the identification of a body state as an emotion and the identification of an emotion as good or evil is partly constituted by meaning and understanding, which is not merely biologically given and independent of consciousness (Brinkmann, 2006: 370). On the other hand, Damasio's definition of good and evil seems tautological. Goodness is the state of joy, which is determined biologically and independently of consciousness by the homeostatic equilibrium, and the homeostatic equilibrium is reached when one is in a state of joy (Damasio, 2003: 172). As we shall see in chapter three, however, meaning, including the conceptualization of emotion, is not independent of deliberation and our embodiment is constraining rather than determining.

Thus, even though Damasio acknowledges the reciprocal relation between emotions and feelings, that they are divided yet undivided; and even though he tries to overcome the dualism between mind and body by stating that emotions are an integral part of reason; he nevertheless underestimates the phenomenological aspect of the affective experience and the partial constitution of emotion by meaning, which results in the privileging of body over mind. For this reason, Damasio does not ultimately undermine the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics and Skaarup's statement that politics is first of all feelings is once again put into question.

2.3 Brian Massumi's Theory of Affect

Having discussed the concept of affect in terms of what is empirically realized suggesting the non-conscious conditioning of reason, I now turn to the affect theory of the Canadian philosopher and social theorist Brian Massumi and his more elaborate philosophical conceptualization of affect (Massumi, 2002: 1, 29). The aim of Massumi's theory is to bring out the politicality of affect and make "qualities of experience couched in matter in its most literal sense [...] cultural-theoretically thinkable, without falling into either the Scylla of naïve realism or the Charybdis of subjectivism" (Massumi, 2002: 4). This project neither stands in direct debt to Damasio nor builds upon his findings specifically. Nevertheless, Massumi does use insights from the neuroscience of affect corresponding with

Damasio's and they both share an interest in the work of Spinoza (Leys, 2011: 442-443; Stanley, 2017: 102).

According to Massumi, recent cultural theory treats the body as mediated and structures it through a signifying gesture. It brackets the unmediated bodily experience, which is why it can be said to be ideological (Massumi, 2002: 1-4). Ideology presupposes that "the coherence of the composition [of society] is a certain form of rationality [...] reflected in a structure of ideas" (Massumi, 2015: 84). However, this implies a misconception of affect as individual and irrational and captures one in a circuit of ideologies and counter-ideologies that cannot be broken. In other words, the structure of domination is constant and static. It leaves no potential for change (Massumi, 2015: 84-87). In opposition to ideology, Massumi wants to provide an asignifying philosophy of affect that brings out the politicality of affect and enables the potential for resistance and systemic change (Massumi, 2002: 1-3; Massumi, 2015: ix). He wants to suggest that it is more useful to think of society as a process rather than as a structure, causing one to think of structure as emergent and self-improvised. Instead of asking: "How is change possible, given the embeddedness of ideological reproduction in the social structure?", Massumi asks: "How are certain regularities enabled to *re-emerge*, across the variations, in always new forms?" (Massumi, 2015: 87). For Massumi, change becomes more fundamental than reproduction. As opposed to structure, process is not functional but operative. It is not composed of parts but of operations that are directly relational, i.e. "the terms in relation do not pre-exist their relation and then enter into it" (Massumi, 2015: 88). Process is always becoming. When thinking of society as a process, relation becomes primary, which makes affect primary and the concept of affectivity more fundamental than rationality (Massumi, 2015: 91). The concept of affect, however, must be reconceptualized as "*involving feeling in thinking*, and vice versa" and as directly collective instead of individual, that is, "*it pertains more fundamentally to events than to persons*" (Massumi, 2015: 91).

2.3.1 Reconceptualizing Affect

Similar to Damasio, Massumi's reconceptualization of affect takes its point of departure in Baruch Spinoza's notion of affect as "the body's *capacity* [...] to affect or be affected" (Massumi, 2002: 15). This places affect in the unmediated space of in-between, in a field of becoming. It does not presuppose an active side and a passive side, as it is prior to the distinction between passivity and activity. It is not exactly passive, as it is always in motion, and not exactly active,

as it cannot be directed toward practical ends (Massumi, 1995: 86; Massumi, 2015: 92). Affect denotes some kind of bodily agency or force that breaks with the static structure of ideas. It is the capacity of incipience or the incipience of tendencies, which are operative and moving but always prevented from actualizing themselves completely. It always escapes perception (Massumi, 1995: 91). In this sense, affect is autonomous and follows a logic of the event that does not exclude the middle or prefigure anything (Massumi, 1995: 85). It is indeterminate, unqualifiable, and unassimilable – “as such, it is not ownable or recognizable, and thus resistant to critique” (Massumi, 1995: 88). Because of affect, structured distinctions collapse and it becomes possible to connect the categorically incommensurable, and hence achieve change (Massumi, 1995: 87). In relation to this, Massumi argues that affect constitutes the “*differential attunement* of bodies in a joint activity of becoming” (Massumi, 2015: 94-95). Different bodies come together in the same encounter, entering it differently and leaving it differently. Hence, affect is taken to be connected directly to the event, the encounter, or the relation, which is why affect is understood to be inherently collective, pre-subjective or transindividual (Massumi, 2015: 91, 94). In sum, Massumi’s conception of affect resembles Damasio’s conception of emotions, as he takes it to have an irreducibly bodily, non-conscious, and autonomic nature that suspends linear temporality and causality (Massumi, 1995: 89).

Especially central to Massumi’s conception of affect is its autonomy, which constitutes its openness in the sense that it pertains to an order that is different from the order of structure. On the basis of this distinction, Massumi discerns affect from emotions, which are socio-linguistic fixings of affect. Emotions are individual and subjective, as opposed to collective and pre-subjective, and are the most intense expression of the capture of affect (Massumi, 1995: 88, 96). They are the retrospective qualification of affect as linear action-reaction circuits, which is why they form a conscious-autonomic mix (Massumi, 1995: 85, 88). The relation between the order of affect and the order of rationality, however, is not a relation of correspondence but of resonance or interference. Following from this, conceptual pairs such as mind/body, past/future, happiness/sadness etc. should not be construed as binary oppositions but as resonating levels in relation to affect. They all have affect as their point of emergence, a point of singularity, and virtual coexistence (Massumi, 1995: 86, 94). Consequently, affect and emotion are two sides of the same coin. Affect is a capacity “immanent to matter and to events, to mind and to body and to every level of bifurcation

composing them and which they compose” (Massumi, 1995: 94). In other words, affect is the condition of possibility of experience and emergence in terms of the unclassifiable as opposed to the categorical (Massumi, 1995: 94).

2.3.2 Reconceptualizing the Body

The above conception of affect is based on a reconceptualization of the body, which takes its point of departure in different neuroscientific experiments. Among others, Massumi points to an experiment by the neuroscientist Benjamin Libet, which shows that stimulation of the body is only consciously registered if it lasts more than half a second. Consequently, Massumi calls this phenomenon “the missing half second” (Massumi, 1995: 89). This half second, however, is not missed because it is empty but because it is “in excess of the actually performed action and of its ascribed meaning. Will and consciousness are *subtractive*. They are *limitative, derived functions* which reduce a complexity too rich to be functionally expressed” (Massumi, 1995: 90). This missing half second corresponds with Damasio’s theory of affect and, similar to Damasio, Massumi takes it to indicate that “what we think of as “higher” functions, such as volition, are apparently being performed by autonomic, bodily reactions occurring in the brain but outside consciousness” (Massumi, 1995: 90; Stanley, 2017: 101). Different from Damasio, however, Massumi disavows any attempt to understand the body in terms of a linear logic of causality or to conceive of the conscious level as corresponding to the non-conscious level. The body is neither passive in the sense that it just receives impulses nor active in the sense that it works toward a prefigured end. Instead, the body constitutes the unmediated in between, both inside and outside of itself; and because the missing half second reveals that something happens too quickly to have happened, too quickly to be perceived, Massumi denotes the body as virtual. “The virtual is a lived paradox where what are normally opposites coexist, coalesce, and connect” (Massumi, 1995: 91). It is a realm of potential or openness, which is a precondition for the above reconceptualization of affect. The body is both abstract and concrete, both incorporeal and real. It is the present where the past opens to the future. In sum, the virtuality of the body enables the capacity of affect and the existence of a non-conscious bodily agency (Massumi, 1995: 92).

2.3.3 Thinking-feeling and the Techniques of Affect Modulation

Having reconceptualized affect and body, Massumi needs to bring out the politicality of affect and make it operative. Because affect always escapes recognition and linguistic fixation by virtue of the virtuality of the body, affect and its operativity cannot be understood through reflection. Instead, Massumi proposes that affect can only be understood as enacted, which stands in opposition to Habermas' communicative and reflective notion of understanding (Massumi, 2015: vii). In explaining this enactive understanding, Massumi revisits Spinoza's notion of affect and expands it with a second part: "Affect [...] is the capacity to affect and to be affected, as applied to a *transition*" (Massumi, 2015: 93). The additional part mentions a transition, which Massumi interprets as a felt transition "passing a threshold to a higher or lower power of existence, understood as an affective readiness for subsequent encounter" (Massumi, 2015: 93). This notion of a felt transition marks the shift away from a paradigm of rationality but still preserving thought. It marks an enactive or affective understanding, which Massumi denotes "thinking-feeling" (Massumi, 2015: 94). As mentioned, the body and affect are unmediated, which is why it is not possible to distance oneself from the event, observe it, and reflect upon it. However, by means of thinking-feeling it is possible in the heat of the encounter to "understand, in the very fibre of our being, what is at stake, and where things might be tending" (Massumi, 2015: 94). Thus, the encounter does not entail "raw" feeling but is "imbued with an immediate understanding of what is under way, what might be coming – and what we are becoming" (Massumi, 2015: 94). In this sense, thinking-feeling is a way of understanding what cannot be expressed with words but still moves us, still has importance. Furthermore, Massumi argues that thinking-feeling does not pertain to a subject or an object but is a capacity integral to the event. It is pre-subjective or transindividual as it is not acquired but lies between individuals and coincides with a becoming, alters the present and is something else than it just was (Massumi, 2015: 94). This affective notion of understanding convincingly resonates with the experience of being convinced without being able to explain why; and as we shall see, it plays a crucial role in the notion of embodied reason, however, in a revised form.

By virtue of the enactive understanding of thinking-feeling, a number of affect modulation techniques become accessible in the event, which makes it possible to effectively bring out the politicality of affect. They become accessible through automaticities that operate with the same immediacy as the event such as reflexes and habits. However, they are not individual or owned but inherently

relational, collective, and participatory, couched in the singularity of the event. They do not reduce one's freedom but are a necessary foundation for improvisation, enactive knowing, and intuitive action. In other words, "affect can be modulated by improvisational techniques that are thought-felt into action" (Massumi, 2015: 96). Consequently, thinking-feeling can be strategic, that is, it makes it possible to modulate the event as it unfolds. However, it is not strategic in the sense that it entails a pre-conceived end. It cannot control the outcome of the event but only deflect its unfolding. "It is [...] more [...] the deflection [...] of an already active *tendency* than the imposition of a prescribed intention," which is why Massumi calls affect modulation techniques "event-factors" as opposed to intentions (Massumi, 2015: 96). Thinking-feeling enables a modulation of the bodily agency of affect, which prevents the unfolding event from coagulating into a structure but keeps the restructuring alive constantly modulating the tendencies in new directions. In this sense, thinking-feeling is affective and not rational, as it "avoids the ideological trap of ending up reimposing much the same kind of power structure that is being resisted" (Massumi, 2015: 97). This enactive notion of knowing by means of affect modulation techniques convincingly resonates with the aesthetic experience of losing oneself in a moment, acting intuitively and pre-reflectively in the sense that one would not be able to perform the act if one gave it too much thought. For example, this pertains to the act of playing an instrument. As we shall see, this notion of knowing also plays a crucial role in the notion of embodied reason, however, in a revised form.

2.3.4 The Political Implications of Thinking-feeling

On the basis of the affect modulation techniques and thinking-feeling, Massumi suggests that it is possible to ground a politics in the "interests of the collectively unfolding *event*" beyond both self-interest and the illusory "general interest" of ideology (Massumi, 2015: 97). In other words, the affect modulation techniques and thinking-feeling provide the practices of a direct and participatory democracy, which produce a collective self-structuring. They eschew representation in favor of presentation, which makes it possible to participate in a differentially attuned becoming or "embodied freedom" (Massumi, 2015: 98). This kind of politics has tendency but no teleology, because it does not entail a linear progression toward a goal. It does not steer toward overcoming differences but always expands, invents, and render differences compossible as differences (Massumi, 2015: 99-100). It is pragmatic and aesthetic in the sense

that it concerns the powers to act, think, and feel, which Massumi denotes the powers of existence. Through the affect modulation techniques, the collective self-structuring is capable of increasing our powers of existence and produce a surplus-value of life, a more to life, in life, i.e. an aesthetic experience, in which one feels an excess of potential (Massumi, 2015: 101). The collective self-structuring becomes possible because the affect modulation techniques take advantage of the openness of affect, which is not limited by the order of structure and its requirement of categorical recognition and consistency. It enables acting on the basis of a bodily enactive understanding, which cannot be expressed with words.

However, Massumi neither considers the politics of affect liberatory nor progressive. Structures of power emerge from the order of affect, which is prior to the order of structure or rationality, and continually return to it in order to re-emerge. As such, structures of power are regularities of capture of affect or the channeling of affective tendencies toward a certain end. There is no original state of freedom to return to, no pure realm free of structures, only the order of affect and affective tendencies, in which the structures of power always interfere. Hence, the possibility of oppression is always present. In fact, the affective tendencies are destined to give rise to oppression (Massumi, 2015: 101-103). Yet, affect also always offers the potential for alternative emergencies, a margin of maneuver, or a degree of freedom, as oppression and freedom or power and resistance are two sides of the same coin. The body is capable of modulating counter-tendencies that resist capture; if these modulations succeed in differentially attuning bodies and expanding the field of collective self-structuring, then the degree of freedom has been increased and the “powers of existence have been collectively augmented” (Massumi, 2015: 105). This modulation of counter-tendencies is what Massumi calls resistance.

Resistance is immanent to the event and, hence, cannot be communicated but only gestured. It is a gesture of mutual inclusion, which is why it cannot impose itself but can only rely on its power of contagion. In other words, resistance is an immanent critique of structures of power, as it is one with participation, which comes prior to the structures. Through its gesture and power of contagion, resistance creates a new field of collective self-structuring, which keeps restructuring itself (Massumi, 2015: 105-106). Following from this, resistance cannot be evaluated by means of pre-established criteria of correctness. It cannot justify itself and cannot be oughted. It is

the counter-desire for the collective augmentation of powers of existence, in dynamic mutual inclusion in an intensive field of contrasts. There is no basis in which we can say it is “better” in *principle* (Massumi, 2015: 107).

There are techniques of resistance, however, that makes it more desirable, and thereby make the expansion of the collective self-structuring more desirable.

Thus, in order to bring out the politicality of affect and take the non-conscious conditioning of reason seriously, Massumi introduces an enactive understanding of affect by means of thinking-feeling, which gives access to a number of affect modulation techniques that take advantage of the openness or autonomy of affect. These notions convincingly resonate with the experiences of being convinced without being able to explain why or losing oneself for a moment in pre-reflective action. They provide the possibility of conceptualizing understanding and knowing in a non-linguistic, bodily way, and therefore they challenge the notions of communicative reason and deliberative politics in a number of ways. First, Massumi argues that affect is fundamental to rationality, which is why thinking-feeling and affect modulation becomes more fundamental to democratic politics than communicative action and reason. Second, Massumi’s notion of thinking-feeling contests Habermas’ notion of understanding based on acceptability conditions of meaning, according to which conviction is a matter of knowing what makes a claim to validity acceptable, i.e. conviction is a matter of explanation. Hence, thinking-feeling also contests communicative reason and its telos toward mutual understanding. Third, Massumi’s notion of affect modulation challenges Habermas’ notion of the autonomous subject and the possibility of justifying actions. Taken together, Massumi’s affect theory questions the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics, which to him is only illusorily in the interest of all because of its ideological character. In other words, it supports the critique of Habermas for privileging mind over body. At the same time, Massumi proposes the possibility of countering ideological power structures through the field of collective self-structuring by means of resistance; this would enable a direct, relational, and participatory democracy in the interest of the collectively unfolding event that increases the powers of existence and produces a surplus-value of life through the differential attunement of bodies. If we apply this theory of affect to Skaarup’s statement that politics is first of all feelings, it seems to support the statement in the alternative version of “politics is first of all affect”. However, it runs counter to Skaarup’s notion of democracy as representative

and his contention that feelings can determine justice, as affect cannot be justified. In this sense, it provides an alternative that neither Skaarup nor Brinkmann argues for lying outside of Habermas' normative models of democracy.

2.4 Mind versus Body in Massumi

Even though Massumi takes into account important insights from neuroscience regarding the non-conscious conditioning of reason and provides a non-linguistic bodily way of understanding absent in Habermas, I still want to argue that he commits the same mistake as both Habermas and Damasio by conceiving affect as pre-subjective, asignified, and autonomous of subjective, linguistically signified emotion. He creates a mind/body dualism, by which he hypostasizes the mind similar to Habermas and privileges the body similar to Damasio. As we shall see in chapter three, this does not necessarily refute any notion of bodily affective understanding and knowing, but it does leave open the question of the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics.

First, the radical separation of the order of affect from the order of rationality is problematic, as it leaves no way to link affect to the judgment of the agency of affect. As Massumi puts it: Affect is “resistant to critique” (Massumi, 1995: 88). Because the order of rationality is understood to emerge from affect and because affect implies an autonomous agency, it becomes natural to think of action and judgment as a mere effect of a priming affective tendency, “for which the giving of reasons is little more than window-dressing” (Zerilli: 2015: 269). In this sense, Massumi retains the mind/body dualism, privileging the body, and leaving no space for the importance of deliberation in politics. Furthermore, the missing link between affect and judgment raises a number of questions: If affect cannot be recognized or perceived, how can Massumi conceptualize it? How can one distinguish between affect and emotion and decide that an emotion is the most intense capture of affect? How can one preclude that emotion is not a capture of something else, unless affect is in everything, and hence redundant? Does the concept of affect in fact posit a limit-concept indicating the existence of a true or transcendent affect? In any case, the autonomy of affect implies the impossibility of conceiving affect positively, which is why Massumi can only approximate it negatively and speculate about it. Consequently, it seems futile to engage with Massumi's theory, as it is not possible to discuss the correctness of this phenomenon and its importance in

politics. All one can do is to postulate that it exists and that it is important, which Massumi also seems to acknowledge (Massumi, 2015: viii).

The missing link between affect and judgement also affects Massumi's notion of resistance causing it to become either inconceivable, morally relativist, or cryptonormative. That is, how does one distinguish between affective tendencies "already moving in ways that lend themselves to capture" and modulate into ideology and fascism and affective counter-tendencies of resistance that modulate into direct participatory democracy (Massumi, 2015: 102)? What are the criteria of resistance? How can resistance contaminate if it cannot be recognized or perceived? And how does it achieve political relevance? Furthermore, Massumi states that resistance is not better in principle and cannot be evaluated by means of pre-established criteria of correctness. Affect modulation of fascism can neither be said to be better nor worse than the affect modulation of resistance, which is why the idea of resistance must be considered morally relativist. In other words, Massumi cannot explain why one kind of politics should be normatively better or worse than another kind. Finally, Massumi uses resistance in connection with and opposed to value-laden concepts like freedom and democracy or power structures and domination. He explicitly denies any normative evaluation of resistance but evaluates it implicitly through his use of words, which he does not ground in anything. In this sense, Massumi's notion can be said to be cryptonormativist implicitly privileging one kind of politics, namely resistance (body), over another kind of politics, namely power structures (mind) (Leys, 2011: 452).

Second, the pre-subjective and asignified autonomy of affect requires Massumi to conceptualize thinking-feeling and affect modulation techniques as correspondingly pre-subjective and asignified. However, this conception of enactive understanding and knowing seems to either misconceive the affective experience or render understanding and knowledge of affect inaccessible to the subject. I want to argue that an affective experience is a first-personal mode of experience, which is why it cannot be pre-subjective. It denotes a distinct manner of experiencing in the sense that one lives through one's experience differently than anybody else. However, this does not necessarily entail a certain content or quale, which is why an experience in the first-personal mode can be pre-objective, bodily, and unmediated by language, thereby, possessing all the characteristics of thinking-feeling and affect modulation techniques except the character of pre-subjectivity (Zahavi, 2014: 21-22). Thus, if Massumi insists that thinking-feeling and affect modulation techniques are pre-subjective, they

cannot be said to be experiential, which is why they seem to be inaccessible to the subject. It seems inconceivable how thinking-feeling and affect modulation techniques can bring out the politicality of affect.

Third, the radical separation of the order of affect from the order of rationality creates a false dichotomy based on an intellectualist notion of the mind present in Massumi's understanding of meaning and intention. First, Massumi retains an intellectualist notion of meaning as propositional and mediated because of his distinction between affect as asignified and pre-subjective and emotion as the capture of affect in terms of its ascription of meaning to affect (Leys, 2011: 458; Zerilli, 2015: 265, 268-269). As we shall see in chapter three, however, it is possible to refute this intellectualist notion of meaning by proposing an embodied notion of meaning that resolves the sharp distinction between body and mind or affect and rationality. Instead of doing this, though, Massumi creates an opposition between embodied affect and disembodied meaning creating a mind/body dualism privileging the body. Moreover, this dualism and privileging of the potentiality and openness of affect seem to imply that there are no limits to possible changes in meaning and perception. In a sense, Massumi's conception of affect creates an eternal doubt questioning whether the perceptions of our surroundings will change radically any minute. Second, Massumi opposes affective tendencies to conscious intention, which prescribes action and prevents change. This represents an intellectualist and disembodied notion of intention as fixing practice by constituting a rule in terms of an ideal track that rule-following action has to run along.²⁰ This intellectualism is also prevalent in Massumi's use of the missing half second, in which intention becomes a matter of motor control or the mind's full causal control of the body. Once again, Massumi creates a dualism privileging the body instead of refuting the intellectualist notion of intention (Leys, 2011: 456).²¹ By contrast, the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty²², for example, counters the intellectualist notion by stating that intentionality is a bodily existence in and toward the world. The body projects intentional threads out in the world, which constitutes the necessary background for objects to stand out from the horizon. In this sense, it constitutes a form of

²⁰ Zerilli suggests that this intellectualist notion of intention leads to an anti-intentionalism, which is in fact rooted in an intellectualist notion of conceptualism tying concepts to words (Zerilli, 2015: 271-272).

²¹ See for example Shaun Gallagher's refutation (Gallagher, 2006).

²² I mention Merleau-Ponty here, as he has been a great inspiration to Lakoff and Johnson, whom constitutes the pivotal point of the subsequent chapter (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: xi).

double horizon or knowledge relation to the world, which is pre-objective, pre-reflective, and a necessary precondition for reflexes and habits (Merleau-Ponty, 2012: 80-84, 103). This notion of intentionality does not prefigure the result of an act but enables the potential of acting, both virtually and actually, as the intention is distinguished from its realization, which might deviate from the intention (Merleau-Ponty, 2012: 141-146). In this sense, intention becomes a matter of “I can” instead of “I think”, in which the distinction between mind and body obliterates (Merleau-Ponty, 2012: 139).

To summarize, the autonomy of affect and its pre-subjective character undermine the possibility of rational judgment and makes it inconceivable how Massumi can bring out the politicality of affect. Further, it opens his notion of resistance to the critique of being either morally relativist or cryptonormativist, which is why Massumi’s conception of democratic politics cannot be said to be more preferable than deliberative politics. Finally, he opposes his notion of affect to an intellectualist notion of the mind, which creates a mind/body dualism that privileges the body. Thus, Massumi’s affect-theory cannot ultimately undermine the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics. However, the above shows that Massumi’s and Damasio’s theories of affect still contribute by pointing to the pre-reflective and bodily aspects of understanding and knowing and to the non-conscious bodily reactions that condition reason, supporting the suspicion from the previous chapter that Habermas privileges mind over body. At the same time, they also leave the question of the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics open, as neither overcomes the mind/body dualism nor ultimately undermines the possibility of reaching mutual understanding and distinguishing between ethical and moral questions. Consequently, I turn to the notion of embodied reason in the next and last chapter in order to overcome the dualism between reason and feelings, while reconciling the linguistic and reflective aspects of understanding with the non-linguistic, pre-reflective, and bodily aspects.

3 The Regulative Hope of Deliberative Democracy

To recapitulate, deliberative politics relies on both the possibility of reaching mutual understanding across ethical communities and the possibility of distinguishing moral questions concerning the interest of all from ethical questions concerning ethical self-understanding, in order to prioritize the former over the latter. Habermas seeks to establish these possibilities by arguing that communication or language use is rational in the sense that it entails a telos toward mutual understanding inscribed in the illocutionary force and the force of the better argument. However, the investigation of Damasio's and Massumi's affect-theories shows that this argument abstracts too much from the affective and bodily aspects of experience, which is why it overlooks the non-conscious and bodily conditioning of reason and the non-linguistic and pre-reflective aspects of understanding. At the same time, Damasio and Massumi underestimate the phenomenological aspects of experience, which prevents the possibility of rational judgment. Consequently, a holistic view of experience seems to play a central role in relation to the notions of reason, feeling, and understanding, which is why I now turn to the cognitive linguist George Lakoff and the philosopher Mark Johnson and their philosophy of experientialism. In particular, I focus on their concept of embodied reason in order to reach a satisfying answer to my research question.

Similar to Habermas, Lakoff and Johnson identify reason as the basic theme of Western philosophy. However, they argue that empirical research has shown that we can no longer think of reason as disembodied, universal in a transcendent sense, completely conscious, purely literal, and dispassionate (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 3-4). Instead, Lakoff and Johnson take their point of departure in the major findings of cognitive science, especially cognitive semantics, in order to overcome the mind/body dualism. These major findings

are 1) that the mind is embodied, entailing that 2) thought is mostly non-conscious, and 3) that abstract concepts are largely metaphorical. On the basis of these findings, Lakoff and Johnson understand reason to be conceptual inference, which is both embodied and imaginative because it arises from our bodily experiences and metaphorical thought that maps bodily inferences with more abstract inferences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 3, 17, 20, 77).

In this chapter, I provide an analysis of Lakoff and Johnson's notion of embodied reason and its role in deliberative politics. On the basis of this analysis, I argue that reason and feelings²³ are not each other's opposites but are reciprocally conditioning in the sense that feelings can be reasoned with and feelings are integral to reason. As a consequence, reason cannot be said to be inscribed in a telos toward mutual understanding, which undermines Habermas' conception of meaning, and hence his conceptions of discourse and morality. However, this does not necessarily mean that we have to throw out all of Habermas' thoughts or that embodied reason necessarily undermines the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics. Instead, I argue that the concept of embodied reason leaves a hope of both mutual understanding across ethical communities and moral progress, as our shared embodiment provides a partial frame of communality across cultures that can be elaborated in either a universalistic or communitarian direction. Further, I argue that it is possible to reframe Habermas' theories of discourse and morality in a way that is consistent with the concept of embodied reason, which in turn supports the reading of morality in a universalistic direction, as it provides a regulative hope of reaching agreement and moral progress. This provides a regulative hope of the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics.

The chapter is structured in three parts. First, I compare the concept of embodied reason to Damasio and Massumi arguing that it takes into account their insights but also acknowledges Habermas' point that the character of language use creates a space for critique and the importance of deliberation. In this sense, reason and feelings are reciprocally conditioning. Second, I compare embodied reason with communicative reason focusing on the relation between Habermas' theory of meaning and cognitive semantics in order to specify how and why the two concepts differ. This provides the basis for the third part, in which I investigate the consequences of embodied reason for deliberative

²³ If nothing more is specified, I use the term "feelings" holistically about both the non-conscious conditions of feeling an emotion and the experience of an emotion and the term "emotion" about the non-conscious conditions of feeling an emotion.

politics arguing that deliberation is not a matter of identifying unconditionally valid norms but a matter of enhancing moral understanding enabled and constrained by our embodiment and supported by a regulative hope.

3.1 The Reciprocal Conditioning of Reason and Feelings

According to Lakoff and Johnson, the concept of embodied reason can be studied, illustrated, and supported by means of cognitive semantics, which investigates “the relationship between experience, the conceptual system, and the semantic structure encoded by language” (Evans & Green, 2006: 48; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 497). Cognitive semantics is the study of cognitive phenomena through language.²⁴ In relation to this, experience is construed as embodied in the sense that it is constituted by categorizations, which are largely non-conscious and automatic, shaped by our bodily being in the world, and necessary to our survival (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 19). As emotion is a part of our bodily being in the world, this notion of experience corresponds with Damasio’s point that emotion is an unavoidable part of experience and therefore influences our categorizations (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 514). However, Lakoff and Johnson’s understanding of categorization also seems to deviate from Damasio’s. On the one hand, Johnson argues that the homeostasis, which emotions are a part of, should rather be thought of as allostasis, i.e.

a dynamic equilibrium in which the organism can, as it interacts with its environment in an ongoing fashion, establish a new equilibrium set-point, and does not merely return to some pre-established, fixed set-point (Johnson, 2015: 4).

Consequently, the definition of good and evil is less straight forward than Damasio makes it look like (Damasio, 2003: 172). On the other hand, Lakoff and Johnson argue that the traditional “innate-versus-learned dichotomy is [...] an inaccurate way of characterizing human development” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 507). That is, our brains are plastic, which is why some of the neural connections we are born with die off and some grow depending on how they are used. Furthermore, “the connections present at birth are too dense to

²⁴ By cognitive, Lakoff and Johnson understands “all aspects of thought and language, conscious or unconscious [...] This includes phonology, grammar, conceptual systems, the mental lexicon, and all unconscious inferences of any sort.” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 11). “[It describes] any mental operations and structures that are involved in language, meaning, perception conceptual systems, and reason” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 12).

perform normal adult human functions. Development requires that connections must die off' (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 507). This is not to deny that our development is constrained by what we are born with. However, since learning through experience does not just add to what we are born with but alters it, it is difficult to determine what is innate and what is not. Consequently, Damasio's contention that emotions are innate is contestable, as it is difficult (or impossible?) to determine whether emotions are consistent across cultures because they are a product of innateness or common experiences and environmental factors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 508). Thus, Lakoff and Johnson seem to have a more dynamic understanding of categorization, and hence emotion, which integrates the embodiment and embeddedness of experience within an encompassing ecological and cultural context (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 97).

Regarding the relation between the conceptual system and experience, Lakoff and Johnson argue that concepts constitute neural structures that allow us to mentally characterize and reason about our categories and experiences, which is why they are embodied. They are not just reflections of an external world but reflections of our bodily being in the world (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 19-20). This does not imply that all experience is conceptual or that all concepts are created non-consciously. Yet, a great deal of the same non-conscious mechanisms characterize our concepts and play a central role in creating our experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 509). On the one hand, this understanding of the relation between concepts and experience corresponds with Damasio's point that emotions are an inherent part of reason. We can only reason about experiences, which always entail a non-conscious emotional aspect. On the other hand, it corresponds with Massumi's contention that consciousness is subtractive and reduces the complexity of the body's agency. However, Lakoff and Johnson neither conceive of emotion or affect as autonomous²⁵ nor ascribe embodiment a determining role in reason. Rather, they construe embodiment as constraining, which enables conceptualization and understanding to be relative without being arbitrary. For example, Lakoff and Johnson argue that the same category can be conceptualized in multiple ways, which is why an emotion in Damasio's terminology is not necessarily conceptualized as a feeling and vice versa (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 19). In other words, "the same" emotion can be experienced in different ways (Johnson, 1993:

²⁵ This will become more clear when I return to the role of language in relation to experience and conceptualization.

259). Moreover, they argue that categories have prototype structure, which designate an asymmetry between category members internal to a category. Category members are defined by means of family resemblances and not common properties and some members of a category are considered more representative than others because they are experientially and cognitively more central. Consequently, categories are not defined by necessary and sufficient conditions but have graded or fuzzy boundaries and vary across contexts, which is why they can be contested (Lakoff, 1987: 39-46; Johnson, 1993: 189). For the same reason, what is phenomenologically seen as a feeling or neurologically as an emotion in one context might be seen as something different in another context even though one's body state is physiologically "the same".

Further, Lakoff and Johnson's understanding of embodiment distinguishes itself from both Damasio's and Massumi's by being threefold instead of twofold. First, embodiment is phenomenological, i.e. the aspects of experiences that are accessible to consciousness are mediated by our brains, bodies, and physical and social interactions. It is embodiment at "the level of which we speak of the 'feel' of experience" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 103). Second, embodiment is neural, i.e. non-conscious neural structures characterize concepts. For example, this pertains to our color concepts in the sense that what we experience as the best example of the different colors is correlated with the maximal neural response in our retinas and color cones (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 24). Third, embodiment is cognitively unconscious, i.e. our conscious experience is made possible by cognitive mechanisms that operate above the level of neurobiology but below the level of consciousness and therefore cannot be accessed through phenomenological introspection but only indirectly through cognitive linguistic research (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 10-12).²⁶ Consequently, it should not be understood in any Freudian sense. By contrast, the cognitive unconscious is hypothesized in order to account for conscious experience and behavior that cannot be understood entirely on its own terms and is made probable by means of convergent evidence (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 104).

According to Lakoff and Johnson, an adequate understanding of the mind and reason necessitates an analysis of all three levels because they are not independent of each other (without claiming that this alone suffices). There is no neutral perspective between the three levels, which is why there exists no

²⁶ Especially, this third level distinguishes Lakoff and Johnson from Damasio and Massumi. Among other things, it entails the existence of conceptual metaphors, which I will return to later on.

objective, monolithic truth. People are neither mere bundles of phenomenological experiences, mere neural circuits, nor structures of the cognitive unconscious (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 104-106). Instead, all levels have a theoretical ontology that is necessary to the explanation of reason, which should also be understood relative to the organism's functioning in its environment. Therefore, Lakoff and Johnson have established the Neural Theory of Language paradigm, in which the mind is investigated at both a neurobiological, neuro-computational, and cognitive level. Here, the neuro-computational level mediates the two extremes metaphorically modelling the neurobiological level in order to account for functions at the cognitive level. However, the explanation and motivation goes in both directions, which is why thought, language, and other cognitive functions are taken to be just as real as cells, synapses, and so on. They are not epiphenomena (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 110-113). In this sense, Lakoff and Johnson acknowledges the existence of what Habermas calls social facts and do not aim to reduce consciousness, cognition, or the psyche to neurobiology.

At the same time, this threefold understanding of embodiment creates a levels-of-truth dilemma. Truth claims depend on the level of embodiment relative to which they are claimed. But, since the three levels are not necessarily consistent with each other, and since there is no neutral perspective between the levels, a truth-dilemma arises. In order to avoid this dilemma, Lakoff and Johnson proposes that "*what we take to be true in a situation depends on our embodied understanding of the situation*" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 102-103). By embodied understanding, Johnson understands:

our way of situating ourselves more or less successfully in the world, in a manner that allows us to make sense of our surroundings, ourselves, other people and cultural institutions and practices (Johnson, 2015: 1).

In this sense, understanding is not just an intellectual enterprise regarding linguistic propositions but an experiential one. It is a bodily engagement with one's material and cultural environment, which is meaningful to organisms that are capable of maintaining their lives both at a physical, interpersonal, and cultural level. It is more closely connected to experiencing and acting than to thinking and knowing. To understand the world is to inhabit it and feel at home in it and not being alienated from it. It is grasping its meaning in the sense that one is capable of moving forward or living through one's life (Johnson, 2015: 3). Johnson also expresses it as follows:

We “understand” some object, event, or idea when we grasp its significance for past, present, and future activity and are able to carry that understanding forward into new experience. Therefore, understanding is a form of embodied adaptive and transformative experience, since developing a new understanding actually remakes experience (Johnson, 2015: 3).

This notion of embodied understanding corresponds with Massumi’s notions of thinking-feeling and affect modulation insofar as it is non-linguistic, pre-reflective, and pre-objective and connected to action rather than thinking. However, it also deviates from thinking-feeling and affect-modulation, as it is not opposed to an intellectualist notion of meaning but entails intentionality and subjectivity. That is, according to Johnson

Basically any thing (object, quality, person, event, idea) has meaning just insofar as it points to some experience, either past, present, or future (projected) that is for us connected with it. Things are meaningful because they afford us various possible experiences (Johnson, 2015: 5).

Despite the intentionality and subjectivity of embodied meaning, Johnson still considers it emergent, creating a space for change similar to thinking-feeling and affect modulation techniques. This emergent character of meaning is further supported by the cognitive semanticist understanding of language as a way of accessing concepts. According to cognitive semantics, words “serve as ‘points of access’ to vast repositories of knowledge relating to a particular concept or conceptual domain” (Evans & Green, 2006: 160). They constitute “prompts” of meaning construction in the sense that, whenever one expresses a word or a sentence, the hearer selects an appropriate conceptual interpretation against the context of the utterance based on one’s experiential knowledge. Against the context of a child playing on the beach, for example, the meaning of the word “safe” in the following sentences relies on one’s encyclopedic knowledge of a child, a beach, a shovel, and what it means to be safe: “a. the child is safe b. the beach is safe c. the shovel is safe” (Evans & Green, 2006: 161). Furthermore, the word safe would change meaning, if one changed the context. This implies that language is not in itself meaningful. That is, the meaning construction that takes place within linguistic communication is not linguistic but conceptual. It is a dynamic process involving encyclopedic knowledge and “inferencing strategies

that relate to different aspects of conceptual structure, organization, and packaging” (Evans & Green, 2006: 162).

Even though embodied reason acknowledges that understanding is emotional, pre-reflective, pre-objective, and non-linguistic, it still takes into account Habermas’ point that language use is important to understanding and reason. In cognitive semantics, language is not merely considered to reflect or subtract conceptual structures or one’s bodily being in the world. Language use can also give rise to conceptualization (Evans & Green, 2006: 101). On the one hand, linguistic research has supported the contention that language facilitates conceptualization. Language has a symbolic function, as it encodes patterns of thought or meaning. However, the single encoded pattern of meaning within a given vocabulary is conventional in the sense that it is a product of accepted norms within a specific language community. Different vocabularies offer different options for externalizing thoughts, which influence the way we reason. It may be possible for an expert to express a thought that a non-expert is not capable of expressing but still capable of conceptualizing (Evans & Green, 2006: 98). On the other hand, linguistic research has supported the belief that language not only facilitates conceptualization but also influences non-linguistic thought. Because language is embodied and our brains are plastic, the neurological, conceptual, and linguistic levels influence each other reciprocally. In other words, the causality goes both ways. For example, the cognitive psychologist Lera Boroditsky has investigated whether the different lexical concepts for time in English and Mandarin affect the different speakers’ reaction time in a psycholinguistic experiment. In Mandarin, the concepts “earlier” and “later” are elaborated as “upper” and “lower”; whereas in English, they are elaborated as “before” and “after.” In the experiment, Boroditsky exposed the subjects to different primes like the ones in figure 1 representing either a vertical or horizontal axis prior to asking them true-or-false-questions employing the concepts earlier and later (for example: Monday comes earlier than Tuesday: true or false?). This showed that Mandarin speakers responded faster when exposed to a prime relating to the vertical axis, while English speakers responded faster when exposed to a prime relating to a horizontal axis indicating that language influences non-linguistic thought. Thus, language influences our conceptual habits, understanding, and reasoning (Evans & Green, 2006: 100-101).

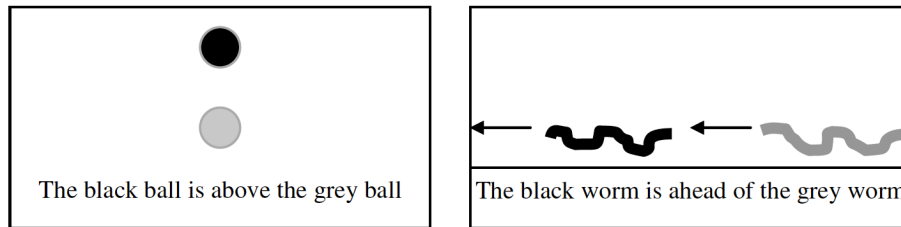


Figure 1 (Evans & Green, 2006: 101)

To summarize, Lakoff and Johnson's notion of embodied reason as conceptual inference arising from our bodily being in the world manages to take into account Damasio's and Massumi's most important insights. On the one hand, it acknowledges that reason is conditioned by non-conscious bodily reactions, among other emotions. On the other hand, it implies a notion of understanding, which conceives of meaning as emergent, non-linguistic, pre-reflective, and pre-objective. However, embodied reason does not consider affect or emotion to be autonomous. Nor does it ascribe a determining role to embodiment because the plasticity of the brain and the embodiment of language imply the importance of language use in understanding and reasoning. That is, embodied reason creates a space for critique and rational judgment. Thus, the notion of embodied reason shows us that Damasio and Massumi are wrong to consider emotion or affect autonomous and decisive to politics. Yet, as we shall see below, it also shows that Habermas is wrong to consider reason autonomous and to believe that everything can be criticized and reasoned with. Instead, we must realize that the use of "the words *mind* and *body* [...] are imposing bounded conceptual structures artificially on the ongoing integrated process that constitutes our experience" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 97). Reason and feelings are not each other's opposites but are reciprocally conditioning, as language can give rise to various conceptualizations of feelings and feelings are integral to experience, and hence reason.

3.2 The Disembodiment of Habermas' Theory of Meaning

Before I turn to the relationship between embodied reason and deliberative politics, I want to investigate the relationship between embodied reason and communicative reason. Because Habermas' theory of meaning is fundamental to the concept of communicative reason, I delimit the investigation to the relationship between language use and meaning, comparing Habermas'

conception of meaning to cognitive semantics.²⁷ I conduct this investigation in order to specify how and why the concepts of communicative and embodied reason differ from each other, providing the basis of a subsequent reconceptualization of deliberative politics and a reframing of Habermas' theories of discourse and morality.

Overall, Habermas and cognitive semantics take similar points of departure in approaching the relationship between language and meaning. They both criticize Anglo-American analytic philosophy and truth-conditional semantics. Where Habermas criticizes analytic philosophy for treating pragmatics ad hoc, precluding itself from understanding the role of language in producing interpersonal relations, cognitive semanticists criticize it for not taking the cognitive organization of language into account (Habermas, 1998: 25-28; Evans & Green, 2006: 156-157). Further, both Habermas and cognitive semanticists regard language use and its experiential basis as crucial to linguistic meaning (Habermas, 1998: 69; Evans & Green, 2006: 110). Nevertheless, as argued in the previous chapters, Habermas' theory of meaning abstracts too much from experience, which is why it becomes disembodied, decontextualized, and dispassionate. This contention is supported by the study of cognitive semantics and can be elucidated in the following way.

First, Habermas' differentiation of linguistic meaning is disembodied. He proposes that linguistic meaning should be differentiated according to language use or the pragmatic functions of speech, as meaning is learned through the experience of these different functions (Habermas, 1998: 69-72). In connection to this, he argues that the cognitive use of language is based on sensory experience, while the interactive use of language is based on communicative experience. On the one hand, this differentiation can be criticized for selecting one aspect of experience as defining the whole; since it selects the sensory aspect as the basis of the cognitive use of language and the communicative aspect as the basis of the interactive use of language. That is, Habermas abstracts from experience, which is composed of "both the structure and the activity of the organism as well as the structure of the environment" (Johnson, 2015: 3). He abstracts from the experience as a whole, unified situation entailing sensations, emotions, concepts, propositions, judgments, and so on. On the other hand, Habermas' differentiation is artificial, as experience, concepts, and language are

²⁷ By comparing Habermas' theory of meaning to cognitive semantics, I can compare Habermas to both Lakoff and Johnson, as their notion of embodied meaning is entailed in cognitive semantics, and more general insights of cognitive semantics that are not explicated by Lakoff and Johnson.

shaped by our brains, bodies, and bodily interactions. The conceptual inference of reason is to a large extent a sensorimotor inference insofar as concepts are part of, or make use of, the sensorimotor system of our brains (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 20). In other words, the perception/conception distinction is flawed. Consequently, no matter which pragmatic function language use has, it is based on sensory experience as well as other aspects of experience (e.g. emotion).

Second, the disembodiment of Habermas' notion of meaning is present in his use of Searle's principle of expressibility by assuming that a speaker is capable of expressing "his intention precisely, explicitly, and *literally*" (Habermas, 1998: 61, my emphasis). In opposition to this, Lakoff and Johnson argue that our embodiment makes it impossible to reason purely literally (this will become crucial to the later discussion of deliberative politics). According to Lakoff and Johnson our conceptualizations, and hence meaning and reason, are shaped by metaphors to a large degree. From a conceptual perspective, metaphors are cross-domain mappings between two different conceptual domains called the source domain (often a sensory motor domain, e.g. grasping an object) and the target domain (often a domain of subjective experience, e.g. an idea). From a neural perspective, they are neural connections between two different neural circuits that have been connected and learned via co-activation (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 57-58). When one thinks metaphorically, one conceptualizes the target domain experiences in terms of the source domain experiences, including all its inferential structure; and thus, metaphors allow "conventional mental imagery from sensorimotor domains to be used for domains of subjective experience" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 45). For example, we may conceptualize ideas as something we can grasp (e.g. "I get it") and inferentially lose grip of (e.g. "I lost it"), which is why metaphors are said to structure our reasoning about ideas.

Furthermore, metaphors form a hierarchy based on their complexity. The lowest level is constituted by primary metaphors, which are primary in the sense that they are acquired automatically and non-consciously as a consequence of highly correlated and frequently occurring phenomena. For example, physically lifting one's facial expressions when smiling is highly correlated with being happy (e.g. "I'm feeling up") and being physically close is highly correlated with being intimate (e.g. "we are close friends") (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 50, 56-57). Therefore, it is almost impossible not to think in terms of primary metaphors. Some of them are even universal in the sense that they are found in any language

studied diachronically and synchronically, which is believed to be a product of universal bodily experience. Second, the primary metaphors can be put together in order to form complex metaphors. Complex metaphors do not have an experiential grounding in themselves but by means of the primary metaphors they consist of, which is also the reason why they vary across cultures. For example, it is possible to conceive of love as a journey in English; hence, it is possible to reach a dead-end in a relationship or pursue common goals, which are not conceivable in every other language (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 63-65). In other words, metaphors are an important part of our embodiment and without them we would have an impoverished language and understanding of ourselves and the world (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 266).²⁸ Consequently, Lakoff and Johnson consider reason to be largely imaginative and not purely literal (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 4).

Third, Habermas' criticizes Austin and truth-conditional semantics but does not entirely break with this theory. On the one hand, Habermas criticizes Austin for reserving meaning to sentences, which does not acknowledge the influence of pragmatics on linguistic meaning. On the other hand, he criticizes Austin for not differentiating meaning according to different uses of language in different contexts. Yet, Habermas still distinguishes categorically between the propositional component, sentences, or what is said, and the illocutionary component, utterances, or what is meant, which is inherited from truth-conditional semantics (Habermas, 1998: 48; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 450; Evans & Green, 2006: 170). For this reason, Habermas inherits some of the problems of truth-conditional semantics. First, the categorical distinction is associated with a dictionary view of word meaning. According to this view, words represent packaged bundles of meaning that can be defined by means of necessary and sufficient conditions, and distinguished from and influenced by the pragmatic meaning of language use (Evans & Green, 2006: 207-209). However, as already mentioned, cognitive semanticists argue that concepts have a prototype structure; and word meaning is conceptual and encyclopedic in the sense that it is always constructed on-line against a context and by means of repositories of knowledge (Evans & Green, 2005: 160). Therefore, cognitive semanticists do not distinguish categorically between utterances and sentences. Instead, they conceive of "an utterance [as] a situated instance of language use which is culturally and contextually embedded," and sentences as idealizations representing a structure associated with a prototypical utterance. That is,

²⁸ For a more comprehensive account of conceptual metaphors see Lakoff & Johnson (1980).

sentences are a function of utterances (Evans & Green, 2006: 111). Second, the categorical distinction is associated with the possibility of distinguishing between context-independent and context-dependent meanings of words and sentences (Evans & Green, 2006: 213). In opposition to this, cognitive semanticists distinguish between coded meaning and pragmatic meaning, which is a distinction between “the conventional meaning associated with a particular word or construction, and the meaning that arises from context” (Evans & Green, 2006: 113). However,

because words always occur within context, coded meaning represents an idealization based on the prototypical meaning that emerges from contextualized uses of words. In reality, the meaning associated with words always involves pragmatic meaning, and coded meaning is nothing more than the statement of this prototypical meaning abstracted from the range of the pragmatic (situated) interpretations associated with a particular word (Evans & Green, 2006: 113).

This prototypical meaning of coded meaning is based on the phenomenon of entrenchment. When words and sentences are encountered more frequently they become entrenched in the sense that a cognitive pattern or routine is established. From a neural perspective, the frequent encounter strengthens a neural connection between a certain phonological form and a concept (Evans & Green, 2006: 114). In the last instance, however, linguistic meaning is a function of language use in context. For the same reason, there are no universal structures of speech in Habermas’ sense that utterances have something in common independently of particular contexts or conventions. All structures of speech are a function of our embodiment and language use. Consequently, speech does not have a universal validity basis in Habermas’ sense.

Fourth, Habermas revises Chomsky’s concepts of competence (language knowledge) and performance (language use or the use of language knowledge) with regard to utterances, but does not break with them, which is problematic in the following ways. First, it upholds the innate-versus-learned dichotomy, which Lakoff and Johnson, as already mentioned, argue is an inaccurate way of characterizing human development (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 507). Second, it is unclear whether Habermas retains Chomsky’s categorical distinction between competence and performance. On the one hand, Habermas states that competence does not represent innate dispositions but is learned, which indicates a non-categorical distinction, as competence could potentially be learned by means of performance. On the other hand, Habermas states that

competence constitutes a rule consciousness that determines the production of utterances fulfilling the universal validity claims, which indicates a categorical distinction between competence and performance (Habermas, 1998: 37, 47-49). If the latter is the case, Habermas can be criticized for neglecting that language knowledge is a function of language use, i.e. that rules are a product of language use as argued in the above. Relatedly, Habermas' characterization of his language analysis as a formal analysis aiming to explicate rules connotes a reductive and intellectualist model of language, in which it is considered possible to produce or predict "well-formed" instances of language use taking a point of departure in conscious rules or competence (Evans & Green, 2006: 117-118). However, this also neglects that language structures are a function of all instances of language use – well-formed and irregular – which can be categorized and conceptualized by means of schemas but cannot be reduced to schemas (Evans & Green, 2006: 117-118). In other words, linguistic meaning is not a function of conscious rules but of one's ability to situate oneself successfully, which is why know-how cannot always be translated into know-that. For this reason, the contention that "*we understand a speech act when we know what makes it acceptable*" is flawed insofar as "knowing" is associated with know-that, propositions, and consciousness (Habermas, 1998: 297).

To summarize, the comparison between Habermas' theory of meaning and cognitive semantics shows that Habermas takes a step in the right direction by criticizing and revising Austin and Chomsky in an attempt to explicate meaning relative to language use and experience. But, he does not break with them, which is problematic in a number of ways. First, Habermas' notion of meaning abstracts from the experience as a whole, unified situation. Second, he inherits intellectualist and disembodied assumptions that rules, word meaning, competence etc. can be categorically and literally delineated independently of conventions, context, and language use. However, as cognitive semantics shows, linguistic meaning is experiential through and through in the sense that it cannot be disconnected from our embodiment and language use. Consequently, linguistic meaning is not a matter of acceptability conditions in Habermas's sense, as there exists no universal validity basis of speech. That is, utterances do not have something in common independently of particular contexts or conventions. Instead of being inscribed in a linguistic telos toward mutual understanding, embodied reason can be said to be inscribed in our conceptual structures which are both embodied and imaginative. In other words, reason is

not autonomous but constrained, which is why intersubjective control of meaning and critique is not possible to the extent that Habermas argues.

If we then return to Skaarup's statement that politics is first of all feelings and try to understand it from the point of view of embodied reason, it seems that it should be modified into "politics is also feelings". Feelings only constitute one aspect of experience among others such as sensations, qualities, concepts, judgments, and so on. Further, feelings can be reasoned with in the sense that language use can give rise to different conceptualizations of feelings, and hence different experiences of "the same" feeling. Therefore, politics is not first of all feelings but does involve feelings. Neither is it first of all communication or discourse. It is rather a constant negotiation of how we should understand our embodied experiences. In this sense, Skaarup is right in stating that feelings are a natural part of our political being and that we should respect them. That is, we should acknowledge that they constrain reason to a certain degree. However, he is wrong in emphasizing them as the aspect of our being in the world that is supposed to be the most important to politics.

3.3 The Reframing of Habermas

Since the concept of embodied reason overlaps with but also differs from Habermas' concept of communicative reason, it consequently challenges the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics. The possibility of deliberative politics is challenged because deliberation does not entail a telos toward mutual understanding. However, as already mentioned, language use or deliberation can still influence meaning even though it is constrained by our embodiment. At the same time, our embodiment enables the possibility of reaching mutual understanding across ethical communities, as it provides the basis of universal experience, and hence universal conceptual structures (Evans & Green, 2006: 56-57). For example, we all experience boundedness, gravity, temperatures, etc. in common ways by virtue of our bodies. In this sense, embodied reason does not necessarily undermine the possibility of deliberative politics but calls for a reconceptualization of deliberation based on embodied meaning and not universal validity claims. Moreover, the moral desirability of deliberative politics is challenged, as meaning is not relative to universal validity claims in the sense that speech unconditionally raises claims to truth, rightness, and sincerity that are meaningful when one knows what makes them acceptable. Consequently, discourse cannot be a matter of vindicating universal validity claims, i.e. explicating why they are acceptable, which is why morality cannot be

a matter of establishing categorically valid claims to rightness. This is further supported by the largely metaphorical character of moral concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 290).

First, there are multiple metaphors that characterize moral concepts, which is why it is possible to conceptualize the same moral concepts and questions in several and not necessarily consistent ways. Consequently, moral reasoning cannot be univocal, homogeneous, and consistent. There can be no single right way to do things (Johnson, 1993: 10; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 328). Second, the metaphorical character of moral concepts implies that absolute moral principles defined by literal concepts cannot be applied immediately, directly, or univocally as their application will depend on their metaphorical elaboration in given situations (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 326). Third, the metaphorical character of moral concepts calls into question the distinction between moral and ethical questions or the right and the good, as moral reasoning is derived from inference patterns that are tied to ends, goals, and purposes, i.e. notions of the good (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 332-333). Fourth, the metaphorical character of moral concepts implies that they are constrained by our experiences and bodily being in the world. On the one hand, this enables a stability, and in some instances universality, across cultures, as our embodiment is shared. On the other hand, it enables variation because source domains might be culturally specific and because even universal experience can be elaborated metaphorically in different ways from culture to culture. For example, the morality as balance metaphor might be universal while the meaning of achieving balance varies. Furthermore, it enables imagination and creativity as it is possible to extend metaphors from past and prototypical cases to future and non-prototypical cases (Johnson, 1993: 10; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 325-326). Thus, we avoid both extreme moral subjectivism “because there are shared bases for metaphors within a culture, and even across cultures” and extreme moral relativism “because some metaphors appear to be grounded in universal bodily experiences” (Johnson, 1993: 196).

Following from the above, the embodiment of moral concepts undermines Habermas’ strong moral cognitivism, as one cannot distinguish categorically between moral and ethical questions and because norms can never be unconditionally valid. Additionally, a metaphorical analysis of Habermas’ moral theory reveals how it relies on a reason as force metaphor, which is not the only metaphor that reason can be conceptualized with. Yet, this does not necessarily undermine the moral desirability of deliberative politics, as the metaphorical character of moral concepts does not prevent universal morality as such. That

is, the embodiment of moral concepts creates a partial frame of commonality between competing moral views, which enables the understanding of a decision as in the interest of all (Johnson, 1993: 237-238). This partial frame of commonality, however, only leaves a hope of mutual moral understanding, as our shared embodiment can be elaborated metaphorically in different ways from culture to culture supporting a communitarian notion of morality. In this sense, deliberative politics may be morally desirable insofar as deliberation elaborates our embodiment in a universalistic direction promoting mutual moral understanding across ethical communities. By contrast, it may also be communitarian insofar as deliberation elaborates our embodiment in different ways across cultures promoting moral decisionism, i.e. that political decisions appear morally arbitrary to some of the concerned parties. However, I want to argue that it is possible to reframe Habermas' theories of discourse and morality in a way that is consistent with embodied reason supporting the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics.

Regarding Habermas' discourse theory, the notion of the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions and its justification by means of the notion of performative contradictions make intuitive sense. It would simply seem absurd, if participants in argumentation did not presuppose that they were being understood. It would be absurd, if they did not presuppose that their arguments and explanations made a difference; that there was a possibility of reaching an agreement. However, because of the embodiment of reason, we must abandon the idea of the force of the better argument, as it is impossible to realize the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions or to determine when they are approximately realized. In other words, Habermas' notion of a rational discourse is unrealistic. It is unrealistic that participants of discourse should be able to identify a better argument that could force agreement, as conviction is dependent on a great deal of other "forces", e.g. emotions. On the other hand, the cognitive impossibility of identifying the better argument does not seem to constitute a sufficient reason for abandoning the notion of the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions. That is, if the cognitive impossibility of identifying the better argument led to the conclusion that explanations and arguments did not make a difference and that we could not achieve agreement through argumentation, I could not see why anyone would ever engage in argumentation.

Instead, I want to propose that the idea of the force of the better argument constitutes a regulative hope rather than a cognitive possibility in the sense that argumentation is regulated by the hope that we might reach agreement. This

corresponds with the imaginative aspect of reason, i.e. that we are capable of imagining how argumentation could lead to agreement. Further, I want to propose that it is possible to ground the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions experientially. Similar to the cognitive semantic contention that sentences are idealizations, which represent a structure associated with a prototypical utterance, I want to suggest that the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions should be understood as idealizations, which represent a structure associated with prototypical argumentation. In other words, I suggest that the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions are idealizations based on a prototype of the experience of argumentation, which is associated with the achievement of agreement. And because these idealizations are entrenched in our conceptualization of argumentation, they regulate our engagement in argumentation. In case this is correct, it seems to me to be yet unsolved whether such an experience with argumentation is culturally specific or universal, and hence whether the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions are culturally specific or universal. Insofar as the experience is culturally specific, one is right to criticize Habermas' discourse theory for being ethnocentric in the sense that it constitutes abstractions based on a cultural prototype. Insofar as it is universal, however, it supports a reframed version of the discourse-theoretic interpretation of public communication based on an embodied conceptualization of deliberation. Further, even if the regulative hope of argumentation is culturally specific, we cannot deny that it could gradually transcend its own limits. Because our brains are plastic and because people, whose argumentation is regulated by the hope of reaching agreement, should be expected to reach out to people, whose argumentation is not regulated by that hope, it might be possible to spread the hope. In this sense, the reframing of Habermas' discourse theory, consistent with the notion of embodied reason, supports the possibility of deliberative politics.

Regarding Habermas' moral theory, I want to argue, similar to the above, that the discourse ethics principle (D) constitutes a regulative hope of the evaluation of norms. To recapitulate, (D) is a discursive operationalization of the moral point of view based on 1) that people who enter practical discourse are compelled to take on a we-perspective, and 2) that rationally structured argumentation is assumed to be found in every culture. However, because of the embodiment of morality, it is not possible to distinguish categorically between practical and other types of discourse, which is why there are no discourses in which one is decidedly compelled to take on a we-perspective. Moreover, as

argued in the above, argumentation is experientially structured, as opposed to rationally structured, and it is yet unsolved whether this structure is universal. Nevertheless, we do not necessarily have to throw out (D) because the imaginative aspect of reason enables one to take on a we-perspective and because the experiential basis of the regulative hope of argumentation is still potentially universal.

Next, Habermas states that (D) is hypothetically posited, which is why he formulates the universalization principle (U) in order to render it probable. However, because (U) is derived from the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions that are not cognitively possible to realize, (U) also cannot be cognitively possible to realize. This means that (U) cannot render (D) probable, as (U) itself is not probable. But the cognitive impossibility of (U) does not seem to constitute a sufficient reason for abandoning (D). If the cognitive impossibility of (D) led to the conclusion that the discussion of norms did not imply moral or normative progress in some sense, I cannot see why people would not just abstain from such discussions and make decisions on the basis of whatever they felt was good for them. By contrast, I want to suggest that (D) constitutes a regulative hope in the sense that evaluations of norms are regulated by the hope that it is possible to establish norms that are not just in the interest of the participants but of an ever-wider community. That is, they are regulated by the hope of moral progress. This corresponds with the imaginative aspect of reason that we can imagine a wider community. Further, I want to suggest that it is possible to ground (D) experientially. I want to suggest that (D) arises from a prototype of the experience of normative discussion, which is associated with both the achievement of a better solution and the implicit reference to something bigger or wider than one's own local situation. In case this is correct, it is still unresolved whether such an experiential basis of (D) is universal. However, as argued in the above, it might be possible to expand this basis even though it is not universal. Consequently, the reframing of Habermas' moral theory supports the moral desirability of deliberative politics. It supports the belief that deliberation can promote mutual moral understanding and counter moral decisionism.

Finally, a consequence of reframing Habermas' theories of discourse and morality is that in order to elaborate our embodiment in a universalistic direction and promote mutual moral understanding, we have to both increase plurality and engage in deliberation more humbly and patiently. If morality is experiential and there is no single right thing to do then we should seek to broaden the

horizon of our experiences and recognize that no one has the truth, whole and absolute. We should do our utmost to try and understand each other, use our imagination, be open-minded, and hope that we can find better solutions together. In other words, we should not enter normative discussions with the conviction that we are right and they are wrong (Johnson, 1993: 258-259). Skaarup and Brinkmann would not necessarily disagree with this. However, their discussion illustrates how difficult it may be to engage in a discussion with the required humbleness to reach agreement. On the one hand, they both claim that reason and feelings are not opposites. Yet, Brinkmann accuses Skaarup for opposing feelings to reason. On the other hand, Skaarup accuses political experts indirectly for being irrational, while Brinkmann accuses Skaarup of being irrational. Thus, they are closer to claiming that they know the truth than recognizing that no one has the truth, whole and absolute. Further, I want to suggest that neither Skaarup, Brinkmann, nor political experts are irrational. Instead, they probably conceptualize the same phenomenon differently or talk past each other. Consequently, if they had engaged in the public debate more humbly, tried to figure out how their dissidents conceptualized the relevant phenomena, been sincerely open to the possibility that those conceptualizations could have been constructive, and hoped that they could have jointly found better solutions, they might have realized the rationality of each other's views and reached mutual understanding.

4 Conclusion

In this thesis, I argue that reason and feelings are not each other's opposite; instead they are reciprocally conditioning. I argue that reason constitutes conceptual inference, which is inference at the level of thoughts that are not necessarily linguistic or purely conscious. It is both embodied and imaginative in the sense that it arises from our bodily experiences and metaphorical thought that maps bodily inferences with more abstract inferences. In relation to this, experience is understood as a whole, unified situation involving both sensation, quality, concepts, judgments, feelings, etc. Consequently, feelings are an integral aspect of reason. However, "the same" experience can be conceptualized in multiple ways, which is why the embodiment of reason is only constraining and not determining. In other words, it is possible to reason with feelings in the sense that one can conceptualize "the same" feeling in different ways. At the same time, what might be conceptualized as a feeling in one context might not be conceptualized as a feeling in another context. Following from this, Skaarup's statement: "politics is first of all feelings," should be modified into: "politics is also feelings". Skaarup is right to state that feelings are a natural part of our political being. However, he is wrong to emphasize it as the most important or prevalent aspect of politics.

Furthermore, I argue that embodied reason does not necessarily undermine deliberative politics but leaves a hope of its possibility and moral desirability. On the one hand, the notion of embodied reason undermines Habermas' conception of meaning, and hence the concept of communicative reason, as it abstracts from the experiential basis of reason. Meaning is inherently situated, context-dependent, and conventional, which is why there exists no unconditional communicative structures independent of context that could support the idea of a linguistic telos toward mutual understanding. However,

deliberation is still important as language use can influence meaning, even though it is embodied. At the same time, our embodiment is shared providing the basis of universal experience, and hence universal conceptual structures. In this sense, embodied reason leaves a hope for the possibility of deliberative politics. On the other hand, the notion of embodied reason undermines Habermas' strong moral cognitivism, as there exists no universal claims to rightness that can be vindicated. Our shared embodiment, however, provides a partial frame of communality across cultures for competing moral views in terms of the metaphorical character of moral concepts. Still, this partial frame of communality can be metaphorically elaborated in either a universalistic or communitarian direction. In this sense, embodied reason leaves a hope for the moral desirability of deliberative politics. In relation to this, I argue that it is possible to reframe Habermas' theories of discourse and morality in a way that is consistent with embodied reason supporting the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics. I argue that the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions and the discourse ethics principle (D) can be given an experiential basis by pointing to the possibility that they constitute idealizations of the experience of argumentation and normative evaluation, respectively. Further, I argue that rather than constituting cognitive possibilities, the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions and (D) constitute regulative hopes. That is, the transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions regulate argumentation in the sense that we hope to achieve agreement, while (D) regulates the evaluation of norms in the sense that we hope to find better solutions, which do not just pertain to our own local community but to an ever-wider community. If this is correct, it is still unresolved whether these experiences, and hence regulative hopes, are universal. However, because our brains are plastic, it might be possible to expand the experiential basis of the regulative hope. Thus, the reframing of Habermas' theories of discourse and morality enables a regulative hope for the possibility and moral desirability of deliberative politics based on the embodiment of reason.

5 Bibliography

- Aboulaflia, Mitchell. (2002). "Introduction". In *Habermas and Pragmatism* edited by Aboulaflia, Mitchell; Bookman, Myra; and Kemp, Catherine. New York: Routledge
- Arnfred, Carl Emil. (6th of August, 2017). Peter Skaarup: "Fakta er underordnet vores holdninger og følelser". *Politiken*, section: Politik
- Austin, J.L. (1962). *How to do Things with Words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baere, Merle & Drivholm, Louise Schou. (4th of August 2017a). 'Følelser er det bedste kompas til at træffe politiske beslutninger'. *Information*, section: Indland
- Baere, Merle & Drivholm, Louise Schou. (7th of August 2017b). Professor: Det er sørgeligt, hvis demokratiet skal reduceres til at være et teknokrati eller et emojikrati. *Information*, section: Indland
- Bennet, M.R. & Hacker, P.M.S. (2003). *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing
- Brinkmann, Svend. (2006). "Damasio on mind and emotions: A conceptual critique. *Nordic Psychology*, Vol. 58, No. 4, pp. 366-380
- Brinkmann, Svend. (13th of August, 2017). Peter Skaarup fra DF kunne have gavn af lidt elementær viden om det menneskelige følelsesliv. *Politiken*, section: Kultur
- Brunkhorst, Hauke; Kreide, Regina & Lafont, Christina. (2017). *The Habermas Handbook*. New York: Columbia University Press
- Clough, Patricia T. (2008). "The Affective Turn: Political Economy, Biomedicine and Bodies". *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 25 (1), pp. 1-22
- Damasio, Antonio R. (1994). *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*. New York: Avon Books
- Damasio, Antonio R. (2003). *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain*. New York: Mariner Books
- Evans, Vyvyan & Green, Melanie. (2006). *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- Gallagher, Shaun. (2006). "Where's the Action? Epiphenomenalism and the Problem of Free Will". In *Does Consciousness Cause Behavior?* edited by Pockett, Susan; Banks, William P. & Gallagher, Shaun. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
- Habermas, Jürgen. (1984). *The Theory of Communicative Action vol. 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Boston Mass.: Beacon Press

Bibliography

- Habermas, Jürgen. (1990). *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Maldon/Cambridge: Polity Press
- Habermas, Jürgen. (1994). "Three Normative Models of Democracy". *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 1-10
- Habermas, Jürgen. (1996a). *Between Facts and Norms*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
- Habermas, Jürgen (1996b). "On the Cognitive Content of Morality". *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, Vol. 96, pp. 335-358
- Habermas, Jürgen. (1998). *On the Pragmatics of Communication* edited by Maeve Cooke. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
- Hansen, Kasper M. & Rostbøll, Christian F. (2012). "Deliberative Democracy". In *The Edinburgh Companion to the History of Democracy* edited by Isakhan, Bejnamin & Stockwell, Steven. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- Ingram, David. (2010). *Habermas: Introduction and Analysis*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press
- Johnson, Mark. (1993). *Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press
- Johnson, Mark. (2015). "Embodied Understanding. *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 6, article 875.
- Kristiansen, Otto Lerche. (28th of July, 2017a). Peter Skaarup om alternative sandheder og det postfaktuelle samfund: Følelser er vigtigere end viden i politik. *Information*, section: Inland
- Kristiansen, Otto Lerche. (2nd of August, 2017b). 'Selvfølgelig skal politikerne være informerede. Sådan kvalificeres beslutninger'. *Information*, section: Inland
- Lafont, Cristina. (1999). *The Linguistic Turn in Hermeneutic Philosophy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
- Lakoff, George. (1987). *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press
- Lakoff & Johnson. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press
- Lakoff & Johnson. (1999). *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books

Bibliography

- Leys, Ruth. (2011). "The Turn to Affect: A Critique". *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 37 (3), pp. 434-472
- Mahmood, Saba. (2013). "Religious Reason and Secular Affect: An Incommensurable Divide?". In *Is Critique Secular?: Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech* edited by Asad, Talal; Brown, Wendy; Butler, Judith & Mahmood, Saba. Online: Fordham Scholarship Online
- Margolis, Joseph. (2002). "Vicissitudes of Transcendental Reason". In *Habermas and Pragmatism* edited by Aboulafla, Mitchell; Bookman, Myra; and Kemp, Catherine. New York: Routledge
- Massumi, Brian. (1995). "The Autonomy of Affect". *Cultural Critique*, No. 31, The Politics of Systems and Environment, Part II (Autumn 1995), pp. 83-109
- Massumi, Brian. (2002). *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham & London: Duke University Press
- Massumi, Brian. (2015). *Politics of Affect*. Cambridge/Malten: Polity Press
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. (2012). *Phenomenology of Perception*. NYC: Routledge.
- Outhwaite, William. (2009). *Habermas, A Critical Introduction*. Oxford: Polity Press
- Papastephanou, Marianna. (2012). "Exploring Habermas' Critical Engagement with Chomsky". *Human Studies*, Vol. 35 (1), pp. 51-76
- Pedersen, David Budtz. (21st of January, 2017). Demokratiet er truet af følelser. *Information*, section: Moderne Tider
- Skaarup, Peter. (25th of July, 2017a). *Politik er først og fremmest følelser*. Localized the 28th of January 2018: <https://danskfolkeparti.dk/2017/07/>
- Skaarup, Peter. (17th of August, 2017b). Følelser of politik kan ikke adskilles. *Information*, section: Debat
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (27th of July, 2006). *Democracy*. Localized the 30th of May 2018: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/democracy/>
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (4th of August, 2014). *Jürgen Habermas*. Localized the 13th of March 2018: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/habermas/>
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (29th of February, 2016). *Dualism*. Localized the 30th of May 2018: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dualism/>
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (19th of March, 2018a). *Spinoza's Theory of Attributes*. Localized the 2nd of July 2018: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/spinoza-attributes/>

Bibliography

- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (28th of June, 2018b). *Moral Cognitivism vs. Non-Cognitivism*. Localized the 30th of June 2018:
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-cognitivism/>
- Stanley, Kate. (2017). "Affect and Emotion: James, Dewey, Tomkins, Damasio, Massumi, Spinoza". In *The Palgrave Handbook of Affect Studies and Textual Criticism* edited by Wehrs, Donald R. & Blake, Thomas. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan
- Taylor, Charles & Gutmann, Amy. (1994). *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press
- Wehrs, Donald, R. (2017). "Introduction: Affect and Text: Contemporary Inquiry in Historical Context". In *The Palgrave Handbook of Affect Studies and Textual Criticism* edited by Wehrs, Donald R. & Blake, Thomas. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan
- White, Stephen K. (1995). *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Zahavi, Dan. (2014). *Self and Other: Exploring Subjectivity, Empathy, and Shame*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Zerilli, Linda M.G. (2015). "The Turn to Affect and the Problem of Judgment." *New Literary History*, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 261-286
- Zeuthen, Nikolaj. (2007). "Antonio Damasio's bevidsthedsteori". In *Følelser og Kognition* edited by Jensen, Thomas Wiben & Skov, Martin. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanums Forlag