

According Legitimacy to the Human Body in Education

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Abstract

This paper makes an argument for legitimizing the human body in education and traces its philosophical moorings. From very early on in history, in the ancient Greek and Indian traditions, there appears to have been a tendency to assign a pre-eminent status to the mind and a subordinate place to the body. It was philosophically revisited and reinforced chiefly by Descartes in the modern era. The result has been that the education of the individual has had only a partial focus, i.e., the mind, and the student has not blossomed fully across all faculties of human development. Knowing the body and cultivating the body needs understanding of the body – the personal, biological, social, religious and philosophical dimensions among others. Some of these are explored here.

Keywords: Ontological Legitimacy, Psychosomatic, Archimedean Fulcrum, Full-Employment

1. Introduction

The human body is a very fascinating entity. Among all creatures filling the earth, it is the human who has a majestic, upright body. In comparison to all other living beings, the human commands the created order with his/her powerful presence – and a large measure of that presence is due to his/her body. Speaking of this presence, it is actually the power of presence. A telling example of such power is visible in the gospel of John in the scene of the arrest of Jesus Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, just before his death. The soldiers, who are armed and have come in force, are addressed by Jesus, who asks who they were looking for.

And they reply, “Jesus of Nazareth.” And as he says, “I am He,”³ they all fall to the ground. Jesus was exuding tremendous spiritual power on that occasion and his presence was too much for the onlookers to take in. This is an instance of the power of the mind acting through the body. We make several arguments in this chapter for the seamless connection between the mind and the body and accord the body the legitimacy it deserves.

Pursuits undertaken by the human person in a lifetime can be abstracted as knowing, doing and being. None of these can be engaged in without participation of the mind, and neither is any of these possible without the body. Can either the mind or the body exist independently of the other?

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³ John 18:5, Catholic Edition of the New Revised Standard Version Bible, here after abbreviated as NRSV Bible

The only issue before us then is: which of these, mind or body is superior, and that is an irrelevant debate in the light of arguments forthcoming here, which establish that the two cannot be separated in a living being – they are interdependent, and together, constitute the whole person.

The human body is far more than an attribute of the person; it is more intimate than simply a physical appendage of the soul and almost defines the person in question. Even our day-to-day conversations betray this idea – when somebody hits us, for instance, we are more likely to ask, “why did you hit me?” and not “why did you hit my body?” Similarly, if a felon were to shoot someone, the law would ask, “Why did *you* shoot him?” rather than “why did *your hand* use the gun?” Similarly, we could have, “I ate,” and not “my mouth ate,” or “I played cricket,” not “my hands and feet played cricket” and so on. We might say that our bodies are too intimately connected to the question of who we essentially are. The mind and the body together constituting the whole person is the human being. The ‘I’ that we use for self reference does not and cannot take only the mind into account – the body is equally part of the being. This ontological legitimacy given to the body ought to be reflected in educational circles. It is a great travesty that in education we emphasize the mind far too much and give short shrift to the body. In fact, we sometimes go to the extreme of associating the body with positive evil.⁴

2. Descartes and the Cogito

Rene Descartes, in modern philosophy, is considered a major proponent of the real distinction between mind and body as two entirely separate entities.⁵ However, the ontological separation of mind and body in the human being was anticipated much earlier - in ancient Greek⁶ and ancient Indian⁷ philosophy. Descartes brought the new insight that viewed the body as part of nature (*res extensa* – the extended thing), governed by its physical constraints and laws, while the mind is not (Grosz, 1994) restrained by the elements. In *Meditations on first Philosophy*, he said, “I am a thinking thing,”⁸ or *res cogitans*. The body is akin to a self-moving machine, behaving in accordance with the laws of nature. It is like a mechanical device that functions like other physical entities in nature, obeying the laws of cause and effect. The mind cannot be seen, while the body is visible. Since the mind is the thinking thing and the body is the extended thing, there is nothing common between them. One of them is the extended thing in space, while the other is entirely of a different nature. The mind and body are really distinct and can exist independent of each other – that is why Descartes contends that they are two categorically different entities all-together.

In terms of Anthropology, for Descartes, the mind and the soul are more or less the same thing. Descartes divides the human being into the mind and the body and gives primacy to the mind.⁹ He made the famous assertion, “I think, therefore I am” or *cogito ergo sum* in Latin.

⁴ Among the first to condemn the body as evil are the Platonists and Manichaeists. Since the sex organs primarily differentiated the man and the woman, the condemnation was extended to marriage and conjugal life. Adapted from *Theology of the Body*, Pope John Paul II. See

http://www.catholicprimer.org/papal/theology_of_the_body.pdf. Retrieved October 25, 2014.

⁵ <http://www.iep.utm.edu/descarte/>. Retrieved October 25, 2014.

⁶ Plato was influenced by the prevalent and overarching Greek belief which viewed the body as a prison for the soul; the soul had committed some grave misdemeanor in the divine realm and was sent to earth to remain inside a body. The body was considered as the prison of the soul. Cf. These souls are finally “imprisoned in another body” <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phaedo>.

⁷ “There is this city of Brahman the body, and in it the palace, the small lotus of the heart, and in it that small ether... By the old age of the body, the ether, or Brahman within, does not age; by death of the body, that ether, or Brahman within it, is not killed. That Brahman, is the true Brahma-City, not the body. In it all desires are contained. It is the self, free from sin, free from old age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst.” From the ‘Khandogya Upanishad.’ See F. Max Muller, *The Sacred Books of the East*, Volume I, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879, p. 125

⁸ http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfs/descartes1641_1.pdf. Retrieved October 25, 2014.

⁹ A rather vivid and extreme example of mind-body distinction can be seen in the person of the brilliant physicist, Steven Hawkins, who is strong in mind, but is paralyzed below the neck and needs gadgetry to communicate. It may appear from Hawkins’ example that the two (mind and body) are separate entities. However, it is only true that Hawkins’ body is still functional so as to support his mind. Even for Hawkins, the mind cannot exist independent of the body.

Descartes was, as most of us are, a creature of his times. Skepticism and nominalism were rife in the Europe of his time and all of a sudden, the certainty about God became questionable. The crusades and the holy wars, which Europe fought in the name of religion, were a sorely disillusioning experience. And Descartes used 'doubt,' the blood-brother of skepticism, as the starting point. He was looking for something like the 'Archimedean Fulcrum,' using which, the whole universe of ideas could be turned. He found that in the only thing that could not be doubted – doubt itself, and Descartes made a creative use of doubt. That point of absolute certitude, or the 'clear and distinct' idea was found in the notion that he could doubt anything, but not doubt the doubter. Since he was part of the one thing that was certain, he, the agent, the doubter existed! And in answering the question, what am I, Descartes reached the conclusion: "I am the thinking thing." The human person was thus projected to be understood as primarily his/her mind, or the cognitive self. Descartes' cogito has been paradigmatic in qualifying the human person in terms of just one dimension, i.e., his or her cognition. Though Descartes was now sure of the mind, he could not be sure of the object with its extension. The subject is sure but the object is not. This is the famous "problem of the bridge," which represents the conundrum of the mind and body being able to have common ground despite the fact that they are two entirely different realms – on the one hand, we have the mind which itself is mysterious and represents the subject, while on the other, we have the body, which is concrete in nature and part of the world, the object. There has thus far been no meaningful explanation to the bridge or the middle ground between the subject and the object, the mind and the body, and therefore it presents an unsolved problem in philosophy.

Another argument used by Descartes is that the mind is considered indivisible. This is because it cannot have parts. The body on the other hand, is divisible because it can only be considered in terms of parts. Since the mind does not have parts and the body has parts, if they were the same thing, then we would have an impossible situation of something that does and does not have parts. Therefore the mind and body are definitely two different entities, contends Descartes.

Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia, Descartes' correspondent, presents the opposing argument that considers the mind and body as inseparably linked and completely intertwined. This is the view we subscribe to. She says that the mind and body cannot be considered different because of the 'mind to body causation' phenomenon.

For one thing to cause motion in another, they must come in contact with one another like the cue ball to the eight ball in a game of pool. Thinking mechanistically, the mind cannot come into contact with the body unless there is a common surface for them, through which the cue ball will set off the eight ball in motion.¹⁰ So, if the mind and body are entirely different natures, it would be impossible for the mind to will the lifting of the hand and set it into motion when showing the direction in a street, for example.

A similar situation obtains in the 'body to mind causation' phenomenon. The perception of the senses causes an idea of the external world to be formed in the mind. Consider for example, the eye visualizing a tree and the optic nerve and brain producing an image of it. How can this image be formed if the two are of entirely different natures, asks Princess Elizabeth.

These two counter arguments by Princess Elizabeth put paid to Descartes' contention that the mind and body are really distinct and have nothing in common. In fact, the connection between the mind and the body is truly mysterious. The evidence that portrays that the mind and body have much in common and the human person is a psycho-somatic entity says that the two are seamlessly connected together. All we can consider is the 'whole person.'

¹⁰ <http://www.iep.utm.edu/descarte/>. Retrieved October 25, 2014.

The mind or the soul does not have any linkage to nature. This is the reason for the existence of the subject (the self) and the object (the world). The fact that the subject is not part of nature is the basic pre-requisite for all knowledge. The subjectivity of the person is far removed from the world and gives scientific ideas their objectivity. It may be argued that for Descartes, the mind alone is linked to the foundations of knowledge and the body has no part to play in it (Grosz, 1994). In Descartes' view of the world, the mind occupies a place categorically different from the body, and being outside nature, it assumes a position superior to it. This would mean that understanding reality would be indirect, inferential, deductive and by projection (Grosz, 1994). However, that is only part of the story – knowledge enters the mind of the individual in two principal ways: the conceptual way and the perceptual way.

In the former, knowledge is directly conceived in the mind, it is abstract in nature and calls the imagination into play, while in the latter case, the path way of knowledge to the mind is through the body i.e., the senses that convey the perceived information into the mind. To understand the whole gamut of intake of knowledge, we need both the mind and the body, conception and perception (Bittle, 1953); not the mind alone.

Descartes de-emphasized the body and posited that even though there be many drastic changes and alterations in our body, we would not lose the sense of who we are (Howson, 2004). That view may be argued against – the body is apt to make indelible impressions on the mind when significant changes take place in it. Consider a lady who has had her uterus removed surgically. There would be an undeniable effect on her sentiments and her emotional disposition – women react to such situations in varieties of ways - from being morose to being given to despair, owing to a feeling that 'some part of me is now missing,' that 'I am not capable of bearing children anymore,' and she would be a changed person! Or consider a person who has been through a terrible accident with the loss of a limb. This great change in the body, which directly affects mobility would most likely lead to deep disappointment and would change his/her outlook in life forever – s/he too would be a changed person. The Bible also indicates a change of character and renewal of mind through spiritual processes and exercises – a new creation.¹¹ Yoga, from the Indian tradition also claims to produce a calm mind through yoga exercises and *pranayama*. Bodily changes impact the mind!

3. Body in Philosophy

While some dominant schools of thought (Plato, Descartes, Kant) give primacy to the mind, there is a great tradition of modern philosophers who stand out for according that status to the body – the first was Jean Jacques Rousseau in *Emile*¹² and Friedrich Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.¹³ We also have several twentieth century philosophers, Jean Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau Ponty, Martin Heidegger and Mitchell Foucault pursuing this line of thought.

¹¹: "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" 2 Corinthians 5:17, NRSV Bible. Here, the change is total, for the whole person that involves the both body and mind.

¹² "Since everything that comes into the human mind enters through the gates of sense, man's first reason is a reason of sense-experience. It is this that serves as a foundation for the reason of the intelligence; our first teachers in natural philosophy are our feet, hands, and eyes. To substitute books for them does not teach us to reason, it teaches us to use the reason of others rather than our own; it teaches us to believe much and know little... Before you can practise an art you must first get your tools; and if you are to make good use of those tools, they must be fashioned sufficiently strong to stand use. To learn to think we must therefore exercise our limbs, our senses, and our bodily organs, which are the tools of the intellect; and to get the best use out of these tools, the body which supplies us with them must be strong and healthy. Not only is it quite a mistake that true reason is developed apart from the body, but it is a good bodily constitution which makes the workings of the mind easy and correct." JJ Rousseau, *Emile*, Book II, from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/5427/5427.txt>, Retrieved October 25, 2014.

¹³ "There is more reason in your body than in your best wisdom" from <http://philosophy.stackexchange.com/questions/1764/what-does-this-quote-of-nietzsche-from-thus-spoke-zarathustra-mean-is-my-analys>, Retrieved October 25, 2014.

Rousseau advocated friendship with nature and legitimized the importance of the senses. He strongly brought the counter perspective that the body was, in fact, good and essential to a healthy and comprehensive understanding of the person. Nietzsche also championed the legitimacy of the body – like Rousseau, he proposed ‘embodied reason,’ locating the ability to reason in the body rather than the mind, and was an opponent of mind / body dualist scheme with primacy for the mind, as enunciated by Descartes. Nietzsche famously said, “there is more reason in your body than in your best wisdom.” Like Rousseau, Nietzsche saw the body as vested with great intelligence. The human being acts through the intelligence of his body, reconciling the various conflicts and divisive instincts within the body. Jean Paul Sartre was another philosopher, who buoyed up the body - he is famous for his contribution, “existence comes before essence.” Just ‘to be’ was more important than the kind of being one is. He would say that the body is the first dimension of being.

Maurice Merleau Ponty brought the notion of the “lived experience” and “embodied perception” giving primacy to the senses, which perceive the world as it is, rather than through the subjectivity of the mind. He is of the view that the mind and the body cannot be neatly separated as subject and object, transcendent and immanent – this would mean that there would be unity between mind and body – they are too intimate to be torn asunder – only death can do that. The body is the means by which the world outside is accessed. In his *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau Ponty argues that the body is not an object like any other. Neither are the body’s relations with the world those of cause and effect. They are rather informed by meanings. It is not possible for us to stand outside our own body and observe it because the body is the means by which our perspective comes into being. A Chinese saying goes, “If you want to know what water is like, don’t ask the fish” because the fish is in the water and it is through the water that the perspective of the fish comes into being – the fish can not say anything objective about the water. A great implication of this is that we have at best, only a partial understanding of things. We cannot know them absolutely (Fraser & Greco, 2005).

There is an interesting argument that connects the human body to animal bodies. The difference between the two is only in degree and not in kind. The physiological arrangement of animal bodies and the human body show a fundamental continuity (Grosz, 1994). There cannot be a qualitative distinction between the two. This further bolsters Descartes’ argument that the human body, like any other animal’s belongs to the mundane, terrestrial order, and is the extended thing (*res extensa*). What is very different is the soul, the mind, the conscience and consciousness that drive the human person, giving him/her perspective and a point of view.

Among the many objections to the Cartesian model, which relegates the body to a place with brute nature, there is the fact that the body can ‘feel’ the objective world out there: this is the felt body or as Sheets Johnston put it, the ‘somatically felt body’ (Blackman, 2008). Would this not mean that the body and the mind operate together to make sense of the objective world when it is felt by the body? Here is another reason for viewing the mind and body as seamlessly and intimately connected, and impossible to separate. The so-called mind-body dichotomy is a faulty premise that does not exist – it is a pseudo problem – only the whole person exists!

4. Body in Religion

Early history of education shows that it shared a lot with religion. In the Babylonian civilization of the second millennium (2000 BC to 1500 BC), we find that the priests were considered the guardians and conservators of knowledge (Bowen, 2003). Also, we find St. Paul in the first century AD, articulating the Christian message through his Judeo-Greek erudition.

We find that religion closely shares ties with education. We observe the body or the flesh¹⁴ standing for passions, and the spirit, standing for virtues like love, temperance, fortitude etc. That period was also a time of expectation of the second coming¹⁵ of the saviour. People tended to disregard life in this world in order to embrace that in the next. This prompted the people to think that just as the Greeks have it, the body is a site of evil passion. There were some unfortunate implications because the concept of the self now began to be associated essentially with the spirit, to the neglect of the body – the wholeness of the person was lost! Modern theology does not accept this kind of deprecation of the body. Of all things, if the flesh were evil, how could the Lord Jesus Christ himself take flesh? However, the notion of worthlessness of the body had deep undercurrents not only in religion, but oriented education fundamentally as a project to be directed at the mind.

Going further back in time, we find Biblical complementariness¹⁶ of human bodies. Human kind created through Adam and Eve, male and female, implied that *human genders are each different and made for the other* – this is reflected in the overwhelming majority of relationships in the world. In Jewish thought, the body is the soul in its outward form. Also, we have the poet William Blake calling the body a ‘portion of the soul’ (Erdman, 1988). John Scotus, the Irish philosopher calls the body the ‘echo of the soul’ (Newell, 2002). In Christian thought, the body is considered the temple¹⁷ of the Holy Spirit.

Christians are exhorted to keep a pure¹⁸ body, which is a prerequisite for spiritual worship – keeping a pure body, untouched by intoxicants and undefiled by promiscuity is holiness for St. Paul. Sex has a proper place for the human being in marriage and only in marriage – this is underscored in Genesis 2:24 as follows: “for this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.” Uniting in body by the married couple brings them a new freedom and a profound intimacy, which is derived from God. This kind of sexual discretion is the polar opposite of the so called “sexual freedom” practiced by those who engage in it outside marriage.

It may also be emphasized that the Bible sets an order of intimacy permissible between man and woman – the sexual union between man and woman in marriage paves the way for a far greater intimacy than the relationship between mother and child or father and offspring – this despite the genetic composition of the body of the child drawing everything from the parents – even though that relationship is more ‘natural’ than the ‘contractual or covenantal’ relationship of marriage (where the body is shared). Also, Adam’s proclamation, “she is the flesh of my flesh and bone of my bones,” in qualifying Eve points to the common humanity of man and woman. On the other hand, the stark distinction of the human body in its male and female forms shows that the two are definitely different. In other words, man and woman are *equal but different*¹⁹ and it is most evident in the bodies of the two.

Christian Anthropology also says that the first human was created with the capacity to work;²⁰ he was also commanded to subdue the earth. These clearly imply that the human person was created with a body. The Apostle’s Creed in the Catholic Church holds the ‘resurrection of the body’ as one of the articles of faith. Each person after death, will be given a new ‘glorified human body,’ with new properties, not limited by space and time. If the gospel is anything to go by, such a body will be like Jesus Christ’s own body after resurrection.

¹⁴ The flesh is the biblical term for the appetitive body, St. Paul’s Letter to the Galatians 6:8, NRSV Bible.

¹⁵ John 14:3, NRSV Bible.

¹⁶ “Male and female he created them,” Genesis 1:27. NRSV Bible. The verse establishes that the two kinds of humans are differentiated fundamentally at the bodily level – a part of Christian Anthropology.

¹⁷ “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God” 1Corinthians 6:19, NRSV Bible.

¹⁸ “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” Romans 12:1, NRSV Bible.

¹⁹ N. V. Sreejaya, ‘Equal but Different,’ *The Hindu*, 4 March, 2014, pg 4.

²⁰ “There was no one to till the ground,” Genesis 2:5, NRSV Bible.

Interestingly, the ancient Indian understanding of 'Ardhanarishwara,'²¹ depicts part masculinity and part feminineness in the same person; and this idea seems to be echoed by modern medical science - the proportion of sex hormones like testosterone and estrogen in the body give it a predominantly female or male characteristic orientation – thus implying that both possibilities exist in the same person – a vindication of the Ardhanarishwara philosophy. Males and females enact who they are through the body. It is through the vehicle of the body that people express themselves.

In William Blake's 'The Divine Image,' we have a symbolism for each major part of the body (Newell, 2002). The crown of the head is considered the carrier of the mystery of our being, which cannot be described by mere words. The forehead stands for divine wisdom which can penetrate the reality of things. The arms are associated with strength – the left arm with power and the right hand with love. The heart represents the great beauty within us irrespective of what we may have done. The genitals are associated with our ability to co-create life. The legs are the pillar of life. The soles of the feet signify presence.

An interesting comparison can be made to the *Manusmriti*²², which depicts the human body as the source of different castes in the Indian social setup – from the head of *Brahma*, the deity, come the Brahmins, whose profession is interpreting the scriptures; from the arms, come the *Kshatriyas*, the warrior class; from the thighs, the *Vyshyas*, those who run business and commerce; and from the feet, come the *Shudras*, the outcastes of society. It does appear in the *Manusmriti* that there is a hierarchical order of importance accorded to the various parts of the body, which begins with associating the head to the Brahmins, whereas Blake's schema has no such hierarchy – each part of the body is equally valued. It would seem that through the *Shudras* in *Manusmriti*, a low status was accorded to the feet. Here is another instance where the higher worth assigned to the head and the mind and a successively lower worth assigned to other parts of the body distorts the wholeness of the person.

According to ancient Indian philosophy, there is *Sthula Sharira* and *Sukshma Sharira*. The former is the physical or gross body that is constituted by the *Panchamahabhutas*²³ – it is vegetative in nature, requires food and suffers pain and decay and finally, death. The latter is the 'subtle body' that never dies and its immortality is akin to that of the soul. It is believed that Reincarnation after death enables the soul to begin a new life in a new body – such a body could be that of any creature in the world, bird, animal, fish, worm or human. This depends on the kind of life led in the previous birth. There is a cycle of death and rebirth in this system, and it is a central tenet of Hinduism. However, it is hard to reconcile the *Sukshma/Stula Sharira* with the Reincarnation system. Another philosophical difficulty with reincarnation into a new body is the absence of 1:1 correspondence between number of human beings who have lived and the multitude of creatures alive. Starting from micro-organisms, the number of creatures on the earth far-outnumber the number of human beings there have ever been – just the bacteria in the human body would number more than a million living entities. If a human being is reincarnated as a creature, it can only be as one of them at a time. And if that is so, there simply is no accounting possible between the number of humans who have reincarnated and the number of creatures there are. This represents another conundrum.

5. Body in Society

The human body is an entity to reckon with, not only for the life of the self, but also for interpersonal relations that engage a person in society.

²¹ Ardhanarishvara (Sanskrit: अर्धनारीश्वर, *Ardhanārīśvara*), is a composite androgynous form of the Hindu god Shiva and his consort Parvati, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ardhanarishvara>. Retrieved October 25, 2014.

²² Manusmriti – the Laws of Manu, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manusmriti>

²³ Panchamahabhutas or the 'five great elements,' in Indian thought are *vayu* (air), *jala* (water), *agni* (fire), *Akash* (sky) and *Prithvi* (Earth)

This would imply that all our personal attributes attached to the body, like our gait, our mannerisms, our proportion and symmetry, our balance and poise, our size and shape contribute to, and determine in some part, our relations with the wider social world – they are part of body language through which we communicate with the external world – they do not remain private, confined to the individual alone. Also, our senses, like the vision, the audition and the tactile nature of our bodies judge and assess others and the world outside. The body thus has not only a personal dimension, but a social one too! (Howson, 2004). Our corporal being is not just our own bodily self but a part of everyone else.

There are norms that societies set and expect compliance with, when expression through the body is at issue – consider the *Namaskara*²⁴ and the handshake for example. They are legitimate forms of greeting in different parts of the world. The way we conduct our bodily selves must be in keeping with expected social mores. The rules for such expression change with time and culture. For example, it is not a rare sight anymore to find people with headphones and wires hanging from the neck region downwards while walking through public space, talking to nobody in particular. Such behavior must strike us as strange before the communication revolution was ushered in by the mobile phone. But today, it is in vogue and is common place. Extrapolating on these lines, we could say that the teacher in the classroom must dress appropriately and keep the students riveted to the lesson rather than attracting their attention to his or her hairdo or fashion accessory. The body commands attention in the social realm. Students must be educated to use and display their bodily selves in society appropriately. There are important ways in which students can learn and teachers can teach and how schools can be organized through “culturally elaborated ways of attending to and with one’s body in surroundings that include the embodied presence of others” (Csordas, 1999).

The attributes²⁵ attached to a person, as mentioned in the previous page contribute to the very identity of a person, thus making each person’s body unique and particular – that should explain the *raison d’être* for biometric identity equipment. It is true that the facial outlook can be altered but the basic identity cannot be tampered with, eg. the structure and geometry of the eyeballs cannot be altered.

The body is also an instrument to express moods, desires, intentions and inclinations. By averting the eyes we can show reverence or disinterest, by rolling the eyeballs we can express anger or dissent, and by screwing up the lips we can signal the intent to non-cooperation etc. The whole gamut of facial expressions along with the display of fingers and the arms may be used to communicate. Words are not always necessary to get the point across. The use of non-verbal cues can be misused by those in power using subtle methods to get their way, without worry of being held responsible for a possible cognizable offence – the non-verbal cues used could be purported to portray meanings different from those understood.

For example, a student who is out of favor with a teacher can be upbraided simply by the use of stern facial expressions! The student can be brought around thereby to an ingratiating disposition with the teacher. Bodily expressions are conditioned socio-culturally and can convey both friendly and hostile meanings.

If students learn, recognize and use body language, they will be adding to their repertoire of communicative abilities. By taking more inputs than just speech into consideration, they can make more meaning out of situations, besides calibrating and adjusting their responses better. Instead of an informal, lackadaisical approach to body language then, a more serious pursuit in understanding its use in society is in order.

6. Psychosomatic Nature of the Human Being

Similarly, any physical exercise, like a 20-minute run or a half-hour workout at the gym can release proteins called *Endorphins*²⁶ in the brain.

²⁴ The typical Indian Greeting with folded hands, which is a welcoming gesture.

²⁵ The natural attributes of the body may be seen in the gait, the poise, the strides and the mannerisms etc.

²⁶ Endorphins (“endogenous morphine”) are endogenous opioid peptides that function as neurotransmitters. They are produced by the pituitary gland and the hypothalamus in vertebrates during exercise, excitement, pain, spicy food consumption, love, and

The effect of these secretions is like injecting the drug, morphine into the body. The exerciser is left with a pleasant and relaxed feeling that lasts several hours. This psychosomatic interaction, which exhibits a seamless, interdependent relationship between mind and body is a compelling argument for this thesis. Considering this closely, we find that exercise of the body causes the brain to release its "juices," and conversely, these juices produce a calming sensation in the body. There is an important implication to this phenomenon: when the mind and body are relaxed, there is the 'ambience' for better concentration and focus. That is why it may be beneficial to have some physical workout before school begins in the morning each day. Students need to know and discover for themselves this happy tendency in the mind and body, and take advantage of it.

It may also be added that the well-being of the mind depends on that of the body. That is a basic premise of Yoga. The psychiatric health of the person requires the body to be exercised.²⁷ Also, the diet of the person has a great bearing on the mind and body of the person – indigestion, anorexia, obesity and eating disorders not only make the body unwell but render the mind incapable of attentiveness.

Students should learn the importance of keeping to the right diet and developing and observing an exercise regimen. The time spent in exercising every day will only help the student to study better.

Many illnesses of little school-going children such as breathlessness, shivers, giddiness, stomach ache etc. can sometimes be traced back to bullies in school or to some case of teasing among peers. These psychosomatic ailments occur because the tender minds of children are vulnerable - they do not have an effective defense against overpowering or embarrassing acts meted out by others – it could be a teacher, who some children are mortally scared of, or a peer, who is a source of harassment. Schools must discuss such issues openly among children so that they are psychologically reinforced and strengthened.

7. Full-Employment of the Body in Learning

The five senses of the body can be simultaneously brought to bear in the learning process. These are the ways that the human person perceives the world and carries sense information to the brain. For example, in a science experiment to understand the physical phenomenon of 'heat conduction,' we can use a copper wire and a lit candle. While holding the wire at one end with one hand and holding the candle at the other tip with the other hand, conveying heat locally to the copper wire, we find that within a few minutes the other end of the wire will start feeling warm. The tactile nature of the body is employed, the visual nature of the body sees the candle flame and the olfactory sense smells the wax of the candle. The phenomenon of conduction through the molecules can be imagined in the mind and verified by multi-sensorial perception. Through imagination, we have the concept of heat conduction through a copper wire conceived in the mind of the student. The result of this multi-sensorial application is that there is both perception and conception in the learning process. Here is a more vivid learning experience and lesson for the student, which has been possible through fuller employment of the body. This is the basis for the whole idea of 'experiential learning.' The other alternative is simply to teach using the chalk and black board and calling the attention of the student to imagine the process of heat conduction. The idea of conduction is conveyed better in the former case and we could say that there is more understanding there.

8. Whither Body, Whither Mind?

The mind and the body share one of the most intricate connections – the human nervous system, which is connected to the spinal cord is present in every tissue, organ and sinew of the body (Bittle, 1945).

sexual activity, and they resemble the opiates in their abilities to produce analgesia and a feeling of well-being. From <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endorphins>. Retrieved October 25, 2014.

²⁷ D. Balasubramanian, *Exercise is brain food*, The Hindu, June 13, 2013.

The spinal cord is the extension of the brain and therefore, the mind – it may not be entirely out of place to say that the ‘brain is everywhere in the body.’ The brain and the body are interdependent and coordinate functions with each other for the ultimate benefit of the whole person! It is quite incorrect, therefore, to separate the mind and the body and give primacy to the mind in qualifying the human person. We really cannot tell where the body ends and where the mind begins!! Further, this limited view of focussing solely on the mind is pernicious for education because it creates lopsided individuals – while producing intelligent professionals, who are skilled at their metiers, our educational programs also produce disturbed individuals who become educated terrorists, unethical doctors and corrupt keepers of the law. Could this have happened because their education trained their minds and not their hearts? There is much truth in the Latin saying, ‘Mens sana in corpore sano,’ (a healthy mind is found in a healthy body).

A radically new point of view on the body is put forth by the Dutch anthropologist, Anne Marie Mol: the body is simply not a single entity, but rather a ‘body multiple.’ This is so because the body is not just something that is bounded by the skin, but is part of and connected to various other bodies and techniques and technologies (Blackman, 2008). All these help the body to enact what it is to be human.

9. The Body in Chinese Thinking

The body, in Chinese thinking, is not ontologically separate from the mind. In contrast to the western notion of ‘bodig,’²⁸ or vessel or container for the soul, the Chinese speak of the angry liver, the anxious heart, the melancholic spleen. Chinese people are trained to ‘listen within their bodies,’ (Ots, 1990) which indicates how finely related the two (mind and body) are. Actually, there is no equivalent to the word psyche in the Chinese language (Ots, 1994).

The different functions are attributed to the different modes of existence of the body itself – they are the *xin* or the heart, which is the seat of cognition and rationality and the body in emotion and turmoil. Also, Chinese thought does not assign a subordinate position for the body in relation to the mind, as ancient Indian or Greek thinking do.

10. Body in Life and Death

We find some insights in the distinction between the terms ‘personhood’ and ‘individuality’ in Martin Buber’s ontology of the human person. The former is bound up with the mystery of God in us. It has a very high order of dignity, being vested with the ability to choose and reject. Individuality, on the other hand, is a delineation of person in terms of particular states that s/he finds the self in. Apparently, the personhood is immortal, while individuality lasts only the mortal span. All of a person’s achievements and his or her relationships to those living may constitute personhood. To put it another way, what we remember about famous people even after their death is their personhood. Thinking on these lines, it would seem that ‘personhood’ may or may not need a body, but individuality will necessarily require one.

11. Closing Remarks

We have in this paper seen that the human body has a definite ontological legitimacy, and that it cannot be taken as subordinate to the mind. Such a tendency was prevalent from time immemorial in both the ancient Greek and Indian traditions. It was philosophically revisited and reinforced chiefly by Descartes in the modern era. However, we also find a few counter voices like Rousseau, Nietzsche and Merleau Ponty, who have argued that the body is as important and essential as the mind, and that there is need to cultivate it. This poses a directive to our educational world, where this problem and its ill-effects are particularly rampant. Education has inherited this flawed paradigm because of historical reasons and it continues to ravage human development. It is time to change and consider the student as ‘whole and entire’ rather than just as a ‘bright young mind.’ We need to appreciate and understand the indistinguishable and inseparable interconnection between mind and body.

²⁸ From the old Saxon, ‘Bodig,’ means vessel or container.

It would do a world of good for education if students are taught about phenomena like multi-sensorial learning, psychosomatic nature of the human being, the equality and the difference of the male and female bodies, the concept of the social dimension of the body, the body in work and marriage, and the inclusion of body language in the repertoire of communicative abilities. That would lead to a more balanced orientation of educational priorities and better consequences for human development.

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