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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the cultural evolution of the meaning of the body through the major thinkers of modernity and postmodernity, relating this evolution to the new stimuli arising from the knowledge produced by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. If we want to redefine the concept of the body from a monistic, unitary perspective, as Whitehead advocates, rather than from a dualistic, divisive one, as is often the case in the current narrative, those responsible for this change need to undergo training that incorporates these ideas. To achieve this, it is essential that those guiding this cultural shift, particularly physical education teachers, receive adequate training. This training should not be limited to Physical Literacy but should also include philosophical and humanistic subjects. This approach could bridge the gap with the bio-health and performance-oriented focus that currently dominates academic training programs.

Il paper esamina l'evoluzione culturale sul significato del corpo attraverso i maggiori pensatori della modernità e post modernità, per rapportarla ai nuovi stimoli derivanti dalle conoscenze prodotte dalla quarta rivoluzione industriale. Se si vuole arrivare a poter ridefinire il concetto di corpo in un'ottica monistica, unitaria, come chiede la Whitehead, e non dualistica, divisiva, com'è nella storia attuale, occorre che le persone preposte a questo cambiamento abbiano una formazione che tenga conto di questi contenuti. Se si considerano in primis gli insegnanti di PE, occorre cambiare la loro formazione inserendo non solo l'Alfabetizzazione Motoria come tema portante, ma anche le materie filosofiche e/o umanistiche per colmare il gap con il mainstream bio-sanitario o prestativo presente negli attuali programmi di formazione accademica.

KEYWORDS

Philosophy of the body; philosophy of sport; embodiment; physical literacy; physical education
Filosofia del corpo; filosofia dello sport; embodiment, alfabetizzazione motoria; educazione fisica

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Introduction

The history and evolution of the concept of man's body or corporeity¹ has developed along a long and discontinuous path; philosophical and/or pedagogical reflections on the various and articulated dimensions of the corporeal (affective, cognitive, emotional, expressive, relational, social) have seen alternating phases of exaltation with periods in which the spiritual or ascetic aspects of human existence have diminished or even denied the corporeal dimension. We could say- if culture were a breathing organism-that phases of inhalation (transcendence) have succeeded one another over the centuries with phases of exhalation (immanence), creating a dualism characterized by a clear separation between mind and body, consciousness and body, soul and body.

As is well known, dualism was introduced into the history of modern philosophy by Descartes, but it is an ancient concept, appearing as early as in Plato's works; later, during Roman times, an extreme and paradoxical understanding of the body developed, characterized by spectacular and bloody motor practices *in amphitheaters* and healthy-recreational ones *in thermal baths*.

With Christianity -almost in parallel with Stoicism²- (without confusing the two: the Stoic is master of himself, self-liberating from the passions; the Christian but the Jew first, and the Muslim later submits to the will of the Most High) the excessive celebration of the body was reduced, focusing not so much on the development of physical perfection but rather than on the conquest of moral values. This division has affected the thinking of generations of scholars, leading a good part of philosophy to give more importance to the spiritual/value aspect, and to consider corporeality as a marginal component (D'Elia, 2011), or functional to something else as today in *transhumanist*³ thought.

¹ The human body is always inseparably organism and lived experience; in Nietzsche's terms "Behind your thoughts and feelings, brother, stands a mighty ruler, an unknown sage -who is called Self. It dwells in your body, it is your body" (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 'Works', Adelphi, vol. VI/1, p. 34).

² Without confusing them: the Stoic is his own master, self-liberating from the passions; the Christian, *but the Jew first, and the Muslim later* submits to the will of the Highest

³ In 1998, the *World Transhumanist Association*, (now Humanity Plus) was born, thanks to Nick Bostrom and David Pearce, where an evolution of the human condition is foreshadowed through the resources of new scientific achievements; specifically from the confluence of four research directions: nanotechnology, biotechnology, computer science, and cognitive science (NBIC). It can be considered one of the roots of the birth of the cyborg concept. (Castaldo, 2020).

In modernity⁴, René Descartes, (1596-1650) developed his thought from considerations arising from rationality: the need for scientific certainty and the primacy assigned to both reason and its speculative autonomy. At its basis we find *the Res Cogitans*, or thinking substance, which the author believes is distinct from the body and endowed with its own existence. Descartes identifies two basic parts of which human beings are composed: the *res cogitans* ("thinking thing," thus the mind) and the *res extensa* ("extended thing," thus the body).

With George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) we find an anthropology that is grounded in reason, denying all contingent being as is corporeality. In his famous text *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) he describes the path that each individual must take, starting from his own consciousness, to identify the manifestations through which spirit rises from the simplest forms of knowledge to the most general to absolute knowledge. For Hegel, reality is concrete Reason, which entails the negation or overcoming of what, being materiality and corporeality, is not and can never be truth. Hegel privileges in man the spirit; the body is denied and overcome in 'ideality' (Giudice, 2017).

In Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900), we find a rediscovery of the meaning of corporeality, not as a biological entity only, but as a set of unexplored potentialities of a richer and more complex self than in Cartesian philosophy; he goes so far as to say, "There is more reason in your body than in your best wisdom" (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 35).

Subsequently, a foundational intervention was the birth of the philosophical current of Phenomenology, with Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) inserting the concepts of *Körper* and *Leib*, i.e., physical body and living organic body -the latter also called the lived body (Husserl, 1952, p. 152). *Körper* is the name that Husserl uses to define the body-object, the body that has certain volumes, that occupies a certain space, my own body, which I can perceive almost as a foreign object by looking at it in the mirror, an other from me, as if it were the body of another.

Differently, Husserl calls *Leib* the body experienced in the experience for which I am in the world, the body-living, insofar as experienced by me as its own and not as an object, in its totality and not fragmented by its individual parts; the body that I am, rather than the body that I have (Husserl, 1931).

A true step toward psycho-physical unity.

⁴ The term "modernity" refers to the process by which Western civilization as established from the Renaissance onward, culminating in the Enlightenment of the 18th century; its main features were capitalism, industrialization, rationalism, individualism, urbanism, scientific-technological progress, secularization, and the declared autonomy of man with respect to God or a god. (Fantoni, 2009).

An additional form of reunification of the body-mind polarity (consciousness, soul) can be found in Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) who affirms *the constitution of consciousness by means of the body*; in this sense he will argue that the child learns the maternal language through the body, not mentally (2020, 99-107). A constitution that transforms the body itself, “transferring it out of physical space” (1942, p. 227). For the philosopher, body and consciousness become variations of a single system: «in other words, matter, life and spirit must participate differently in the nature of form, represent different degrees of integration, and finally constitute a hierarchy in which individuality is increasingly realized» (ibid., p.147). In postmodernity⁵ with the explosion of the FIR (Fourth Industrial Revolution) and Neuroscience, philosophy raises a question: how and where do mind and body interact? The concept of embodiment appears with its emphasis on the body involved in real time in our interaction with the world.

But what does it mean to be embodied? In everyday language, embodiment refers to the body included in our cognitive resources; our perception and action are thus involved in our cognition.

In 2002, philosopher Margaret Wilson writes:

“There is an ongoing movement in cognitive science aimed at granting the body a central role in the formation of the mind. Advocates of embodied cognition have as their theoretical starting point not a mind working on abstract problems, but a body that requires a mind to make it work” (pp 625ff)

In this premise, we can find examples of the alternation of meaning of body concept that has come down to us through the centuries, always under the banner of a search for truth constitutive of being in the world.

Will it be the final version?

Will the entry of new concepts such as *posthuman-superhuman* provide other transformations?

Z. Bauman speaking of postmodernity (with a thread of bitterness) says, “The truth is that chaos will remain in spite of all we can do or know, and that the modest orders and systems we forge in the world are fragile, ephemeral, and just

⁵ Postmodernity is probably a term first used in 1917 by German philosopher R. Pannwitz; Jean F. Lyotard (1986) sets postmodernity in the 1950s, which in Europe marked the end of reconstruction. Postmodernism can be understood as a cultural climate identifiable in sociology, aesthetics, mass media and communication studies, literature and literary criticism, artistic production, photography, cinema, etc., all encompassed in the grand framework known as the Fourth Industrial Revolution. (FIR).

as arbitrary, and ultimately random, as their alternatives” (1996, 38ff). Later writing *Liquid Modernity* he will clarify, “the ‘postmodern’ does not announce the end of modernity, but its continuation through other means; postmodernity is a modernity without illusions” (2000). Very strong concept, almost in the line of what has already been pronounced by G. Vattimo and P.A. Rovatti with *Weak Thinking* (2010) later introduced in European postmodernism.

What meaning do we want to give on the body today? Is the concept of Motor Literacy just a functional appendage in this premise?

Taking our inspiration from two expressions found in various scholarly articles (*Lost in transition; Lost in translation*) we will try to give explanations, converging - in the conclusions - in an aid to researchers engaged on the concept of Motor Literacy.

2. Lost in transition & Motor Literacy.

The term Literacy, in recent years, is recurring in so many fields of knowledge; its definition is simple: *the ability to read and write*, and yet there is a debate about the meaning even in European projects, since in many languages there is no univocal translation. According to David Mallows, a historical contributor to the European EPAL platform, *literacy* is often followed by other terms referring to specialized fields, reporting that he has identified at least 33; we find digital literacy, financial literacy, futures literacy, quantitative literacy, ocean literacy, emotional literacy, motor literacy, etc.

Although for each of these specialized fields the use of text-mediated information plays an important role, the meaning of literacy here is not reading and writing, but competence in a particular field, i.e., we speak of functional illiteracy (being able to read and write, but not enough to meet the demands of everyday life). An adult can be considered functionally illiterate only if he or she cannot meet the demands posed by his or her particular social and professional context.

Why it is necessary to talk about motor illiteracy today ?

According to Whitehead (2013) there are several reasons:

- more people do not engage in physical activity after leaving school;
- sedentary recreational activities are on the rise (electronic games);
- in many contexts dedicated to physical activity there is a more performing culture that inhibits both the participants and the inherent educational aspects;
- diseases related to wellness are on the rise along with those related to stress;
- physical activities belong to less noble activities in today's (dualistic) culture (NdA).

Motor literacy - henceforth *Physical Literacy*, *PL* - can be defined (IPLA, 2016) as <the motivation, physical competence, knowledge and understanding useful for assessing the responsibility of engaging in physical activity during one's lifetime>. We prefer to this definition the meaning given by the author of this fundamental strand of research, philosopher Margaret E. Whitehead:

PL highlights the importance of the embodied dimension in the interaction with the world and, in doing so, acknowledges the role of this dimension to cognition; it implies the embodied dimension in doing, interpreting, responding, and understanding; it implies embodiment as experienced and thus expands the role of the embodied dimension as a pure machine or tool; it has nonexclusive connotations, indicating that everyone can achieve this capacity in line with their unique endowment (Whitehead,2010)

The concept of *PL* emphasizes the key role that the embodied dimension plays in life and provides us a way of interaction -which we should enhance- without which we could not realize our potential as human beings (Whitehead,2013b). That is to say, according to each individual's gifts, *PL* can be described as a disposition to make the most of our embodied human capacities, which the individual has: the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for maintaining meaningful physical activities and/or pursuits throughout life; a path from cradle to grave.

This new form of culture related to corporeality, Whitehead will say, has its roots in philosophy and was born out of the study of Monism⁶, as opposed to Platonic or Cartesian dualism; within monism then, a bifurcation with existentialism and phenomenology; for the author, the concept should be experienced as a life-long learning path because it represents all components of human nature:

“The commitment to Monism is reflected in the definition which encompasses three of the key characteristics of human nature - the affective, the physical and the cognitive” specifying then that “Focus on only one of these areas of human potential does not constitute physical literacy; [...] developing fundamental movement skills is only a very small element in promoting physical literacy (Whitehead,2013b).

The concept of embodiment -beyond the ancient spiritual meanings typical of Christianity- began in the 1980s, in various disciplines, in that soup of culture called the Fourth Industrial Revolution FIR, characterized by the NBICS disciplines (Castaldo, 2020;2021;2022;2023); it has become a central concept in philosophical research on mind and cognition thanks to the studies of Varela (1991), then the studies of Rizzolatti & Sinigallia (2006) on the identification of mirror neurons,

⁶ Reduction of the plurality of beings to a single principle (Treccani.it)

continuing with Gallese (2003; 2005; 2006), up to the final framework of A. Damasio, against Cartesian duality, which shows that the human mind does not originate in individual and self-referential terms but is formed through the continuous interaction a body has with its surroundings: “The human brain replicates and feeds on perceived reality” (1995: 31ff).

Embodiment today, evolves with the so-called 4E Cognition paradigm that brings together under one label a heterogeneous body of research in the theoretical field of philosophy of mind; 4E Cognition refers to the *embedded*, *embodied*, *enactive* and *extended* conception of mind (Newen et al., 2018).

The various modes of research on embodied cognition in the literature today essentially converge in two strands:

- (a) the one that emphasizes action, thus the role of body and action characteristics for cognition (Gibbs, 2006; Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2006);
- (b) the one emphasizing that cognition is related to our sensory-motor and sensory-perceptual system with the environment (Barsalou, 2010; Iachini, 2011); for this strand, in summary, embodied cognition is based on perceptual and motor processes.

In postmodernity, with the development of anthropological, psychological, sociological, and ethnological sciences, philosophy no longer has exclusive rights on the study of man (Spinsanti, 1983:22ff; Galimberti, 2002) although it remains the most suitable to synthesize them for the definition of the issues that concern embodied theory: identity/self/consciousness, learning and intelligence, language, memory, bodily and motor skills, emotions, perception, intersubjectivity and empathy (Gardner, 1985; Gallagher, 2005; Francesconi, 2011 a b).

With Embodied Cognition Science, corporeality and body awareness find room and dialogue, paving the way for the role of motor activity as a practice that acts on the body and with the body, and becomes central to being an instrument-expression of other-than-self.

But we live in the time of “liquidity” (Bauman, 2000) and paraphrasing the words of a well-known rapper Italian: *Why don't kids show up/They are as elusive as panthers/When they are caught by a definition/The world ready for a new generation* (Jovanotti, Non m'annoio, 1992), even the definitions of body that have come and gone over the centuries may be obsolete, already outdated, unusable.

In 2022, the report “The Future of the Body” produced by FutureBrand, a service company international company that constantly monitors socio-economic changes reflected in brands, analyzing this new perception of one's body and how marketing is already aligning with it. Among the most noticeable aspects of the changed perspective from which we view the human body, according to the

Report, is the acceptance of *nonconforming bodies*, with a different inclusiveness, a new sexuality, passing through the *gender fluid*, the broadening of the concept of beauty, and by technology with the interconnection between the body and technological apparatus.

These are not illogical changes, given that the Italian Olympic Committee, on the topic of Sport -which we could call the *Formula One* of corporeality (along with all the arts)- in a January 2023 study (2050: Scenarios on the Future of Sport in Italy) has been offering several analogies on gender, inclusion, technologies.

On July 22, 2024, the CNG National Youth Council, an consultative body to represent young people with the institutions for policies dedicated to them (L. n.145/ 2018), has published the research "Lost in Transition: Motivations, meanings and experience of young people in NEET status."

We are in a time of transition, with many liquid variables; if we do not find solid concepts, we run the risk of being lost in transition! It is a concept widely used in recent years; on the Google engine this expression finds 382,000,000 results; in Scholar (2010/2024) 16,800; in PubMed (2010/2024) 3,355 papers, and also in Google books, 16 books. Does it mean, beyond the specific content, that so many authors consider the current era to be a transitional one; Physical literacy, the concept of the body and the many illiteracies, need to take this into account? In which way?

3. Lost in Translation & Motor Literacy

On 09/2023, Sport -considered particularly as an activity of movement and play- enters and modifies the Italian Constitution, inserting a specific paragraph in art. 33; the cultural vision of a value-based activity is recognized, as we say today, on the concept of 'Community of sports practice' (Castaldo & Mango, 2024). The motor-sport activity acquires an *educational role* (third educational agency after family and school), *social* (on a par with other policies of inclusion, inner growth and promotion of well-being) and *prevention and care* (for biohealth aspects); together with play, they are a right of all persons of minor age (UN (1989 art. 31),) and in the words of Nussbaum (2000) they make life good and allow human flourishing.

Ultimately, a Motor-Sporting Community of Practice (CoPS) becomes an element of value contribution *ad intra* for values falling on the subject, and *ad extra* for the same values elaborated and poured into intersubjectivity. The concept of CoPS is a natural fruit of Communities of Practice (CoPs), a construct developed by Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave in the late 1980s; the authors, in an attempt to find effective ways of learning outside the mainstream, determine that unconventional

places are needed, with the important function of peers, so they speak of “situated learning.”

CoPs, will evolve into CoPS due to the strand inaugurated by Culver & Trudel (2008) initially limited to only aspects of Coaching mechanisms.

What are the obstacles to the implementation of the new legal subsection? How can we formally translate this subsection? After more than a year, are we in a “Lost in Translation” situation?

The expression “Lost in Translation,” which is widely used in research (the PubMed portal has 7,866 results from 2000/2024, and Scholar has 27,600), is also the title of a famous film awarded in 2003.

The film's story focuses on the loneliness of a young wife in search of her identity, plus the loneliness of a declining actor in midlife crisis, and how two strangers can come together to provide something each of them lacks. Interviewed about the film (Thompson, 2003), director S. Coppola said, “it's about misunderstandings between people and places,” and as the title, which points to the details and nuances lost in a translation between two languages, says, “it's about disconnected things and the search for moments of connection.”

The director's statement gives us an interesting analogy to the theme of the paper. I believe that the concept of “Physical Literacy” is still separated from our current understanding of the body. This separation can be amplified by misunderstandings between verbal and nonverbal language, just as in the film.

It is often said that “the body cries out what the mind keeps silent,” and this is true.

Without delving into Psychosomatic Disorders (Alexander, 1951), we can observe that nonverbal communication (CNV) includes elements such as: facial expressions, body movements, postures, distance from an interlocutor, and clothing (Pease, 2004; 2008).

The elements we discuss had already been pointed out by psychologist A. Mehrabian in 1972 and later by anthropologist Ray L. Birdwhistell, who formalized these studies through Kinesics. Birdwhistell argued that every body movement has a meaning and that the grammar of this paraverbal language can be analyzed like that of verbal language. In fact, verbal communication uses only 35 percent of words, while the rest of the message is conveyed through nonverbal communication (NVC).

According to Luigi Anolli (2006), NCV-related processes are based on specific biological structures with universal characteristics, but are influenced by the culture. This is supported by the study of D. Efron (1941), who compared the gestures of Southern Italian immigrants and Eastern European Jews in the United

States, noting significant differences in gestures, facial expressions, and interpersonal distance.

Efron's research has been taken up in the 1970s by Ekman and Friesen (1969; 1972), showing that gestural behavior, and thus movement, is a cultural product.

To sum up, *gestures, postures and reciprocal positions of bodies in space become elements of a system of meaning that society strongly institutionalizes* (Marcantonio, 2015:11; 2008:13).

If kinesics is determined by cultural influences, the body itself is also affected, so the current conception of the body is influenced, translated, by the cultural currents in which we live.

One of the dangers in today's cultures stems from stereotypes about the body⁷; among those most prevalent are the way of looking, the particular shape (long, short, round, slim), the way of dressing, makeup, etc.

The consequence, particularly today, results in body-shaming, a form of bullying that consists of mocking the other person's body or appearance.

In 2023, EURISPES published the report "Liking and pleasing" on women's bodies; the research, a snapshot of this relationship, investigates in particular their perception of themselves, through understanding how much and how the other's gaze and one's own subjective feeling, influence self-representation in relation to one's experience of the world.

The report also verifies the hypothesis that the female body is not only an intimate and private matter of the individual, but has a public dimension that can influence its own perception; a way of highlighting how the external gaze (the culture in which one lives) can expropriate subjectivity by forcing every woman to come to terms with such a gaze, which is often demanding and severe.

It is a way of allowing others to alter one's subjectivity, and in today's context of hyper-connectedness and web-voyeurism, the most susceptible groups are young people. In fact, in the EURISPES report we read that the age group from 65 and above, the least susceptible to social, expresses more appropriateness with the body.

If to this report we add the Future of the Body Report by FutureBrand mentioned earlier, the project of the pharmaceutical services company Superdrug Online Doctors in London, *Perceptions of perfection*, dedicated to female beauty, and the one created by the same group through Photoshop modalities on male beauty, we can see how, in postmodernity, the body as the main indicator of subjective

⁷ A stereotype is a preconceived, simplified or generalized opinion, not acquired from experience, which defines, without appropriate checks, various social groups on the basis of a characteristic that they have in common (Arcuri and Cadinu, 2011)

identity, is “constructed and reconstructed according to a consumerist ideology, according to which beauty and perfection are a guarantee of happiness and success” (Gancitano, 2022).

In this sense, but in the opposite direction, perhaps we can explain the phenomenon of “marked bodies” (Melito, 2006): tattoos, piercings, bodily lesions, no longer a way of identity to highlight who we are but a form of self-determination and liberation from homogenizing mass culture. A match can be found in the works of Michel Foucault in which the term body, like a red thread, runs through his entire thought; he will be the forerunner of concepts such as biopower and biopolitics.

The reading of the meaning of the body, goes far beyond the problem of aesthetics; as Sandel (2008) says, the frantic search for improvement, the ever-increasing tension toward a project of perfection, can lead us to want to become 'designers' of our bodies or even the designers of our children, today thanks to the supermarket of genetics and the culture of enhancement - much represented by the expression better than well- (Elliot, 2004) so present in today's culture with the various possibilities of being able to choose the physical features most pleasing at the moment (fillers, lipofilling, cosmetic surgeries).

Aesthetics needs ethics if it is to influence culture.

Today we interpret corporeality as an “embodied mind,” often compared to hardware, where movements and gestures function as software reflecting central programming.

But movements and gestures according to Vilém Flusser (1991) are indicators of intentional and symbolic acts that characterize the person, which are often inhibited by cultural contexts resulting from commercialization, and need to be recovered, disciplined; so everything possible must be done to regain lost materiality (physicality).

Flusser, in the text *Toward a General Theory of Gestures* (2014), defines gesture as movement through which freedom is expressed, hoping for the emergence of an interdisciplinary, and therefore anti-academic and anti-ideological theory, that, acting as an interface, would link anthropology, psychology, neuroscience and communication theory.

To give an example: the movement performed to bring an arm up can be clearly explained through biomechanics, but we would not have access to anything related to the inner motivations that required the movement, precisely because the movement is the result of psychological, physical, cultural, economic and so much more factors. A movement may be simple on an epistemological level, but

very complex ontologically. Therefore, there is necessarily a need for dialogue and communication in a teleological view as well.

Following Flusser, we could say that movement -intrinsically multifactorial and interdisciplinary- is an interface, as it unites various disciplines in its being (Marcantonio, 2015).

Returning to the area of sports, i.e., the highest and most complex form of human movement (along with the arts as already mentioned), a number of works in the Anthropology of Sports can be found on the inhibition coming from stereotypes in motor and sport gesture.

Beilock (et al., 2006) demonstrates that cultural pressure resulting from a stereotype reduces the automatic execution of a movement procedure by inducing explicit monitoring of the sensorimotor response, which disrupts its efficiency and execution. This concept has been abundantly echoed by Stone (et al., 1999; 2008; 2012a; 2012b), particularly on gender and race stereotypes. Smith & Martiny (2018) will later show that offering a positive social identity, rather than being pressured by stereotypes, can reduce the deleterious effects of performance in the motor-cognitive domain.

Let's try to summarize by going back to Physical Literacy our overarching theme: the basis of PL is a body; the body, culturally, is subject to pressures that can alter motor responses; the discipline best suited for implementing PL is PE; academic training in PE has evolved into SMS Sport and Motor Sciences.

We need to translate PL through PE, but we could get lost in this translation if we did not take into account all the facets and pressures that the body has today. If the educational model of those who are to teach Physical Literacy (PL) focuses only on achieving high physical performance, then we may risk misunderstanding the true purpose of PL. In this case, we might actually get *lost in translation*.

Conclusions

In 1947 ethnologist M. Leenhardt, studying the inhabitants of Melanesia, reported his conversation with a Kanak tribal elder about the impact on his people of European culture by suggesting that it was Europeans who had introduced the notion of "spirit" into indigenous thought.

The interlocutor replied: we have always acted according to the spirit. What you have brought to us is the body" (Csordas, 1999: 20ff). Leenhardt interprets the indigenous elder's statement as follows: the body did not have an existence of its own, nor was there a specific name for it; it was only a support for the spirit.

Before European domination, body was neither a subject of experience nor an object of discourse for the Kanaks. In the West, the body during the 1900s,

paraphrasing Descartes and Marcel Mauss, is translated as “Corpo ergo sum” or as “Total Social Fact.”

The relationship between the body and interiority is unstable and culturally variable, particularly in the present time, when we find ourselves discussing body versus incorporation.

A synthesis of this idea can be found in anthropologist Csordas (1999:21):

“the body is understood as a biological and material entity; incorporation is seen as an indeterminate methodological space, defined by perceptual experience and the ways in which the body is experienced and engaged with in the world.”

In the context of Physical Literacy (PL), Whitehead (2007; 2010; 2013c) specifically calls for this shift: moving from a PE focused on the body to a PE focused on incorporation.

It is in this sense that we can appreciate the philosophical aspects that are always present in her work.

Whitehead had identified PE as the key competency for an epochal shift: educating both the physical body and the lived body, emphasizing that PL is not a substitute for PE (Lynch & Soukup, 2016), nor is PL a separate subject to be taught within an educational curriculum. As she wrote in her first definition (2010), PL is 'the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding necessary to sustain physical activity throughout the life course.

Again Whitehead, along with Capel (2013), in Chapter 4 of one of their texts, asks: "What should students learn in PE?"

The obstacles we face in Italy today are very clear: an erroneous epistemological and educational choice in young faculties for PE (in Italy, Motor and Sport Sciences).

In 2019, Mango & Castaldo, at the SIRD international conference in Rome, presented the results of a survey on the presence of philosophical disciplines (such as sports ethics) in the Faculties of Sport and Motor Sciences, across various academic and/or Higher Education structures (PhDs, research grants, masters, research institutions), using the Cineca and Cestor platforms. The survey revealed a complete absence of any educational offerings in the field of philosophy! This evidence confirmed that PE teaching was essentially focused only on the physical and biological body, not on the lived body."

Why are there no courses on Philosophical Sciences in the current SMS faculties?

The recent mergers and new definitions in this disciplinary field, established by DM No. 639 of 02-05-2024 (which merged the M-EDF 01/02 area of SMS with the A6 area of Medical Sciences), seem to suggest a conscious epistemological choice

regarding the body: biohealth aspects are considered more important or predominant over sociocultural ones."

This represents a kind of return to Cartesian dualism: *everything changes so that nothing changes*, the typically Italian truth of Tomasi di Lampedusa's "The Leopard."

We have a duty to look to the future. The body, especially in the context of youth, is undergoing a period of difficult transition (e.g., body and emotions: a rise in violent crimes due to abnormal and uncontrollable actions, according to Castaldo, 2024b), as well as a misinterpretation (aesthetics without ethics).

Together with V. Gallese (2024), we say: «The human being is a body in motion [...] We restore centrality to the body, to its sensory-motor and affective expressiveness, identifying it as the hinge around which we build our being, our individuality.»

The inclusion of the new paragraph in Article 33 of the Italian Constitution could provide -if the academic authorities recognize it- the necessary impetus for the epochal change that PL could bring, placing the body and movement at the center of a balanced, effective, and efficient vision of human life."

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