

Overcoming the Philosophy/Life rift: Demonstrating Yoga as Embodied Pedagogy for philosophy teaching/living inside/outside Classroom doors

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Abstract:

Philosophy's essence depicted by Socrates lies in its role as pedagogy for life, yet its traditional treatment of 'body' as a hindrance to 'knowledge' in fact severs it from life transforming it into "an escape from life" (James, 1978:18). The philosophy/life dichotomy is thus an inherent flaw preventing philosophy as traditionally taught and engaged in, from fulfilling its original goal.

Recent rejections of the Cartesian nature of Western curriculum, such as O'loughlin's (2006), constitute an important theoretical paradigm shift, and yet the realm of actual practice is still lacking a technology serving as the embodiment of such theory. This paper suggests a re-orientation of philosophy teaching from its present disembodied pedagogy, towards an embodied philosophical practice. By the description and demonstration (physical and verbal) of modern-postural-yoga (De Michelis, 2004) I will depict the twofold role of the 'body' in philosophy teaching: 1) The Pedagogical role: demonstrating how philosophical discourse emerges from the practice of bodily postures. 2) The Integrative role: the body as the healer of the philosophy/life rift as modern-postural yoga practice transcends the yoga-mattress to life. It will thus be suggested that yoga be incorporated as an integral part of philosophy teaching reclaiming its educational ethos.

Keywords: embodiment, pedagogy, philosophy/life dichotomy, yoga

Introduction

When I practice, I am a philosopher. When I teach I am a scientist. When I demonstrate, I am an artist (Iyengar, 2005).

The paper I am presenting today is rather provocative and maybe even quite bizarre in the approach it brings to philosophy as discipline and as pedagogy. In the first section I will shortly characterize philosophy as pedagogy for life as established mainly by Socratic and Stoic ideas yet in what follows I will challenge the disembodied (Cartesian) nature of such pedagogy, which creates an unbridgeable rift between philosophy and life, thus preventing it from fulfilling its cause. Such critique may be seen as quite counter-intuitive as it challenges the common notion which would question how philosophy, as the kingdom of reason, could possibly involve 'body' as part of its methodology. Yet, I attempt to unravel the claim that as long as philosophical discourse fails to incorporate 'body' within its method, it will remain what James (1978:17-18) defined as a "marble temple shining on a hill" which is "no explanation of the concrete universe" but rather "an escape from it". James' words call in to question the impact of philosophy teaching at school and philosophical discourse as such. The concern of this paper will be to reunite the worlds of philosophy and life in order to reorient philosophy as pedagogy towards a more fruitful path anchored in its initial ethos.

After bringing some necessary background regarding the yogic tradition and its transformation in to "modern yoga" (De Michelis, 2004), the next section will suggest no less than the yogic posture as a pedagogy which heals the rift between philosophy and life to form an *embodied philosophical practice*. As such it will be strongly recommended that yoga become an integral part of philosophy teaching and in fact a daily practice in contemporary Western schools.

Philosophy as life-pedagogy

Life's essential goal as expounded by Socrates is to live a 'virtuous life' which is to serve one's well-being (*eudaimonia*). Achieving this goal requires the unraveling of the principles underlying such a life. The methodology undertaken for such an endeavor is the constant probing into moral questions or in other words, the engagement in philosophical discourse.

Plato's famous cave allegory, situated at the heart of the *Republic*, draws the relation between the goals of life, philosophy, and education. In the allegory Socrates defines education as "the art of turning around" (518c8-d1)¹. Man's proper orientation abandons the temporal *doxastic* world represented by the shadows in the cave, turning to the a-temporal *dianoetic* world represented by the objects outside the cave - the 'forms'. Once oriented towards the absolute 'forms', one is bound to act morally in accordance with truth. The method for the achievement of such excellence is no other than the philosophical discourse. Philosophy for Socrates constitutes no less than *the pedagogy for life*².

Epictetus as a representative of mid-period Stoicism embraces Socrates' agenda as he sums philosophy's role as the Stoic 'art of life' (1.15.2), presenting it as the necessary 'enquiry' for one who has become dissatisfied with living on the basis of mere 'opinion' and is devoted to establish exact criteria for an excellent and consistently satisfying life (2.11.23)³.

Epictetus acutely expresses his demand for one's philosophical views' manifestation in life rejecting the notion of mere learning while stressing the requirement of training oneself to live well (*Encheiridion* 49). For Epictetus the philosopher is primarily one who embodies the philosophy of right virtue, rather than one who preaches of their value (Fragment X). Philosophy will teach one how to endure changes in fortune (2.13, 14-15), how to bear sickness, thirst etc. (3.6, 10). Thus, to engage in philosophy *is* the means to become educated and 'to live well'.

Reading Socrates and Epictetus it appears that life and philosophy were intended to be intertwined. Indeed, in the *Phaedo*, Socrates had bravely drunk the poisonous cup manifesting his adherence to the truth he encouraged others to seek. Philosophy in its traditional sense was meant to transform one into an ideal of morality. It was intended as a *practical* 'science/art of life'.

Yet leaping from Classical Greece to early 20th century America, I wish to recruit James' words to bring us directly to this paper's topic:

"... when you entered a philosophic class room you had to open relations with a universe entirely distinct from the one you left behind you in the street. The two were supposed...to have so little to do with each other, that you could not possibly occupy your mind with them at the same time. The world of concrete personal experiences to which the street belongs is multitudinous beyond imagination, tangle, muddy, painful and perplexed; the world to which your philosophy professor introduces you is simple, clean and noble. The contradictions of real life are absent from it...it is a kind of marble temple shining on a hill.

In point of fact it is far less an account of this actual world than a clear addition built upon it...It is no explanation of our concrete universe, it is another thing altogether, a substitute for it, a remedy, a way of escape." (1978:17-18).

Philosophy has gone quite astray from its original ethos.

This paper presents a challenge to philosophy on two different levels: the first is a *methodological challenge* concerning the discrepancy between philosophy's original educational aspiration and the purely rationalistic disembodied pedagogy it has been applying, the second is an *ethical challenge* concerning the fall of philosophy from the above described lofty educational aspirations, to an alienated disembodied severed-from-life discourse.

I claim that both Socrates and James were correct: Philosophy *should* be a pedagogy for life (Socrates), but philosophy is alienated from life (James). The *ethical challenge* is to re-claim philosophy's status as

pedagogy for life, overcoming its aloofness to it. The two challenges I am posing here are strongly intertwined, and can be met by rejecting the undergirding premise of philosophy as we know it: *the treatment of 'body' as a hindrance to 'knowledge'*. This very premise posed throughout Western philosophy has been depriving it from the proper route towards the fulfillment of its goal. Through reclaiming 'body's' proper place within philosophy I wish to *reclaim philosophy's original educational ethos as I suggest its embodied form*. This embodied form will attend to both challenges posed and will be demonstrated in two realms: 1) The first concerns the reuniting of philosophy with life. Revisiting Dewey's (1929) problematization of the school/life dichotomy I would claim that ideally we would wish for the erasure of the border line between the classroom and the world. This would mean that when we entered the philosophy classroom, life would not freeze but rather invigorate the philosophical discourse, conversely when we left the classroom, our philosophical comprehension evoked by the lesson, would become part of our conduct. If philosophy as described by James is an alienated endeavor so remote from our actual sweaty daily life, in what way does its teaching constitute an effective pedagogy for life as initially intended? This first realm of embodiment thus wishes to reunite the worlds of philosophy and life to create an embodied philosophy which remains with us as we leave the classroom. 2) The second realm concerns the actual pedagogy which serves the fulfillment of the first realm. It is the counter-traditional suggestion of introducing the 'body' into philosophy's pedagogy. My intention is to *physically* demonstrate how philosophical questions are evoked by the yogic posture, and how the reciprocal relationship between the practice and the practitioner's philosophical reflection evoked by it, yield education which transcends the philosophy/life dichotomy.

Eventually it is 'body' which serves as the Archimedean point which overcomes both the methodological challenge, and the ethical challenge.

Rejecting the Cartesian ontology undergirding contemporary curriculum

Various researchers have described contemporary Western curriculum as rooted in the ethos of *rationalism*⁴. The attempt to establish certainty had led both rationalists and empiricists of the 17th and 18th centuries to posit 'objectivity' as the corner stone of scientific validity. The greater the 'objectivity', the more grounded the truth revealed. Such a tendency brought to the 'weeding out of self' (Kincheloe & Steinberg (1993:312)) from curriculum; to the disengagement of knowledge from the residues of idiosyncrasy in favor of objectivity. This ethos is no other than the notorious Cartesian mind-body dualism (clearly rooted in Plato). Whether it is Descartes' disengaged mind denying the 'body' as a source of knowledge, or the empiricists' selective mind which accepts only that portion of 'body' which can be 'trusted', eventually the ethos of modernity has left us with a 'crippled body'; a 'body' which is used/abused as a mere means to know the world without, while rejecting its own story as our own subjective existence. It is not science's success which I am criticizing⁵, but rather the deadening grip of the Socratic-Cartesian legacy which our curriculum has succumbed to; the legacy of treating the 'body' as an obstacle to 'knowledge' rather than *the indispensable link binding man and world*.

Socrates, as the ideal of wisdom represents the model of one who does not let earthly desires eclipse his impeccable reason, as he prefers to embrace death unwilling to compromise principles established by reason in the *Phaedo*. Socrates promotes an 'art of life' as an 'art of *disengagement* from body'; a continuous tending to the antipode of the mundane; to the soul. According to Socrates the philosopher's life is a constant preparation for death⁶. Contemplation is to purify one from the desires of the earthly body, freeing the soul towards its ultimate ideal of 'form' contemplation. Socrates' ideal is a stark phrasing of philosophy's aloofness to mundane bodily life⁷. This very approach produces an essential unbridgeable rift between philosophy and mundane life as we know it. The Jamesian concern for philosophy as an escape from life is in fact a feature of philosophy 'from day one'. It is not a flaw which has appeared at some point in history, but rather an inherent shortcoming accompanying philosophy as it was established by the Greeks.

Socrates did not see philosophy as an *escape* but rather as a shift in perception, from the temporal constantly changing and therefore lesser quotidian life, to the permanent and unchanging and therefore

higher realms of the soul. Why does James relate to this as an escape? *Because it is far from having anything to do with life as we know it. It is the constant turmoil of our distrustful senses, our agonies, our ecstasies; our emotional flux; our mundane nature which constitutes life. Platonic forms seem like a completely different realm which has no bearings on how we live life; on how we conduct our days which are very much riddled with that same 'lesser' quality which at the end of the day is our life.*

The rejection of Descartes' body-mind dualism and the notion of 'objectivity' have been a substantial subject throughout the 20th century⁸. Perhaps the harshest of critiques appears in Merleau-Ponty's 'embodied subject' yet contemporary curriculum, philosophy teaching included, is much more loyal to Descartes' worldview than to Merleau-Ponty's. Anti-Cartesian post-modern critique remains a theoretical discourse which hardly translates to pedagogy as Lelwica (2009) and O'loughlin (2006) point out⁹. School day consists mostly of a series of fragmented lessons based on factual knowledge, as it highlights the objective nature of knowledge while marginalizing subjectivity. We teach history, natural sciences, social sciences etc. but as Noddings (2003, 2006) repeatedly asks: do we teach how to make a home? What motivates us? intelligent belief? Cultivation of hobbies? Etc. Or as I would phrase this: *Do we engage in education as a philosophic-scientific exploration, unraveling "who we are within the world we live in?"*. These forms of *embodied* knowledge relating to the core of our existence remain mostly outside school doors.

The school/life dichotomy and more specifically concerning our context, the philosophy/life dichotomy, stems from that same Cartesian disengagement from 'body'. If our subjective idiosyncrasy is neglected in favor of 'objective' factual knowledge, we in effect empty our lives from the most basic experience of existence.

Without privileging monism or dualism, experientially our lives are thoughts, *sensations*, and *emotions*. Western curriculum deals solely with thoughts yet our lives include a fair amount of pain, joy, fear, rage, sickness, and old age representing our mundane *bodily* existence. Philosophy, as a clear representative of school/life dichotomy, may be a means of *speaking* about these bodily experiences, but language rather empties such sensations and emotions from meaning. Citing James again from *The Principles of Psychology*:

"Without the bodily states following on the perception, the latter would be purely cognitive in form, pale, colorless, destitute of emotional warmth, we might then see the bear and judge it best to run, receive the insult and deem it right to strike, but we should not actually feel afraid or angry." (1981:1065)

James asks us what is left once we strip fear from the sensations of shallow breath, quick heart-beat, weakened limbs etc.? O'loughlin reiterates this view: "The senses... are our means of furnishing intelligibility and ultimately our capacity to reason, judge and feel..."(2006:5)

Following these claims, the philosophical aspiration of cultivating wisdom is not fulfilled by the separation from body, but rather by the integration with it. Contrary to Socratic philosophy as the 'art of disengagement from body', philosophy representing love of wisdom, must embrace the body as it represents life, and as it stimulates philosophical discourse.

As long as philosophy's undergirding perception of man differs from the perception of man as it stems from the actuality of daily life, the philosophy/life dichotomy will remain intact.

We must find a way for a fuller engagement in philosophy; a way which embodies philosophy and refills it with its initial poignancy and educational drive. Our curriculum and pedagogy must be rethought to become attuned with the more idiosyncratic, subjective realm in order for it to reunite with life. Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, and O'loughlin's harnessing of Merleau-Ponty to education surely orient us in the right direction allocating 'body' its proper place, but they do not quite drive their point home towards a substantial consolidated alternative pedagogy. O'loughlin wishes education to enhance the individual's ability of:

"...watching in new ways, noticing, opening oneself to, and attempting to see the world as it is, in its own fashion, so that person and world ultimately emerge. That world is to be explored

experientially...Experiential exploration is, first and foremost, bodily exploration, and knowing is, above all, bodily knowing.” (O’loughlin 1995:7)

Yet, how exactly *do we* cultivate these abilities? O’loughlin (1998) herself suggests educational drama, creative forms of dance, and a number of practices which shift our privileged vision towards a multi-sensual curriculum. These are all surely beneficial but do not present a consolidated body of technologies compared to yoga as will be touched upon here. In a sense, these orientation calls *themselves* remain *disembodied*, as long as they do not translate to the core of pedagogy, or in Merleau-Ponty’s language, strive towards theory’s and practice’s making of the same “flesh” blurring the theory/practice demarcation. It is here in which yoga should be introduced as an embodied philosophical pedagogy, yet before engaging in pedagogy I will bring a short orientation for readers who are unfamiliar with this tradition.

Yoga orientation

Defining yoga is a rather controversial deed. Its origins are four thousand years old and it has disintegrated into numerous currents continuing to change even in our times¹⁰. I will thus give very schematic coordinates which I admit probably may confuse and fail to do justice with this tradition yet these are quite necessary in order to make at least some effort to demystify the *bizarreness* which some may see in the approach promoted here.

Yoga can be referred to as a philosophic-scientific embodied practice¹¹. The authentic practice is a self-research of the questions "who am I", and "how am I to conduct myself". These two questions lie at the heart of Western philosophy as well, concerning epistemology, ontology and morals, yet while Western philosophy has offered reason alone as the vehicle by which to explore these fields, yoga treats the body as an indispensable means for embarking on such research. The methodical practice suggested for this research is condensed in Patanjali's *yogasutra* (arguably dated to 100 AC) referred to as the eight limbs of yoga (*ashta-anga yoga*¹²) consisting of moral precepts (limbs 1-2), bodily postures, breath exercises (limbs 3-4), and four limbs of increased levels of concentration/meditation (limbs 5-8).

A very short excursion into yoga philosophy man as a dualistic being in which his true self (*purusha*) is hidden by his entanglement with nature (*prakriti*). Man wrongfully identifies with his thoughts which in fact are a manifestation of ever-changing impersonal *prakriti* masking *purusha*. The practice is aimed at “the restriction of the fluctuations of consciousness” as Patanjali’s second sutra declares. When these fluctuations, which are our thoughts and sensations (*prakriti*) are restricted, True Self is realized (*purusha*). Thus classical yoga is a dualistic tradition, yet while Descartes would classify mind as *res cogitans*, and body as *res extensa*, yoga would classify both as *prakriti* as opposed to the true self (*purusha*). Bodymind in yoga is thus one complex which practice is aimed at unraveling¹³.

How exactly does this very schematic background, reflect what one experiences or witnesses in a yoga class in Perth, Paris or New York is a very legitimate question. Fortunately De Michelis (2004) has conducted a thorough research which links Patanjali’s classical yoga directly to our times coining contemporary yoga in the West as “Modern-yoga”, and suveying B.K.S. Iyengar’s crucial role in its formation. Traveling to the West in the 1950's Iyengar adapted his teaching to the Western mindset bringing forth a unique understanding of the third limb – the yogic posture as impregnated with all eight limbs of Patanjali’s practice. Every posture holds the key to further philosophical-scientific probing into “who I am” and “how should I conduct myself”. This paper deals solely with this aspect of Patanjali’s eight limbs – the yogic posture. The reasons for such a confinement are four:

Firstly, the third limb is the most direct means to convey yoga as an 'embodied philosophical practice' as opposed to philosophy as disembodied. Secondly attending to modern-*postural-yoga*¹⁴ brings us most closely to what a contemporary Westerner may be familiar with. In this sense it is “disarmed” from the sectarian-religious aura attributed to it drawing antagonism from some. Modern-postural yoga lends itself both to a secular rendition of embodied education as O'loughlin (2006) promotes *and* to a resacralized approach as

called for by Wexler (2000, 2008) pushing towards a non-dual pragmatic approach to man, to education and its corresponding pedagogy¹⁵.

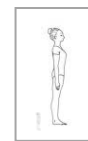
Thirdly, the potential of bodily postures to bring forth philosophical discourse is infinite and should be given this separate attention. Fourthly, any attempt to deal with the final limbs (*samyama*) throws us to the realm of the non-rational *Purusha* which should definitely be explored but requires a long excursion which cannot be handled within this framework.

After this short background I will now move to the pedagogical section of this paper. In order to remain loyal to yoga as *embodied philosophy*, I will be demonstrating my case physically as I speak attempting to represent exactly how this unique philosophical embodied practice overcomes the School/Life dichotomy so prominent in Western curriculum.

Turning to Pedagogy


I. A Lesson in/on ontology

An apparently benign posture such as Tadasana – (Mountain pose which is other than aware balanced standing, becomes an incredibly rich resource for philosophy. If I sink my weight down to the ground and begin to turn my inner gaze towards the soles of my feet, I quickly encounter the difficulty of marking the boundaries of my body. Where do my feet end? Where does the earth begin? As I turn my inner gaze to my hands, similar sensations appear. I observe the "twilight zone" buffering between what I take to be me and what I take to be the not me. The self/world dualism transcends philosophical disembodied discourse, into an actual lived embodied philosophy. When I began the practice I felt more like a Cartesian man, but now I am embodying/philosophizing perhaps a Heidegger's *Dasein*? Merleau-Ponty's *embodied subject*? What am I? Am I an embodied dualistic being, a monistic being? How does this posture as embodied philosophy transcend the yoga mat to my daily life? Maybe my sense of integration with earth can translate into a more ecological way of living? Perhaps to a sense of kinship with others surrounding me? As every fruitful philosophical enquiry I receive answers and more questions as I explore the art of living.



seemingly no embodied towards the body. Where

II. A lesson in/on a human psychology

 Utanasana (intense extension) - The familiar forward bend from our long forgotten gym class is much more than a stretch of the hamstrings. Did our gym instructor mention that by bending forward we surrender, both literally and metaphorically? We literally surrender to gravity releasing tension from the back and the facial muscles, but we are also performing a full bow suggesting surrender of a much broader magnitude. To whom are we bowing? To God? To Nature? Yoga does not insist on one answer. It is non-sectarian, therefore it will allow us to philosophize on this issue and determine whether we wish to embrace this bow charging it with our idiosyncrasy as Patanjali's sutra 1.39 allows¹⁶. What does this bow arise in us? Antagonism? Willingness? A sense of taking off the burden of pride. As we hold the posture a somatic-philosophic interpretation of human psychology is unraveled through the discrepancy between the notion of bowing and our hamstrings which begin manifesting the pains of inflexibility. Why is it so hard to surrender? To acknowledge humility? Utanasana reveals to us the ever present battle between the ego and the possibility of stepping away from the cage of its imposition of pride. This embodied philosophy may manifest itself in a more humble approach to others' opinion. Perhaps to an acceptance of our own vulnerability? or a forgiving attitude towards ourselves and others as a moral standpoint?

III. A lesson in/on Ethics



Virabhadrasana I (Warrior I) My right leg pulls backwards, my left is anchored in front. My arms shoot to the heavens with lightness as I sink down my weight to my legs firmly to the ground. My head and chest are raised upwards. My body is pulled in all directions becoming

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a locus of controversy, *yet I still wish to maintain a center*. My pelvis is in the midst of deciding whether it belongs to the front leg or to the back, *yet it belongs to both*.

Quite similarly my life is an embodiment of contradicting vectors demanding my presence and attention. How can my actions remain ethically sound within all these forces aiming at my disintegration? My obligation towards family, career, society, all these at times become a hurricane. Yet within this hurricane I wish to be the silent eye, from where things can still be seen clearly. Back in my body again at times more rooting to the back leg is required, at times more sinking to the ground.

At times a student will dedicate himself more to a friend in need, at times he will tend more to his studies, at times to his piano practice, yet he will only be able to make these shifts intelligently if he becomes aware of all the forces acting in his life, and his own being within these forces. Virabhadrasana I can become an embodied philosophical lesson in balancing between ethical choices constantly present in our lives, challenging our ability to choose which side to take. It can assist in our wish to experience inner integration as we search for our Aristotelean “golden mean” between various ethical poles.

The examples brought above are but a fraction of the endless reservoir of lessons lying latent within modern-postural yoga awaiting the practitioner to unravel them through the cultivation of awareness. By these examples I wished to show both how the practice of yogic postures becomes a philosophical exploration into the nature of being and life, and how such practice transcends the confinement of the yoga mat, to the arena of life. The format brought here was depicted as a spontaneous discourse occurring in the practitioner's consciousness as he reflects on his practice, but philosophy lessons can be much more structured and tailored towards the needs of the learning situation¹⁷.

A critical note must be added here regarding the feasibility of the suggestion made in this paper. It is suggested no less that philosophy teachers will become yoga teachers, as they both grasp yoga's philosophical potential *and* be able to demonstrate and teach yogic postures. No doubt this is a critical issue, yet firstly it is extremely important to note that embodied philosophy lies within the most apparently benign postures, such as the one's chosen here to make this point. One does not need to perform the most contorted posture in order to extract these lessons. Actually the more difficult the posture, the more demanding the listening to embodied philosophy becomes.

Secondly, as a normative statement, I am here challenging the myth of the philosopher as a rational secluded enclave of 'mind' in favor of a philosopher-yogi embodying philosophy as life and life as philosophy. This new philosopher is one who explores “who I am”, “what is the world” and “how I should conduct myself”, engaging in research through body/mind towards becoming an ideal of human perfection. Indeed this is an ideal, yet if we aspire to overcome the philosophy/life rift, we cannot settle for less than teachers who do not merely teach but rather are the teaching in every aspect of their being¹⁸.

Conclusion

This paper wished to bring a fresh approach to the teaching of philosophy as it attempted to adopt the classical view of philosophy as the pedagogy which teaches the 'art of life'. Rejecting the Cartesian disengagement from body running as a thread throughout the curriculum and most specifically in the realm of philosophy as described by James as an "escape from life", I suggested the embodiment of philosophy in two senses: 1) Transcending the philosophy/life dichotomy which places philosophy as a remote "additional construct to life" (in James' words), negating the original goal of philosophy as the pedagogy for bringing forth a life of well-being. 2) Attending to the actual pedagogy through the embodied practice of modern postural yoga and demonstrating how yogic postures evoke a philosophical discourse teaching/living 'the art of life'.

Recent researchers have been calling for the urgent need of incorporating 'body' within the curriculum¹⁹. To claim that I agree would be an understatement, yet it is my sense that *these calls remain theoretical and disembodied themselves*, unless a substantial technology is brought forth as a vehicle of educational

transformation. This paper is an attempt to drive such normative calls home to pedagogy, and here specifically to philosophy as pedagogy.

On a more general note, it is no less than a paradigm shift that is required (to use Kuhn's (1962) conceptualization). It seems that we have outgrown the conventions imposed by Western Enlightenment. Perhaps it is time to integrate Eastern enlightenment into our discourse; our philosophy; our pedagogy and life. Modern-postural yoga as a less-esoteric and more graspable form of classical yoga for a Westerner, may serve as an excellent platform for beginning such exploration.

Epilogue

On a more personal and sharing note, my own experience with yoga has been a form of reading my own book titled "Mr. Ergas' ego". During a three year yoga teacher training course I developed serious knee pain inhibiting my ability to practice many postures. Attending practice sessions with fifty course students, observing them perform these "coveted postures" through the lens of a competitive craving ego, was a constant battle alternating between self-pity, self-compassion and self-loathing. It was one of the most difficult experiences of my life, yet one of the most humbling, and educating I have ever had. I learned acceptance, letting go and self-compassion. I am not such a good student, I am still learning this lesson daily as I practice and live.

Acknowledgement

I thank Professor Samuel Scolnicov greatly for his insightful comments, and both Bruce Haynes and the reviewer of this paper for their critical suggestions for improvements.

Notes

¹ I will be using the ordinary Stefanus pagination with Grube's (1992) translation.

² Refer to Scolnicov (1988:13): "Socrates' intellectual activity was human action. His is not the contemplation of the ordered universe leading eventually to a corresponding order in the soul, but a consideration of human actions and their justifications...His aims...were practical; knowledge was ultimately for the sake of action and the good life."

³ As Long (2002:98) interprets, philosophy for Epictetus: "is what persons need in order to become properly themselves, to fulfill their natures, to achieve the happiness that is everyone's natural goal. It is the required route for anyone who wants 'to live well'."

⁴ Refer to O'loughlin (2006), Lelwica (2009) and Eisner (1996) for more on the Cartesian nature of contemporary Western curriculum.

⁵ I agree with Laudan (1997:156-7): "...we lose nothing by considering that the methods of science are imperfect...Even in this less-than-perfect state, we have an instrument of inquiry which is arguably a better device for picking out reliable theories than any other instrument we have yet devised for that purpose."

⁶ "The one aim of those who practice philosophy in the proper manner is to practice for dying and death" (64a3-4).

⁷ "as long as we have a body and our soul is fused with such an evil we shall never adequately attain what we desire, which we affirm to be the truth" (66b3-5).

⁸ Refer to Lakoff & Johnson (1999), Csordas (1994), Kuhn (1962).

⁹ The Holistic Education discourse should be mentioned as an important anti-Cartesianism shift. Refer to Miller (2007).

¹⁰ Feuerstein posits yoga as: "the generic name of all Indian practices striving towards self-transcendence or liberation from the ego"(2001:5). As a more etymologically oriented definition: "Yoga means union. The union of the individual soul with the Universal Spirit is yoga. But this is too abstract a notion to be easily understood, so for our level of understanding I say that yoga is the union of body with the mind and of mind with the soul." (Iyengar, 2002:3).

¹¹ I will not engage in a full discussion of yoga philosophy here. Refer to Feuerstein (2001), Eliade (1969) and Patanjali's *yogasutra* as translated by Feuerstein (2001) for further reading.

¹² All yogic terms will be brought in Sanskrit and translated to English.

¹³ As Iyengar (2005:11) states: "Yogic science does not demarcate where the body ends and the mind begins, but approaches both as a single integrated entity".

¹⁴ Referred to as: "...styles of yoga practice that put a lot of emphasis on *asanas* or yoga postures..." (De Michelis, 2004:4).

¹⁵ For more on this non-dual pragmatic approach refer to (Ergas, forthcoming a and b)

¹⁶ This specific sutra encourages the practitioner to embrace any object which promotes his practice, as an the object of meditation.

¹⁷ I will not engage in specific curriculum development here but rather hint that any of the examples given above could be drawn towards the study of a certain philosopher (as mentioned) or a certain subject as it is addressed by various philosophers.

¹⁸ The general approach promoted here foresees future teacher training programs as incorporating body-mind practices as an integral part of any of their suggested programs regardless of the specific traditional disciplines (geography, literature, history...) attended to.

¹⁹ Pallasmaa: "Educational change concerning the significance of the sensory realm is urgently needed to enable us to discover ourselves as complete physical and mental beings..." (2007:769)

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