

Contemplative Pedagogy and Bodily Ethics
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Abstract *Moral philosophy and moral education have prominently dealt with cognitive and rational aspects of morality, therefore neglecting the body. This article opens moral education's relation to bodily experience by situating phenomenological studies of the body as linked to contemplative pedagogy. We deal primarily with the concept of moral perception in order to open up a reflexive space for the bodily tenets of ethics. This includes understanding the body not as an object to be manipulated, but as first person experience of our bodily attunement to the world. We also consider ethical know-how and examine it from the aspect of moral perception as Lawrence Blum has characterized it. This leads us to ask how ethical know-how might be learned in practices of contemplative pedagogy. We turn to Timo Klemola's analyses of contemplative practices in order to refine the bodily and practical tenets of ethical know-how. Finally, we examine some of the implications that contemplative pedagogy and practice might have for epistemology and for our understanding of ethics in education.*

Keywords Contemplative pedagogy, moral education, meditation, ethics, phenomenology, lived-body awareness

Introduction: Bodies and Practices of Education and Ethics

When reflecting on Western philosophy and educational practice, it seems several notable philosophers have drawn attention to the neglect of the body in epistemology and moral education. From his pragmatic philosophical stance, John Dewey (1929, p.23) critiqued the “spectator theory of knowledge”—understanding knowledge as abstract and detached from the world it is representing. This entails what Boisvert (1998), following Dewey, labels the “asomatic attitude,” a disregard of bodily determinants of knowledge (cf. Dewey, 1929; 1997a). Another example is French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who foregrounds the notion of the *lived body* as of central significance for understanding human perception and

cognition (Merleau-Ponty, 1992; cf. Shusterman, 2012). The asomatic attitude is reflected in the dominant forms of education as instrumental, standardized and measurable practices that focus on narrow, cognitive and behavioural, aspects of learning (Byrnes, 2012, pp. 24-25). The neglect of the bodily tenets of education develops and sustains a reified and isolated view of human existence, thereby occluding the possibilities of holistic, integrative approaches to education. (Byrnes, 2012; Orr, 2012, p.84; Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006.) However, we have recently seen an increased interest in the bodily aspects of the human being among several academic disciplines, not only in philosophy but also in neuroscience, psychology, sociology and psychotherapy (Caldwell, 2014). In education, this interest is often related to various forms of contemplative practice, which have—also recently—become significant aspects of holistic/integrative approaches to education (Hart, 2004; Hyland, 2011; Orr, 2012; Willard, 2010).

As with Dewey and Merleau-Ponty, Francisco Varela (1999) also expresses a detriment about the marginalisation of the body in the field of *ethics*. He argues that ethical discourse is particularly focused on ethics as cognitive, more or less logical operations detached from bodily, social and temporal contexts. Lawrence Kohlberg's psychology of moral development is a good example of a predominantly intellectualistic conception of ethics and morality. In Kohlberg's theory, moral development is seen as cognitive process in which children evolve from egocentric accounts of morality into more universal-humanist and rational arguments for moral behaviour (Kohlberg, 1984, pp. 170-180).

What this view highlights is morality as a form of cognitive reasoning and argumentation. It does not account for the practical, much less the corporeal aspects of moral education. Moreover, academic ethical inquiry is often more interested in the *concept* of the good life than in the *art* of living itself (Varela, 1999; Klemola, 2004, p. 237). Ideally, the moral agent is envisaged as in a state of thoroughly responsible freedom, choosing more or less objectively the best form of moral action. To bring the bodily and practical contexts of ethics into view, Varela distinguishes between ethical know-*what* and know-*how*. Moral life, he argues, is based on knowing *what* is the right or good thing to do, as well as on knowing *how* to do it. However, present mainstream philosophy of moral education tends to neglect the latter, focusing only on the *what*. This reflects a detached and asomatic view of the moral individual. In this ethics of knowing-*what*-to-do, the perspective of character development—other than that of refining one's cognitive, analytical and reasoning abilities—is easily neglected or lost (Dreyfus, 1995; cf. MacIntyre, 1984; Saari & Pulkki, 2012).

The education of ethical know-how, on the other hand, is related to practical wisdom and personal virtue. A wise and virtuous person is “one who knows what is good and spontaneously does it” (Varela, 1999, p. 4). Many moral situations are such that there is very little or no time at all to reflect on the situation rationally and

apply some consciously chosen moral principle. For example, when a conversation goes into a topic that happens to embarrass one of the participants, we may immediately, without any reasoning, change the subject by a humorous remark and relieve the uncomfortable situation. As Varela points out, this kind of action presupposes an “immediacy of perception” (1999, pp. 4-6); in this case a perceptual sensitivity to another person’s emotional state and even the reason for its occurrence.

A question for moral education then arises: how can such sensitivity be learned and developed? In the past thirty years or so, there have been various attempts to resuscitate philosophy as *a way of life*, thereby emphasizing the multifaceted educational contents of global wisdom traditions. Stoic philosophical exercises, such as practicing awareness of the present moment, are now being combined with cognitive psychotherapy and Eastern philosophies such as Yoga and Zen Buddhism circulating in the therapeutic and self-help discourses. Since the late 1990s a movement called *contemplative pedagogy* has emerged in Anglo-American philosophy and psychology of education (see e.g., Bai, Scott & Donald, 2009; Grace, 2011; Hyland, 2011). Despite differences in theoretical and conceptual approaches, their common aim is to insert philosophical contemplative exercises into education. For instance, *mindfulness* practices that combine Zen meditation with those of psychotherapy are now experimented with in classrooms, from kindergartens to university seminars (see e.g. Byrnes, 2012; Kaltwasser, Sauer, & Kohls, 2014; Morgan, 2012; Orr, 2012). Students might focus on their bodies and their senses, just noticing what is happening without evaluation (cf. Willard, 2010). Empirical studies show that this practice, if regularly exercised, may significantly reduce stress and anxiety, even depression and addiction, while heightening capabilities to relax, cope and focus on the present moment (Altobello, 2007; Brady, 2007; cf. Walsh & Shapiro, 2006).

In this paper, we take a closer look at contemplation as one practice of moral education and philosophy, which includes attention to the body, or more precisely, the cultivation of experiences of what Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1992) called the “lived body”; i.e., the body not as an object to be manipulated from the outside, but as the experience of our bodily attunement to the world. We are particularly interested in what this means for moral education, both on the level of discourse and on the level of daily life. We propose that contemplative practice may be one fruitful approach to moral education, or *bodily ethics*. In the following, we first focus on Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the lived body and its ramifications. Thereafter we consider ethical know-how and examine it from the perspective of moral perception, as Lawrence Blum has characterized it. This leads us to ask how this ethical know-how might be cultivated in contemplative practices. Thereafter and therefore we turn to Timo Klemola’s analysis of contemplative practices in order to refine the bodily and practical tenets of ethical know-how. Finally, we examine

some implications contemplative pedagogy and practice might have for epistemology and for our understanding of ethics in education. Thus our aim is not to engage in normative ethics of education in the sense of prescribing bodily tenets for moral action. At this stage we merely wish to present reasons why and how the cultivation of lived-body awareness through contemplative practices can refine the ability to perceive the world in moral terms.

The Lived Body

In order to understand how the human body is significant for the philosophy and practice of moral education we turn first to Merleau-Ponty. He is well known for having expansively developed the notion of the “lived body” (*corps vivant*) in phenomenology. In his early works (for instance, 1992), Merleau-Ponty used this term interchangeably with “phenomenal body” and “functional body,” all of which were contrasted with the “objective” or “physical body.”¹ Put simply, the lived body is our body as experienced from within ourselves. This experience is not of a physical object but of something “lived.” If I feel an itch somewhere I do not need to calculate the distance between that spot and my hand that wants to scratch it; my hand goes there without thinking because it *knows* where it is. But the lived body is also open to the world and the things around it. I do not need to carry out any particular spatial calculations when I seat myself in front of my computer in order to work on it: I have done it so many times that my body knows how to comport itself. On the other hand, if I have some pain in the back, my body takes on more of the character of a physical object that I have to consciously adjust so that I can work without too much trouble.

Merleau-Ponty’s concept of lived body shows its fruitfulness to moral education and education in general in the philosophical problem of intersubjectivity. Traditionally, the fact that we as individual subjects are embodied in separate physical organisms has been considered a problem for our understanding of the possibility of intersubjective experience and communication. This problem arises because we tend to consider our bodies as physical objects and not as living and *expressive*. Understanding the body as “lived” means that it is actually the very condition of being open to the other, and of the other being open to me. (This is not to say that we are completely open and transparent to each other; ambiguity and concealment are built into the very fabric of existence.) The lived body is therefore the very gateway to the social world. The awareness that I am seen by others is based on the awareness of my lived body. The consciousness of “me” and “you”

¹ In his later thinking (1968), in order to signal a radical move beyond all forms of traditional philosophy of consciousness (whether embodied or not), Merleau-Ponty replaced the lived body with *Flesh* (*chair*); a basic ontological dimension characterized by the crossing and weaving together of all our inherited dualistic categories such as body/spirit, visible/invisible, idea/fact etc.

arise simultaneously. The very intentionality² of the other is like a *prolongation* of my own, and vice versa. As Merleau-Ponty puts it:

In reality, the other is not shut up inside my perspective of the world, because this perspective itself has no definite limits, because *it slips spontaneously into the other's*, and because both are brought together in one single world in which we all participate... (1992, p. 353; our italics)

Another concept that belongs in this context is so-called *intercorporeality*. This idea derives from Merleau-Ponty's lived-body phenomenology and has been developed by researchers in the human and social sciences (see for instance, Csordas, 2008; Maclaren, 2002; O'Loughlin, 1998). In the social and moral domain, intercorporeality refers to the living but mostly pre- or subconscious mirroring of bodily (re-)actions and behaviours going on between people when they interact, or even when they merely occupy the same space together.³ Intercorporeality—the “in-between our bodies”—is the primal ground of sociality and our human being-together. It is out of this ground that we gradually become conscious of our selves as individuals. The feeling of being-together-with-others is based on our lived-body experience and precedes the ego-centred thinking mind and the experience of being a separate individual. As with all stages of development, this level of experience does not disappear even if other stages follow. It remains in the subconscious and can be returned to, spontaneously or intentionally, through the cultivation of lived-body awareness (Merleau-Ponty, 1992).

The dimension of intercorporeality finds a certain resonance in the need expressed in contemplative pedagogy for addressing the domain of the pre-objective and pre-subjective realm out of which emerge both the ego and the world/other people. Students engaging in meditation report such “ground-of-being” experiences that entail a feeling of being connected to a pre-objective, limitless founding of conscious phenomenal existence (Morgan, 2012). On a slightly more prosaic level, it may be noted that recent theories and findings in psychology and neuroscience suggest that self and other are interconnected, not only cognitively/conceptually but also on a more basic bodily-affective level (Trautwein, Naranjo, & Schmidt, 2014). This connectedness is furthermore supposed to be fundamental to basic moral qualities such as empathy and compassion. Certain meditation techniques, especially mindfulness and loving-kindness meditation (derived from Buddhism), foster the same moral qualities (Trautwein, Naranjo, & Schmidt, 2014).

² Intentionality is a basic concept in phenomenology, denoting the nature of consciousness as always directed towards something external to itself.

³ The so-called mirror-neurons probably have an important role in this; cf. Shapiro (2009).

Moral Perception

Moral perception is the immediate awareness of the moral aspect of the world in general and the present situation in particular; apprehended with the senses and the mind (Blum 1991). In several critical accounts of Western epistemology, cognition has been analyzed and understood as typically immersed in *visual* perception, in which the learning subject plays no part in the world she is surveying, which is obviously only one way of perceiving and knowing things. Visual perception in the sense implied here has an objectivistic and impersonal quality. It is focused on *things* and on *space* and spatial relations between things, not on dynamic interactive processes between living beings. (Jay, 1993, Ch.1; Levin, 1999, pp. 30-33; Merleau-Ponty, 2004, pp. 39-42). Considering that the quality of our subjective consciousness influences our moral perceptions and that bodily experience and mental reflections are intertwined, our predominantly visual perception easily neglects and suppresses the non-visual and lived-body aspects of moral life and education (Shusterman, 2012; cf. Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Shusterman (2012, p.97) gives the example of how prejudices against other races are often correlated with more or less subconscious, visceral and unpleasant bodily sensations when coming close to a person of another race. Presumably, such subconscious experiential processes contributes to the “othering” of certain kinds of human bodies, i.e., it is part of the reason why one individual or group can oppress another “by making their body wrong—the wrong colour, size, shape, posture, etc.” (Caldwell, 2014, p. 80). Bringing such lived-body experiences into contemplative awareness—looking at them in a dispassionate and non-judgemental way—can be an educationally conducive way for overcoming such prejudices. Thus, contemplative methods can be used to address not only cognitive but also emotional and bodily aspects of oppression, thereby widening the merely intellectual tenets of mainstream critical theory and praxis (Orr, 2002). Contemplative approaches thus intervene in the automatic cognitive functions pertaining to our social prejudices. They may also be conducive to “clarity, tolerance, and heightened empathy toward one’s self and others” (Morgan, 2012, p. 52). Indeed, one wonders whether the highly “disembodied” character of our present digital media culture is not in dire need of practices that re-establish the balance between body and mind (cf. Caldwell, 2014; Kaltwasser, Sauer & Kohls, 2014). One may also speculate that the increase of so-called hate-speech (Whillock & Slayden, 1995) on various internet forums (Foxman & Wolf, 2013) is partly a result of the disembodied nature of digital communication, in which the intercorporeality dimension described above is reduced to zero.

Lawrence Blum expresses a persuasive criticism of the knowing-what tradition of ethical inquiry (Blum, 1991). An important point of his reasoning is that before applying any moral principles to a particular moral situation, or using any rational

deliberation, one has first to see *that there is something to deliberate about*, something morally relevant that requires a rational judgement. Therefore “moral perception comes to the scene prior to moral judgement” (Blum, 1991, p. 702). Blum uses “the case of Tim” in order to illustrate a basic lack of moral perception. Tim, a white middle aged male, failed to notice that the taxi driver preferred him to a black woman with her daughter, who were looking for a taxi before him. Even though Tim sincerely objects to racism, he was unable to react because this did not come to his attention. Tim is an average person who is in a hurry to get home and therefore glad to have gotten a taxi for himself. The black woman with her child came to his attention later on. Tim was perhaps daydreaming, distracted and not paying attention to the present, therefore failing to see the moral aspects of the situation (Blum, 1991, pp. 708-712). The example of Tim shows that one crucial element of moral perception—and thus of ethical know-how—is *attention* (see also Narvaez, 1996, p.3; Ladkin, 2011, p. 95; Dreyfus, 1995).⁴

Contemplative approaches to education have stressed the importance of training attention with regard to facilitating better learning outcomes (Altobello, 2007; Brady 2007), but also for addressing and reflecting teachers’ and students’ moral preconceptions (Morgan, 2012; cf. Saari & Pulkki, 2012, pp. 20-22). However, though attention may be an essential part of moral perception, it is not enough for learning ethically sound action. Well-trained attention can obviously be directed to ethically sound or unsound pursuits. But the stronger one’s ability to pay attention, the more one will be able to establish a personal connectedness to an object, another human being, or a situation (Dreyfus, 1995). There seems to be a certain correlation between the ability to pay attention and to devote yourself selflessly to the world. As Austin remarks, “attention and selflessness differ physiologically, yet they tend to interact in complementary ways, like yin and yang” (2011, p. 22). Thus, to make moral judgements presupposes learning moral perception, which is based on a certain kind of attention. The form and the intensity of our attention qualifies our *awareness*. We cannot adequately judge something we are not aware of. After all, the way we perceive things affects our judgement even before the judgement takes place (Blum, 1991, p. 707). Furthermore, the processes of moral perception are not the same as those of moral judgement and conscious reasoning. Nevertheless, moral perception as well as judgments and arguments are all informed by the general

⁴ Pierre Hadot (1995) has noted that in Stoic philosophy, practicing attention (*prosoché*) was a central precondition for the transformation of the self. The philosopher was to vigilantly focus on the present moment and to be fully aware of it. This was a precondition for the operation of free will and the proper mode of living together with other people in a mindful and just manner. This was a way of learning to recognize the value of each instant and see it from a cosmic viewpoint. Recognizing each moment with vigilance meant that conscious living would overcome the limits of individuality and achieve a larger viewpoint where the whole cosmos is present. Moreover, it enabled an immediate, intuitive coping with reality. (Hadot 1995, pp. 85-87, 209-210.) This practice is very similar to what in Buddhism is called mindfulness, which we refer to in the article.

values and principles we have adopted (ibid, pp. 701-702; cf. Dreyfus, 1995). That is why all education needs to be based on sound values, for they affect the way we perceive, and thus construct, the (moral) world.

Giving attention and being open to the external situation as well as to our inner life may enable us to become aware of the mental and social factors that influence our moral judgements and actions, even before they lead us into detrimental emotional *re*-actions (Dreyfus, 1995). Inner attention makes possible the uncovering of what is often happening pre- or subconsciously in our mind. Moral perception, like all perception, is initiated by such preconscious processes, preceding the conscious interpretation of the situation (Narvaez, 1996; Austin, 2011). Emotions are part of our lived-body experience. Strong emotions like anger or fear are well known for their bodily effects, but actually all emotions are sensed and felt in the lived body in a more or less subtle way. This can be observed in meditative states of awareness and is an aspect of Buddhist mindfulness practice (Ricard, 2011; cf. Orr, 2002). Emotions also affect the way we perceive things, which, in turn, feeds back into our emotions. For example, if we associate pain with weakness, we are inclined to underestimate the pain of another person, even to feel contempt for him/her, because the feeling of pain makes us feel uncomfortable (Blum, 1991, p. 705).

Blum's discussion of moral perception, however, does not entail vistas for the *development* of moral perception. In order to find out more about the structure of moral perception we need phenomenological studies in the form of first-person examination of moral experience (cf. Kriegel, 2007). In the next section, we suggest that the meditation practice of contemplative pedagogy, in which one shifts one's attention from ego to lived body, can significantly address many problems of ethical know-how. We suggest that this shift can also change one's scope of awareness from egoistic self to the world—thus enabling a more compassionate relation to other people and the world. This may sound strange since the ego and the body, from a conventional point of view, are closely related, the body being the source of many egoistic cravings. However, the experience of the lived body developed in contemplative practices actually undermines this kind of ego-body link and opens up very different realms of experience (Klemola, 2003; 2004; cf. Morgan, 2012; Orr, 2002).

From Ego-Consciousness to Lived-Body Awareness

We now turn to examine how moral perception might be cultivated in practices of contemplative pedagogy. Klemola, a Finnish philosopher and teacher of Zen meditation, applies Merleau-Ponty's ideas to the bodily experiences of meditation as well as to other Eastern bodily practices like Tai Ji Quan (cf. Morley, 2001; Sarukkai, 2002). Klemola (2003) asserts that conventionally we tend to locate mind or consciousness in the head—in calculating, thinking about the past or the future,

evaluating our achievements, and similar mental activities. In this state of mind, the body is *distanced*; it is somewhere far off on the horizon (cf. Hart, 2004; Bai, Donald & Scott, 2009). For instance, when writing a paper, we might be immersed in our theoretical thoughts, unaware of the rapid movements of the fingers on the keyboard, of the shaking tension that the caffeine brings to our body, the tension in our back from sitting still a long time etc. However, considering the role that the lived body has in all of our perceptual life—as noted above—all this points to the restricted and even misconceived character of the idea that mind and awareness are centred in the head. Ego-consciousness is rather limited and easily distorts the nature of life and the world around us. Education that fails to consider the body also fails to develop moral perceptiveness (cf. Orr 2002, pp. 477-480).

Another kind of distancing of the body might also happen even when we are engaged in prominently bodily activities. We might look at our body as if from the outside, tracing and evaluating its movements as an object to be manipulated. Klemola (2003) takes the example of a dancer who might discipline their body by emulating other person's movements or closely watching themselves in a mirror. The alternative approach is to *carefully listen* to one's own body from inside as it were; to its movements and (lack of) balance as well as its feelings of joy, pain or exhaustion—and many other more subtle sensations more difficult to put into words. This attentive listening throws light on the structures of experience of the lived-body awareness. A deeper study of this field will however have to wait; here we will only introduce some of its topics related to ethics.

It is interesting for moral education that Klemola (2003) asks whether there is ethical knowledge based on bodily, pre-reflective experience. In order to investigate this, he distinguishes between ego-consciousness and body-consciousness. Ego-consciousness is the common, everyday form of being-in-the-world.⁵ In this attitude we take the world and ourselves for granted, as being what they appear to be. There is “I,” the ego, a relatively fixed mental construct, and there is the world “out there,” and things in the world are the way ego experiences them to be. Ego's immediate evaluation of things “out there” is done in relation to how they satisfy its needs, wishes and desires. In this everyday mode of being and acting, we are often strangely forgetful of our immediate perceptual *relation* to our body (see also Klemola, 2004, pp. 86f.). We do not really *listen* to our *lived* body, the way it mediates our relation to the world; it remains in the pre- or subconscious realm. This autopilot mode of everyday being can be related to the mechanical and unperceptive *habits* that Dewey (1997b) distinguishes from the *flexible and sensitive* habits that should be developed in education (cf. Doddington, 2014).

Here it is important to consider that we know from modern physiology that in

⁵ Klemola (2003) relates this to Husserl's (1913) “natural attitude,” sometimes also called the “naïve attitude.”

addition to the common five senses we have also the two so-called proprioceptive senses: the sense of balance and of movement (kinaesthetic sense). These senses are more intimately related to the lived body. To these two senses a third could be added, what Rudolf Steiner (the founder of Steiner Waldorf education) calls the *life sense* (Soesman, 1990). This is an inner sense of the general state of our body, whether it is tired or energetic, healthy or ill etc. These three senses point to our inherent potentials for experiencing our body and being aware of its state of being. An important aspect of Steiner's theory of the human senses is that different senses actually *interact* in our perceptual life. Thus the senses of proprioception and of life, which tend to work more subconsciously, interact with more conscious senses like seeing and hearing. For instance, the eyes in themselves (according to Steiner) only perceive colour; in order to perceive *forms* they need to interact with the kinaesthetic sense. The latter helps the eye to trace the figure that the form makes; hence the forms of things can be seen as "frozen movements." (Modern neuroscience is well aware of the role of rapid eye-movements in seeing). In this way almost all of our everyday sense perception is by nature *synaesthetic*; something that Merleau-Ponty also came to discover in his phenomenology of (sense) perception (1992, pp. 227ff). In learning to live more consciously in the body we draw upon this subconscious perceptual realm and deepen our awareness of it.

Klemola, for his part, often takes examples from Eastern wisdom traditions instead of Western philosophy or athletic exercises. This is because in most Eastern traditions the relationship between body and mind is not prominently dualistic. It is rather a matter of *practice*, which involves the cultivation of the experience of their oneness (Klemola, 2004, p. 88). For example, one might do the kind of "body scan" exercise common in yoga, mindfulness and contemplative pedagogy. Schematically speaking, one first concentrates on one's breathing, feeling the inhalation rising from the lower abdomen, filling the lungs to the full. This brings awareness of the body to the fore and slowly leaves the ego-consciousness to rest. Then one shifts one's attention to various parts of the body, starting from the soles of the feet, and then focusing on the legs, the belly, the arms, the chest, and the head. This practice is thought to heighten one's concentration skills and sensitise the lived-body awareness (cf. Morgan, 2012).

Klemola discerns different stages in the development of this awareness. In the first stage we "bracket out" the outer world by bringing our attention on the five senses of smell, taste, touch, sight, and hearing. Thereby the external world is reduced to five different kinds of sensations. The second stage entails disengaging ourselves from the continuous flux of thoughts. One lets thoughts come and go like clouds in the sky, without identifying with their contents. As mentioned above, in our everyday mode of being, thoughts tend to distract us from our lived-body awareness, i.e. from awareness of the breath or the sensations of the body. But in a

contemplative exercise like this, a slow transition takes place: as the mind ceases to work on the quotidian contents that dart inside our mind, the inner sensations of the body itself are revealed (Klemola, 2004, pp. 55f.). This is what happens in the second stage of practice. The third stage takes things even further. As we become trained in bracketing out our wandering “ek-static” thoughts; i.e., thoughts that take us outside the present moment, projecting our existence into the future or the past, we can let our awareness of breathing and our bodily existence fall off altogether. This will reveal a state of *absolute presence* and *pure awareness*; an awareness without particular contents and without intentions. Yet this is by no means a “mystical” or otherworldly experience. What is revealed is that which is always already in the background of our daily lives, existence without concepts, thoughts, plans, memories or fears (Klemola, 2004, p. 56). There is no longer a body as an object or a mind as a separate subject (Klemola, 2004, pp. 59ff.).⁶ This is analogous to the “ground-of-being” experience (Morgan, 2012) mentioned above.

One might ask what all of this has to do with ethics and moral education. Have we not forgotten the ethical rules and regulations that govern, or should govern, our actions and behaviour? What is the connection to what Lawrence Kohlberg would call moral reasoning, which establishes the validity of such rules? We can elucidate how all this does in fact relate to ethics as we know it—the ethics of knowing-what—by going back to the significance of moral perception, the very basis of our judgments about what ethical rule is applicable and relevant to follow in a particular situation. The point is that moral perception can be cultivated so as to give attention to more—and also more subtle—moral aspects of “the situation”—that is, *the present moment*. Our attention can be trained to be less absorbed by our stream of thoughts and more mindful of the present moment, which, as we have seen, is correlated with intensified lived-body awareness. Thereby we can actually learn to be more sensitive to the needs of others (Morgan, 2012; cf. Blum, 1991). It is here that the above-mentioned intercorporeality of human togetherness comes into play; a mainly pre-reflective level of awareness that we can learn to experience more consciously.

Epistemological Reflections

The concept of lived-body awareness, in which consciousness is seen as residing in the whole body without separating the body and the mind, gives us reasons to reconsider the concept of knowledge. If a contemplative pedagogy of the lived body is to be recognized as an emerging approach to teaching and education, we need to

⁶ Klemola speaks also of this stage as “letting be” and “waiting”—terms borrowed from Martin Heidegger. Letting be (*Gelassenheit*) is a disposition of openness and non-attachment, and waiting (*Erwartung*) a waiting for nothing in particular, just waiting. There is a complete openness to the present moment, no limiting thought patterns that focus on something (e.g. rational thoughts) while excluding others (e.g. sensations of the body) (Klemola, 2004, p. 70).

deal with some more or less implicit epistemological issues. To begin with, contemporary approaches to knowledge taught in schools may be characterized, following Tobin Hart (2004), as based on either of the two classical ideas of Western epistemology: rationalism, which finds this source of knowledge in reason and systematic thinking; and empiricism, which finds the source in sense experience. Rationalism emphasises calculation, causal explanations and logical analyses. Empiricism focuses on experience, especially observation and various kinds of measurement. Rationalism and empiricism have traditionally set the general standards for genuine knowledge. However, as Merleau-Ponty (1992) points out, there is something lacking in both of these perspectives: neither one of them give us a good enough understanding of *learning* and *attention*. The two perspectives "... are in agreement in that neither can grasp consciousness *in the act of learning*, and that neither attaches due importance to that circumscribed ignorance, that still 'empty' but already determinate intention which *is* attention itself." (ibid., p. 28; italics in original).

We have touched upon the significance of attention throughout this paper, especially in relation to moral perception. Here Merleau-Ponty (1992) claims that neither of the two traditionally predominant epistemological views goes sufficiently deep into the acts of learning and attention. Rationalism under-determines attention in focusing on the conceptual element, whereas empiricism under-determinates it by focusing on the passive reception of sense experience and its external sources. Neither can account for the strange balance between on the one hand the "emptiness" of the learning attention, which does not know what it is seeking to learn; on the other hand the "already determinate intention" of this same attention (this is of course the basis for Plato's famous paradox of learning, the so-called Meno's paradox: that we never really learn anything that we did not already know). Drawing upon Merleau-Ponty and on Plato's dialogue *Politeia*, Schuback (2006) characterizes attention as the attitude of the *hunter*. The attention of the hunter is always prepared to meet something unexpected; it is therefore in a sense engaged in *un-learning*, i.e., in extracting itself from the natural attitude, in which we (believe that we) already know everything we need to know. The hunting attention "is related to the open indeterminacy of a coming to be" (Schuback, 2006, p. 138). Therefore, the conscious cultivation of attention has the potential to transform our way of being aware and conscious about things. We learn to be aware of *the presence of the world* and not merely of things "present at hand"; i.e., things (and people) as serving our personal purposes, intentions and self-interests. We learn to attend to—and expect—*anything*, rather than something that we have already decided upon.

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological explorations of perception, attention and learning bring in the lived body as a basic element that is lacking in both rationalism and empiricism. These two classical epistemological stances actually

contribute to the somatic, perceptual and intersubjective alienation of the human being from her body and senses, as well as from other people (Bai, Scott & Donald, 2009; Morgan, 2012; Orr, 2002). We live under the constant impression that knowledge and meaning only happen “in me,” in the isolated mental processes of my ego-mind. Then it is hard to realize that meaning and knowledge are actually *lived*, not only in our bodies but also in our mind-body-world interactions. However, once we realize this, we also see that knowledge is not only a question of what we know, but also of *how* we know. *What* we should know and teach is the common question focused on in education and curriculum studies. A logical consequence of this view is the knowing-what perspective of moral education. But *how* we (come to) know is just as fundamental a question to raise and to research in education (Hart, 2004). This how-question, although logically different from the knowing-how of ethical inquiry discussed above, is nevertheless related to it because both questions deal with the practice of lived-body awareness. Such practice enhances ethical knowing-how and develops a kind of ethical knowing-what that has a different nature from that based solely on rational cognition.

The asomatic nature of merely empiricist and rationalistic knowledge does not make a person wise or virtuous, because such knowledge is disembodied (Orr, 2002; cf. Varela, 1999). In contrast, the knowledge developed by lived-body awareness is embodied. This kind of knowledge can be called *contemplative*, in accordance with Hart (2004). It is a way of knowing recognized throughout time and culture, but generally disregarded in academic life.⁷ From the perspective of moral education the asomatic character of rationalism and empiricism is something that narrows our awareness and understanding of the corporeal world. Contemplative knowledge, on the other hand, has the potential to affect our depth of understanding, their character, as well as our performance (Hart, 2004). Varela’s expertise in cognitive science and phenomenology supports this idea of contemplative knowledge. Referring to “knowledge as enaction” he points to the paradigm change that is currently taking place in cognitive science and culture in general. The old view, which emphasizes knowledge as something abstract, objectivistic, formal, logical and rational is being questioned. At the centre of the new paradigm, and also coherent with the knowing-how perspective on ethics, is knowledge as something that is concrete, embodied,⁸ incorporated, and lived. This kind of knowledge and learning is about situatedness, uniqueness, history and context (Byrnes, 2012; Orr, 2012; Varela, 1999, pp. 6-13; cf. Hyvönen, 2007).

⁷ Cf. Foucault (2001, p. 17f), who points out that contemplation in Socratic philosophy was a method of knowledge that could change the philosopher as a person.

⁸ Embodiment here means at least two things. First, embodiment refers to the fact that we have a human body with various sensori-motoric abilities that guide our experiences and actions. Secondly, embodiment points to the fact that individual sensori-motoric abilities are themselves embedded in biological and cultural contexts (Varela, 1999, pp. 6-13; cf. Klemola, 2003, pp. 5f).

Seeing knowledge as enaction implies that the world is not something ready-made and “given” but something we engage in by moving, touching, breathing and eating. In the enactive approach to cognition, cognitive structures emerge from perceptually guided sensori-motoric patterns, and action is “perceptually guided in a perceiver-dependent world” (Varela, 1999, p. 11; cf. Klemola, 2003).

Relating contemplative knowledge to Kabat-Zinn’s (2005) ideas about the practice of mindfulness, we can appreciate it as something not known in terms of conceptions or mental representations, but nevertheless perceived, felt, and intuited (cf. Dahlin, 2013). However, it may also be further elaborated into words if carefully focused and reflected. Contemplative knowledge requires attention of many or all of our senses in a direct, non-fragmentary experience. All this is combined into an interaction with something that is wider and greater than ourselves, yet it is nothing more than the essence of what we are (Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p. 155). Klemola even claims, “to feel one’s body as one, as a unity, is a precondition to the experience of the unity of the self and the world” (2002, p. 6). To sum up, two epistemological points are important for the nature of contemplative knowledge in ethics and contemplative pedagogy. First, contemplative knowledge, in which the subject-object dichotomy can be overcome, is conducive to ethical know-how. Ethically problematic actions are often conducted in an opposite state of mind, in which self and other are not experienced as a unity but as more or less competing persons, whose subject positions are opposed. Meditation practice can develop the ability to transcend this dualistic mind state. This non-dual state of mind has so far been mostly described in primarily non-ethical settings like artistic and sport activities, related to what Csikszentmihalyi (1975) terms the state of flow (this is not to say that ethics is irrelevant to such activities). But the non-dual mind state is highly relevant also for ethical action.

The second point is that moral perceptions of unity between self and other or self and world can be achieved by training in a contemplative pedagogy that cultivates lived-body awareness. This may result in the world being *perceived in a different way*, that is, in significant changes in worldview, sense of self, and social relationships (Hart, 2004). Human development is, after all, essentially that of expanding awareness of oneself in relation to the world, and deeper understanding of the interrelatedness of things. From this follows an expanded sense of empathy (Kabat-Zinn, 2005), which may spread out from ego-mind to lived-body-awareness, and then further on to other sentient beings. Opening up the contemplative body is essentially an ethical experience (Klemola, 2003). An epistemology for contemplative pedagogy has to be an epistemology of attention and of lived-body awareness. It needs to go beyond the traditional opposition between rationalism and empiricism, as knowledge in both of these perspectives becomes something abstract and inert; not enacted, embodied and lived.

Conclusions

Dewey thought it was through body work with the Alexander technique that one's philosophical and psychological knowledge “changed into vital experiences, which gave a new meaning to knowledge of them.” Dewey also stated there was a “great change in moral and mental attitude that takes place as proper co-ordinations are established” (Jackson, 1998, pp. 138-139). In this spirit of Dewey we have argued in this paper for the significance of the lived body in contemplative pedagogy. In particular, we have shown how moral perception and ethical know-how can be cultivated by shifting attention from ego-consciousness to lived-body awareness. Moral perception and action is embodied and based on lived-body awareness rather than ego-centred consciousness alone. Understanding the potential of bodily ethics, however, requires some re-evaluation of what we understand by knowledge and the learning subject, as well as their interrelations in the processes of education. The (learning) subject is not, as it is often assumed, an ahistorical, rational, abstract entity isolated from the social world and from all other human motivations and instincts (Smith, 1987, p. 285). This kind of abstract knowledge of the disembodied learner does not cover all that is pedagogically and educationally valuable for human beings. Lived-body awareness, and contemplative knowledge dovetailing it, is also a significant dimension of meaningful human existence and education. Appreciating only rationalistic and empiricist perspectives on knowledge and wisdom makes us disregard other ways of knowing, thus limiting the scope of our awareness (Hart, 2004).

Contemplative approaches to education may lead us to appreciate intuition, sensing, and feeling as equal to rational deliberation as they are intertwined and needed for learning empathy, imagination and compassion. Rational deliberation alone, without other embodied ethical qualities, is often based on empty voluntarism and hedonism, in which people follow their whims in order to increase their consumption or gain more power and control (cf. Pulkki, 2014). We do not wish to downplay rational deliberation in learning ethical know-how, but emphasize that there are also embodied, intuitive, and pre- or subconscious elements significant to ethical reflection and moral action. We can, first of all, become aware of and perceive our subconscious habitual reactions to certain situations. Second, we can let go of the darting thoughts that throw us out of the present moment into images of the future or the past and their concerns. By moving from ego-consciousness and the ethical knowing-what frame of reference to lived-body awareness we may refine our ability to pay attention to the present moment. This in turn can make us more sensitive and perceptive to moral issues. Becoming aware in this way involves the refinement of our perceptual and somatic sensitivities, as well as our rational, affective and intuitive ways of knowing (Bai, Scott & Donald, 2009, p. 321).

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