

Phenomenological Writing – Existentials

“Lived Body”

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What a very special joy to be alive, to be born into a body, a sensating bio-physical locus from which to experience the marvels and mysteries of existence. To be born into a body is an act of ‘incarnation,’ implying that there may be periods of discarnation. Despite reassurances from some sources that this is the case, such mysteries will always remain speculative from a ‘lived body’ perspective. All I can be sure of from this perspective is that I am ‘here’ ‘now’ – and that is the very essence of existence.

And what a special privilege that is! By privilege I mean that there are tremendous opportunities to make progress while inhabiting this body. Progress here means none other than coming to understand the marvels and mysteries of existence, first-hand as it were; or maybe better yet, first-person: every act in this body has consequences. I soon discover that I am not the only lived body around here. How is my existence affecting others? Obviously, the privilege of inhabiting a body also comes with responsibilities.

Perhaps my first responsibility is to myself? Why didn’t I write “to my body?” Is there a distinction between my self and my body? I remember back in my B.A. days taking a class called “Awareness through the Body.” By the end of that class I was ready to insist that I *am* my body, though now I am not so sure. I mean I have started to detect an ageing process in my body: the hair over my temples has begun turning grey while the hair on top of my head has been steadily disappearing – I’m suddenly left with the startling prospect that I may be mortal! If that is true then this beautiful body I’ve grown so comfortable with, this beautiful body that has been the locus of so many wild adventures, will one day cease to exist. If that happens (and I’m starting to believe that may in fact be so) then will ‘I’ cease to exist?

I find myself (my self) rebelling against the prospect. My body may have begun showing signs of ageing yet I – the I that is doing this writing, the I that endeavors to obtain a Ph.D. – shows every indication of improving and advancing. What to make of this disconnect? If ‘I’ am my body then ‘I’ should be showing signs of degeneration *in exact concordance with* the ageing process of my body. Yet this is far from so: ‘I’ keep getting better and better. I must conclude, therefore, that I am *not* my body – and I believe this can be verified by noticing the use of the possessive pronoun ‘my:’ *my* body. Is *my* body, then, just another possession, like *my* stereo, to give me a few passing pleasures?

I seem to have stumbled here upon that age old spiritual doctrine that proclaims the body to be as just a ‘suit of clothes,’ worn temporarily by the soul in this incarnation only to be

discarded at death waiting for another suitable set of clothes in the next incarnation. Yet, even though I can acknowledge not being able to identify completely with *my* body, I find *my* self once more rebelling against such a disposable situation. I consider the existential of lived body to be a tremendous gift of marvel and mystery; therefore, I cannot so nilly willy disregard body as a consumable...Let's party!

I am transported here to ruminations about the life of Jesus. The Church seems to want to emphasize that aspect of the story where "He died for our sins." Yet, I always thought the deeper mystery lies in the Resurrection. Isn't it true that Jesus was laid in a tomb and after so many days arose such that nobody could find Him in His tomb? If this is true, then Jesus resurrected *in* a body *as* a body, and later appeared to the disciples in bodily form. This seems to me to be a far more significant lesson of Christianity. We also can recall the Hindu teachings of the Yugas, where bodies in ages other than our own dense Kali Yuga grow taller, live longer, and are made more palpably of light. The Bhagavad Gita says that all souls have a distinctive individual form and character.

For all these reasons, as I assess the potentials of the existentials of 'lived body,' I am motivated more than ever to optimize the health and vitality, the presence and perseverance, the tuning and toning, of this body that I inhabit here and now. That's why I embarked upon a Transformation Intensive in conjunction with this KA*753C Research Methods and Practice study. That's why I am getting up at 4 in the morning to do pranayama before meditation and yoga. I have an intuition that there is a lot more to body than we've been led to believe. Whatever may befall this body as it glides into its final days, I want to ensure I have extracted every bit of marvel and mystery I can while it is still animated. Thank you, my body, for so many wild and glorious adventures. I will cherish you always...