

Body, Sociability and the Construction of the Polis in Spinoza: Consequences for Education



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ABSTRACT: According to Dutch philosopher Spinoza (1631-1677), the body is a power of acting. This force of existence can be affected (checked or stimulated) by the mechanisms of subjection that discipline the body, with obvious consequences for our development and well-being. These were the questions for inquiry: what importance should be attributed to Spinoza in the ecology of existential knowledge? What kind of body experience does he advocate? What lessons for education can be drawn from his thinking? In this sense, we highlight as an axial objective: To discuss Spinoza's importance in the idea of body as ecology of knowledge. As sources we used the published works of Spinoza. To achieve our goals, we adopted a methodological strategy that is enacted in an approximation between phenomenology and historical hermeneutics (in the wake of Husserl, Heidegger and Gadamer). It is a question of inquiring how the body is revealed to consciousness (disconcealment), because it plays an important role in the production of truth. As a conclusion we will say that Spinoza knew how to distance himself from the legacy of the process of body mortification and he also knew how to position himself critically vis-à-vis the ideas of modernity. He helps us find a more ecological type of education so we can establish healthier relationships.

KEYWORDS: Spinoza; body; feeling, ecology; education

INTRODUCTION

As is known, Spinoza wrote nothing about education. However, despite having written nothing, he said much about education. Moreover, having lived in an extremely hostile context, marked by fanaticism, intolerance, obscurantism, and having been placed between "the sword or the cross", in other words, between death and conversion, Spinoza chose to say so much when one could only say so little.

Spinoza, a 17th-century philosopher, is an indomitable free spirit. For a long time, he was despised by both political and ecclesiastical authorities. Not only that, he was also marginalized by philosophers. The Netherlands was at the time a refuge for many thinkers of the time, due to its religious tolerance. This allowed him to level criticism at the philosophical tradition, particularly in relation to the body and the Cartesian thinking that would be at the root of modern philosophy. Still, even in this context, he was banished from the Jewish community and persecuted by the Catholic authorities.

Following the disappointment at his religious upbringing and after his great master, Franciscus Van den Enden, had been hanged, he decided to follow up on his concerns, seeking the path of truth and happiness. That's what Spinoza tells us:

After experience had taught me the hollowness and futility of everything that is ordinarily encountered in daily life, and I realised that all the things which were the source and object of my anxiety held nothing of good or evil in themselves save insofar as the mind was influenced by them, I resolved at length to enquire whether there existed a true good, one which was capable of communicating itself and could alone affect the mind to the exclusion of all else, whether, in fact, there was something whose discovery and acquisition would afford me a continuous and supreme joy to all eternity.¹

It is in this extremely antagonistic juncture and in free search happiness that Spinoza (1962, p.85) denounces the ignorance of the power of the body. This contempt for the body comes from Christianity (with the help of Platonism), which called for the abandonment of the body, reinforced by Descartes' rationalism. Spinoza is a voice that stands against the prevalent morality of renunciation. In the context in which he lived, contempt for the body was required to ensure the salvation of the soul. A process of vigilance, punishment and mortification was need to achieve this goal. This mortification was not understood as a one-off act, but as a process (regime) made at the expense of suffering. This process required feeding daily doses that could not be forgotten.

Body, Sociability and the Construction of the Polis in Spinoza: Consequences for Education

To paraphrase Foucault, we will say that we have here a regime practice as art of living. The manner in which human existence is conducted in this regime presupposed a number of skills to be trained. Foucaultⁱⁱ underlines:

“Regimen—was a fundamental category through which human behavior could be conceptualized. It characterized the way in which one managed one's existence, and it enabled a set of rules to be affixed to conduct; it was a mode of problematization of behavior that was indexed to a nature which had to be preserved and to which it was right to conform. Regimen was a whole art of living”.

This “savoir-faire” determines the victories and defeats of each individual over him/herself. The relationship with the body is one of renunciation, making asceticism a permanent fight to reach the way of being legitimized by truth.

Spinoza takes a position against this regime of understanding the body and life. The predominant body-soul dualism is a false issue. The major problem lies in the cleavage of the joy-sorrow affections and the role they have in quality of life. He is completely innovative in his approach. The dominant knowledge about man and life is completely wrong. Neither mechanistic organicism nor ascetic spirituality. Spinozaⁱⁱⁱ refers to the need for us not to be deceived in the way we access knowledge. It is necessary to overcome the imperfect stage of knowledge in order to know how to promote joy. To address this problem, we need the correction of the intellect, which is a first step to help a certain understanding of things. In his *Treatise on The Emendation of the Intellect*, in paragraph 25, Spinoza states that choosing the best way to perceive requires “To have an exact knowledge of our nature which we wish to perfect, and at the same time to know as much of the nature of things as is necessary”.

Knowing nature is, therefore, a requirement and a matrix that is put to reflection. As stated by Spinoza^{iv} the nature of a thing is nothing more than the essence itself. Man is distinguished from other beings because he is in his essence but in communication with all that exists in nature. This makes what he is, and not something different. It means that man has particularities, he has his “disposition”, which we should know. But man, in nature, is part of nature, and that does not give him privilege because he obeys the same laws as other living beings. We are just different modes, expression. It is in this effort to understand that we find the paths that Spinoza aims to point out.

The questions for inquiry asked are as follows: What does Spinoza bring that is unheard of with the claim of the study of nature? What does he mean by the condemnation he expresses about ignoring the body's power? What was Spinoza's innovative aspect in changing the notion of body? What kind of body experience does he advocate? What place does he assign the body in the development of civility? What lessons should be drawn from Spinoza's philosophy for the field of education?

In this sense, the goals of our article are the following: To identify the innovative aspect of Spinoza's philosophy; To reflect on the relationships he established with the dominant ideas; To analyse the impact of his ideas; To discuss Spinoza's contribution to the ecology of existential knowledge, and to education in particular.

To achieve our goals, a methodological strategy was adopted that is enacted in an approximation between phenomenology and historical hermeneutics (in the wake of Husserl, Heidegger and Gadamer). We strive to make a comprehensive analysis as a broad dialogue dissolved in the hermeneutic circle. This search for understanding the body is made by a combination of *archê* and *telos*. The body assumes a problematic nature in the world, and its knowledge is in the process of disconcealment, in bringing to light, in coming-to-presence. It is to say that presence, of what the body is, depends on our understanding of the process of making it come out of the darkness. In this inquiry, we seek the meaning to give the body from the following angles (eidetic variation) of analysis: 1st the meaning of the body; 2nd the regime of the body; 3rd the individual and collective power to act; 4th starting from the interpretation of the meanings of the previous items (essence – phenomenological reduction), we will draw the consequences for education (*telos*).

A NEW REGIME OF MEANING TO THE SENSE-MAKING OF THE BODY

Spinoza^v considers it necessary to reform the intelligence in order to access the highest level of the highest wisdom. The truth does not come from outside, it springs from intelligence, so it becomes necessary to know it. That is what is really important to Spinoza. Reforming intelligence has the aim of reaching truth. Only in this way can one achieve wisdom, the vision of man's totality. To achieve good thinking, we need to regulate our reflection from the universal order of ideas. The starting point of man's knowledge must lie in understanding nature.

Starting from this concern, Spinoza presents three key concepts for understanding the body: Substance (eternal order, nature, God), attribute (thought and extension) and mode (the temporal order of perishable things). Starting from this framework, the body-mind is analysed as modes of immanent activity of two attributes of the single and infinite Substance, namely, thought and extension. They are expressions of the same and only cause, that is, the substance whose respective attributes are expressed distinctively.

In definition III of book I, Spinoza^{vi} tells us “By substance I mean that which is in itself and is conceived through itself; that is, that the conception of which does not require the conception of another thing from which it has to be formed”. It can be said

Body, Sociability and the Construction of the Polis in Spinoza: Consequences for Education

that there is little originality in this. But let us observe that he draws a peculiar path not yet laid down previously. If we consult Descartes in *The Principles of Philosophy*^{vii} we find that he states that we can conceive by substance “nothing other than a thing which exists in such a way that it needs no other thing in order to exist.” Although there is some influence, Spinoza stresses the fact that it exists in itself and is conceived by itself.

In Definition IV of Book I, Spinoza states “By attribute I mean that which the intellect perceives of substance as constituting its essence.” And “By mode I mean the affections of substance, that is, that which is in something else and is conceived through something else.” With this Spinoza defends a substantial monism, with its attributes and modes. Despite having different positions, Aristotle^{viii} in *Metaphysics* had already devoted much importance to this issue, having stated that “something is said to be in many ways, but all in reference to one starting-point. For some things are said to be because they are substances, others because they are attributes of substances (...) Being and one are the same and one nature, in that they follow along with each other(...).”

Going back to what was stated above, we will say that Spinoza, when defining the modes, such as substance affections, considers them to be ontologically dependent on substance. In this sense, body and mind are isonomic, in other words, equal and governed by the same law, despite expressing themselves differently. Between one and the other there is a correspondence relationship.

Substance is absolute (and unique) and identifies with God, not anthropomorphic, not transcendent, but immanent to natural reality. He is considered absolute power of the production of all things. Spinoza^{ix} in Part I, proposition 20, states: “that which constitutes the essence of God at the same time constitutes his existence”. His essence and existence are identical and they are also identical to his power or force to exist for himself and in himself indefinitely (being, acting and existing are the same thing). In his action he makes himself exist and makes things exist as an expression of himself. It is this identity of the existence, the power and the essence of substance that is called eternity.

In part I, Proposition 10, Spinoza^x states that “Each attribute of one substance must be conceived through itself.” There is one single substance that is constituted by a multitude of modes and attributes, which are its properties and characteristics, where the attribute is infinite in its kind, of which the only known to man are thought and extension. But thought and extension are not finite and distinct substances, they are two expressions of the same reality, of substance. Finite things are simple modifications produced by God in himself since he is immanent cause. The thought attribute is the activity of power that produces the infinite mode of God’s intellect. This produces all finite modes of thought that are the ideas, or minds, or souls. The extension attribute is the activity of the power that produces the infinite mode of the Material Universe, which are the bodies to which the proportions of motion and rest are given. Ideas and bodies are finite ways, and express substance in a determined manner and according to the necessary order that governs all beings of the universe.

In Part II, Proposition 1, Spinoza^{xi} with the term *Natureza Naturante*, refers to the substance and its attributes as an infinite activity that produces the totality of what is real. On the other hand, thought is an attribute of God; to put it differently, God is a thinking thing; and in Part II, Proposition 2, Spinoza^{xii}, extension is an attribute of God; so, God is an extended thing. With the term *Natureza Naturada*, he refers to the totality of the modes produced by the attributes. Therefore, there is no separation between cause and effect after having produced them, but immanent and efficient causes of his modes and through them it expresses itself and they express it.

Thus, the body is a mode, which is to say any particular shape or figure that reality assumes transiently. All beings (and also men) are defined by a certain proportion of movement and rest. This acting force, impulse for everything to preserve its being is *conatus* (desire as power, dream, lack, affirmation of energy, affirmation of power). This differentiating force is conflicting and vigilant, it contains an integrating element. It is the fulfilment of the same dynamic reality that imbues all nature and has in each individual (mode) a certain proportion. The identity of each one can, in the relationship between the different *conatus*, cause conflict, but tends towards a dynamic balance. Neuroscientist António Damásio^{xiii} resumes this idea of homeostasis.

Their action on our body is a constant stimulus, indispensable for human development. Such bodies are organized sets of elements, dynamic beings that change in a permanent effort to maintain their own individuality. It is a dynamism that obeys a strict structuring order, which leads them to establish relations of cause and effect. The substance is explained in its attributes, and these, on the other hand, are realized in infinite modes. Whether we face it from thought or from extension, we come across the same order imbuing bodies and minds. Spinoza challenges philosophers to look into this correspondence between physical and mental. And he helps them by providing them with elements that allow them to take a complete approach to reality, which requires a dual perspective on substance.

In Part III, Proposition 6, Spinoza^{xiv} states that “Each thing, insofar as it is in itself, endeavors to persist in its own being.” This means that there is a natural and spontaneous tendency to remain in existence, and all the effort that is made to exist (*conatus*). Spinoza goes beyond conservation when he uses the concept of *conatus* from stoicism. For Spinoza it is more than self-

Body, Sociability and the Construction of the Polis in Spinoza: Consequences for Education

preservation, it is desire, it is appetite and, of course, as he argues in Part III, proposition 7, “The conatus with which each thing endeavors to persist in its own being is nothing but the actual essence of the thing itself” (Spinoza, 1962, p.283). Conatus is used in the positive sense and not for self-destruction. The existence of nature is a positive, affirmative reality. Conatus does not separate from the thing, it is the very essence of the thing, it is natural and intrinsic power.

The notion of body is particularly elaborated in book II of Ethics. Specifically, Spinoza^{xv} tells us, “By body, I understand a mode that expresses in a definite and determinate way God’s essence insofar as he is considered an extended thing.” In Part I, proposition 15, Spinoza^{xvi} argues “Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God.” And further below, in Part I, Proposition 18, he clarifies that “God is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things.”^{xvii} . And then, in Proposition 25, he emphasises that “God is the efficient cause not only of the existence of things, but also of their essence.”^{xviii} .

Both bodies and ideas reveal God. Therefore, we must not devalue matter by making it secondary in relation to thought. In Part II, Proposition 1, Spinoza^{xix} specifies that “Thought is an attribute of God; i.e., God is a thinking thing” and in Proposition 2, he also considers that “Extension is an attribute of God; i.e., God is an extended thing.” This implies that matter is inherent to him, materialising itself in the infinite bodies it constantly produces and with which we constantly relate. Following Spinoza^{xx}, in Part II, Proposition 11, he underlines “That which constitutes the actual being of the human mind is basically nothing else but the idea of an individual actually existing thing.” The essence of man is constituted by certain modes of God's attributes (thinking, thinking like love, desire or any other feeling of the soul...). And with Proposition 12, “(...) if the object of the idea constituting the human mind is a body, nothing can happen in that body without its being perceived by the mind.” This is revolutionary, because it went against everything that had ever been said. This leads us to understand the relationship between mind and body as modes of the immanent activity of two attributes of the single and infinite Substance – thought and extension. Expressions of the same cause (substance). There is isonomy, which means that they are dependent on the same order, despite expressing themselves differently. Spinoza^{xxi}, with Proposition 7, states that “The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things”, which leads us to understand that whether we conceive nature under the attribute of extension, or under the attribute of thought, we will always find one and the same order, a single connection of causes. Spinoza^{xxii} expresses this relationship well in Proposition 13, “The object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body – i.e., a definite mode of extension actually existing, and nothing else.”

2 – PROMOTING AND RECONCILING THE POWER OF INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE ACTING - THE POLIS

Spinoza revolutionized the notion of body by placing himself in a different position from the philosophical tradition. He stands against the despisers of the body because they diminish the potential of life. He goes from the monism of substance (thinking and extended) and makes us establish unprecedented connections. For Spinoza, unity is not enclosed in the link between body and mind, it is also established with the universe and God (infinite totality).

The body wants its power to act increased, but this can only be achieved through the polis. Polis is understood here to be the great city. Spinoza's idea of polis differs from the Greek one. The idea of a self-governing community, instead of nullifying individual freedom, seeks to make the individual and collective compatible, fostering both natures (*natura naturante* and *natura naturada*). The part is not sacrificed to the whole. The community does not exist to subjugate the parties, but to empower them, to make them exist on a higher level. This is not, as was the case in Ancient Greece, the predominance of public over private life^{xxiii} . In addition to this new dynamic, Spinoza's idea of polis is not circumscribed to a small territorial area, rather it is elevated to cosmic dimensions. The polis for Spinoza is the great city where we live, which includes the relationship of one with all others, with the universe and with God. The polis is not so much a territory, but rather implies the relationship with everything that surrounds us, in order to satisfy the demands of a civilized life. The dignity of men comes from this relationship (good encounters). As we are all born in this great “city” we are all “naturalized” in this possibility of being citizens.

The individual power that exists in each body must be articulated with the political power that exists in society. Human achievement is made at both individual and political level. Nature is integrated into the whole of which it is part in order to be able to express itself in its fullness. The State offers everyone the possibility of fulfilment, facilitating (depending on the regime...) a way of living which is not achievable outside this framework. We act from being inserted into a political body. This insertion has the ability to affect men positively or negatively. Each one of us has his own path of liberation. Good encounters reinforce, foster, conatus. Collective power (social, political...) forms the body. That's why the body is in permanent construction, due to conatus (to good encounters).

Living in society inevitably implies affection in its double sense. It means that the bodies are united with one another and all of them form a body. Actually, the human body is distinguished from other bodies by the union it establishes with other bodies. In this regard, Spinoza^{xxiv} tells us that everything is a composite. The human body is a double composite – by the union it establishes with others and with itself^{xxv} . The human body needs a large number of other bodies by which it is as if continuously

Body, Sociability and the Construction of the Polis in Spinoza: Consequences for Education

regenerated^{xxvi}. This dynamic depends on the conatus that exists in each of the bodies. We have to seek (and provide) convenient encounters, which increase the power (of the body) and avoid inconveniences, which decrease it.

Good sociability (civility) produces positive feelings, which reinforces conatus. The power of encounters feeds on pleasure (pleasure promotes the expansion of conatus while pain checks it) which means:

I shall understand by pleasure “the passive transition of the mind to a state of greater perfection,” and by pain “the passive transition of the mind to state of less perfection.” The emotion of pleasure when it is simultaneously related to mind and body I call Titillation [titillatio] or Cheerfulness [hilaritas]; the emotion of pain when it is similarly related I call Anguish [dolor] or Melancholy [melancholia]^{xxvii}.

Pleasure is a power relationship with the world, it is a movement of amplitude. The functioning of societies can also improve from here. That is why he advocates political regimes that allow men to live happily. For him, nature is good (tends towards homeostasis) and, in this sense, the political regime must help its fulfilment (happiness).

Happiness is the goal of conduct and not renunciation, castration, denial, mortification. To access this state, argues Spinoza, it is essential to reverse the logic of operation, we need another reference. For Spinoza, we should not avoid or renounce pleasure because it is nothing more than the transition from a lower state of perfection to a higher state (the reverse for pain). In this passage, emotion is the modification of the body through which the power of action of the body is increased or decreased. Emotion is good if it increases the body's power to act. Virtue is a power to act, an ability.

Spinoza moves away from the Christian ethical tradition because he believes that a moral system that teaches man to be weak is devoid of value. He highlights the virtues associated with the ability to act and with power. It is not virtue as reward (of Christianity) but virtue in itself. Therefore, thought should not lack the warmth of desire, nor should desire lack the light of thought – contrary to the position that Kant (1724-1804), the main philosopher of the modern age, will have on reason and emotion almost a century later.

He establishes a relationship between reason and passion: passion without reason is blind, and reason without passion is killed. An emotion can only be stopped or removed by another emotion, contrary and stronger. Instead of uselessly opposing reason to passion, Spinoza opposes disordered passions to the passions coordinated by reason and perfectly regulated by the total perspective of the situation. It is not an accident that António Damásio^{xxviii} seeks to meet Spinoza, confirming today through neuroscience research much of what he said.

Good sociability also has a positive effect on "idea-affectations". For Spinoza, knowledge, (of first level kind-more basic) is formed from "ideas-affection". Affection (affectus) is the continuous variation of the force of existing and is determined by the ideas one has. An idea is the representation of anything (the more perfect, the more it coincides with reality). By affection, says Spinoza^{xxix} he understands “the affections of the body, by which the body's power of activity is increased or diminished, assisted or checked, together with the ideas of these affections”. Therefore, there are multiple ways of power and action being increased or diminished. Spinoza^{xxx} states that pleasure (laetitia) is “the passive transition of the mind to a state of greater perfection.” With the opposite affection, pain (tristitia) occurs the transition from greater perfection to less perfection.

Spinoza situated the body as arché. Pre-Socratic philosophers such as Tales of Miletus (625-558 a.C.), Anaximander (610 - 547 a.C.), Anaxímenes of Miletus (585—528 a.C.), had already sought to enquire what the generating element of all nature would be. We are using the term arché in Spinoza, not to consider water, the ápeiron (that which results from opposites) or the air as the main generating principles nature, but because he situated the body as a new organizing principle of men's lives. The body as arché means that in it lies the power to act, matrix of action. Our ability to act will depend on the strength we are able to give it. By this Spinoza means that we must develop good feelings. Good feelings generate a dynamic of good feelings. And, consequently, bad feelings have an opposite effect. When we love someone, we strive and we do everything to achieve reciprocity. Anyone who thinks he's hated by someone will hate that person as a result. Hatred is increased by mutual hatred.

As Foucault^{xxxi} warned us, the body is immersed in a political field. The body acquires a political dimension, because in it are inscribed values of the regimes of truth (of the construction city). Through this we understand how marked, directed it is, what signs are required of it. That's why we have to relate the biological dimension with the regimes of truth that determine the aptitudes of the body.

Spinoza was precocious in this understanding. He believes that the state must create conditions and ensure good sociability, it must adopt a regime that promotes pleasure and, in this way, build the city, the polis. Man lived without law or social organization, with no idea of what is just and unjust. Law and strength were all the same. State intervention is necessary. However, what is the right point for state intervention? Is the state's job to secure or sacrifice freedom? This point drives Spinoza away from Hobbes (1588-1679), because the latter considers that man is a wolf of a man, which justifies the existence of the state to prevent men from devouring one another. For Hobbes^{xxxii} the state must suppress the power to act in each body. Salvation lies in the state, and man must discard natural right.

Body, Sociability and the Construction of the Polis in Spinoza: Consequences for Education

Spinoza believes that laws must not stifle individual initiative. Above all, Spinoza defends the freedom of the word. Without it, all laws become unjust, because man ceases to respect the laws when he cannot criticize them. By adding the political dimension, he clarifies the need for the democratic regime, in which freedom plays a decisive role in the process of fostering thinking and acting. But it is important that in this whole process man is driven by reason. The dictates of reason (Spinoza^{xxxiii} “[demand] nothing contrary to nature, it therefore demands that every man should love himself, should seek his own advantage (I mean his real advantage), should aim at whatever really leads a man towards greater perfection”. And there is nothing more advantageous in this effort for the perfection and preservation of his being than to be all in such agreement that one single soul and one single body can be formed – that all strive in the search for the common usefulness of all (the polis). Spinoza^{xxxiv} argues that “there is nothing better, by which one may give evidence of skill and talent, than instructing men in such a way that they may live, finally, under the empire of their own reason.

CONSEQUENCES FOR EDUCATION

With Spinoza, education gains a relational and ecological dimension. We learn to argue that nature's education cannot neglect feelings, or the relationship with others and the universe. He was the great forerunner of the issue of emotional and environmental education. With his eco-humanism, a battle began that tried to break away from dualisms, hierarchies, attributing to the man-body its human value which it had been deprived of.

Spinoza helps us to know human nature integrated into the greater nature, to understand what our place in the polis and the cosmos is. The environmental crisis we are experiencing today makes us rethink the meaning and value that Spinoza attributed to nature. This interconnection that he establishes among men and between man and nature arises with great relevance. The grandeur and beauty of nature are so sublime that it is confused with God. This profound unity and communion imply knowledge and the need for an ecological education, a respect for all the manifestations of nature, where man (and his feelings) is included. The body is in the grandeur of this ecological intelligence, a fractal of the cosmic architecture as the great city. In the pantheistic ethos one lives the search for sustainable knowledge that respects the balance by the ecosystem. It is in the search for this balance that education must be enacted.

Spinoza rescues the endeavour (conatus), this force that each one has in himself and which leads him to go towards the light, and which cannot be alienated. However, this force of existence can be affected by the mechanisms of subjection that discipline the body, with evident consequences for our well-being. This means that this power to act can be neutered or exalted, resulting in different ways of being with the other human beings in the polis, with the universe, with God...

Spinoza is against the way of organizing the body that had prevailed – mortification of the body. His concern points in the opposite direction – letting the potential of the body flow. He is against the organic organization of the body, advocated by Plato, by Christianity, by Descartes, by Hobbes... and by so many others. He is against any incorporation of the excess of containment that limits and petrifies the organization (polis).

Education must be at the service not of mortification, not of the loss of its vitality, but of the reinvention of life itself (construction of the polis). Reverting what has been imposed, exploring the virtual dimension (flows, connections, affections), so as to overcome the limitation that one is. Following this line of reasoning, it is this potential that education must explore, appealing to a new experience, to a new practice, a new policy that is able to give back to the polis the joy that the tyranny of powers stole from us.

Spinoza taught us to associate conatus to feelings, and to keep in mind the role they play in the homeostasis of the body, of the polis, of the cosmos. When this innate imperative is in danger, it expresses negative and positive feelings when well-being reigns. In this sense, they function as sentries. They tell us what we need to know. Actually, they function as mental assistants of homeostasis. Indeed, feelings play an important role in the invention of culture and of the homeostasis of the life of each and every one (polis). That is why Damásio^{xxxv} stresses that he “rejects the traditional view of the brain as the single origin of the mind.” And in another passage Damásio^{xxxvi} tells us that “without a body there is no mind”. The nervous system does not create the mind by itself, but in collaboration with the rest of the organism. It is the entire body that contributes to homeostasis, having been refined throughout man's evolution process. Mind and culture are connected. The cultural homeostasis that is life in the polis depends on the civilizational effort.

Damásio^{xxxvii} argues that we are governed by two worlds. In one of the worlds, we are governed by the invisible hands of the natural rules of life regulation – pain and pleasure. The other world concerns the cultural means we have invented to guide life. Culture represents this cumulative effort that is life in the polis. In the variety of cultural organisms (ethnic diversity...), we find the seed of conflict. In very competitive, individualistic and self-centred cultures such as ours, people and social groups, due to rivalry and hostility, tend to clash, making life in the polis unbearable. The machinery of affections can awaken fury, anger,

Body, Sociability and the Construction of the Polis in Spinoza: Consequences for Education

hatred, jealousy, envy, revulsion, anger, which may revert us to animal emotion. This is where education can play an important role, and revert the course of events enhancing well-being in the polis.

The civilizational effort, which has been made thanks to education, has led man to overcome conflicts, to live in a regime of peace and not of hostility and war. In the absence of civilizational effort, people will fight for what they want. The only way we can overcome this conflicting issue, fierce competition, is to promote cooperative cultures. Hence the need for education to foster these values of common life in the polis.

We haven't abandoned the realm of biology. We still hold on to the machinery of affections. However, it is important to invert the type of feelings. Only through education can we promote positive feelings – honesty, kindness, empathy, gratitude, modesty. The reading we make of Spinoza recommends that education must promote healthy environments (school cultures), encouraging ethical and civic behaviour for a new polis. Culture can play a crucial role in controlling violence and negative feelings, favouring and developing positive feelings. This is the great challenge faced by education. The problem is that education remains blind to affections. What future can we build if we do not feel it? What Spinoza wanted to tell us is that we should not want a human mind similar to the logic of artificial intelligence. What would the world be devoid of feelings and conscience? What makes man be a man is precisely self-consciousness (Sacarrão^{xxxviii}), but one must add that feeling plays a vital role in this process^{xxxix}. Education will only be truly fulfilling its role if it seeks more humanity in the unfinished being that is man, in other words, fostering feelings and consciousness for the life in the polis.

Spinoza advocates a relation between feeling and reason. Thinking homeostasis through more and better culture. With this relation, he aims to emphasise positive emotions and avoid negative ones. Spinoza argues that the human mind should not follow the logic of artificial intelligence, nor should we be prisoners of instincts.

At this point, Spinoza moves away from Kant. According to Kant^{xl}, reason cannot be contaminated by feelings. Reason governs our will and our will is practical reason. Following Spinoza, we will say that education cannot exclude the ability to feel. That is what Spinoza told us, and what Damásio^{xli} now proves. It is necessary to understand the biological base of the cultural mind. For Spinoza, goodwill is felt and this can only be achieved with education.

Man does not let himself be determined exclusively by what is natural. Man is moved by passions and by freedom. The former leads him to seek the satisfaction of selfish desires. Freedom arises to limit (law) the strength of passions. Freedom is not the absence of a limit. It is the production of a reality that leads man to live in conformity with it.

Education should take advantage of conatus, but by promoting healthy cooperation, in opposition to destructive competition. Education is part of this exercise of searching for greater perfection in ordinary life. Education must produce a new alchemy. This demand must be harmonious in order to promote collective and individual power.

CONCLUSION

At a moment when the dualist and disintegrating perspective dominated, Spinoza strongly advocated integration and unity. He placed nature as a reference for reflection, in such a way that it has become an important issue that is still being valued today. Take, for example, the recently republished work, but already released in the twentieth century, by Helmuth Plessner^{xlii}, in which this author tells us that, in order to understand human nature, we cannot fail to consider laughter and crying, two important aspects of expressive behaviour. Bergson^{xliii} also dedicated his attention to this problem by stating that man is “an animal that laughs” or makes others laugh. In Schopenhauer's^{xliv} theory of the ludicrous, known as the incongruity theory, we find a reference to laughter – he analyses the cognitive aspects of laughter. Freud^{xlv} also talked about the importance of laughter for the psychic economy. Freud examined the different techniques of jokes and their cataloguing system. Everything that is laughable is related to what is human. The study of laughter is a peculiar way of studying human nature. This issue calls for a community of feelings. But to explain laughter you necessarily have to explain what is at stake in the thought process. Many authors have resumed feelings as a fundamental issue of the human condition. Still, the great forerunner of the issue of affections was Spinoza.

We can say that Spinoza stands against all the education taught. Spinoza's conception has consequences for education, and for physical education in particular, because it expands the idea of body-organism. The concern of educational work extends to affective, cultural and environmental concerns.

Education must follow the path of pleasure, of the power of pleasure. Spinoza was important in the ecology of knowledge because he invites us to a new relationship of each one with himself, with others, with society. It is no longer a question of manufacturing docile and submissive bodies^{xlvi} but of taking advantage of each individual's potential. His notion calls into question all educational technology. Taking advantage of this new relationship implies a new, more ecological knowledge, capable of promoting a healthier body. Spinoza had a ground-breaking role and was able to position himself as a defender of freedom as political regime of the body, unlike the regime advocated by Hobbes. Finally, we make a point of mentioning António Damásio's importance and topicality, since he draws on Spinoza's theses to research brain neurology.

Body, Sociability and the Construction of the Polis in Spinoza: Consequences for Education

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