

Embodied Self-Reflexivity

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Abstract

Drawing on G. H. Mead and Merleau-Ponty, this paper aims to extend our understanding of self-reflexivity beyond the notion of a discursive, abstract, and symbolic process. It offers a framework for embodied self-reflexivity, which anchors the self in the reflexive capacity of bodily sensations. The data consist of two years of ethnographic observations and in-depth interviews of vipassana meditation practitioners in Israel and the United States. The findings illustrate how bodily sensations are used as indexes to psychological states, emotions, and past experiences, while constant awareness of embodied responses is used as a tool for self-monitoring. The paper follows the interaction between discursive and embodied modes of reflexivity and the attempt to shift from one mode to the other. I suggest that currently popular practices of embodied awareness, from meditation to yoga, are based on embodied self-reflexivity and are part of the postindustrial culture of self-awareness.

“You see, now, while I am talking to you, I can feel the ends of my toes. Isn’t that an amazing thing?” (Interview with Gabriel, August 2006)

When I first heard the above statement from a practitioner of vipassana meditation, I did not quite understand the significance of the experience he described. What is so exciting about feeling your toes? As I continued to follow and speak with other meditators, I came to understand that this hyperawareness of the body is at the base of meditation, and for meditators, it is a source of healing and self-transformative experiences. In fact, this awareness of the body is the anchor for an important form of self-reflexivity.

When examining the sociological literature for discussions of the body as an anchor for self-reflexivity, one discovers that previous studies of selfhood and self-reflexivity are focused on language and communication. Self-reflexivity is frequently referred to as “internal conversation”, and language is assumed to be the main channel through which individuals can relate to themselves. Studies of the self have focused on conversations, confessions, and diaries—all discursive tools that serve as anchors for self-reflexivity. Yet this focus on words has neglected other, more hidden forms of reflection, which are more difficult to track.

My ethnographic research in vipassana meditation centers strengthened my belief that the existing models of selfhood are inadequate to explain the importance of the body in self-reflexivity. Though vipassana meditation, a Theravada Buddhist practice, is an introspection technique, and the word for meditation (in either Pali or Sanskrit) is best translated as “mental culture,” there seems to be less of the mental and much more of the physical in the experience of meditation. Vipassana meditation is a reflexive practice, but this reflexivity is not abstract or discursive—it is anchored in the body. In meditation, in order to know oneself, one does not speak either with another or with oneself. Instead, self-knowledge is anchored in bodily sensations.

In this paper, the term *self-reflexivity* refers to the conscious turning of the individual toward himself, simultaneously being the observing subject and the observed object, a process that includes both self-knowledge and self-monitoring. I further suggest an analytic distinction between two modes of reflexivity. The first is *discursive self-reflexivity*, a process based predominantly on language, in which the relation with oneself unfolds through a symbolic medium, by way of practices such as talking to oneself or talking to others. The second is *embodied self-reflexivity*, a process based predominantly on feeling the body, in which the relation with oneself unfolds through a corporeal medium by way of practices that increase awareness of sensations, such as meditation, yoga, and dance. The distinction between the two modes is nonexhaustive and analytic in nature, since I do not preclude the possibility of other modes of reflexivity, and as we shall see, self-reflexive events can include both modes. This paper, therefore, follows the cultivation of an embodied mode of self-reflexivity, while shedding light on the ways it interacts with discursive modes of self-relations.

Theoretical Frameworks

In spite of the recent interest in self and reflexivity as a dimension of modern culture, the microsociological study of self-reflexive processes remains a neglected avenue for empirical research. As Archer (2003) claims, the actual process of self-reflexivity remains in a “black box”, and many sociologists assume it to be a vague, unified process. This unified process is typically identified with linguistic abilities, and self-reflexivity is assumed to be a discursive act.

The emphasis on discursivity stems from the assumption that language is the only medium through which reflexivity takes place. Indeed, language is a natural candidate for the production of self-reflexivity, since it has an easily accessible reflexive capacity. Just by saying the word “I”, a person turns herself into an object to which she can relate. Through language, one

can speak about oneself with others, produce biographical narratives, and engage in inner dialogues. G. H. Mead (1934:142) went so far as to claim, “I know of no other form of behavior than the linguistic in which the individual is an object to himself, and so, as far as I can see, the individual is not a self in the reflexive sense unless he is an object to himself.” The individual, Mead (1934) argued, cannot experience himself directly, but only through the public medium of language.

This linguistic monopoly has become axiomatic in sociology. Though sociologists acknowledge the role of the body in producing a “sense of substantivity” (Weigert and Gecas 2003), self-reflexivity is seen as dependent on the capacity to communicate via symbols and as “anchored in language, communication, and social interaction” (Gecas and Burke 1995:41). Since, from this perspective, the objectification of the self takes place through a discursive channel, the outcome of this reflexive process is a symbolic and abstract self-image often referred to as the “self-concept” or the “conceptualized self” (Rosenberg 1979; Demo 1992). These abstract images may include a physical aspect, manifested in emotions such as shame or pride (Scheff 1997), yet this physical dimension is not considered central to the actual *cognitive* process of reflexivity (*cognitive* here being defined in the narrow sense of thinking as reasoning; see Mead 1934:173). Embodied experience, therefore, is viewed as distinct from self-reflexivity. Sensual feelings are considered prereflective, and internal conversations are required in order to enter a reflexive mode.

This emphasis on language as the main source of self-reflexivity has led to, in Wiley’s (1994:166) terms, an “upward reduction” of the self. This effect is illustrated by the abundance of studies on discursive practices of self-reflexivity such as talking to others, reading books, and writing private journals. This emphasis should not come as a surprise, since discursive self-

reflexive practices are central to "reflexive modernity," with the growing popularity of the "talking cure" in contemporary culture (Giddens 1991; Rose 1996; Illouz 2007). Still, side-by-side with discursive practices, we witness a growing number of activities that cultivate embodied awareness, from meditation to yoga to biofeedback. Vipassana meditation is one instance of this form of cultivation, aiming to replace the internal conversation in one's mind with a different kind of self-reflexivity: an embodied kind.

To move the discussion away from the virtual internal conversation toward embodied experience, I draw on Merleau-Ponty and the phenomenology of the body. Merleau-Ponty attempts to step back from abstract representations of the self and to locate the "being in the world"—to capture individual experience from an embodied perspective. As if directly disputing Mead's claim that self-consciousness can never be achieved through direct experience, Merleau-Ponty writes ([1945] 2002: 432): "At the root of all our experiences and all our reflections, we find, then, a being which immediately recognizes itself ... not by observation and as a given fact, nor by inference from any idea of itself, but through direct contact with that experience." The kind of self-recognition that Merleau-Ponty describes is quite different from the Meadian symbolic, role-taking self-recognition described in *Mind, Self, and Society* (1934). Such self-consciousness is far from the "symbolic self-awareness" suggested by Mead and in fact is closer to Mead's notion of immediacy. However, Mead maintained a strict distinction between immediate experience and self-consciousness, even while emphasizing the notion of immediacy as the first phase of the semiotic act. It is only when we return to Mead's earlier writings (e.g., Mead 1903) that we find that Mead did support "the belief that the 'I' could be immediately experienced" (Joas 1985: 86-87). As Joas writes, this emphasis produced a contradiction between Mead's known theory of the social genesis of the self and Mead's earlier claim that "the self is

directly accessible to reflection” (Joas 1985:87). And yet, if we take this immediacy of experience of the “I” to be a different kind of self-awareness, a somatic one, then this contradiction may be resolved.

For a definition of the somatic self, I turn to recent studies in neuroscience. These studies demonstrate that underneath the level of linguistic, abstract, symbolic self-recognition, there is another kind of self-consciousness or self-awareness. From Damasio’s (1999) perspective the idea is quite simple—the central nervous system constantly monitors the organism, producing a “map” of inner states that gives the organism stability. This map is generally unconscious. And yet, whenever the self enters a relation with any object (be it real or imaginary), a second-order map is produced. This second-order map is made of sensations produced by the body. Through these second-order sensations, an individual senses the present situation—whether it is desirable or not—and responds to it. The somatic map is therefore an inner sense that “conveys a powerful nonverbal message regarding the relationship between the organism and the object” (Damasio 1999:125).

This resonates with Merleau-Ponty’s claim that “the body is the mirror of our being” (2002:198). Concurrent to sensing the world, we can sense ourselves sensing the world. The body carries a reflexive capacity, defined by Franks (2003:623) as “mute reflexivity.” It reacts to the world by producing sensations—pain, heat, itchiness, change of heart rate, electricity, muscle tension—of the second order, outcomes of the first-order sensory information that the individual receives from the world. These second-order sensations are the somatic map of the self, a map based on sensual, nonverbal systems of meanings. While first-order sensations, produced, for example, by a touch, a smell, or an image, do not yet carry relevance to the self, second-order sensations certainly do. They carry meaning. They are not just free-floating sensations that

require interpretation; they are already the interpretation themselves.

This mute reflexivity can take place without conscious awareness or deliberate self-control. We can start running long before we realize that we are afraid. When we feel pain, we automatically move to ease the pain. Some of these responses are acquired over the life course and are based on our social and cultural surroundings. Some are genetically hard-wired and may be shared by humans and animals alike. The important point is that as human beings, we can attempt to affect these embodied feedback loops consciously and deliberately. Such attempts characterize practices that deliberately raise embodied awareness, leading to heightened modes of embodied self-reflexivity.

The Practice of Vipassana Meditation

Though the body has natural reflexive capacities, in order to use it as the main source for conscious self-reflexivity one must undergo extensive training. This rigorous preparation suggests that embodied self-reflexivity can be cultivated and is dependent on the social and cultural surroundings of the practitioner. Vipassana meditation is not a simple technique that one can learn from a book. It is taught in meditation centers, in an environment that allows the body to take the leading role in lived experience.

The first and most important condition in these meditation centers is the avoidance of verbal and nonverbal communication, including reading, writing, and eye contact. Students do listen to meditation instructions and are able to ask for necessities or report a problem, but the majority of each day is dedicated to the silence of meditation. This withdrawal from discursive practices allows for the emergence of the body as the central experience. Meditation aims to decrease the inner conversation in the mind, since concentrating on bodily sensations is considered a key to introspection.

The main aim of vipassana meditation is to become aware of the nuances of bodily sensations, observing them with equanimity. Awareness here is understood as giving full attention, deliberately concentrating one's mind on sensual experience. This kind of awareness, also referred to as mindfulness, involves both body and mind in a synchronized process. While a part of the mind always monitors somatic information, in vipassana meditation the sensations of the body, and nothing else, become the center of attention, as the meditator attempts to feel every minute physical detail. Students are specifically instructed not to visualize their body parts, but instead to concentrate on feeling the body. Therefore, though the term "observation" is frequently used as a metaphor for the process of meditation, actual physical observation is discouraged.

The meditation technique involves moving one's attention slowly from head to toe, patch by patch, feeling whatever is happening in the body in each specific patch where the attention rests. A patch is an area around one or two inches square. If the meditator does not feel a sensation on the body in one patch, she is asked to wait one minute, concentrating on this area, and then move on. Whenever the meditator comes across a sensation, be it pain or itchiness, a pleasant or unpleasant feeling, she is asked to respond always in the same way, with full attention but without moving, speaking, or reacting emotionally. This nonreactive response aims to break the habitual embodied feedback loop—if usually, when in pain, the meditator tries to ease the pain by moving, now she is asked to break this pattern and simply observe. Though the pain can become quite extreme, she is asked to continue giving attention to the body without changing her posture or opening her eyes.

Naturally, to remain in the nondiscursive realm of sensations for extended periods of time requires a long process of cultivation. For new students in the first days of a course, meditation

still includes a strong inner discursive element, as they fight their minds, trying to avoid thoughts and concentrate on sensations. An external observer can easily differentiate between the first days of the course and the last day. While in the first days I typically observed numerous movements in the meditation hall, on the ninth day the hall was usually completely silent, and most students sat with their eyes closed and bodies still for a full hour. Of course, corporal silence is not identical to mental silence, but meditators report that the two are strongly correlated. This does not mean that all the students completely abstain from thinking during this whole hour. It also does not mean that in their everyday life meditators do not search for the causes of their sensations or engage in internal conversations. In fact, as we shall see, they frequently move from one mode of reflexivity to the other. Still, as students advance in meditation, they report that the body becomes increasingly central in their inner self-relations.

Peter is in his thirties, a professor of computer science at a top university in the United States. He took his first vipassana meditation course when he was studying in France, a few years before our interview. During this time in France, he was very intimidated by the French students and their somewhat anti-American attitude, as he perceived it. Here, he describes his return from his first meditation course, when he used his body in a systematic and conscious way as a medium for self-reflexivity:

*I saw the physical aspect of that fear immediately, that was the thing that changed the most. I got back on Sunday, and Monday went back to school, and I'm just walking down the street, and it is a fairly long street and you know that that is where you are heading, and that everyone that pass you are coming from that school, and I saw right away the clinching in the stomach, and my shoulders going up and my heartbeat, my heart started racing, my breath getting shallow, and I mean, that was nothing new, just *noticing* that was something new, and everything I heard in the course, that every reaction has a physical component, and that if you learn to be detached from the physical component your state of mind can also be detached, and it was immediately clear and also incredibly liberating, *that if I stop and watch my heart racing I could stop that process, slow it down.* [emphasis added]*

In order to follow the self-reflexive process that took place in this event, it is important to break it down into the different response loops that were in play. Peter was walking on the street that led to his school. The first embodied process that took place was the perception of the street and the French students. This perception produced a strong bodily reaction consisting of second-order sensations. His strong embodied reaction was the somatic representation of the relation between Peter and the world, a world that at that moment consisted of the French students. This was not an intended response and in fact can be seen as a subconscious habitual reaction, of the type that carries the cultural and social world in which the individual lives. Indeed, for Peter, his conceptions regarding French students and the way they viewed him, the American, were at the base of his response.

The next step in the event is the conscious awareness of this bodily response. As Peter said, the awareness was “what changed the most” after he completed his ten-day meditation course, since the bodily response “was nothing new, just *noticing* that was something new.” This awareness transformed bodily sensations (the heartbeat, the shallow breath) from a reaction to the students into a message regarding the state of the self, thus turning the body into a mirroring agent. The somatic self was brought into consciousness.

For Peter, this awareness brought with it a moment of verbal interpretation, which raised the event closer to the discursive level: he explicitly connected his bodily sensations with the notion of fear. To name specific sensations “fear” requires an appraisal of second-order sensations combined with an assessment of contextual cues from the environment, cues that for humans are often based on symbolic worlds of meaning. This discursive aspect became even more central in my interview with Peter—here, he continued in the discursive self-reflexive

mode by connecting his fear to the French students, to his cultural position as an American, to the way others viewed him, and to the way he viewed himself.

These layers of interpretations illustrate how second-order sensations, such as elevated heart rate and shallow breath, can go through processes of verbal translation that attach titles and causes to embodied experiences. However, I would like to accentuate the bodily dimension of Peter's self-reflexive event. According to Peter, the moment of verbal interpretation was followed by a turn to an embodied self-reflexive channel, the one he had learned in the meditation course. Instead of thinking about his fear, he attempted to monitor his body's reaction by calming or relaxing the physical elements of his emotional response; he attempted to observe his sensations.

But what does it mean to “watch my heart racing”? An excerpt from my field notes, taken while participating in a meditation course in Israel, illustrates the details of the embodied loop of self-monitoring that constitutes this process:

By now the sensations in the body are clear. I can feel them constantly. I saw a cockroach in the bathroom yesterday.... I jumped back and let out a heavy breath. I didn't know what to do. For one moment I wanted to cry for help.... I spent most of the night awake. The sensations on the body were so intense. Sensations creeping around, such unpleasant sensations, top to bottom. I cannot really describe them. Like being nauseous and a little sick and an unpleasant shivering. I attempted to direct my attention to these sensations, scan them slowly. It did help. Once in a while the picture of the cockroach entered my mind and again I felt a strong desire to leave the room, and again I attempted to redirect my attention to the body. When I was truly observing the sensations I felt a relaxation—though the sensations were still unpleasant, they were suddenly bearable.

This description illustrates well the reflexive capacity of the body. As in the previous example, we see how a perception of an external object (the cockroach) led to the production of second-order sensations that carried a message regarding the state of the self. These sensations were the interpretation of the situation, an interpretation presented through an embodied medium. Being extremely unpleasant, these sensations called for action that would change the situation. In this

case, they led to a strong desire to leave the room. Even after the actual event, when the image of the feared object reemerged in the mind, these sensations escalated, and with them the desire to carry out a self-protective response.

In the attempt to monitor this desire, the first step taken was to move attention from the feared object to the embodied sensations and to be aware of these sensations without reacting to them. This nonreaction interrupted the automatic flow of the reflexive feedback loops that usually lead to a self-protective response. By not moving, not screaming, not allowing fear to take its regular behavior course, an embodied distance is generated between the second-order sensations and the self.

As one trains oneself to be attentive to embodied signals, the practice of observing sensations becomes a habit of monitoring the self. In fact, most practitioners use bodily scans regularly, to “check themselves,” as they say. This checking involves moving attention over the body, being aware of sensations. It can be done every moment in everyday life—sometimes deliberately, and sometimes as a habit. The checking helps a meditator to “catch himself,” another common term meditators use. To catch oneself means to catch a change in the somatic map of the self as early as possible (by using bodily indexes) and to monitor this change by observing bodily sensations. To check oneself and to catch oneself are both practices of self-reflexivity that are anchored in bodily awareness.

Shifting Modes of Reflexivity

For many students of meditation, the notion that one uses the body as a medium for self-reflection is not necessarily followed by a departure from other, more discursive practices of reflexivity. There are practitioners of meditation who go to therapy once a week, discuss their inner states with their friends, or write personal diaries. As we have seen above, they tend to give

interpretations to sensations and to follow these interpretations in writing their diaries or in talking with others. They constantly move from the embodied realm to the discursive realm, and some meditators even told me that they think these two forms of self-knowledge are complementary. Yet as meditators progress to more advanced levels, the body becomes more and more central in their everyday practice of self-reflexivity.

As meditators report, the centrality of the discursive or the embodied mode of reflexivity can depend on the quality and quantity of meditation. Thomas, for example, before he began meditating, invented his own self-reflexive practice: writing down the things he would like to change in himself. This would include commands to himself such as, “Stop eating so many sweets” or “When you work, concentrate on your work.” In order to increase the self-reflexive aspect of this exercise, he used to go back to this “ideal self” list and mark the accomplishments he had made and the changes that were still needed.

When I met him after his first meditation course, he had completely stopped the management of this list. He told me that he did not need it anymore. And yet, after a year, he gradually came back to the habit and started writing again. This time, the commands included many references to meditation: “When meditating, don’t move for the whole hour” or “Remember that when in everyday life you react, then the whole point of meditation is lost.” He even told me that while in the midst of a meditation course he missed having this tool (since he was not allowed to write) and tried to remember some insights he had during the course in order to add them later to his list.

Six months later, I asked Thomas again about his ideal behavior list. “I still have it,” he answered, “but you know, I haven’t looked at it for a while. I don’t know—I think that in the last period my meditations were good and then I don’t really need that list.” I asked him why, and he

said it seemed to him that when the meditation was good, the things on the list just fell into place. I then asked him what he meant by “good meditation,” and he answered that it meant “that I am with the bodily sensations all the time.” His main channel of self-monitoring changed, from writing down the way he acted and should act to an embodied involvement with his urges and desires.

For Thomas, to be completely “with” sensations meant that embodied self-reflexivity had become a habit of everyday life. Many advanced meditators offer similar descriptions in which their daily self-monitoring “just fell into place.” For example, when I asked Michelle, who had been practicing meditation for the last six years, if in daily life she deliberately observes her sensations, she answered that it happens without any deliberate thought: “When I have a strong sensation, or something changes in the body, I do not tell myself – ‘observe your sensations now’ – it happens naturally, I just find myself aware of these sensations, observing them.” In these situations, meditators do not name a sensation or search for its cause. The tendency to enter internal conversations regarding “What do I feel and why?” was replaced by a mute awareness of the corporeal dimension that accompanies self-states.

The above “falling into place” manifests a monitoring loop that is constantly in motion, in which one is aware of bodily sensations and monitors actions, needs, and desires by monitoring bodily reactions. In order for this feedback loop to take a primary role in everyday life, it must be constantly maintained through meditation. With the decline of meditation, this mode of reflexivity declines. Most vipassana meditators reported that when they do not meditate they feel their emotional reactions begin to fall out of balance, and their control over their behavior and responses decreases. Many meditators added that they need a meditation retreat of a few days to balance themselves again and to regain access to their bodily sensations. They need

to go back to an environment in which discursive acts are forced to a minimum, and in which they can cultivate full attention to the body while monitoring embodied reactions.

Conclusion: Generalization and Future Research

This study exemplifies Merleau-Ponty's claim that the body is a "mirror of our being" (2002:198). By shifting attention to sensations in their bodies, meditators start sensing themselves sensing the world. They become aware of the somatic self, which consists of endless embodied feedback loops that are part of their beings. Such awareness can lead to interpretations and meaning-makings that take place in a discursive realm, as one engages in internal conversations, connecting bodily experiences to symbolic worlds of meaning. Yet if the body takes over and becomes the main channel for self-monitoring, a different mode of reflexivity is revealed. Here, self-to-self relations take place through the monitoring of the nonverbal meaning hidden in somatic images. By relaxing certain embodied responses and habitualizing new responses, a meditator can monitor his or her emotional and mental state.

Students arrive at meditation courses with a tendency to translate sensations into the discursive realm, to search for causes and give titles. A long process of cultivation is required in order to reduce this tendency and increase the centrality of embodied monitoring. We can therefore situate the self-reflexive events discussed above on a continuum. On one end of this continuum are symbolic internal conversations that are distanced from bodily experience. On the other end are embodied processes that monitor the nonverbal semiotics of second-order sensations. In between these extremes, self-reflexive events that begin with the body can involve different levels of discursivity. One can monitor sensations without giving them any discursive interpretations or verbal titles, being completely "with" sensations. One can merely state the name of an emotional or bodily state. One can state the name and search for the cause. And one

can build narratives and stories that are based on a bodily experience, leaving behind the sensation and moving to a purely discursive mode of reflexivity. Vipassana meditation aims to strengthen the embodied side of this continuum of self-reflexivity, and as students advance in meditation, the centrality of their body in self-reflexive events is enhanced.

Though embodied self-reflexivity is based on the preverbal reflexive capacity of the body, it is by no means a presocial process. As I have stated, second-order sensations carry meaning, and this meaning is anchored in the social and cultural world in which the individual lives. Our embodied reactions to the world are based on previous interactions, and for human beings these interactions are predominantly social. French students and cockroaches, therefore, turn into objects of fear in specific cultural and social environments. From this perspective, our body is not only a mirror of our being; it is a mirror of our social world. The conscious monitoring of embodied sensations offers a channel through which the relation of the self with the social world can be monitored and transformed.

The question remains whether we can use the framework presented in this study to shed light on everyday life situations that do not necessarily carry an intentional cultivation of self-awareness. Though further research is required to affirm this claim, I suggest that situations that are accompanied by heightened awareness of the body, such as dance, athletics, physical labor, childbirth, illness, and healing convey dimensions of embodied self-reflexivity. These situations include giving attention to bodily sensations, relaxing different embodied reactions and attempting to monitor the nonverbal meaning hidden in somatic images, and may naturally lead to a mode of reflexivity similar to the one meditators intentionally cultivate and enhance.

The framework of embodied self-reflexivity offers a fresh perspective on a variety of social situations and practices. For example, while the study of “working out” commonly stresses

the objectification of the body, analyzing this practice as an embodied self-reflexive process can shed light on important aspects of fitness culture. In a “good” workout, thoughts are completely absent, and full attention is given to the body. Pain and high muscle tone, sensations that usually index an undesirable situation, are observed without reaction. The aftermath of this process includes a strong feeling of relaxation that involves both body and mind. From this perspective, working out does not lead to an alienation from the body, but instead facilitates a new form of self-anchoring. Likewise, I suggest that fasting, a common religious and spiritual practice, involves mental and emotional alteration based on embodied awareness. During the process of fasting, bodily sensations such as hunger, weakness, and dizziness are at the center of attention, and the individual exercises observing and accepting these sensations. This acceptance leads to feelings of empowerment and euphoria, commonly reported by religious practitioners or people with eating disorders. A thorough empirical study of these cases will reveal the interaction between discursive and embodied modes of reflexivity, shedding light on self-to-self relations that are based on feeling and sensing the body.

To conclude, the framework of embodied self-reflexivity balances the common view that gives language the main role in inner self-relations. Such a framework suggests that we can use the body consciously and reflexively just as we can use communication and language. It reveals that self-reflexivity can operate through different channels, using different tools. One can train in, cultivate, and specialize in different forms of self-reflexivity, and different cultures have indeed put more emphasis on certain forms over others. Further research is needed to continue to reveal the centrality of the body in our relations with ourselves and to shed light on different contexts that lead to the rise of embodied inner conversations.

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