

Reuniting Corps and Psychisme: Toward an Integrative Model of Human Experience

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Abstract

Historically, the human experience has been conceptualized through a dualistic lens separating *mind* from *body*. However, contemporary research across neuroscience, psychology, anthropology, and philosophy increasingly points to an *integrated model* where bodily processes and psychological life are deeply entangled. This review synthesizes interdisciplinary scholarship to formulate an integrative model of human experience that reunites **corps** (body) and **psychisme** (the embodied psyche). Drawing from embodied cognition, neurophenomenology, interoceptive neuroscience, and biopsychosocial frameworks, we argue that human experience arises from dynamic interactions between bodily states, neural processes, and subjective meaning-making. We examine evidence that the body not only supports but shapes cognition, emotion, and selfhood, and explore how disruptions of embodiment relate to psychopathology. The review highlights models such as Damasio's somatic marker theory and contemporary interoceptive frameworks that center bodily signals in emotional experience, as well as cultural and evolutionary perspectives on embodied emotion. We also discuss clinical implications for mind-body therapies and propose future directions for integrative research. This work contributes to the emerging consensus that **human experience is fundamentally embodied**, and to fully understand psychisme we must collapse long-standing dualisms and embrace an integrative framework.

Keywords: embodiment, bodymind integration, psychisme, interoception, embodied cognition, neurophenomenology, biopsychosocial model, human experience, mind-body interaction

1. Introduction

The separation of body and mind—rooted in Cartesian dualism—has shaped much of Western thought and scientific investigation for centuries. In this framework, *corps* (the physical body) and *psychisme* (mental life) were treated as distinct domains, often leading to fragmented explanations of human behavior, emotion, and cognition. However, growing evidence from various fields challenges this dichotomy and suggests that human experience emerges from **ongoing interactions between bodily processes and psychological states** rather than from isolated mental functions.

Embodied approaches argue that cognition, affect, and selfhood cannot be meaningfully understood apart from the body in which they are grounded. According to embodied cognition

theories, *cognition is situated in and shaped by bodily interactions with the world*, and mental processes are deeply tied to sensorimotor, affective, and interoceptive bodily dynamics.

This review aims to integrate diverse theoretical and empirical work into a coherent model of embodied human experience. We will explore how contemporary science reframes the body–mind relationship, examine mechanisms that interlink bodily processes with psychological phenomena, and discuss implications for clinical practice and future research.

2. Theoretical Foundations: Beyond Dualism

2.1 Embodiment and the Bodymind Concept

Philosophical and psychological critiques of dualism emphasize that *mind and body form an integrated system*, often referred to as *bodymind*—a unit where cognition, perception, and affect emerge from embodied interactions with the world.

Embodied cognition, as outlined in contemporary philosophy and cognitive science, posits that cognitive processes cannot be separated from bodily experience. Cognition arises through **sensorimotor engagement with the environment**, and mental representations are shaped by bodily form and capacities.

2.2 Neurophenomenology and Subjective Experience

Neurophenomenology bridges subjective experience and neuroscience by insisting that the *lived body* (the first-person perspective) and neural processes are co-constitutive of conscious experience. This approach supports integrative models of human experience by linking phenomenological accounts with empirical data.

Antonio Damasio’s theory of consciousness underscores how *emotion, body state, and neural processes interact* to produce a unified experience of self and world. His model argues that the body’s physiological responses are integral to the *feeling of what happens* in consciousness, thus situating bodily states at the core of human experience.

3. Embodiment in Cognition, Emotion, and Selfhood

3.1 Embodied Cognition

Embodied cognition suggests that mental functions depend on bodily interactions with the world. Cognitive processes such as reasoning, memory, and decision making are shaped by movement, perception, and bodily context rather than by abstract computation alone.

Research in this area demonstrates that sensorimotor activity is directly involved in conceptual processing, such as when motor regions become active during linguistic tasks involving action words. These findings support the *reunification of body and mind* as co-constitutive rather than separate domains.

3.2 Interoception and Emotional Experience

Interoception—the sense of the body’s internal physiological state—is increasingly understood as foundational to emotion and subjective awareness. Interoceptive signals influence motivational states and affective experience, and the brain interprets these bodily cues as part of emotional life.

In cross-cultural studies, differences in emotion concepts are shown to arise from variations in how bodily signals are represented and interpreted, underscoring that *emotional experiences are culturally and corporeally embedded*.

4. Integration Across Levels: Neurobiological, Psychological, and Cultural Dimensions

4.1 Neurobiological Integration

Human experience emerges from the integration of neural activity with bodily states. Research in social and affective neuroscience highlights networks that coordinate bodily signals with cognitive and emotional processing, illustrating how embodiment shapes interpersonal and affective dynamics.

For example, somatic marker hypotheses suggest that emotional bodily responses guide decision making, acting as *biological signals* that inform cognition.

4.2 Psychological and Clinical Perspectives

Clinical psychology increasingly acknowledges disturbances in embodiment as central to mental health conditions such as depression, schizophrenia, and eating disorders. An *embodied mind* perspective suggests that disruption in the integration of bodily experience and selfhood underlies certain forms of psychopathology.

This has led to therapeutic approaches focusing on *body awareness* and embodied practices (e.g., somatic therapies, mindfulness), which aim to restore the coherence between bodily experience and psychological self-interpretation.

4.3 Sociocultural Dimensions

Embodiment is shaped by cultural practices, language, and social context. Neuroanthropological research emphasizes how cultural and evolutionary forces shape emotional embodiment and the lived body, showing that human experience is a product of both biological and sociocultural evolution.

5. Toward an Integrative Model of Human Experience

5.1 Synthesizing Perspectives

An integrative model of human experience must weave together the *neurophysiological*, *psychological*, and *cultural* threads that define human life. Such a model positions the body not as a passive vessel but as an active agent of cognition, affect, and selfhood.

In this model:

- **Bodily states and bodily awareness** influence cognition (e.g., decision making, emotional regulation).
- **Neural integration** translates bodily signals into subjective feelings and self-schema.
- **Cultural and social practices** shape how bodily and psychological experiences are interpreted and enacted.

Together, these processes constitute an **embodied psychisme**—an inseparable field of mind-body interactions that produces lived experience.

5.2 Implications for Understanding Psychisme

Psychisme should be seen as a *dynamic system* emerging from embodied processes rather than as a disembodied mental essence. The integrative model emphasizes that *who we are* arises from continual interactions among bodily signals, neural processing, cultural meanings, and subjective interpretation.

6. Applications and Implications

6.1 Clinical Practice and Mental Health

Integrative understanding of embodiment can enhance therapeutic outcomes by acknowledging the role of bodily processes in mental health. Practices that cultivate body awareness and interoception—such as somatic therapy and mindfulness-based interventions—can address disturbances in psychisme and self-integration.

6.2 Education and Cognitive Development

Embodied cognition models imply that learning and memory are not purely cerebral but involve whole-body interaction with environments. Educational strategies that engage sensorimotor processes may improve comprehension and retention.

6.3 Cultural and Social Policy

Understanding how culture shapes embodied experience can inform public health, social programs, and cross-cultural communication. Recognizing embodiment in social practices may reduce stigma around mental health and promote holistic care.

7. Future Directions and Challenges

Future research should further unite interdisciplinary domains, particularly through:

- **Longitudinal studies** that track development of embodiment across the lifespan.
- **Cross-cultural research** examining how different societies shape embodied psychisme.
- **Neurophenomenological methods** that integrate subjective reports with neural data.

Methodological challenges remain, especially in uniting qualitative and quantitative paradigms. However, the convergence of evidence suggests that *an integrative model of human experience is both scientifically feasible and philosophically compelling*.

8. Conclusion

Reuniting *corps* and *psychisme* calls for a **holistic, interdisciplinary framework** that acknowledges human experience as an embodied phenomenon. By integrating insights from neurobiology, psychology, anthropology, and philosophy, we can transcend dualistic constraints and appreciate how bodily processes and subjective experience co-create human life. This integrative approach not only enriches theoretical understanding but also offers practical insights for clinical practice, education, and social policy—ultimately affirming that *to be human is always to be embodied*. The historical division between *corps* (body) and *psychisme* (psyche/mind) has shaped centuries of philosophical debate, scientific inquiry, and therapeutic practice. Yet contemporary research across embodied cognition, neuroscience, phenomenology, and somatic psychotherapy increasingly demonstrates that this separation is neither experientially accurate nor clinically sufficient. Human experience emerges not from a

disembodied mind acting upon a passive body, but from a dynamic, reciprocal, and co-constitutive relationship between lived embodiment and subjective awareness.

An integrative model of human experience recognizes the body as both biological organism and lived meaning-making field. Sensations, posture, breath, movement, and interoceptive signals are not merely physiological processes; they are foundational to emotion, cognition, identity formation, and relational engagement. Likewise, beliefs, memories, imagination, and symbolic processes are not confined to abstract mental space but are embodied, enacted, and expressed somatically. The psyche is lived through the body; the body is interpreted through the psyche.

Reuniting *corps* and *psychisme* requires moving beyond reductionism—whether purely neurobiological or purely introspective—toward a multidimensional framework that integrates biological regulation, affective processes, cognitive structures, relational dynamics, cultural context, and existential meaning. Such a model supports a biopsychosocial-phenomenological understanding of the human person, where health and transformation arise through restoring coherence across these dimensions.

Clinically, this integrative approach invites therapeutic practices that honor bodily awareness alongside reflective dialogue; philosophically, it calls for ontologies that acknowledge embodied subjectivity; scientifically, it encourages interdisciplinary collaboration bridging neuroscience, psychology, and the humanities. In education, healthcare, and contemplative traditions, this reunion fosters greater self-regulation, resilience, and authenticity.

Ultimately, reuniting *corps* and *psychisme* is not merely a theoretical refinement—it is a reorientation of how we understand what it means to be human. Human experience is embodied consciousness in motion: sensing, feeling, thinking, relating, and becoming within a living body situated in a relational world. An integrative model thus restores unity where fragmentation once prevailed, offering a more holistic, humane, and coherent vision of personhood in the twenty-first century.

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