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# Poetics of Life A Study of Human Movement in a Somatic Perspective

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*Abstract* - All the joints of my body were breathing alive and dancing ... it was a feeling of open presence...a sparkling feeling of being totally alive... (Engel, 2006, p.110) eller 2007 FQS?

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# Poetics of Life A Study of Human Movement in a Somatic Perspective

Lis Engel <sup>α</sup> & Charlotte Svendler Nielsen <sup>σ</sup>

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Our research interest is focused on experiential understandings of human movement dynamics and experiential dimensions of joy and aliveness as important qualitative dimensions of lived practices.

In this article we focus on embodied experiences of aliveness and lived meaning through a phenomenological study of contemporary somatic dance training. It is the intention to cast light on a nuanced and qualitative understanding of movement as an embodied and dynamic meaning making process that happens through subtle bodily micro movements and rhythms as cultural and personal experience-expression. It is an understanding that is anchored in somatic body awareness techniques and in the phenomenology of human movement as a co-creation of the event. Human movement is understood as the flow and articulation of possible rhythms and tonalities of the event, at one and the same time a concrete bodily articulation as a co-creation of experiential-expressive possibilities of rhythms, relationship and meaning. Different situations and contexts open up into diverse landscapes of practice-different modes, experiences, styles, and motives as the articulation of both personal and cultural ways of how it is possible and desirable to live. Each individual person develops his or her own special repertoires and ways to meet life. This manifests itself through the dynamic repertoires of skills, attunements, rhythms and intensities; in combination we call this the musicality of the event as articulated and made real through human action. We understand the musicality of movement as a fundamental dynamic dimension of people's conscious and unconscious communication with the world; and thus as a crucial, qualitative dimension of the experience of health as aliveness, vitality, joie de vivre, and meaning. Human movement is the element that we live through.

Our research interests are inspired from a variety of somatic and artistic bodily practices and our interest in movement techniques and how they can change the lived experience of self and world and be experienced as what they mean for experiencing joie de vivre – understood as deepening sense of presence, of

belonging and of possible intensities and meanings beyond the functional and the strategic. The theoretical base is rooted in a phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1960, 1962, 1964; Engel, 2007, 2008; Svendler Nielsen, 2012). Besides being informed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology our work is also inspired by Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's phenomenology of movement (1998, 1999) and by several aesthetic and art-pedagogical theories of the connectedness of bodily learning, aesthetic practice and experience (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004; Deleuze, 1994; Shusterman, 2000/1992, 2000, 2002; Williams, 2003). In sum, our work is grounded in a practical-theoretical interest that takes as its point of departure an organic paradigm in which lived body, lived space, lived time and lived meaning continually are co-created as the lived reality (Todres, 2007; van Manen, 1990).

## 1. Micromovements of the Joints of the Body

The introductory quote for this article describes a movement experience of intense aliveness articulated through the body's micro-movements and how they are related to an embodied attunement of an experience of openness—a quality that connects the micromovements of the joints to experiential qualities of joy and aliveness expressed as "a sparkling feeling of being totally alive". This brings to mind Merleau-Ponty's suggestion that the joints of the body are a meaningful metaphor for our relationship to the world. He refers to the joints of the body as cavities or spaces within which movement generates a special exchange and flow, simultaneously transforming the body and the world. Thus, dynamic bodily articulation and the intensity of the felt sense and experience and meaning are woven together to "allow reality to come to expression" (Gill, 1991, p. 66). Thus, movement is understood as a continuously (re-)creative process in the direct bodily articulation of the living realization of the moment (Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1991/1999; Depraz, Varela & Vermersch, 2003). It's all about the how of movement, which always connects an action's what, where, who, and why with an expanded understanding of the possible qualities and modalities of movement as "a multiplicity of perspectives on the same subject and an interchange of perspectives on various subjects" (Deleuze, 2003, p. 208) and as "a means of re-creating

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the world in concordance with human values" (Merleau-Ponty, 1960, p.86).

## II. The Creation of the Joy of Breathing

In order to create a palpable and qualitatively nuanced understanding of a movement's articulation as the production of intensities we have selected examples from work with Skinner Releasing as a pedagogical and artistic dance practice. Skinner Releasing is a somatic and artistic dance practice that is deeply absorbed in exploring and experimenting with the practice of movement as the production of intensities and qualitative potentials. It has to do with movement as a dynamic interweaving of body and world articulated through the rhythms, tonalities or musicality of movement and imagination. Even the smallest, simplest movement is at the same time an experience-expression that opens up to a continuum of articulation as sensitivity, experiential qualities and intensities that can open in to movement's imagination as meaningful landscapes – or expressed with Gaston Bachelard's beautiful metaphor: "the creation of the joy of breathing" (Bachelard, 1988/2002, p. 2). Interest for the qualities of movement is not only in the structure and functionality of movement, but also, and always, in a movement's musicality as connections between movement as form and energy, experienced and expressed through the articulation and imagination of movement and all forms of symbolic languages. (Bachelard, 1988/2002, p. 2).

## III. Somatic Dance Technique – Mindfulness in Movement

We have both participated in courses of Skinner Releasing Technique™. It is a dance technique that continually explores the interconnections between images, language and movement. Some of the characteristics of this dance is a deep awareness toward the felt sense of the living now 1) Intensification of the felt sense of movement itself. 2) Intensified awareness of movements between the small joints of the body—that is a liberation of micromovements and thus an expanded bodily experience with graduations of muscle tone that can be articulated throughout the whole body. This gives an intense experience of nuances of possible movement qualities as a continuum of tonalities, sensitivities and creativity expressed through bodily articulations of movement dynamics - an articulation that triggers the embodied imagery of qualities of the lived body as light, weightless, heavy, fluid, sharp, intuitive and spontaneous – a limitless nuanced variety of possible lived movement qualities. This kind of movement articulation is more concerned with movement as a continuous energy than of movement as positions, and lastly 3) Expanded experience with 'sensing the musicality of movement' as resonances or vibrations that simultaneously oscillate

with and articulate the dynamic potential of the moment. This bodily ability to sense the dynamic interplay between experiencing and articulating is also expressed in this dance technique. It is in this way that movement intertwines the inside and the outside, the living body and space, as a continuous expression of moving and being moved. In the following selected examples from experiences with the method are presented and reflected on.

### a) *An Introduction to Skinner Releasing Technique™ In New York*<sup>1</sup>

I've just completed an introductory workshop in Skinner Releasing Technique™, with Robert Davidson as instructor. After just three hours working with this technique—which was new and a bit strange to me—I feel intensely present and totally alive. It has had an overwhelming impact on my experience of what it means to be able to give nuances to the qualities of movement. And afterwards the reverberation—a feeling of being exceptionally intensely aware in an intimate, sensuous and emotional contact with everything in and around me, noticing the tiniest of nuances. I will never, never forget this workshop, and ever since, it has decisively influenced the way in which I understand movement, movement styles and the co-dependent experiential qualities and relations of being.

An important part of the picture is the music used in the workshop—by a wide variety of classical and modern composers such as Terry Riley, Eberhard Weber, Toru Takemitsu, Alice Coltrane, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Ravel, Stravinsky, and Steve Reich. The choice of music and the way images and metaphors are used in their teaching language are ways of supporting the principles of the bodily learning process. The effects of the music contribute greatly to attuning the body as a sounding board, resonating openness and bodily creative sensitivity. The practice of this multidimensional way of exploring movement and the musicality of movement on a continuum of possibilities of movement and receptiveness are experienced as an intensification of the bodily fluidity and openness toward the possibilities of the living now and thus a qualitative change of the articulation as the co-creation of movement and meaning.

### b) *Skinner Releasing in Seattle*

I have enrolled in an intensive training seminar with the American Contemporary Dance Company (ACDC), Seattle's oldest modern dance company. It is known for working with improvisation based on Skinner Releasing Technique™. The company uses improvisation both as a means of learning the technique and as a part of their performance.

It is morning. The first training session is led by Bob (Robert Davidson). The participants come from

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.skinnerreleasing.com/>

many different countries, and we start with a short round of introductions. Bob says a bit about 'releasing' and he stresses that it is important to always go back to the beginning, regardless of one's level of accomplishment and experience. This is a fundamental principle in exploring the potentials of dance – to approach it with the "mindset of a beginner".

Our work is based on guided imageries of movement which are the point of departure for improvisations as an inquisitive exploration of the conscious and unconscious expressions of movement and experienced meaning. During the course of the first morning we work through a series of different imageries of movement. They are mostly focused on working with body awareness and especially to the small micro-movements between the joints. At the same time, we explore a continuum of movement nuances and intensities through playful improvisation related to the suggested themes and imageries of movement. Moreover, we also work continually with paying free, flowing, sensuous awareness and imagination that guides us to be aware of our breathing, of how our bodies are moving in the room as a whole or of specific focal points such as the balance of the head, shoulders, ribcage, hip joint, and so on. The idea is that the imageries and focal points 'guide' our bodily sensations, thus helping us on a journey of discovery with sensuous awareness in relation to our experimenting inquiry into the possibilities and meanings of the movement. Here are some examples of the themes and imagery used.

*c) Space and Improvisation – Towards an Intensification of the Experience of Space*

Sense the space around you as if it were active and as if the sensation of energy in the space is moving you. Press your palms together lightly. Imagine that there is something between your hands – a kind of life. And sense the feeling of life between your body and your arms, between your arms and your head. Notice how the space is filled with energy that moves you. Model the space around you – imagine that you are shaping the space. Look at it as a substance you can shape. Picture yourself shaping space with your hands. Sense it. Now imagine that you can also "see" the room and the space around you with your eyes closed. Move with heightened awareness of the space between the floor and your head and between your legs. Sometimes you shape the space around you. Sometimes it shapes you. Sense the space between your face and the ceiling, between your knees, and elbows. Imagine that something is brought to life. Sense the space between the floor and your space. Imagine that space is alive, that it is like an energy that activates you. Sense the space between you and a wall. Always be aware not of the object, but of the space between you and the object. Little by little allow your awareness to move towards the

space between you and your neighbors. Switch between letting your self be shaped by the room's energy and actively shaping space with your energy. Switch at your own tempo – quickly or gradually. You can sense someone or perhaps several people around you. Move your awareness to those far away from you. This might be a bit more difficult, but it is still possible. Let the space open and expand. Sense the whole room and the spaces between you and the room and the others moving about in the room. Stop for a moment. Sense the room. Notice how the space around you is filled with impulses. They can change with the speed of lightning. Some of you seem filled with impulses. They can give energy and a source of inspiration for others who can take the energy and develop it with new possible nuances.

Experience that the changes in attunement and rhythm in the body can contribute to an expanded and intensified experience of space which is pivotal for enriching the experience and enjoyment of life.

*d) Group Improvisation*

Be sensitive to the space around you. Be sensitive to the room and your neighbours and their movements. Be sensitive to impulses that arise far away from you. Sometimes you can just move in the room, and sometimes you can pick up impulses and imitate, mirror, repeat whatever comes up. Don't keep doing the same thing for too long. Let the impulses move freely among you. Let them emerge from everywhere.

On the basis of these suggestions, we work in groups, five at a time while the rest of the class watches. We start with silence and we are to work freely with awareness of space and each other and the impulses that arise from the improvisation. Finally, we are to find a form of closing that we complete in silence.

After working with improvisation we share our experiences of the group improvisation. Here are some excerpts: "I really like working in that way" - "It doesn't work very well in big groups." "I think it can be difficult to see in large groups" "I experience an infinite calm when I dance." "I feel receptive to the energy there. I feel as if I am transparent and all impulses colour me – and it can also be like silence."

Bob stresses that the impulses can come both as ideas and as kinaesthetic sensations from the body's movement. He stresses that the impulses that arise from the body's sensations can give a very strong impression of "it is moving in me" or "I am being moved".

In this exercise focus is particularly on the intersubjective field as an intensification of bodily awareness of what is possible, what arises, and how each individual is a part of a field of giving and receiving attention and movement as a potential for creative and sensitive interplay about the potential of the moment. This is a multidimensional experience of bodily communication that does not need to be associated



with a practical utilitarian focus or to a concrete figurative message. Instead it is associated with the musically attuned and playful space, as the creation of receptivity, rhythm and the experience of bodily learning that arises in interaction with the group-dynamic attunement in the room. It is a method of working that opens into playfulness and unpredictability through an experimental exploration of the musicality of movement.

*e) Awareness, Rhythms and Breathing*

Today the training is guided by Kris, a young dancer who specializes in contact improvisation. We start the session with simple movement themes. We walk, run, bend forward and let our bodies dangle, relaxed. We inhale deeply, run on the exhalation and pause. We continue the rhythm of running based on the rhythm of our breathing. We take a deep breath, bound in a relaxed leap and land in a squat – again timed to the rhythm of our breathing. We switch between running, leaping and squatting, and vary our breathing in relation to the rhythm of the movement, e.g. as shown here:

|          |          |                    |
|----------|----------|--------------------|
| Running  | Jumping  | Landing in a squat |
| Inhaling | Exhaling | Inhaling           |
| Exhaling | Inhaling | exhaling           |

The exercise is, of course, meant to increase awareness of the experience of the relation between breathing and the rhythm of movement and thus on what the rhythm of breathing means for the experience-expression of movement. It is also a matter of becoming aware in our movement and dance training, and especially in new situations and techniques, that we often come to hold our breath even though doing so is not useful.

Breathing is one of the first "spots" that mirror unnecessary tension – and also one of the first spots to release unnecessary tension simply by being aware of it. The rhythm of breathing is key to the bodily rhythmic vibration that continually flows through all movement. It is an underlying rhythm that colours each moment and always connects the functional and the imagined in the totality of aliveness. Thus it transcends every dualistic separation of subject-object, conscious-unconscious, body-world. The rhythm of breathing is also a metaphor for the human condition, anchored as it is in sensitive and creative mutuality – giving and taking, expressing and experiencing. Each aspect is the other's dynamic and creative prerequisite. Thus, elemental bodily rhythm is also understood as being anchored in a polarity of mutually creative dependence as the rhythmic sounding board for experiencing potential and freedom – experiencing the musicality of the moment.

*f) The Intensities of Faces*

...the form of subjectivity, whether consciousness or passion, would remain absolutely empty if faces did not form loci of resonance that select the sensed or mental reality and make it

conform to a dominant reality. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 186)

We're doing an exercise that works with sensitivity and awareness of the movements of faces. Yawn. Rub your face and jaws. Move your jaw with your hands. We are working with letting go – and that means that we also let go of our breathing, and let it be however it is. We work with wave movements running through our bodies, and we are to experiment with letting the waves begin in various parts of our bodies. Kris reminds us to let our breathing flow freely. Gradually we are guided to standing while we move with awareness of the movement and letting our breathing be as "singing" as possible.

*g) On Letting Your Skeleton Dance Like a String of Pearls Between Heaven and Earth –*

We're working with transferring. "Imagine that something is pulling you. Rock back and forth and from side to side. Sink into the floor again. Imagine that your head is being supported by an inflatable pillow. Your head rocks as if the pillow were floating on the sea. Sense the standing balance with free possibilities for movement in every joint, and sense your head rocking gently as if supported by an inflatable pillow floating on the sea. Sense your ankles and the cavities in your ankles. Sense the centre of the earth. Let your weight fall down through the ankles and down to the centre of the earth. Sense your heels. Pay attention to any changes in balance from what you are used to. Perhaps you sense that your weight has shifted a little bit backwards from where it usually is. This relaxes the small of your back and the front of your ankles. Rock in that position and sense the relaxed gently floating balance through your heels and up through your entire body and the top of the head and then down again through the centre of the earth.

Let the movement become a series of pliés. Experiment with directions and with the positioning of your feet, but always sense your heels anchored in contact with the ground. Change direction. Change tempo. Sense your head growing up through heaven. Sense that you have an incredibly long cord attached to the top of your head, and you can "hang" from it. You can let go and "dangle freely" from your head cord. Experience it as if you are being lifted by the cord. Shake your body free. Sense the movements in all of your joints.

The core of this intense awareness exercise has to do with sensing a dynamic body balance. Through the exercise you keep a vertical freely flowing dynamic balance with the sense of being anchored from the centre of the earth and from heaven – and you surrender to the feeling of freely hovering, carried by the imaginary cords of energy that stretch out the body's balance as a string of pearls between heaven and earth. In this dynamic body balance each and every joint is always in

movement – anchored through the sensuous body's lines of energy connected in your imagination with multidimensional space.

#### IV. Movement, Metaphors and Multidimensional Perception

The exercises presented above all have the intention to create a kinaesthetic experience of moving in an experimental dialog with space and thereby expand and intensify the experience of attuned body-space relationship as a felt openness and multidimensionality. It is an attempt to create kinaesthetic images that can convey a multidimensional bodily sensation of a playful, experimental balance without inappropriate or unnecessary fixations and with a feeling of free movement between all of the joints of the body and between the energy lines of the body and those of space. This movement style is simultaneously relaxed and intensely dynamic, and it opens for an expansion of the nuances and qualities of the experience – both perceptually and the experience of the moment as unique, as the essence of the possibilities of creation – at one and the same time being and becoming.

This way of working is characterized by experimentation with simple movements, movement themes, and images, for example "run with quick feet". A movement theme is often coupled to an image such as run "like a flowing stream". The interplay of movement themes, images and music is what creates a syn-kinaesthetic field (Fogh Kirkeby???) as the point of departure for experimenting with the potentials of movement. The choice of images is intended to linguistically convey openness in relation to a bodily felt sense as articulation of movement's what, how, where, and why. It's all about the interplay of movement, words and music/sounds – as a space for exploring the potentials of movement as movement's articulation of the felt sense of "being alive", "letting go", "being in a free, flowing dynamic balance", "surrendering yourself to the movement", "being bodily aware" and "being receptive to the energy within and around yourself", such that you - through bodily empathy - move and are moved in a living meeting of perceptions, images, feelings, thoughts, movement and space. This creates possibilities for experiencing a continuum of the musicality of movement as here-and-now articulation and resonance of the moment as a sensitive and creative now. The exploration of movements opens into experiences with articulation as a dynamic co-creator of the moment as intensities and possible states of experience. It is a way of teaching that takes as its point of departure a body-world experience that emphasizes the meanings of bodily sensitivity and creativity for realization of the moment through articulation. This does not mean that rhythm is always the same, e.g. slow and

flowing, but that rhythm and the musicality of movement is articulated and is experienced via a free flowing awareness of the felt sense of the movement's form and imagination. Rhythm and the musicality of movement articulate and realize the intensities and attunements as dynamic bodily patterns and are free to articulate and create all possibilities, forms, moods, attunements and relationships. The musicality of movement can be sharp, hard, hectic, swinging. The relationships between micro and macro movements open themselves to an infinite continuum of possibilities. A multidimensional co-oscillation is created among all of the elements, qualities, intensities and dimensions of the movement. That is, you work intentionally to change awareness from a critical-analytical presence to a multidimensional, open sensuous and creative presence (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 207). This opens for a shift in expression and experience from á priori defined categories to an open, sensitive and creative experience and expression, and thus for new forms of connection, experience and expression. Even the simplest movement accommodates a creative potential that can radically change the dimensions of experience.

#### V. Body Awareness and Modern Dance Training

Every type of body training has an ambition to develop and unfold the potential of movement in relation to diverse understandings of movement. Modern dance training has a special focus on the musicality of movement as an underlying way to develop bodily awareness about how to create through movement and about how nuances in the qualities and style of movement express personal and cultural experience, existential as well as artistic (Engel, 2001; Hanna, 1979; Feldenkrais, 1977; Boadella, 1993). This connects the practice of modern dance training with experientially oriented exploration of ontological and epistemological aspects of mind across traditional practising of movement disciplines, genres and styles. The intent of modern dance training is to make the body as alive and dynamically nuanced as possible in order to achieve expanded sensitivity and creativity and thus to nuance movement's possibilities as the basis for experiencing the co-creation of movement's musicality and meaning. Just as with colours there are no sharp boundaries between the different possibilities for nuancing a movement in relation to body-movement-space-time-force. This is not to say that the different techniques and cultures of movement are not characterized by certain modes of practice and ideals, and accordingly of certain stylistic choices that are functionally, aesthetically and normatively developed. The movements are expressed as bodily and cultural habits and styles that connect us with experiences of particular idioms and cultural and personal connections and their meanings. In practice

many kinds of ideals and patterns arise that may be inappropriate in relation to articulating an artistic expression or to vitalization of life. These inappropriate, frozen habits constrain all forms of creativity and of living.

In modern dance training we understand the musicality of movement as fundamental for people's creative articulation and relationship to self and world. Patterns of stiffness and a lack of contact with the bodily sensation of movement are often unconscious. Bodily sensitivity and creativity training aims at making such habits the subject of experiential awareness and experimental practices, thus turning "silent"/"tacit" patterns into "sensed" patterns, and thus creating the basis for transformation of. Working with body awareness is also working to liberate locked bodily patterns and to open, expand and give nuances to the dynamics of movement as the point of departure for a freer articulation of the potential of the moment. It is experimentation with the musicality of movement that is taken seriously in modern dance training and also in various forms of body- and dance-therapeutic contexts (Lowen, 1994, 2002; Houlberg, 1996; Arnfred, 1992; Strandbygaard & Jensen, 1981).

Each and every movement, regardless of whether its purpose is practical or abstract and symbolic, always produces a certain attunement that is articulated through the rhythm and musicality of movement. Movement methods create special bodily felt ways of connecting us to the moment as unique, spontaneous and cultural repertoires, as ways of perceiving, experiencing and relating us to the potential of the moment. The ways in which we move articulate our personal and cultural habits, norms, and understanding of what is possible, desirable, and meaningful. The musicality of movement is expressed in our breathing and in our pulse as micromovements' rhythmicity, and it is amplified through all movements of the body. Together, all of the bodily rhythms spread out as a bodily symphony of the experienced and expressed intensity of the moment. The rhythms of movement are simultaneously an expression and a creation of the potential and cohesion of the moment and are thus interwoven with the "feeling of aliveness" in the now. A change in modes of practice entails transformations that affect all dimensions of bodily practice, precisely because the ways in which we move are closely interwoven with our experiences of and possibilities for articulating, living, experiencing and understanding. Thus the practice of movement is not only rooted in a practical purpose, but is also and always movement for the sake of movement. Movement is a living expression of the potential articulation, experience and meaning of the moment.

## VI. Dancing in the Gaps

Many bodily, cultural and situational factors affect how we move, but normally we have more or less of a continuum of nuances available to us. On this continuum, we often use only customary everyday patterns that we relate to our personal habits and norms and that we without any conscious thought modify to contexts such as time, place, gender, age, situation, atmosphere and so on. It is important to emphasize that the continuum of intensities we actually have available is not only conditioned by major physical and cultural competencies, but also by a musical sense which is dependent on the bodily sensitivity and flexibility that can be expressed in any given movement. There is a musicality closely connected with basal bodily functionality. It is mirrored in all of the body's movements and pauses. Think about how every movement also swings with the "rhythm of the pulse of life", as a pulsation where the dynamic continuum of movement unfolds through the attunements and micromovements of rhythm that brings balance to the different parts of the body in relation to the nuanced intensities and mobility of the movement. The rhythm of the pulse of life is stretched between a continuum of intensities that go from relative fixation and relative mobility. This is the musicality of movement as it is expressed in movement between the joints. It affects the joints' micromobility, understood as movements taking place in the small joints and thus articulated as the joints' relatively free movement. Bodily patterns of movement are articulated with great differences as regards bringing nuances to the direction of the movement's course through the axes of the body. This awareness of the dance in the cavities of the joints of the body and gaps between body and space as "capacities to affect and be affected" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 288) is put into words in modern dance training through imagery stemming from bodily experiences with how the sense of movement feels, e.g. in images such as 'your bones can move freely', 'the spaces between the vertebra in your back feel as if they are dancing', 'your joints are breathing', 'your body is pulsating', 'living movement', 'in free movement'. The continuum of movement nuances go from the fixed and static to the spontaneous and movable – spontaneous expressive movement that is primarily seen in young children and in animals, while adults and the elderly often congeal in many of the possibilities for small movements. The more static fixations there are around the joints, the more the musicality of movement becomes limited and fixed. Modern dance training is all about expanding and liberating the potential of movement and thus expanding the continuum of qualitative nuances; and this opens to expansion of the nuances of the musicality of movement and thus an expansion of movement's creative potential. And this opens out to new landscapes of resonances

and connections – and perhaps also for an expanded potential for experiencing intensity and cohesion as a more intense way of experiencing life.

## VII. Sensitive Body Training

The challenge is how the practices of movement as the articulation of various qualities and styles can affect and change the dimensions of experience, thus also affecting the ways in which we experience, think, and act. The musicality of movement mirrors the moment and the process of life as a continual bodily narrative. It generates oscillations in the body, senses, thoughts, feelings and surroundings and meets each moment as an exchange of giving and taking, of influencing and being influenced, of moving and being moved – as ways to weave every moment into the world in musical cohesion.

Modern dance is especially concerned with exploration of living bodily movement as bodily felt connections between movement, experience, and relationship – as artistic and existential potential. With its playful voyage of discovery in the musicality of movement modern body awareness training contributes to an intensification and nuancing of our bodily experience of movement as creative processes that explore the connections between practice and what this all means for the ontological and epistemological dimensions of movement (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999 pp. 283, p. 308). This makes body awareness training in modern dance a laboratory for exploring the existentiality of movement as a bodily voyage of discovery in the musicality of movement as ways to nuance and intensify bodily sensitivity and as a creative process of being fully alive and present.

## VIII. The Musicality of Movement and Existential Meanings

Above all, musicality is the bearer of how bodily articulation creates perspective, relationship and meaning and thus, which forms of intensities, experiences and meaning are made possible. "Perception itself is already a style" (ibid.p.87). "It is an awareness of how a body part or the body as a whole is moving" (Sheets-Johnstone, 1998, p. 273). Because the musicality of movement affects complex bio-psycho-social and existential intertwinings of bodily practice, experience and meaning, style also expresses intertwinings of biological, psychological, cultural, existential and health-related experiences and values (Deleuze, 2000/1986; Dissanayake, 1992). The qualities and styles of movement are thus a continual 'creation of existence' as bodily articulation of perception, experience, expression and relationship (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. 153). In Merleau-Ponty's delectable words the living body is what connects us with the world. What we have tried to underscore in this narrative about practice

is that embodiment as attunement and the musicality of movement are tied to perception and experience in a mutually creative relationship.

Perception is not primarily perception of things but perception of elements (water, air) as perception of the living meeting of the world's rays, dimensions as words and I slide on these "elements" and then I am in the world, I slide from the subjective into the existential Being (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 264).

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