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Chapter Five in *The Body in Human Inquiry: Interdisciplinary Explorations of Embodiment*, ed. Vincent Berdayes. Cresskill, NJ: 2004. The Hampton Press.

Body Practices and Human Inquiry:

Disciplined Experiencing, Fresh Thinking, Vigorous Language

Husserl's call to return to the things themselves caught my imagination the first time I read it long ago buried in a Jesuit house of study living a medieval celibate life far removed in sensibility from thingness. Like many of my contemporaries, both religious and secular, I sensed the absolute rightness in that call, knowing that my own life and the scholarship in which I was immersed were hopelessly untethered from direct experience. As with other charismatic invitations—to be compassionate, generous, less cluttered in mind and things—I had yet to travel a long way from the inspiration to any semblance of its realization.

The problem, which would surface thematically only later in the century, was that dualism and idealism are not simply abstract systems of thought to be changed by thought itself. The institutions shaped by these philosophies—schools, sports, dance, the military, gender practices, religion—engender dissociated sensibilities engraved in our neuromuscular structures, the roots of our mechanistic actions and thoughts. For anyone old enough to read Husserl, there is little likelihood that he or she will have the ample resources of flexibility and sensitivity required to embody his invitation. Those of us who have been schooled enough to approach his arcane texts have typically been successfully educated to feel a primal disconnection between thought and experience, no matter what we think, say, or hope for. Those primal feelings seep into the dissociated climate of academic texts, pedagogy, social structures, and interpersonal behavior, even when they are rooted in phenomenological claims.

When the thing itself is our own bodies, the problem is even greater given the incrustations of ideas and habits which aggregate themselves daily onto our experiences of breathing, muscle tension, joint movement, and the endless nooks and crannies of our neuromuscularities.

My own upbringing was so extreme in its deliberate shaping me to be dissociated from direct experience that I gained an unusual appreciation for my good luck in finding a community of teachers who helped me recover many lost, or never-known lines of experiential connections with regions of bodily experience. That community encompasses a bewildering variety of body-centered practices developed in the West,

sometimes inspired by Asian, African, and Middle-Eastern practices or, more typically, older European practices that have existed in the backwaters of the culture. They include the F. M. Alexander Technique, Rolfing, Moshe Feldenkrais' Awareness through Movement and Functional Integration, Body-Mind Centering, Continuum, the Lomi School, Hakomi, Sensory Awareness, Authentic Movement, the various offshoots of Wilhelm Reich's bioenergetics, and a host of others. They all share a direct focus on bodily experience. There are tens of thousands of practitioners of these methods dispersed throughout Europe, the Americas, and Australia, with many now practicing in Japan and India, with countless students and clients. Many involve hands-on strategies and occur within individual sessions; others are group sessions involving movement and body awareness strategies. To make a living with the work, some schools have linked their work with physical therapy; many with psychotherapy; some with natural healing practitioners and massage therapists. Despite their many differences of strategy, demeanor, and professional presentation, all of them share a foundation in core questions: what happens when we learn to turn our awareness in repeated methodical ways towards the intricacies of our bodily experience? What is revealed about the world? About ourselves?

The late Thomas Hanna, like myself a recovering philosopher, succeeded in gaining broad acceptance for a name and theoretical umbrella to the many particular schools: he called the field "Somatics," inspired both by Husserl's vision of "somatology," a science that would unite a methodical knowledge of the body derived from experiential studies with the biological sciences; and by the classical Greek *soma*, the living bodily person, in contrast to *necros*, the dead mass of flesh. (1986, pp. 4-8; Husserl, 1980, ppar. 2, 3; Behnke, 1993, p. 11; Martin, 1995, footnote nine for Chapter Five, p. 271)

Hanna, like myself and a number of other philosophers who stumbled into these quiet, non-academic practices, saw them primarily as basic methods for recovering from the existential sickness of dualism with all its implications, personal and social. The general public, however, and even many practitioners, view them as alternative medical practices or adjuncts to psychotherapy. This has been an understandable interpretation because of their considerable effectiveness in handling chronic dysfunctions such as low-back pain and migraines, which are impervious to standard medical treatment. They have also enjoyed a remarkable success in facilitating the psychotherapeutic process, making impacts through Gestalt, the various Reichian therapies, Hakomi, and many others.

Yet this view of Somatics within the frameworks of healing and psychotherapy has obscured its more profound aspects. In that deeper level, Somatics is better understood in comparison with older Asian practices—chi gong, tai chi chuan, hatha yoga, vipassana—whose fundamental aim is the cultivation of adult behavior and capacity, and only secondarily the alleviation of specific ills. For that reason, I have often thought of it as a recovery movement for Westerners suffering from mind-body dualism. Like 12-step programs, these practices are aimed at lessening the tenacity of complex set of ideas that are embedded in stereotypical reactions.

In what follows, I describe the work of three different schools of Somatics—Sensory Awareness, Continuum, and Authentic Movement—with an eye to illustrating their capacity for transforming a dualistic consciousness into a more direct sense of embeddedness in the body and the sensible environment. I have selected these particular methods because they are among the most radical in their claims to be methods of exploration without a particular therapeutic goal beyond the exploration itself. Although they have enjoyed some success with medical problems, and have been used in conjunction with psychotherapy, their founders and leading teachers de-emphasize these aspects, sometimes with feisty passion insisting that their focus is confined to an inquiry into human experience through exercises of sensing, paying sustained attention to sound-making, breathing and various ranges and depths of body movement, both voluntary and involuntary.

While each of these methods has recognizable forms in the sense of repetitive patterns of working, these forms are more functional and have no defined ideological content. By that I mean that although a particular practice—lifting a stone, uttering a certain peculiar kind of sound, initiating a specific movement in the knee—is repeated again and again over decades with many groups of students, the practice has no predefined meaning; it is like an experiment, a path of discovery, and with contents found unique to the explorer. The overall goal is to awaken people’s capacity to discover the things themselves, unclouded by the endless mental chatter that clouds our experience.

I have selected these three works for another reason that is particularly relevant to readers of this collection. The senior teachers in these three methods stand out for their intricate sensitivity to the nuances that exist between experience and verbalization. They immerse participants in the practices with an emphasis on getting them to modulate the rush to speak so that there will be a chance for fresh words to come forth, with the same kind of sensitivity that one gives to the next breath or the movement of the hand. For those of us enmeshed in the intricacies of academic language, this aspect of bodily practice is as important as the actual turn to bodily experience, for our speaking and writing chronically removes us too rapidly from the realm of experience, failing in the last analysis to do justice to our hard-won sensual discoveries.

Sensory Awareness

Sensory Awareness has its origins in the work of Elsa Gindler developed in Berlin during the early part of the 1900s and brought to this country by refugees Carola Speads and Charlotte Selver in the late 1930s. Because I know Ms. Selver’s work the best, I will comment on her version of the tradition. When I was writing the draft of this paper, she had turned 100, recently remarried, still teaching in Germany, Maine, New York, Mexico, and throughout California, a testimony to the vitality embedded in her teaching.

Ms. Selver’s work could not be simpler. In a typical class, she invites people to investigate sitting and standing. During a period of two hours, people sit—in whatever way they happen to sit—and stand—in whatever way they happen to end up on their feet. The only goal is to become increasingly more awake to the many aspects revealed in

paying careful attention to repeated experiences of sitting, coming to standing, standing, and coming back to sitting. There is no judgment or theory about the "right" way to do it or attempts to improve matters; the point is to coax one's interest away from habitual obsessions to the immediate sensations of a particular activity as it unfolds. She typically raises a few questions about the activity, which never seem prepared or repetitive but to arise out of a genuine curiosity about what catches her attention to our activity: "Is your breathing there for your standing?" "Are you there for the floor?" She asks people to notice what happens if they hear the sound of a gong or taste a grape or lift a small rock.

The basis of our work is that when one gradually begins to go into each activity anew, one loses one's habitual stance. And this approaching each activity anew means a person who is awake and changeable. With all this comes movability and elasticity. So that one does not always toot into the old horn. (Selver, 1987 p. 3)

Ms. Selver's late husband, Charles Brooks, describes a typical experiment of investigating lying on the floor:

We may ask people to raise the weight of the leg without leaving the floor at all, so they can feel the difference between just touching the floor and coming fully to rest on it. They are often amazed when they discover how far down one must allow the sinking in order to come to rest. Very frequently someone reports afterward that the leg in question seems to be lying deep in the floor, inches lower than the other one. This, of course, is the measure of the habitual withholding which has now been given up in one leg, but not yet in the other. Another person may announce the opposite: his leg feels light and floating, rather than sunken. This leg was previously heavy and lifeless and has now gained vitality. Such apparent contradictions merely illustrate the different habitual attitudes different people have acquired. (Brooks, 1986, p. 66)

In a class one evening many years ago, Selver invited a small group of us to walk very slowly around the room, paying particular attention to the contact between the soles of our feet and the rush mats on the hardwood floor. I was elsewhere, floating among worries about conflicts from the day's work, my impending divorce, and a painfully stiff neck. Drifting through the room with my attention on that "elsewhere," I suddenly woke up to the sole of my right foot brushing the mats underneath, the solidity of the floor supporting me, the sounds of others, the feel of the air, and Selver's voice saying, "ah, at last, you are there for your feet." Her ability to notice that precise moment when my attention shifted from my self-involved chatter into the experience of my foot gave me a sense of how I could more easily inhabit my muscles and bones, and become less preoccupied with internal conversations.

Not surprisingly, given her history as a refugee from Nazism, she is passionate about sociopolitical issues and shares with phenomenologists a link between investigating direct experience and resisting oppression. Like many of her fellow refugees from pre-War Europe, she has a keen nose for fanaticism in its most subtle forms, and sees her

work as directly addressing the degradation of the sensible world and the fabric of human community. She will do experiments in which she might read an article from the newspaper on a massacre in Bosnia or AIDS in Africa, asking the students to pay careful attention to what happens to them as they listen. Or she will have them pay attention to the environment including faint sensations of air and sound pollution.

How is it that we can help people to become more awake, and how, after they begin to wake up, they learn to trust their own sensations. And how it is that they can discover that they really can see, and hear, and sense; and that this alone can be a very powerful agent in one's life. One can learn not to restrict one's view; to feel oneself as a member of this planet we all live on. It's important that people learn to stop circling around themselves and instead to become open to the world and active. (Selver, 1987, p. 3)

Elizabeth Behnke has written an illuminating comparison of Sensory Awareness and Phenomenology, which might be a blueprint for a collaborative project between phenomenologists and body practitioners. She argues that both Gindler and Heidegger share the same fundamental orientation towards experience which they identify as *Gelassenheit*, a methodical and paradoxically active 'letting things be'. Where they differ is in what happens after the experience arises. Sensory Awareness, as an ongoing working community, simply leaves the experiments as they are for each person, with individuals applying it in their own particular communities outside Sensory Awareness—architecture, schools, political activity, spiritual teaching, psychotherapy; the phenomenologist inquires further into it within the community of phenomenologists, studying its implications, writing about it, engaging in the academic discourse that is grounded in it. (Behnke, 1989, pp. 27-42)

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Writing should aim for a lively, physical expressiveness that resists the passivity of the civilized sign: "the vigorous and expressive language of our muscles and our desires, of suffering, of the corruption or the flowering of the flesh." (Kristeva, 1996, p. 252, quoting Marcel Proust's *Contre Sainte Beuve*)

Crossing the thresholds from experiencing to speaking and writing presents a daunting challenge. What Julia Kristeva calls 'the passivity of the civilized sign' haunts academic literature, deadens the enthusiastic explorations of graduate students. How can our scholarly work do justice to "vigorous and expressive language of our muscles and desires"?

To write about the things themselves within the academy presents dangers similar to those that tortured Paul Celan, who was constrained by his native German to write poetry in the language of those who engineered the death of his family and friends. Academese is a language of encrusted forms, typically Graeco-Latin in origin, fraught with posturing and mandated formalisms, distant from the polyglot of the streets where the things themselves lay strewn. Part of the struggle to return to those fragrant moist

things involves extricating ourselves from the sticky web of formal language that pulls us away from direct experience just as we begin to taste it.

Selver has something to contribute to us who are struggling with this crossover. She has a genius at evoking the numbed spirit of wonder with the continually fresh question leading into language emerging *from* experience rather than commenting *on* it. "When you come to standing, are you there for the air around you?" "Does the floor support you?" "Is your hand there for your partner's shoulder?" Many teachers in the Somatics field and many meditation teachers emphasize turning attention towards sensation. But their work, tinged with many preconceived answers and strategies, does not approach the truly experimental quality of Selver's open inquiry. The simplicity of her questions demands a simplicity of answer, that the speaker pare away the embellishments, the pat answer, the exaggerations, and get to the spare expressions only of what was experienced and no more.

These and other body practices, when combined with concerted attempts to enter careful speaking and writing, provide a sensory matrix that can distract the experiencers from the rapid onrush of already-used words and allow new words to emerge along with new sensations and new movements.

Authentic Movement

As a body in motion, the writing-and-written body puts into motion the bodies of all those who would observe it. It demands a scholarship that detects and records movements of the writer as well as the written about, and it places at the center of investigation the changing positions of these two groups of bodies and the co-motion that orchestrates as it differentiates their identities. This ambulant form of scholarship thus acknowledges an object of study that is always in the making and also always vanishing. It claims for the body, in anxious anticipation of this decade's collapse of the real and the simulated into a global "informatics of domination," an intense physicality and a reflexive generativity. (Foster, 1995, p. 16)

Even to imagine "ambulant scholarship" or an "ambulant psychotherapy" or an "ambulant medicine" strains the imagination, accustomed as we are to centuries of sedentary intellectualism and science. The great ideas that have created the modern world and its professional disciplines have arisen from quietly sitting bodies, hunched over manuscripts, lecterns and desks, typewriters, and computers. What would happen to our ideas about things if we moved more, not randomly, not simply as isolated individuals, but as a conscious community of intellectuals inquiring into the results of deliberate movement practices for our thinking and writing. The late Mary Whitehouse (1911-1979), one of the founders of the field of Dance Therapy, created a practice now popularly known as Authentic Movement, sometimes "Moving in Depth," which provides clues on how to construct an ambulatory intellectualism.

What I began to understand during the beginning of my work in movement in depth was that in order to release a movement that is instinctive (i.e., not the 'idea' of the person doing that movement nor my idea of what I want them to do), I found that I had to go back toward not moving. In that way I found out where movement actually started. It was when I learned to see what was authentic about movement, and what was not, and when people were cheating, and when I interfered, and when they were starting to move from within themselves, and when they were compelled to move because they had an image in their heads of what they wanted to do; it was then that I learned to say 'Go ahead and do your image, never mind if you are thinking of it,' and when to say 'Oh, wait longer. Wait until you feel it from within.' (Whitehouse, 1999, p. 23)

Authentic Movement shares with Sensory Awareness a radical simplicity of approach to experience; its strategies are exploratory, some deliberately designed to inhibit extrinsic interpretation and theories of content. But unlike Sensory Awareness, which may take on any field of sensation, this practice is explicitly oriented to experiences of moving and being moved. And while Sensory Awareness surgically excises any inquiries beyond the sensory, Authentic Movement like Phenomenology is open to the entire range of experiences associated with the movement: images, thoughts, emotions, and words.

The practice involves teaching people how to wait for movement to arise and evolve as one gives oneself to it within an atmosphere of quiet attention, often with one person acting as a non-interpretative witness for the other. It is a sustained, tutored, disciplined waiting for movement to come from the self, instead of from habitual movements or moving as others would have us.

A word about what this way of working with the body requires. There is necessary an attitude of inner openness, a kind of capacity for listening to one's self that I would call honesty. It is made possible only by concentration and patience. In allowing the body to move in its way, not in a way that would look nice, or that one thinks it should, in waiting patiently for the inner impulsive, in letting the reactions come up exactly as they occur on any given evening—new capacities appear, new modes of behavior are possible, and the awareness gained in the specialized situation goes over into a new sense of one's self ... (Whitehouse, 1995, p. 250)

These teachers do not use words like 'instinctive' and 'natural' in the technical academically charged senses, but in a more ordinary street usage to describe commonplace experiences of the difference between posed, predictable, habitual, or stereotypical movements and those that surprise us as fresh and spontaneous.

Authentic movement is movement that is natural to a particular person, not learned like ballet or calisthenics, not purposeful or intellectualized as 'this is the way I should move' to be pleasing, to be powerful, to be beautiful or graceful. Authentic movement is an immediate expression of how the client feels at any

given moment. The spontaneous urge to move or not to move is not checked, judged, criticized or weighed by the conscious mind.” (Adler, 1999, p. 122)

It is a very commonplace feeling that some of our movements just happen, they just ‘run off’ in the sense employed here by Husserl:

The kinaestheses can run off in a forced/compulsory way—alien to the I, as it were—as when my arm is passively pushed or is made to jerk by an electrical discharge. But the kinaestheses can also run off in the form ‘I move,’ and indeed in the mode of kinaestheses set into play voluntarily, actively proceeding from the I, or else in the form of being freely allowed, indeed not willed by the I in its own *fiat*, but allowed to happen without turning toward it, aware of it in the background and permitting it, so to speak (as when I let my child play while I’m occupied with something else). . . Or even breath, which I can inhibit and then set into play once again, but in general allow to run off. (Husserl, 1927, p. 446)

As far as I know, no one within the Authentic Movement community has noticed that they use ‘authenticity’ in nearly the same way as Heidegger does in *Being and Time*, returning to the Greek origins of the word, ‘self-positing.’

Dasein is mine to be in one way or another. *Dasein* has always made some sort of decision as to the way in which it is in each case mine. . . And because *Dasein* is in each case essentially its own possibility, it *can*, in its very Being, ‘choose’ itself and win itself; it can also lose itself and never win itself; or only ‘seem’ to do so. But only in so far as it is essentially something which can be *authentic*—that is, something of its own—can it have lost itself and not yet won itself. (Heidegger, 1962, #42, 43, p.68)

‘Inauthenticity’ . . . amounts rather to a quite distinctive kind of Being-in-the-world—the kind which is completely fascinated by the ‘world’ and by the *Dasein*-with of Others in the ‘they’. (#176, p. 220)

Just as we are our own, to dispose of within the ‘they’ world of gossip, trivia, and opinion; so too, our movements are ours to give over to preconceived notions about how I should carry myself, gesture, or make specific movements; or, I can wait in silence until movements come from myself. “When movement was simple and inevitable, not to be changed no matter how limited or partial, it became what I called ‘authentic’—it could be recognized as genuine, belonging to that person.”(Whitehouse, 1999, p. 81)

In his manual of instructions for teachers of Focusing, Eugene Gendlin cites Isadora Duncan as an example of this practice of waiting for the new (available online at <http://www.focusing.org/process.html>, VII, A, introduction):

"For hours I would stand quite still, my two hands folded between my breasts, covering the solar plexus. My mother often became alarmed to see me remain for such long intervals quite motionless as if in a trance--but I was seeking and I finally discovered the central spring of all movements, the crater of motor

power, the unity from which all diversities of movements are born..." (Isadora Duncan, My Life, Liveright, N.Y.: 1927, p.75.)

Isadora Duncan stands still, sometimes for a long period. She senses dance steps she could move into, but they don't feel right. What would feel right is not sure yet. She is "seeking," she says above, looking for, waiting for the right feel to come, willing to let it come.

This seeking, waiting for, looking, and letting is a kind of action. It is a way of relating to, interacting with ... What? Where? It is interaction with a right feel, a new kind of feel which will come in a new place.

I have freighted this section with a number of quotes both from the side of phenomenology and Authentic Movement as one way of countering the tenacious view that body practices are primarily forms of psychotherapy or medical alternatives. The tens of thousands of people who are engaging in these practices are moving into the foundational rethinking of their lives in relation to others, the earth, and social institutions. In that sense, body practices, like phenomenology, have implications for the reshaping not only of psychology and medicine, but also many other aspects of our social world ranging from schools to spiritual organizations. What Whitehouse and Adler articulate about the nature of their movement practices reflects a principle central to many body practices, the search for fresh bodily expressions as a gateway to liberating us from the stale ideas which continue to dominate our social thinking.

Continuum

Sensory Awareness and Authentic Movement are restrained, elegant, spare in their aesthetic. An ambulant scholarship formed by their works, though having revolutionary potential for our thought processes, would not seem wildly out of place in the university. Continuum practices, however, reflect the fertile imagination of their creator Emilie Conrad, a child of Sephardic immigrants to New York, some of whom were deported from Salonika to die in Auschwitz. Growing up on the streets, she became attracted to the African dance community, studying with Katherine Dunham and Pearl Primus. Under their inspiration, she eventually moved to Haiti where she studied voodoo for five years. Over some three decades after her return to the States, she performed as a dancer and began to apply what she knew as a healer, eventually simplifying her work to the point where it became the method of exploring bodily experience which she has now taught formally for over twenty-five years.

Continuum aims at deconstructing the old formalisms of body movement and awareness shaped through Medieval Christianity and the Industrial Revolution, leading it into more organic, amoeba-like realms. While many body practices have verbalized their works either within ordinary vocabularies of body parts, or older anatomical models of the body—bones, muscles, lungs—Continuum reflects a contemporary sensibility shaped by the advances made in imaging the living body and its microscopic elements. Conrad articulates her work in terms of cells, membranes, fluid exchange, neuropeptides: the

structures that situate us within the world of all living organisms with their shared primal movements.

In my own quest, I was seeking movements that were not ‘culture bound’ but were more biologically based. Would such movements allow for a more universal connection to life? Would it be possible for human beings to feel in such resonance with their biosphere that we could become planetary beings primarily and cultural entities secondarily. (Conrad, 1997, p. 64)

Continuum shares with Sensory Awareness and Authentic Movement an emphasis on experimentation rather than defined protocols. Ms. Conrad constantly invents new strategies for locating unfamiliar, unused regions of the body—tiny muscles in the spinal column or the fingers, the soft tissues of the larynx and the nasal cavities, the outer realms of the lobes of the lungs. She invites students to examine the most remote regions of experiences by initiating peculiar kinds of stimuli. Sometimes she has people make the tiniest possible movements in various parts of the body—knee, shoulder, tongue, eyebrows, and wait in silence to observe what happens throughout the body as a result. Or she will have them initiating unfamiliar yet very specific sounds, followed by long silent periods of waiting and observing. The core of this work involves long periods, often hours, paying attention to the results of those miniscule movements, like watching the results of tossing a pebble into a lake. Continuum workshops typically take place over several days, often in a retreat setting, where the sessions go on twenty-four hours a day, with participants eating and sleeping quietly on their own.

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Because of the misleading popular image which lumps many kinds of different things together under the umbrella of “New Age,” with connotations of frivolity, hedonism, and thoughtlessness, I want to emphasize the kind of atmosphere you might find if you were to observe sessions of these works. They have the feel of a library filled with quiet readers: deeply reflective, inquisitive, intent on studying their own experiences and the insights occasioned by the experiences shared by the group. The language is spare, close to bone and neuron. You might be able to get a faint taste of the profundity of this movement practice if you know that it is typical for a small group of people, perhaps ten or fifteen, to spend a number of days together in silence, except for meals and deliberate periods of verbal reflection, exploring these kinds of movement together for hours at a stretch, and over a period of years. These communal practices are as powerful as any meditation tradition, and as far-reaching in their implications for understanding consciousness and the nature of intersubjectivity.

A Science of Subjectivity

The Somatics Study Group is an instance of how the ideas presented above might take shape. In 1987, I gathered a group of creators of nine different schools of body practices with the purpose of initiating a collaborative inquiry into the nature of our various works, how they might be more thoughtfully articulated. We meet periodically with biomedical researchers, philosophers, spiritual teachers, and social scientists.

Typically, one or another of the Somatics teachers demonstrates his or her work followed by a discussion with the eye towards gaining a better understanding of how these works intersect with other humane strategies, and how they might be better conceived and taught.

At one point we came up against the strange fact that despite the widespread existence of these works, beginning in earnest in the 1950s and earlier, there is virtually no detailed documentation of what actually occurs in sessions of these works and their long-term results, apart from some fairly thin self-help books laced with anecdotes. At the same time that scholars like Michel Foucault were spawning a vast array of books on the body, these practitioners produced virtually nothing in academic or scientific literature. Yet, by comparison to ethereal academic studies in which the use of the word 'body' often seems no more than an empty formalism, these works contain treasures of discoveries about the nature of persons negotiating the intricacies of a physical world, wisdom about human development, ecological consciousness, parenting, education, spiritual practice.

To address this striking gap between the wisdom embedded in the practice and the absence of expression of that wisdom, we have initiated a writing project among the practitioners of various methods of body practice. The focus is on writing carefully described narratives of working over an extended period of time with students or clients: Who is this person? Who are you? What exactly went on in each session, when, in what context? What have been the results over time? We sponsor workshops with professional authors to teach practitioners how to write such narratives. Each year we hold a symposium during which each school offers its finalists to present their narratives to the group of teachers and practitioners, with outside scholars awarding prizes for what they judge to be the best accounts of actual work. Slowly, slowly practitioners are learning how to stay close to what they experience, and inhibit the too-speedy grasp of ready-to-wear words that are not tailored to the nuances of what they actually do.

This kind of writing is crucial for any serious research agenda. Despite the enormous body of literature about qualitative research in the human sciences, it has gained little ground beyond what it held a century ago when Husserl began to conceive of a dual science that united subjectivity and objectivity. Reductionism grows in power beyond what anyone might have imagined even fifty years ago. The Genome Project claims the ability to map the mechanics of all human behavior; the Artificial Intelligence community claims to be on the verge of downloading consciousness into cyborgs replacing what they arrogantly consider to be our poorly designed bodies; and the Visible Human Project (originally boldly entitled 'Adam and Eve') lays out in the most intricate detail every observable nook and cranny of the body, readily available to anyone with a high-speed modem and a large amount of RAM.

By contrast, issues about validity and replicability continue to bedevil the myriad attempts to formulate qualitative studies. I have had a number of frustrating experiences in which very thoughtful, creative, and open-minded scientists have told me that these bodyworks are wonderful, but they are in the realm of poetry, essential to the life of the

human spirit, and perhaps to health. And yet, they conclude, because of their emphasis on subjective experience and idiosyncratic strategies, the practices have no scientific significance.

In response to those challenges, certain points can be made. The body practices significantly advance the possibility of a science of subjectivity. There is an identifiable replicability in each of the schools of work despite their idiosyncrasy and the emphasis on individual variation. Thousands of people experience predictable, tangible, observable results from practicing these works; these experiences are simply not documented.

Husserl's method of bracketing, viewed in light of these practices, is a significant key to articulating a more intelligible model of a science of subjectivity which might address issues of bias and replicability. While Husserl's notion is experiential, subsequent scholars attempting to articulate a phenomenological approach to human research typically describe bracketing as a mental exercise. A typical book on the application of phenomenology to psychological science defines bracketing as a set of "attitudes or postures to the phenomenon through which a certain series of presuppositions. . .are held in abeyance. (Shapiro, 1985, p. 84) Another defines it as "making explicit attempts to put aside expectations and biases during all phases of the investigation." (Braud and Anderson, 1998, p. 246) Both of these brief and vague definitions are virtually all that appears in what are extensive books on qualitative research. Neither author addresses the daunting problems posed by attempts to hold our presuppositions "in abeyance," or "put aside expectations and biases," necessary to articulate "objective" descriptions of any experience. Here is where there is a need to give careful methodological guidelines about how other investigators might go about finding similar experiential results. In comparison to the elaborately detailed volume of methodical processes by which results can be checked by others in the empirical sciences, these attempts are at best frail. No wonder that there is little serious interchange between the two kinds of science. To make bracketing a "mental" exercise, without experimental directions for others to repeat one's own bracketing processes, removes it from the empirically replicable world that is essential to scientific inquiry.

By contrast, the fundamental moves in the three methods above and in many other body practices are actually methodical, observable, teachable ways of bracketing. In defined steps that can be repeated by others, they slow down the rapid pace of thinking, draw attention into experience, weaken the tenacity of preconceived ideas and emotional self-interest to the point when, after long practice, the ideas and the biases wither in the face of the vitally pulsing things themselves. (Johnson, 2000, p. 479-490)

Eugene T. Gendlin in an unpublished draft of a call to develop an experiential science suggests a method that revisions both qualitative and quantitative methods, using Focusing and other experiential processes such as I have described:

The third [in contrast to qualitative and quantitative models], is a MODEL OF PROCESSES. It stems from a philosophical shift: Instead of analyzing what people experience, we define different kinds of experiential processes, different

ways of experiencing. In this kind of science the precision comes neither in units nor the whole; but in precise ways to identify whether the process occurs, also the conditions under which it can be brought about, and its results.

One of the events in the history of our Somatics Study Group seems relevant to the readers of this volume. In 1991, we conducted a week-long conversation between our group and a group of phenomenologists, including Edward Casey, Elizabeth Behnke, Drew Leder, Kay Toombs, and others. It was a surprising romance between two very different cultures. The phenomenologists were able to respond to the sensory awareness, movement, and hands-on practices with a depth of understanding that we rarely experience in giving classes and workshops. That rich response, as you might expect, evoked from the practitioners the capacity better to express their own understanding of their works. And the phenomenologists, as much as I can speak for them, seemed to appreciate the significance of these works in implementing their own life projects of returning to the things themselves. That meeting offered a blueprint for sustained collaborative work. But the pressures of other professional commitments and the absence of funding made it very difficult. That blueprint is once again revived in our collaboration with Eugene Gendlin's project on First Person Science.

It is difficult to develop the kinds of collaboration that are necessary to withstand the poisonous forces that increasingly threaten our planetary life. The academic world as much as the political is rent by nasty debates. One important achievement of the body practices is to develop methods for luring us out of our divisive, self-centered ideas into the realm of sensing and feeling where we exist together, breathing, pulsing, gesturally interacting; a palpable matrix for the building of a more humane social order.

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