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A Practical Introduction to Motion-Sensing Phenomenology

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Abstract

Phenomenology is an approach to research that describes and analyzes lived experience. What sets ‘motion-sensing’ phenomenology apart is the primacy that movement holds, not only in the physically active topics taken up but also in the first-person kinetic, kinaesthetic and energetic approaches to meaning-making. The purpose of this paper is specifically to provide a practical accompaniment to a motion-sensing conceptualization of phenomenology. We discuss the importance of (a) being moved to research a topic, (b) formulating research questions that take us from the functional, taken-for-granted realms of movement to the experiential realms of flow, and (c) taking up our research questions in a practice of writing that remains grounded in the movements written about. The overall result of such inquiry is that preconceived notions of how and why we move become infused with motional sensitivity. Tactile-kinetic, kinaesthetic and energetic meanings have evident appeal in that motion sensing phenomenology (MSP) brings to language what is too often construed as being ineffable. The meanings that emerge and the transformations that are possible have principally to do with appreciating more fully the active and interactive lives that we might lead.

Keywords: phenomenology; kinaesthetic; motion; flow.

Résumé

La phénoménologie est une approche de recherche qui décrit et analyse une expérience vécue. La phénoménologie du mouvement senti se distingue des autres domaines étudiés en phénoménologie; cette distinction tient à la primauté du mouvement, non seulement dans les diverses dimensions de l’activité physique présentes mais également dans cette construction de sens du « je », tant kinésique que kinesthésique. Cet article a comme objectif d’offrir une forme d’accompagnement à la conceptualisation d’une recherche en phénoménologie du mouvement senti. Nous y discutons l’importance de (a) se sentir attiré par un sujet de recherche, (b) formuler des questions de recherche qui évoluent d’une réalité du mouvement pris pour acquis et fonctionnel à une réalité expérientielle du « flow », (c) s’engager dans des questions de recherche par une écriture qui demeure ancrée dans les mouvements abordés. Les significations d’ordre tactile-kinésique, kinesthésique sont d’un attrait évident car la phénoménologie du mouvement senti transforme en langage intelligible ce qui est souvent caché et ineffable. Les significations émergentes et les transformations possibles sont surtout en lien avec une appréciation plus grande de la vie active que nous menons et de nos interactions au quotidien.

Mots clés : phénoménologie; kinesthésie; mouvement; flow.

Moving into Phenomenological Inquiry

“...our primal animateness is, to borrow (and singularize) a phrase from Husserl, the mother of all cognition.” (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011, p. 118)

Phenomenology as a research methodology should appeal to scholars interested in their own and others' *lived experiences* of games, sports, dance, outdoor pursuits and other physical practices and recreations. There is something essentially practical to this research orientation since we all have movement experiences that we have lived through, from the ubiquitous ebb and flow of breathing during exercise, and the gasps and pants for air when moving very vigorously, to the complex and skilful ways in which we may move on the playing field, court or dance floor. What isn't obvious, and what separates a phenomenological approach from other methodologies premised on gathering descriptive experiential data, is the depth of introspective engagement with the topic at hand (van Manen, 2017a). We are not content just to play the game, become the dancer, do yoga and martial arts, ski, climb rock faces and so on; we want to know what these activities mean as being personally satisfying, collectively engaging, and worth teaching to others. We want to know how it is that immersion in these physical practices has meaning in the moment as well as value for us in the lives we share with others. Phenomenology is essentially a research methodology for addressing the individual, communal and pedagogical realms of *lived and living meanings*.

We emphasize the contiguity of these meanings because they set a motion-sensing approach to phenomenology apart from other methodologies, not only in terms of the meanings that accrue the longer one engages in a practice, but also in terms of how we approach the meaning-making process of data generation (cf. Lloyd & Smith, 2006a, 2015). Movement, as the primary focus of inquiry, is less something to which consciousness is directed and more a manner of feeling alive and living with verve. While it is quite possible to objectify movement and think of it as a means of traveling from point A to B, or to externalize it in terms of how we move to score a goal, sink a shot, find a target, to research movement phenomenologically requires taking up the felt sense of moving in a variety of ways with particular ends in view. Before trying to 'capture' the meanings of any particular movement experiences via observations, interviews, or any of the textual means recommended in methodological texts (e.g. Finlay, 2011; Giorgi, 1991, 1997; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003; Vagle, 2018; van Manen, 1997, 2014, 2017a, 2017b), it is first of all necessary to be actively engaged in a meaning-making process that is highly sensitive to the qualities of the movements themselves. Motion-sensing phenomenology (MSP) is essentially about taking up kinetically, aesthetically, kinaesthetically and energetically the lived and living meanings that emerge over time from the disciplinary practices themselves (Smith, 2019). We thus offer a way of doing phenomenology that addresses how phenomena 'show themselves' in consciousness (van Manen, 2014) by attending closely to the very motions by which these phenomena emerge.

A Need for more Movement-Oriented Phenomenological Guidance

While there might be notable contributions from researchers who have situated their phenomenological inquiries in physical education, dance, and physical activity pursuits, such as Connolly (1995), Fraleigh (2018), Smith (1992, 1997, 2007), Kretchmar (2005, 2007), and Whitehead (2001, 2010), little accessible methodological guidance for those wishing to research

movement phenomenologically is available. Brown and Payne (2009) noted over ten years ago that “[d]espite 40 years of important but sporadic contributions to the literature...the phenomenology of movement remains in a nascent stage of development” (Brown & Payne, 2009, p. 436). More recently, theorists such as Stolz (2013) and Thorburn & Stolz (2017) have argued that phenomenology should take more of a central role in the ways we implement, assess and experience movement. Yet, as many researchers of movement have articulated, there is a need to further develop phenomenology as a methodology in human movement studies (Allen-Collison, 2009; Cronin & Armour, 2015; Standal, 2015; Standal & Aggerholm, 2016; Standal & Engelsrud, 2013) to better inform movement praxis and sport participation.

In addition to this well-documented need to offer more methodological guidance for those wishing to take up movement as the central focus of their phenomenological inquiry, it is worth noting that MSP has interdisciplinary appeal. For example, one may wish to attend to the motional meanings of becoming a teacher (Lloyd, 2012; Lloyd & Smith, 2006b; Smith, 1997a, 1997b, 2012, 2014) or in health care professions of, say, the development of a nursing bedside manner. While a detailed description of such applications of MSP is beyond the scope of this paper, we draw attention to the array of presentations and publications that sprang from a five-day international conference we chaired in 2016 dedicated to the methodological advancement of movement-oriented phenomenology. The theme of the 35th *International Human Science Conference (IHSRC#35)* – “Life Phenomenology: Movement, Affect and Language” – not only gathered researchers from the United States, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, and France (see <https://function2flow.ca/ihsrc35-videos/>), it also became the central tenet of a special issue of the *Phenomenology & Practice* journal, which we guest edited (Smith, Saevi, Lloyd & Churchill, 2017). Throughout this conference, featuring three keynote speakers, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, David Abram and Ralph Acampora, the various ways in which movement could be researched phenomenologically with and through kinetic, kinaesthetic and energetic sensitivities were addressed.

In this paper, we build upon such methodological contributions and, for the first time, offer much needed practical guidance for undertaking phenomenological studies in particular movement disciplines. The difficulties of engaging in the practicalities of doing phenomenological research have been well documented over the years (van Manen, 1978, 2017) and when movement becomes the central feature of one’s inquiry, long held assumptions about the ways one engages in research, such as maintaining a detached objective distance, are challenged further. Michel Henry (1922-2002), a French philosopher, has inspired us to consider the life-sensing and life-sustaining field in which we exist, in what he describes as a transcendental affectivity which has radical implications for the field of phenomenology. Elsewhere we have delved into the critique of detached vision as a primary means of sense-making in phenomenological research (Lloyf, 2017; Smith & Lloyd, 2019) and argued for feeling one’s way when engaged in acts of sense-making. Henry (2008; 2015) encourages us to question (a) what it is like to research moments that move us to where there is no detachment, (b) what it requires of us to engage in a phenomenological inquiry that delves beneath notions of visually-informed objectification, and more radically, (c) what it means to enter “an entirely new terrain in which there are no longer any objects” (p. 42), or at least only “relations that spawn objects” (Serres & Latour, 1995, p. 107), as we consider the animating and relational underpinnings of perceptual consciousness.

The methodological challenges of MSP are essentially temporal and sensory in nature. In presenting guidelines for MSP, we consider what it means methodologically to embrace a present moment consciousness as one departs from performing research on ‘lived experience’ and engages

in the sensory process of researching ‘living experiences’ in a way that exudes a sense of life. We aim at a kinaesthetic sensibility where a researcher is not able to stand back and seek meaning via visual means but arrive at phenomenal understandings through activity immersion. We are especially invested in researching life without losing its essence, which is an approach fully in keeping with Heidegger’s (1889-1976) early thinking when he “wanted to develop a kind of philosophizing that would try to understand life and language from the experience of being an active participant in life” (Campbell, 2012, p. 2). MSP in a nutshell, questions the degree to which we are not just “looking on at life but participating in it” (Campbell, 2012, p. 2).

We recognize that MSP might not be the methodology of choice for every researcher wishing to engage in a movement-oriented phenomenological inquiry since such first-person participation requires an investment of time that may well tax the participatory means available to the researcher. Additionally, such immersion in and of itself poses a risk in that one might become lost in the process of feeling one’s way toward meaning-making. For these reasons, we do not intend to reinvent the phenomenological wheel, but build upon well-established, comprehensive methodological approaches and pick up where an “action sensitive knowledge” (van Manen, 1997, p. 21) can become the focal point of inquiry. The approach we take is ‘hands on’ with the goal being to provide as much support as possible for MSP researchers. In fact, we might only half-jokingly add feet, knees, legs, hips, torso, shoulders, elbows, wrists, arms, neck, head, ears, eyes, mouth, and face to being ‘hands on’ given that we want to be inclusive of the full “repertoire of movement capabilities” (Sheets-Johnstone, 2020, p. 8) available to us.

A Framework for Exploring Movement Consciousness

An MSP approach to research shifts attention from the body itself as a site of inquiry to the functions, forms, feelings and flows of bodies in motion. The Function-to-Flow (F2F) framework (Lloyd, 2011, 2015a, 2016), as featured on the website Function2Flow.ca, is particularly helpful in guiding movement inquiry since it indicates a framework for understanding movement as that which essentially sustains and enhances our lives. This heuristic framework was first signaled in breathing vitality into health-related fitness programming so that we may move from quantifiable counts of steps taken, distances covered, and times spent, to experiencing more qualitatively what counts when it comes to living vibrantly and with greater ease (Lloyd & Smith, 2009, 2011; Smith, 2015; Smith & Lloyd, 2006). The ‘function’ dimension of the F2F framework conveys how movement may serve a health-promoting and practical purpose and, by including the ‘form,’ ‘feeling’ and ‘flow’ registers of movement consciousness, we can come to appreciate how movement is self-sustaining and be the very means of cultivating a *joie de vivre*. The F2F framework thus provides a pathway for those who appreciate that movement is something to do in particular disciplinary forms and in particular functional ways to consider and, indeed, to experience, a sensing, feeling and flowing manner of moving that is indicative of who we are as sentient beings living in dynamic relation with others (Lloyd, 2012a; Smith, 2014) and with an animate, vibrant earth (Lloyd, 2011a, 2011b; Smith, 2006, 2007, 2018, 2019, 2020; Smith & LaRochelle, 2019).

While much of our research premised on the F2F model has been directed towards a variety of contexts such as wall climbing, running, and dancing, (Lloyd, 2011a, 2012a, 2015a, 2016, 2020; Lloyd & Smith, submitted), we wish to make available to others an MSP approach (Lloyd & Smith, 2006a; 2015) that may guide their inquiries into the lived and living meanings of the disciplines and movement practices of interest to them. In the sections that follow we will offer specific

guidance with respect to: (a) being moved to research a topic of interest, (b) formulating MSP research questions that get at the F2F registers of movement sensibility, and (c) taking up these questions in a practice that involves writing yet remains grounded in the bodily senses of the movements being written about. The overall result of engaging in such MSP inquiry is that we can experience movement in ways where emergent meanings spring to life and preconceived notions of how and why we move become infused with motional sensitivity.

Being Moved to Engage in Motion-Sensing Phenomenology

Indeed, the wonder of being lies in aliveness and the wonder of aliveness originates in movement. (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011, p. 234)

Wonder, surprise and delight shift our typical mindset assumed in everyday life to moments where we experience the extraordinary in the ordinary. For instance, we may experience a run in a predictable way where the familiarity of our route and pace lulls us into an automaton existence. We may also experience a moment, such as seeing an unexpected moose on the trail before us, that wakes us up to all that we are living right there and then. Many phenomenologists describe this shift as suspending our taken-for-granted ways of experiencing the world in order to see what is there before us with “fresh eyes.” Such a shift does not require one to almost collide with a moose to wake up, rather it may be cultivated by a shift in attitude, and through what has been described more formally as a “bracketing” of the “natural attitude” (Husserl, 1982). To assume such an attitude takes practice, since the way we see the world before us is often clouded by theories and assumptions. But if we are able to suspend the pull of preformed beliefs or judgements and experience the world with “fresh eyes” of motion-sensitivity, we can orient to a more physical way of responding to wonder, to surprise and delight by really seeing and feeling things afresh.

Wonder has long been touted, as far back as Aristotle, as the motivation for engaging in philosophic inquiry (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011). When it comes to MSP, however, we might consider what more there is to it. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (2011) describes the sensations of wonder as a “spontaneous feeling variably weighted with fear and longing” (p. 284). Fear is the withdrawal, the push back, and longing is the pull forward to what engages us. To stand in a moment of wonder is to experience the counter forces of the push back and pull forward that hold us captive in a moment suspended from the everyday momentum to the ways we live our lives. It is from this held perspective that traditional phenomenological inquiries proceed. MSP, by contrast, is a more constructive phenomenology in that it invites us as researchers to move in and through our inquiries in keeping with the very movements of our active and interactive lives.

Consider the spectators to soccer games who are watching from the sidelines and holding their breaths in anticipation as an airborne ball from the kick of a midfielder sails through the air and is received by a forward racing toward the goal, or a gymnast dismounting from a beam in a series of rotating aesthetic shapes of breath-taking precision. Such spectator positions afford a certain degree of connection yet, at the same time, detachment since they draw upon vision as the primary means of sense-making. Active participants in a game or sport, a dance, run, dive or climb, by contrast, connect to the movements firsthand. They sense the continual wave-like ebb and flow of vital breath, and they do so in a way that is grounded in the movements themselves. MSP thus challenges phenomenological notions of suspending judgment and bracketing understandings by inviting researchers to not only see with “fresh eyes” but also to experience the primacy of movement afresh with enlivened kinaesthetic and energetic sensations of connection.

This is the *epoché* we have experienced in our phenomenological inquiries into a variety of games and sports and athletic disciplines (Lloyd, 2011a; Smith, 1982), into exercise pedagogy

(Lloyd & Smith, 2006b), and in swimming (Smith, 2006), snowshoeing (Lloyd, 2011b), climbing (Lloyd, 2012b, 2015a, 2016), hula-hooping (Lloyd, 2012c), salsa dance (Lloyd, 2015b, 2015c, 2017, 2020), and equestrian arts (Smith, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b, 2018, 2019; Smith & LaRochelle, 2019). We did not approach these inquiries from a distance. If what we were writing about was swimming, we jumped into the pool, a lake, or the ocean. If the paper was about flow, we spent time frolicking in ocean waves and diving into the watery depths below. If the inquiry related to equestrian arts, we not only got in the saddle, but spent time on the ground, playing with and moving with the horses. Whatever the context, or number of participants included in our studies, we have always maintained close proximity to the things of interest.

Accordingly, MSP requires the researcher to engage firsthand with the research topic. This means that when selecting a topic to explore with motion-sensitivity, one must first ascertain one's comfort level in taking up the movements. If you have a fear of heights, for example, and you want to do an MSP on climbing you would need to ask yourself if you are comfortable with climbing walls (Lloyd, 2016). Similarly, if you choose to explore a topic that carries significant emotional weight, such as the therapeutic benefits of movement, then you will need the courage to move into those moments of anxiety and stress, and possibly even relive the traumatic memories that certain movements may induce.

MSP requires that one selects a topic which is deeply moving. It should not be assigned to you. Nor should it be motivated primarily by an external need, such as filling a gap in the literature, or solving a problem. We recognize that intrinsic motivations are rarely discussed in research methods courses; in fact, it is common to caution researchers to stay away from topics that are too 'close' (O'Leary, 2017). When engaged in a MSP, however, there can be no detachment (Smith & Lloyd, 2019). Rather than spending the majority of one's time sitting at a desk, it is necessary to step actively into the inquiry. And the manner in which we step, the phenomenological attitude we adopt, may be thought of not just metaphorically but literally as 'taking off our shoes' to have immediate contact with the terrain of what it is we are exploring. We can think of the phenomenological attitude of MSP as a barefoot consciousness where "the ground we are exploring touches us" (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011, p. 295) and where we attune to that which is there pressing into us with each step. In other words, we must move to, in and through what we research.

Consider, for example, the topic of physical risk-taking that pertains to a great variety of games and sports and athletic pursuits. What better place to address this topic than the playgrounds on which so many of us would have first been thrilled on a swing or scared while clambering up a ladder to then plummet down a slide into the outstretched arms below. The exploration of physical risk-taking involves reliving or rather "physically remembering" (Smith, 1992) what it was like to be a young child on the playground. It also involves close observation of children's actions and interactions on playgrounds (Smith, 1988, 1997a) and, indeed, 'taking off one's shoes' and stepping back onto the playground with children as they come to terms with the perceived riskiness of what they are experiencing there and then (Smith, 1997b). In doing so, we can come to make sense of what is at stake when teaching and coaching older children in, say, gymnastic movements on a balance beam or bars that refine the risk-taking capabilities first apparent on playground apparatuses (Smith, 1997a).

We seek sustained participation in the topic of interest, and with others who share our passions and fascinations with what we wish to explore deeply, mindfully, and meaningfully. A long-term fascination with the possibilities of "flow" in games, sports and outdoor recreations (Smith, 1982) enabled a connection with another's interest in the kind of "flow" experience that is possible in fitness instruction contexts (Lloyd, 2004). This became a shared interest in the

“interactive flow” dimension (Lloyd & Smith, 2006b) that can be experienced across a wide range of physical disciplines and that extends relationally to the very concept of “physical literacy” (Lloyd & Smith, 2014). More than what an ethnographer might describe as ‘insider knowledge,’ the topic of interest is experienced firsthand in MSP as we capitalize on our shared abilities to kinetically, aesthetically, kinaesthetically and energetically sense the lived and living meanings revealed to us.

Constructing Meaning through Movement: Function2Flow Framed Research Questions

Challenges arise when we begin to describe that which is relevant in our movement experiences. We want to describe what is most vividly, compellingly, tellingly experienced in and through movement with motion-sensitivity, yet we struggle to find the right words. While a useful starting point, it is not enough to describe what a movement is like (van Manen, 1997, 2014) since “the phrase [‘what it is like’] does not pertain to first-person experienced realities” (Sheets-Johnstone, 2020, p. 20). Research foci that afford opportunities for first-person, motion-sensing inquiry need to be taken up enthusiastically in the very manner in which we seek to express in text that which feels so rich in the lived and still lingering motional affects and effects. Rather than orienting to a topic of interest with a “what is it like?” question, which allows the phenomenologist to both describe and question something from a safe distance, we might ask a question that invites us to step inside, sense and attend to what bubbles up in our senses and manifests in our movements. An overarching MSP question for a research project or paper that incorporates such motion-sensitivity could be, “In what manner do the motile sensations of (*insert the focal point of inquiry here*) manifest?”

More than a single research question is required while engaged in MSP inquiry. This methodology is structured by a series of motion-sensitive questions. Readers of the inquiry ought not just to be curious about the topic but motivated to experience the very motions that this topic represents. The most pertinent questions are therefore the ones that draw the reader’s interest by expressing what is fundamentally motivating to the conduct of the inquiry. We now outline a series of questions that have served to deepen our own MSP inquiries. We subscribe to a Function2Flow framework that helps us transition from the taken-for-granted, or functional realms of movement, to sensing the forms, feelings and flows of being movingly attuned with the forces and energies of life.

Research Questions pertaining to Movement Function

Movement serves a functional purpose. It helps us move from one place to another, score a goal in a game, expend energy, improve test scores in ‘academic’ subject areas, and so on. Yet for many, it is overlooked as an entry point for sustained and enlivened inquiry. Take walking as an example. If we need to get something from the kitchen cupboard, our attention goes to the cup we wish to locate for our morning coffee. We rarely marvel at the ways our feet connect to the floor or notice the length, force, or timing of each stride.

Movement is a physical capacity in the way cardiovascular functionality and muscular strength and endurance are understood as physiological and biomechanical capacities, Movement is also the very means and medium of kinaesthetic consciousness. Michel Henry (2008) frames this conscious capacity to move as a primordial power that precedes the phenomenological sequence Sheets-Johnstone (1999, 2014) puts forward as “the ‘I move’, ‘I do’, ‘I can do’ or ‘I can’” (p. 254). While such descriptions of movement might be difficult to understand, being steeped in Husserlian phenomenology, they can be compared to health-promoting messages

recommending that we simply get more active in our daily lives (i.e., as a prioritization of the “I move”), before we attend to technique or the intentionality of deliberate practice (i.e., in the realm of “I can”) as related to particular ways of moving.

The goal of MSP is to deepen this movement consciousness sensed underneath the objectified body and to experience the subjective and intersubjective corporeity, or what Maurice Merleau-Ponty termed our “incarnate subjectivity” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Beginning with an awareness of movement function is thus just a first step in attuning to the taken-for-granted realm of movement which is our fundamental sense of agency.

Consider asking yourself or your research participants to describe the fundamental motions that are at the heart of your movement practice, yet are also taken for granted, when framing research questions that pertain to movement functionality. You might also ask when drawing attention to the physiological capacities required to engage in your activity: *What fitness attributes provide a foundation and physical capacity to engage in your practice? What aspects of cardiovascular capacity, muscular strength and endurance, agility, and flexibility apply?*

An example of a functional movement line of questioning in a practice that was previously explored with MSP is the walk in salsa dance (Lloyd, 2015b; 2015c; 2020). For many novices and recreational salsa dancers, the walk serves a purpose. One foot typically transfers weight to the other within a 1-2-3, 5-6-7 repeating pattern and according to a few set directions of forward-and-back, side-to-side and, on occasion, crossing behind. Little attention is paid to the technique of this rhythmical walk in terms of where the force of each step is generated or where one’s weight is distributed. Two-time world salsa champion Anya Katsevman who was interviewed as part of the InterActive for Life project (Lloyd, 2020) explains:

If my intent is just to have a good time, then dancing could be easy...I could learn to social dance. I could pick up a few patterns and I can learn to stay on beat so I’m one with the music and nothing else is required of me. And that’s okay. But if you want to be a good dancer, if you want to actually look good, if you want to manifest movement that you control and intend to produce, you need physical ability which is literally just strength training. It’s the capacity of your muscle mass aiding your joints to do what you want to do. It’s no different than any physical activity whatsoever. (Anya Katsevman, personal communication, March 2018)

Such insight speaks to the sport-specific training for increasing one’s physical capacity to be strong in salsa – to a strength that pertains to controlling and producing force through the ankle joint that nuances directional weight distribution. As you begin your MSP, consider the functional dimension of movement in terms of the capacities essential to progressing toward a more nuanced motion-sensing understanding of your practice.

Research Questions pertaining to Movement Form

Once you have established an awareness of the foundational, functional movements that are at the heart of your practice, investigate the various ways in which forms may manifest and what meanings such forms hold. You might ask: *Is there a visibly identifiable ‘correct’ form to your practice? How does this form vary from one participant to another?*

It might be helpful to consider movement form in terms of various phases or in what Daniel Stern (2004) describes as movement contours – when it starts, when it fully takes shape, and when it starts to fade. Consider also describing the various ways forms manifest, as in how your postures and positions adjust when enacting contextualized movement skills, such as throwing and catching a ball in a game or performing a kick in a fast-paced dance routine. By attuning to form in terms

of how it manifests in relational connection to others and objects in play, the very notion of form shifts from something fixed and external to a vibrantly unfolding interaction. We want to describe such interaction with motion-sensitivity and do so in a way that brings the form to life. There is a funny video available on YouTube that might serve as a source of motion-sensing motivation. Andrew Cotter describes his dog defending and then losing possession of his bone: <https://youtu.be/HkppDS8AGWs>. When listening to the play-by-play commentary, one gets more than an outer, objective description of the various ways form manifests. We are drawn, instead, into the excitement and temporality of the movement play.

How might we then return to that functional walk to get a cup from our cupboard and describe it in a way where motility is expressed in what Stern (2010) refers to as a “vitality form”? To inspire a sense of playfulness in this taken-for-granted movement, experiment with different ways of walking to the cupboard, i.e. in slow plodding steps or as a twinkle-toed prance. Such a creative approach to movement inquiry was actually the premise of the infamous Monty Python Ministry of Silly Walks skit (<https://youtu.be/E-eCfaGpyX8>), and while it might be outrageously funny, by experimenting with the various ways form may manifest, we are engaging in a kind of phenomenological variation of perspectives that helps us come to appreciate the motile meanings of otherwise walking purposefully albeit rather mindlessly.

Let's try this now. Take a moment to walk toward something in your immediate vicinity. First walk without much thought as you would with a functional mindset. After you have experienced that familiar gait, repeat it with attention to certain details such as your overall postural carriage where your weight is distributed either more on the front of your feet or back on your heels, and the way various postures and positions influence your feelings of lightness or heaviness. Next, you might want to try on various postures in your walk such as a walk with hunched shoulders or a walk that is particularly upright. This is akin to the phenomenological process Sheets-Johnstone (1999) describes as making the familiar strange. As you experiment with various dynamic postures, consider how such nuanced attention to form informs the experience. What meanings do such postural compartments carry and how does this postural and positional awareness relate to the feelings that manifest?

Research Questions pertaining to Movement Feeling

In what ways might sensations of breath, heart rate, alignment and balance be felt in specific actions of your practice? How does this internal awareness affect your practice? Such questions posed to research participants give opportunity for inner senses to be awakened in ways that are not usually apparent when a certain sport or activity is typically taught or coached in a ‘physical-education-as-sport-technique’ paradigm (Kirk, 2010). By asking varsity volleyball players to describe the breath in a serve, for example, a new depth of power is awakened.

Today as I see Tracy assume her three bounces, I invite her to attend to the breath, not purposefully to change it, but just to be slightly more aware of how it is already part of her well-rehearsed movement pattern. She laughs, seems to be thrown off her familiar automaticity and playfully explores various parts of her serve. Following the workshop, in a journal-like reflection she shares: *I have always taken deep calming breaths as I am walking back to serve, but now I find it helpful to take a short breath in as I toss the ball, and a quick breath out as I hit the ball. I find it more powerful...* (Lloyd, 2011c, p. 9).

While this inquiry was more of a preliminary exploration of movement consciousness in volleyball, the potential is there to explore kinaesthetic awareness more phenomenologically, such as focusing on the power that is there to access (Henry, 2015) before we intentionally experiment

with the breath and the various ways it may be expressed. Consider, by contrast, experiencing more of a command-based intervention where participants are asked to breathe in prescribed ways with specific tempos and cadences, just as one might in a group-led yoga class. When we depart from command-led breath instruction and instead inquire into how one might become aware of idiosyncratic tendencies to breathe in ways that exude shifts in cadence or force, as was exemplified in the 2011 volleyball inquiry, a movement such as the intake and expenditure of breath can shift from something viewed as foundational and functional to a motion-sensing experience taking on many forms that have direct bearing on movement feelings. But to feel the subtle variations of breath and balance takes time. This is where MSP has the capacity to change and transform one's practice. New sensations may emerge that have powerful implications for the ways in which our movement practices can be experienced.

To provide another example, we might attune to the feeling of balance in a salsa walk in terms of where our weight is distributed since subtle changes of weight will greatly impact the flow of the dance. If followers are forward over their toes, their walk will carry momentum and they will feel light to their lead. If they pull their weight back toward their heels, they will feel heavy and their leads will have to exert more force to initiate turns or changes in direction. Anya Katsevman explains what it feels like to assume such a posture:

[You] literally line up the top of your head with the bottom of your tailbone in a straight line. If I want what I do to primarily come from the feet for the sake of speed then all of that [my postural alignment] has to go over the ball of the foot, the joint I access [to make it] quicker. If my alignment is straight but is more over the heels, then the message is kind of delayed. (Anya Katsevman, personal communication, March 2018)

The motion-sensing approach that we employ encourages us to 'try out' interview data that is 'texted out' because reading an excerpt from an interview is one thing but living it is another thing altogether. Walking with a forward lean is easier said than done since it is counter-intuitive. Our taken-for-granted pedestrian gait begins with a heel strike followed by a weight bearing transfer. The forward momentum of a salsa walk removes that exploratory millisecond of a moment when the heel checks out the ground before us because in salsa the ball of the foot connects with the ground first. To walk with a forward lean requires a bodily comportment of courage and a comfort in falling forward into the emergent moment.

Why not orient to this feeling of a salsa walk now? Align your pelvis and hips over the balls of your feet and lean forward. Continue to lean forward until a step must be taken. When that step is taken, absorb the ground in a toe-ball-heel rippling action. To picture this technique in one's mind is one thing, but to actually feel the confidence such a forward lean calls forth is another matter entirely. This was the focal point of an inquiry into the phenomenon of learning to let go (Lloyd, 2015c).

When I show up to dance, I bring all of me. Cognitively I leave my tensions at the door. My mind is fully present, ready to dance and fully focus on new techniques and tips for my salsa footwork. Yet the tension from my core, as I am invited to walk in new emergent patterns and directions, takes hold of me every now and then. More than a decision to be present is required of me. My bodily consciousness is called upon to let go, to soften and to trust. This is a deeper shift, new ground (Lloyd, 2015c, p. 131)

It is helpful to explore this relational attunement in other contexts in order to further orient to the feeling of what a forward angled posture feels like, not only in an individual walk, but in the way such a forward lean may feel to one's partner. Imagine you are sitting back-to-back on the floor with someone and the goal is to stand up. If you both lean into each other with the same

amount of pressure you will achieve the goal of standing up in unison. If one person leans into the other with more force or if one person stops leaning in completely, the resulting imbalance is sensed immediately.

Now that this motion sensitivity is established, we may better orient to the variable pressure that may be experienced in the forward, falling momentum of partnered dance. The following interview excerpt describes the feeling of relaxing the amount of lean into a partner when a cue is received from a lead with an unanticipated amount of pressure or force.

If someone is pushing too hard, I have two options I can accept that and push back or completely loosen up, so they feel their own pushing; I become a noodle. I remove myself from the situation. I relax my arms physically to such an extent that I give nothing and take nothing. I use my legs to get the job done because there is still a significant amount of lead I feel because we are holding hands but *I don't give my body to that person*. So that the direct point of contact isn't hurt. If they are rough it doesn't affect the rest of me and all that person is feeling is themselves. (Anya Katsevman, personal communication March 2019, italics added)

By orienting to the feeling of a bodily lean that is experienced in a partner squat with variable amounts, we may better understand what Anya, an expert salsa dancer, was saying in terms of 'giving her body to the person' or, in a broader understanding, giving herself to the other person and to the dance. Research questions pertaining to movement feeling should therefore be experienced first-hand if possible, within the practice one is researching.

Research Questions pertaining to Movement Flow

Often what one feels in terms of the mood experienced within a motion is heavily psychologized and separated from the motility of the experience itself. For instance, we admit to feeling happy when a 10K race is over. Is it possible that the way in which we hold ourselves in terms of carrying or letting go of excess tension might cultivate this positive feeling, this sense of joy, while being active? How might we pose research questions that afford such a sensibility where emotions and motions are integrally connected? And in so doing, how might we consider the spatiality and temporality of our movement practices in terms of where and when the good (or not so good) feelings become palpable? We might ask: *Is the feeling of flow something that is simply 'there or not there' or does it build and fade with various intensities, energies, rhythms or frequencies?*

By attending to the various ways joy and other pleasurable or even painful sensations manifest in terms of building, cresting, and fading intensities, energies, rhythms and frequencies, we are challenging how emotions are understood as reflective states, and ones that are seemingly unitary and categorical in the Darwinian sense of states of happiness, interest, surprise, anger, and so on (Stern 1993, 2002, 2004). Such a somatic orientation to understanding flow has been the focal point of our research for the past thirty years. In contrast to the 'information processing' model of cognition upon which Csikszentmihalyi's (2008/1990) well-known research on 'flow,' is premised, flow research according to MSP precepts (e.g., Lloyd, 2015b, 2017; Lloyd & Smith, 2015) supplements this cognitivist rendition by offering a motile, sensing pathway aimed at *feeling* one's way into flow rather than simply *thinking* one's way. To contextualize this difference, consider how Csikszentmihalyi (2000, 2008) described happiness as emotional circumspection and a distraction rather than an actively integral part of flow.

He wrote:

When we are in flow, we are not happy because to experience happiness we must focus on our inner states, and that would take away attention from the task at hand....Only after the task is completed do we have the leisure to look back on what has happened, and then we are flooded with gratitude for the excellence of that experience – in retrospect, we are happy. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 32)

From an MSP perspective, we not only challenge this depiction of emotion as being a reflective state, we also explore the motional sensations themselves as the very basis of emotions. Merleau-Ponty (1962) showed “e-motuality” (cf. Mazis 2002) in the case of anger, however we are more interested in the joy of movement that is best appreciated as an e-motional sensing of flow (e.g., Lloyd, 2004, 2011, 2012, 2016, 2017, 2020; Lloyd & Smith, 2006a, 2006b, 2015; Smith, 1982, 1997a, 2015a, 2015b, 2019; Smith & Lloyd, 2019)

MSP is highly influenced by Daniel Stern’s (1993; 2002; 2004; 2010) notion of “vitality affects” and “vitality forms” and the degree to which Sheets-Johnstone has situated such motion-sensitivity within phenomenological inquiry (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, 2011, 2017b, 2018, 2019, 2020). A simple and accessible example to draw us into the integral link between movement spatiality, temporality and mood is to consider the various ways a smile may be experienced. Stern differentiated between a “smile [that] can ‘explode’ or ‘dawn’ or ‘fade’” (Stern 1993, 206) stating that the “difference between them lies, in part, in their temporal contours” (Stern 2004, 63). Imagine the kind of exploding smile we may experience when a dear friend surprises us with a visit versus the gradual turning up of our lips when we don’t really like the surprise guest but are smiling to be polite.

Just as a smile may exude different e-motions based on its temporal, directional and amplitudinal qualities, a forward falling walk has the potential to cultivate positive feelings of flow. The following example exemplifies this mooded motility on the social dance floor.

He walks toward me with an outstretched palm. I am in a new city at a national salsa event. This is the first time our eyes meet. His bespectacled eyes are the same level as mine, given the boost of my 3-inch salsa heels, and I respond by placing my hand in his. He walks us to an open spot on the dance floor and then turns toward me as his other palm opens. We connect. His feet effortlessly merge with the rhythm of the salsa music and I relax now that I know that I only have one beat to follow. His lead is clear and a series of polite, predictable turn patterning ensue until a small piece of my hair gets caught in the crease of his eyeglasses. We immediately stop and laugh at our entwined state. My fingers gently slide my strands from the metal hinge to avoid breakage.

My hair, now free, flows once again as I travel back and forth in this linear style of salsa dance...but something feels different. The residual giggles now live in our eyes, our smiles, and the softness of our hand-in-hand connection. A new level of trust emerges, politeness fades and my torso loosens as I sway, dip and move into various turning patterns. My feet are moving with a confidence that resembles someone who knows exactly where she is going, yet with every walk and turn there is a subtle sense of novelty, a variation that I have yet to experience before. And then it happens. In a flash my upper body dives back and my hips roll up and down in an undulating wave-like fashion. It’s a dip indicative of a showy move one might see in a choreographed performance, yet here it lives in the unfolding present moment. I have no idea how this wave is happening, but it is surging through me. A squeal of delight leaves my lips as the horizontal wave morphs into a forward walk

without missing a single salsa beat. The song eventually ends, our hands part, yet the pulse of this dance continues to radiate from my every pore. (Lloyd, 2015c, p. 135)

Waking Up to Life in and through Movement

The goal of MSP is to describe moments of movement pleasure such that they spring to life and take on meanings that were not necessarily so obvious at the time. No interview transcript will do this work for you. Regardless of the source of information in the way one orients to and senses the functions, forms, feelings and flows of a movement practice, the onus is on the researcher to ‘write up’ the study such that both the researcher, the study participants, and interested readers come away (walk away and dance away) with heightened sensitivity to the movement practice being described and analyzed.

Moving from the data gathering to the process of making sense of that data, and making that sense known to others, is probably the hardest step in this kind of a phenomenological inquiry. There is no step-by-step, paint-by-numbers procedure mapped out for the researcher to follow (van Manen, 1997, 2017a; 2017b) because what is necessarily experienced at this stage of the research process is precisely what motivates the researcher to lean in further to the movement practice (Smith & Lloyd, 2019). Many new phenomenological scholars have a difficult time codifying and chunking transcribed interview data. They want to count frequencies of reoccurring themes, which is something they may have been instructed to do in their qualitative research methods classes, rather than spending time sensitizing themselves to the meaning that is already there and ready to be grasped. Just as one commits to a movement practice and experiences progress over time, MSP inquiry takes time and a particular application of one’s time. Sometimes the writing flows. Sometimes it is stilted and painful and one has to learn to walk away from the writing desk and become invigorated once more with the movements themselves. Throughout this paper we have drawn upon our previous motion-sensing inquiries not so that our approach be taken up as a template but rather that others may write up their own phenomenological inquiries with a sense of playfulness and openness for what might emerge.

As you approach the ‘writing up’ phase of your MSP, it would be a good idea, where possible, to walk through the motions in question, and ask yourself as you attempt to describe them: *Is my write-up indicative of the way these motions function, take shape, feel, and induce a sense of flow? Did I attend to nuances in posture, position, gesture and expression? Does my written description carry the tone, cadencing and rhythmicity of the motion? Do I sense the description to be an evocation of motional qualities that moves me and others to engage in the practice at hand?* These questions require that MSP inquiry draw us into the motions themselves with enhanced appreciation of them. We should not only imagine what we are reading. If the motion-sensing text is written up well, we should have “a directly felt sense” (Sheets-Johnstone, 2020, p. 9) of the phenomenon at hand.

We hope that in sharing guidelines for engaging in MSP you feel ready to experience and write about movement in such a way that your assumptions about what constitutes research may well shift quite profoundly. The F2F questions we have posed are meant to indicate the various ways you can generate first-person and second-person data. We realize that making sense of what we observe and hear through motion-sensing experimentation and engagement challenges the safe distances to which we have grown accustomed in doing research. We believe that such a risk is worth taking. What we study does not have to be considered just something we do. Our research

holds the potential for us to become even more engaged in the movement practices we enjoy and are motivated to study.

When we compare our lived and living experiences of movement to others at physical education and human movement conferences, we often hear about the tensions many face between spending time engaged in their research projects and prioritizing movement in their own lives. Research does not have to be experienced in ways that detach us from our most deeply felt sensations. Looking back over the course of our careers, we have been able to tap into our love of movement and of movement practices and disciplines that need not be compartmentalized as breaks, hobbies or pastimes amidst the seriousness of our research undertakings. To get a sense for how one's passion for movement may become infused with a program of research, please visit our website which mobilizes knowledge not only through references to our academic papers, but also through videos (Studio 7 Multimedia, 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2019). When we designed our most recent "InterActive for Life Project," we asked ourselves what moves us the most and how could this passion become the basis for our next project? We almost had to pinch ourselves when we were awarded funding through the competitive Insight Grant program offered through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). This award confirmed that our motion-sensing passions can have wide research appeal. Our concluding message is quite simple. Research can be what brings you to life. When you research what brings you to life, you not only live your best life; you can liberate others to do the same.

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