



For an Aesthetics of Sensations: the intense body of *Bartenieff Fundamentals* and *Body-Mind Centering*

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ABSTRACT – For an Aesthetics of Sensations: intense body of Bartenieff Fundamentals and Body-Mind Centering – This paper discusses concepts and methodological proposals that approach the theoretical and practical study concerning the body, understanding it as an expressive subject in constant mutation and process of reinvention. For this reason, the study approximates two somatic approaches: Bartenieff Fundamentals™ and Body-Mind Centering™. The aim was to perceive how these somatic approaches allow the construction of an intensive body that engenders an aesthetics of sensations.

Keywords: **Somatic Education. Creation. Corporeality. Body without Organs. Utopian Body.**

RÉSUMÉ – Pour une Esthétique des Sensations: corps intense des Bartenieff Fundamentals et du Body-Mind Centering – Cet article vise une discussion sur les concepts et propositions méthodologiques qui abordent l'étude théorique et pratique du corps compris en tant que matière expressive en mutation et en réinvention constants. L'étude s'approche de deux méthodes somatiques, les *Bartenieff Fundamentals*™ et le *Body-Mind Centering*™. L'objectif était de comprendre comment ces approches permettent la construction d'un corps intense qui engendre une esthétique des sensations.

Mots-clés: **Éducation Somatique. Création. Corporéité. Corps sans Organes. Corps Utopique.**

RESUMO – Por uma Estética das Sensações: o corpo intenso dos Bartenieff Fundamentals e do Body-Mind Centering – Este artigo pretende discutir conceitos e propostas metodológicas que abordam o estudo teórico e prático acerca do corpo, entendendo-o como matéria expressiva em constante mutação e processo de reinvenção. Para tanto, o presente estudo se aproxima de duas abordagens somáticas, os *Bartenieff Fundamentals*™ e o *Body-Mind Centering*™. O intuito foi perceber como estas abordagens possibilitam a construção de um corpo intensivo que engendra uma estética das sensações. Palavras-chave: **Educação Somática. Criação. Corporeidade. Corpo sem Órgãos. Corpo Utópico.**

This paper provides insight into the body and its dynamics of constant creation, both in arts and in life. For that purpose, the body's intensive dimension will be highlighted through a crossing of concepts from philosophy and methodological contributions by two somatic approaches: *Bartenieff Fundamentals* and *Body-Mind Centering*¹.

Inserted in the field of Somatic Education, BF and BMC are body approaches based on the mind-body and body-environment couplings. Somatic Education as a field of knowledge houses different techniques and methods that approach the body in its potentiality of knowledge construction about itself and the world. Here, the body is understood in its cognitive, motor, affective, and sensory dimensions.

Irmgard Bartenieff, a physiotherapist, dancer, and disciple of Rudolf Laban², created *Bartenieff Fundamentals*³ over the 1950s and 1960s, during a polio epidemic in the United States. It is a body approach that proposes a sensory-kinesthetic and cognitive experience, taking the body's totality into account, as well as movements' connectivity. This approach is based on human development's complexity and on the principles of movement's operation, acting on different areas, such as therapy and arts.

BF consist of two interdependent categories: Bartenieff's Movement Principles and Bartenieff's Body Fundamentals. It is possible to recognize three structural key concepts of BF with them: Change, Connection, and Integration. Along with these key concepts, there are a few themes, as Stability-Mobility, Function-Expression, Inner-Outer, and Repatterning⁴ (Fernandes, 2010).

Bartenieff structured ten Movement Principles which support her exercises. Breath Support and Kinetic Chains; Core Muscle Support; Postural Dynamics; Body Organizations; Bony Connections; Weight Transference for Locomotion; Movements Initiation and Sequencing; Gradated Rotation; Expressiveness for Body Connection; Spatial Intent (Fernandes, 2010, p. 43-44).

Bartenieff's Body Fundamentals consist of six basic exercises and their variations, as well as some preparatory exercises. They are considered as basic because they relate to the basic activities of human beings and act towards reorganizing daily actions like sitting, walking, standing up etc., through the activation of the deep musculature (Fernandes, 2010, p. 42-43).

When asking herself what is fundamental, Bartenieff (1999) came to the conclusion that change is fundamental, and that it happens through a process of neuro-motor development which is relational, as can be observed in the movements of babies until they have grown up. During this process, increasingly complex relations between body and space are in progress through maturations of the body's inner space in interaction with the external environment. Thus, "[...] Bartenieff Fundamentals emphasize the internal connections that are key to dynamic rather than static movement" (1999, p. 12).

According to Bartenieff (1999), this process of development happens using patterns of body connectivity: Body Organization Patterns. She points out the importance of reliving these patterns in order to achieve movement fluidity through repatterning, as will be shown further ahead.

In addition to connectedness patterns, when researching on the flow of movements, she recognized the existence of connections throughout muscle sequences and diagonal paths of the body. Along with the dynamic setting of the muscles, Bartenieff recognizes the search for dynamic alignment through bone connections as an important factor in the achievement of fluidity.

Connectedness refers to the dynamic alignment of the weight-bearing structure, the skeleton, in movement as well as stillness. It allows the flow, the movement impulse, to pass through the body in such a way that complete activation can be realized most efficiently (Bartenieff, 1999, p. 13).

The dynamic relation between body and space, by which "[...] not only the body is in space, but space is in the body, while they interact with each other and radiate towards one another" (Fernandes, 2006a, p. 299), is present in the principle of Spacial Intent. From the understanding that the body's inner space consists of a dynamic space and is in interaction, Fernandes (2006a) points out the existence of geometric shapes that redirect and reorganize the moving body, thus making the internal functionality and the external expressiveness easier. This concerns the themes Function/Expression and Inner-Outer, both evoked by the presence of the geometric shape of the spiral (Moebius strip) in exercises and in images used in the execution of movements.

In continuity with BF, BMC somatic practice considers the primacy of movement and of change as central elements for understanding and approaching the body. Both pursue the flow in movements. However, even though they might have some common grounds, these approaches also have meaningful differences in the way they address the body. These differences culminate in diverse methodological propositions, which are yet still adjacent and complementary.

According to Hartley (1994), BMC's creator, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, has initiated her career as a dance teacher and occupational therapist. She has worked as a therapist in hospitals and rehabilitation centers from 1962 to 1972. Her yearning for learning more about the healing facilitation led her to train as a neurodevelopmental therapist in England with Dr. Bobath. She also studied neuromuscular reeducation with Barbara Clark and Andre Bernard, *katsugen undo* (*the art of training the nervous system*) with Haruchi Noguchi in Japan, Laban Movement Analysis and BF with Irmgard Bartenieff, as well as dance therapy with Marian Chase. She founded the BMC School in Massachusetts, USA, in 1973.

Different from many somatic approaches, BMC doesn't suggest a method which would be centered in pre-determined exercises, through which a reorganization of the body would operate for a more adequate motor use. Instead, when it comes to BMC, we are talking about an experimental learning process through which the body explores its own means of composition, both material/energetic and formal.

BMC's propositions consist of collective and individual practices of body exploration guided by a facilitator, through dynamics which are primarily based on touch and improvised movement. With "the art of touching", Cohen (2002) points out to the possibility of somatic reorganization through a communication that is alert to the qualities of the tissue that has been touched. It concerns a work of transmission and acceptance of the energy flow, following the existing lines of forces or suggesting new ones by a tactile dialogue between tissues. In that regard, Cohen (2002) often claims, in her propositions on touch and movement, that she doesn't care so much about reorganizing the body in a mechanical way through intervention in the musculoskeletal structure. There is, nevertheless,

a work of receptive hearing, whereby *not doing* opens spaces for flow passing where they were previously blocked:

If my hands are telling me ‘don't come any closer’, if I feel there is refusal, I won't go to that place. If my hands are attracted to a zone, I will go there and observe. After all these years studying structure, I can see where my hands are going, but I don't drive them consciously towards a structure. I don't manipulate them in order to do something to someone. I receive information a lot more from different levels of the tissue. There's a way of putting your hands where you won't feel the surface and then you go a little deeper, and even deeper, and you get through to the other side [...], through the hands as a radar, searching for information. I try to feel where the blocking is and how to cross it in order to integrate it (Cohen, 2002, p. 148).

In BMC's practice, one can prove basically two propositions: the exploration of experimental anatomophysiology and the exploration of Developmental Movement Patterns. When it comes to the first proposition, it is possible to claim that Cohen invents a new anatomophysiology through cognitive and experimental research of body systems, like: the skeletal, ligament, muscle, fascia, fluid, endocrine, nervous, and organ systems. This research occurs through repatterning techniques, touch, visualization, somatization, embodiment, movement, sound and verbal dialogue. During this learning process, one has the experience of experimental anatomophysiology, as well as the theoretical and practical study of kinesiology and anatomophysiology (traditional and non-traditional²) through the experience of the body.

By claiming the existence of a direct relationship between “[...] the lowest level of activity within the body and the most expansive movement of the body – aligning the inner cellular movement with the external expression of movement through space” (2008, p. 37), Cohen clarifies one of the important basis for BMC practice. Here, the work on alignment is not strictly related to the skeletal system nor to the connections between different bony landmarks, as in BF. It concerns a dynamic alignment related to the micro and macro-dimensions of the body, as well as an energetic balance through the interrelation between body systems. This alignment involves the identification, differentiation, and integration of different tissues or body systems: fluids, glands, organs, muscles, and bones.

Cohen uses the word somatization to define a direct kinesthetic experience by which the body is lived based on its own constituting matters. In this experience, the body and the cognitive mind are not separated, since, “[...] through somatization, the body's cells inform the brain just as much as the brain informs the cells” (2008, p. 37). Through BMC, it is possible to transit from the cellular experience to body systems, directing attention towards different parts of the body and experimenting different qualities of movement. The basis of this experimental exploration happens through cellular conscience. According to Cohen, “[...] each cell is unique. A great variety of cells communicate with each other. The cells of similar structure build entities which work as tissues. These tissues regroup in wider entities that work as systems” (2010, p. 78). The cells build the micro-dimension of the body; the body's systems build the macro-dimension.

BMC's second proposition concerns the exploration of patterns in the development of the movement, which is also present in BF⁶. Cohen calls them Basic Neurological Patterns. The process of developing movement refers to a process that unfolds in complexity since the moment of conception until the achievement of the ability of movement, from the human embryo, the baby, the child, to adulthood (ontogenetic). This process develops into a series of stages called patterns, which reflect the evolution of species from a unicellular organism to a more complex one, like a mammal (phylogenetic).

Both in BF and in BMC, the task of repatterning is about reliving the stages of neuromotor development concerning childhood, which, when brought to adulthood, help in somatic reorganization. This refers to an experimentation strategy through motion, by which it is possible to reconnect fluidity and body integration, making patterns of body stiffness (automatisms) – which resist to changes – more flexible. The patterns of movement development make the body available to a learning process of multiple variations of motion (Fernandes, 2006a).

Throughout this paper, it is our goal to understand how the methodological propositions arising from BF and BMC somatic approaches can contribute to the experimentation of an intensive body in a constant process of invention.

In Search of the Body without Organs⁷: a learning process of the body

In Philosophy, authors like Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and Michel Foucault consider the body as shifting and immanent matter, presenting a new proposition of body that exceeds previous propositions; according to these propositions, the body used to be acknowledged whether as a mere biological and organic reality, or as a phenomenological reality of a body that lived. At the sight of Antonin Artaud⁸, these authors recognize that, apart from the organic and biological body, there would still be an intensive body, CsO, which would be moved by an inorganic vitality.

The proposition of the CsO, initially evoked by Artaud⁹, and later developed by Deleuze and Guattari (1999), assumes a real subversive criticism of the concept of organism. This inorganic vitality consists in a plan of forces that lets qualitative intensities, gradients and thresholds, energy circulation, vibrations, flows pass, an authentic unstable network of forces rather than shapes.

The logic of the body reduced to the organism operates with the subjection of the constituting organs to a principle of body identity. The intensive conception of the CsO refers to the image of a body that is prior to its differentiation in organic shapes. Deleuze (1999) brings the CsO closer to the image of the “full egg”, which is prior to the organization of the organs. The inorganic logic defined by CsO is thereafter the potentiality of intense – non-organized – differentiation, which animates the body as a relation of forces.

Deleuze and Guattari (1999) state that, in order to access this field of forces, or this inorganic life that animates the body, it is necessary to establish an experimentation plan of the body beforehand, building a CsO for oneself. Nevertheless, we should understand that building a CsO doesn't mean to completely dissolve the organic dimension of shapes, since the field of forces and the field of shapes coexist simultaneously.

CsO as intensive differentiation potentiality constitutes the axis of the forces. At the same time, the determined organ presents the face of an organic topicality, building the axis of present body shapes. Thus, building a CsO consists less in a deprivation of organs than in an approximation to organs in their metamorphic conception of

organs undergoing transformation. From this perspective, Deleuze (2007a) observes that organs and their present shapes would always be transitory.

As explained by Sauvagnargues (2009), by exploring the access to intense inorganic life of materials, Deleuze displaces the opposition of matter-shape. Shapes, taken from their plastic aspect, consist of a composition of materials' forces. Deleuze reveals the existence of a mistaken conception of shapes taken strictly in their power of representation. According to him, there would be yet a corporeity without organization, so powerful that it would not allow for representation in a level of dominant interpretations. Here, shapes constitute a coupling of forces and materials by a process of modulation. Unlike the idea of molding – according to which the matter constitutes an inert element, while shape is the active element (the mold) – modulation allows for an appropriation in the level of matter, considering it as carrier of singularity and expression features. The modulation operation shows a molecular zone of matter. According to Sauvagnargues:

The molar order corresponds to stratifications and the aspects of organizations that tend to harden, code, limit subjects, orders or forms. Molecular order arises out of flux phase transitions, becomings, and intensities (Sauvagnargues, 2009, p. 170).

The CsO constitutes the molecular dimension, which opens the molar organic encoding in the direction of flows. What is important to show here is the very dynamics of territory constitution, not as something given, but as a mutant genesis that assumes deterritorialization and reterritorialization movements. Thus, molecular decoding implies a deterritorialization operation, while molar coding always demands reterritorialization. Molecular as a microphysical phenomenon concerns CsO operations, in which decoding always means undoing, turning off, decomposing the constituting strata of molar physical order. However, this dynamics between molar and molecular makes clear that the CsO isn't prior to the organized body, since both coexist and build each other together.

I will hereinafter bring to the scene a contribution by Foucault that helps understand the body as permanent poetics of creation from the body's intensive conception. By bringing corporeity closer

to the notion of utopia, Foucault presents the potentiality in creation of existence, showing that the body, when considered as invention poetics, is the main operator of life's performative regime.

Between Paradoxes and Utopias: the body invents and invents itself

As Foucault himself (2009) said in a radio conference in 1966, on radio *France-Culture*: the body is utopic. Even more surprising is that the body, apart from being utopic, “[...] is the leading actor in all utopias” (2009, p. 14-15). It is important to define the word *utopia* here, from the Greek *ou* = no, and *tópos* = place; therefore, u-topia: non-place. Or, as Foucault defines it himself, “[...] utopia is a place out of all places” (2009, p. 10, our translation).

The modern conception of the term *utopia* has been used by Thomas Morus (England, 1478-1535) in the attempt to describe a new island that would be perfect, pure, and free from all sorts of constraints (2001, p. 75). We can see that *utopia* defines, originally, an idealized, imaginary place – therefore out of the real place.

Influenced by the origin of the term utopia, Foucault (2009) starts his speech saying firstly that the body is the real “ruthless *topia*” (2009, p. 9), the absolute and real place from which it is impossible to escape. In this context, the body would be the opposite of a utopia. Here, the body is initially defined, while *topia* appears exclusively connected to a formal spatial notion. Considered as extensive matter, it is a fragment of the irretrievable space that human beings are sentenced to inhabit. It never represents a non-place as the notion of utopia would wish. Based on this premise, Foucault (2009) believes that all utopias forged throughout modern history of thought and of Western practices – among which the myth of the soul appears as the most powerful of all utopias – have only one goal: to erase the impotent topology of the body.

The brilliant inflection of his thought will show exactly the opposite further ahead. The body wouldn't let itself be reduced so easily. This same body, taken as a point of agglutination of all possible spaces, is square one, from where all utopias break out. From then on, utopia is immanent to the very body.

In its utopic conception, the body is displaced from its own, absolute, closed space, projecting another place on itself – which

is nothing but a place without a place, an opening space. Body utopia can then be defined by a singular space of crisscrossing, a body-passage through which invisible forces can pass. This incomprehensible body, at one time open and closed, invisible and visible, moves its previous status towards a dynamic utopia at the same time extensive and intensive.

I approach Deleuze and Guattari, to whom the body is the result of a dynamics that coexists between a formal organic and a vital inorganic dimension. Therefore, we can say this dynamic utopia is marked by an aspect of an intensive *topos*. A paradoxical architecture, the body consists of an agglomerate of forces, since “[...] this same body, visible as it is, is removed, captured by some sort of invisibility from which I can never untie it” (Foucault, 2009, p. 13).

So, we can see that this intensive *topos* is nothing more than an opening space to other possible ones. It has its “own sources” (Foucault, 2009, p. 12), from where all real and utopic places sprout and flow. Foucault points out: “[...] it is in relation to it [...] that there is up, down, right, left, ahead, behind, near, far” (2009, p. 18). It is the world’s square one, the becoming’s square one.

It is worth clarifying the notion of becoming. According to Deleuze (2007b), “becoming” consists in an encounter or apprehension of two or more heterogeneous elements taken in a zone of vicinity. Unlike imitating, the becoming evokes an encounter by contagion, propagation by an epidemic where heterogeneous elements are taken in an alliance that makes them derive without, however, there being any identification between them. “Becoming is certainly not imitating, or identifying with something [...]. Becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, ‘appearing,’ ‘being,’ ‘equaling,’ or ‘producing’” (Deleuze, 2007b, p. 19).

Deleuze (2007b) states that there is a principle of reality that pertains to becoming. But when it comes to the animal becoming, man doesn’t *really* become animal, since becoming only produces itself. Its domain is the blending, transverse communications between elements at stake following their own line. Thus, the becoming-animal of the human being would be real, even if the animal the human being becomes is not (Deleuze, 2007b, p. 18).

When operating by the logic of catching by contagion, becoming mediates completely heterogeneous terms, combinations between a human being, an animal, a vegetable, a molecule.

When reflecting on corporeity from this inventive potentiality, in the relation with a corporeal space that is at the same time formal and intensive, it is important to clarify how these operative dynamics occur within the body itself.

The researcher and dancer Hubert Godard claims that body and space cannot be taken as two separate entities, since “[...] it is not possible to separate the body from the dynamics that builds space” (2006a, p. 65, our translation). In order to think the relations between body and space, Godard brings contributions to the scene concerning notions of body schema and body image, clarifying the dynamics in the constitution of perception and body gesture within/with space.

According to Godard (2006a), the body schema – or even postural schema – lies on a system of motor functions that operate in a pre-reflexive mode, without the operation of a conscious intention, creating our movements in space automatically, without the need for consciousness monitoring. As explained by Bottiglieri, it concerns a real “[...] sensorimotor navigation chart” (2010, n.p.) that establishes the action and perception potentials throughout space. This system of motor functions consists of tonic postural muscles with the role of mechanical agents in this body schema. Tonic muscles modulate their tonicity through a constant and renewed dialogue with the projections in space. Therefore, it is the relation with space that builds a body schema that is specific to each subject, based on their own projections and singular intentions within a context. Considering the relation with space as fundamental, the great importance of proprioception is revealed in the dynamics of construction of the body schema.

Proprioception, or the sense of self, is nothing but the ability of perception of an inner sense of posture and motion in the body’s relation with space. Or even: the perception of posture as a way of positioning parts of the body in their relations with each other and with space.

As claimed by Godard, this body schema will serve as background for coordinates of gestures and movements, perceptions and expressiveness. Different from body schema, body image is

defined by “[...] a conscious system of intentional states and behavior – perceptions, beliefs, experiences, and emotions – having the own body for an object” (Bottiglieri, 2010, p. 252). The body image develops a feeling for itself that is aware insofar as the subject is recognized in the action they perform. Here, cultural and social contexts are fundamental operators in the elaboration of body image. Both schema and body image operate together in the corporeal action. Having that said, body image can be modified insofar as one works consciously in the scope of body schema. Usually pre-reflexive and unconscious, body schema can become conscious through somatic practices that act on and interfere in postural tonic muscles and proprioception.

Thus, Godard states that there is something that anticipates each and every movement or gesture in space. According to him, body schema consists in a first phase, which is fundamental to every perception and gesture, since the way we orient ourselves in space will define the quality of our gestures and perceptive modes. Hence, before the execution of a gesture or the initiation of a movement, there’s a whole multiplicity of inner body movements he calls pre-movement. Pre-movement is supported by the scheme of the body and anticipates both our actions and our perceptions. It acts through the tonic postural muscles, also known as gravitational muscles, which are responsible for the modes of body orientation in space. These orientation modes are, on the other hand, defined by singular and unique modes through which the body relates to weight and gravity, thereafter reflecting on specific qualities of gestures and movements. According to Godard:

It defines the state of tension in the body, and defines the quality, the specific color about each gesture. Pre-movement acts on gravitational organization, in other words, over the way one organizes their posture in order to stand and to respond to gravity from this position. A whole system of gravitational muscles, whose action for the most part eludes conscious attention and will, is responsible for assuring our posture. These muscles maintain our equilibrium and permit us to stand without having to think about it. [...] These gravitational muscles anticipate each of our gestures, for they are responsible for assuring our equilibrium (Godard, 1998, p. 224, our translation).

Pre-movement acts with pre-conceptions, since pre-movement, understood as micro-adjustments that are prior to the act of moving,

is deeply connected to perceptive and postural habits. These micro-adjustments refer to a plastic composition of real “[...] collectives of motor units” (Godard, 2006a, p. 61) – the gravitational tonic muscles – which, based on movement and perception habits, can lose their plasticity, becoming automated.

It is important to emphasize the importance of pre-movement in the expressive load of every gesture and movement, indicating the affective dimension of the posture.

It so happens that these muscles are also those which register the changes in our affective and emotional state. Thus, every modification of our posture will intersect with our emotional state, and reciprocally, every affective charge will bring with it a modification, however imperceptible, in our posture (Godard, 1998, p. 224).

According to Godard, there are coordinates – in the scope of body schema – which have been previously inscribed as perceptive habits, real pre-conceived schemes that both are related to perceptions and to posture and movements. Thus, there would be a pre-established way of looking at space, prior to the act of moving. This orientation in space by a specific way of looking determines the gestures and the posture in space. This turns pre-movement into the prime place for a possible renegotiation of our habits, since the possibility of leaving pre-constructed schemes behind means to work in the scope of postural and perceptive habits – habits of pre-movement. Inhabiting the moment before the movement – pre-movement – or even, the moment before perception – pre-perception –, can create a possibility of experiencing a zone of corporeal indetermination through which intensive and creative flowpass.

Thus, opening towards new body coordinates requires an opening process in the scope of perception and of the senses, which, on its turn, requires a reorientation in the body’s relation with space. Here, perception, senses, posture, space, and movement are mutually entwined. Assuming “[...] the first impact of our relation with space on the constitution of our tensive organization and our coordination or gestural behavior” (Godard, 2006a, p. 65-66), it is possible to emphasize the relation with space as fundamental to the invention of gestures and of the opening of the potentiality for body motion. Therefore, in the somatic approach of BF, we can find that the propositions for experimentation of lines and diagonals that

build the body's inner architecture make it possible for them to be projected around the surrounding space (Spatial Intent), so that the subject realizes space and moves around it differently. Inner spaces that were previously unknown are expressed in the external space, also contributing for this one to change. Directions and levels of space amplify, as the body draws external space.

So I will emphasize the following questions: how to retrieve this inventive potentiality of the body which Foucault talked about, that is frequently lost by the conditioning of our postural and perceptive habits? Would it then be necessary to produce alterity for the perceptive and gestural modes? A body with an opening potentiality for becoming?

Based on the idea of utopia, I would like to consider the body in its inventive dimension. From this perspective, the body is nothing but the possibility of becoming, through its own matter-body, in its encounters with space and other bodies. Thus, the opening of the inventive potentiality of gestures and motion is deeply related to the construction of space, and it is, above all, an aesthetic issue. This is about acknowledging body and space not as mechanical and objective instruments that would require being dominated and controlled, but, prior to that, it is about creating an aesthetic relation between body and space, where both would constitute plastic territories filled with textures, densities, flows, and intensities.

Now I would like to present one more contribution by Godard. In an interview conducted by researcher Suely Rolnik, Godard (2006b) emphasizes a possibility of elaboration of space, which would be possible through an operation over the senses and perception. Considering this elaboration, it would be possible to re-create gesture and motion in their relation with space when operating within each sense (touch, vision, and hearing). Thus, there would exist a previous point of reference with established meanings concerning space and the way we relate to it. Likewise, the way we build or invent (internal and external) space modulates our possibilities of feeling and perceiving.

Godard (2006b) establishes two exercise modalities within each sense: one he calls subjective sense and another he calls objective sense. Thus, a subjective look would refer to a subcortical look. Through this way of looking at the world, the subject merges into

the context, and there wouldn't be any differences between a subject and an object anymore. It concerns taking part in an overall context whereby sensoriality circulates without being interpreted. A look that doesn't carry any meaning, because it is not connected to the personal story of a subject, and is therefore placed beyond the objective look. Objective look, however, consists in a cortical look – an associative and objectifying look. This look is connected to the language and, therefore, to the personal story of a subject who, wrapped in their memories, confronts the updating process of looking with the past that has been lived and already encoded.

The differentiation between a subcortical and a cortical look, as is shown by Godard (2006b), is owed to research conducted using clinical trials. In these trials, people who had partial cortical blindness caused by an accident were observed. In this context, when putting a chair in front of one of these people and asking them to describe or to name the object, they would say they cannot. However, when asked to walk, she would avoid the chair, deviating from it. This look that holds more of a spatial and atmospheric quality is also called *blind look* by Godard.

The blind look reveals a way of looking as a behavior of reception of the world, “[...] it is as if the world would come to me” (Godard, 2006b, p. 73). A concave look, as opposed to another type of convex look in which the eye is projected into the world, full of meanings and representations. Thus, the subjective look, or blind look, allows a plunge into a look considered as primal, since it concerns a look that hasn't yet been apprehended by language or by the interpretation of the things of the world. This look allows, on the contrary, a direct encounter with the *other*, with alterity. Considering this understanding, Rolnik states that the possibility of becoming-other depends on “[...] inhabiting this paradox between the two modalities of exercise of the senses” (Godard, 2006b, p. 75). Inhabiting the paradox would mean, precisely, being able to operate comings and goings of a sensory look that is receptive to the world, and an objectifying look that denominates and defines. At first, de-objectifying the way we see, diving into pre-seeing, allows the subject to take a plunge into an abyss of sensitive possibilities. Like a child in their first years of life, who is immerse in a look that is pure sensation, only gives meaning to these sensations afterwards, once language and culture have been introduced.

In addition to the individual story, the author identifies a history of perception to a collective level, through which, from Renaissance on, a long path towards the intensification of the objective look has been projected and constructed, along with the elaboration of modern subject. The objective look gains a status of dominance, leading to the emptying of the potentiality for reinvention of the objects in the world, amidst both social and individual practices. Individuals gradually lose the ability to reinvent objects, their contexts and landscapes, since, through a neurosis of the senses, the projection of meanings and representations that have already been given connects them always and immediately, from the same culturally and socially established signs.

Thus, diving into the moment before looking, into pre-look, also means putting the imaginary and the inventive potentiality back into movement, since the abandonment of the safety of an already given terrain opens an unknown territory still to be created. Therefore, first alterity isn't the other, strictly speaking, says Godard (2006b) – but the operation of creating the *other* itself, in the realm of each of our senses. It means producing a “prismatic function¹⁰” (Godard, 2006b, p. 74) in sensitive and perceptual abilities, making encounters with the unheard possible, from the contagions between corporeal matter and the matters of the world.

According to Godard, it is possible to identify a blind touch as opposed to a touch that objectifies. Blind touch, or subjective touch, is marked by the quality of acceptance. From it, hearing starts and a double movement, described by Merleau-Ponty (apud Godard, 2006b, p. 74), happens: I touch the table and, at the same time, the table touches me. This double movement wouldn't be possible if the subject related to the objects of the world only through objective touch. When getting closer to the table, having given representations as references, a single movement towards the object would be revealed: a subject (already given) touches the table (already given). From another perspective, through the relation touching/touched, it is possible to deviate from a kind of objectifying relationship with the bodies in the world. In this relationship, where the other is no longer a mere object, the potentiality for invention is put back in motion. By touching and being touched, it is possible for the subject to be dissolved in sensations produced by the encounter. Becoming

breaks out of this sensitive encounter, and the perceptive modes are reconfigured.

In BMC, the experimentation exercise of blind touch can be shown. Here, the exploration of corporeal matter constituted by cells, tissues, organs, systems, is often materialized through touch. A quality of receptive and welcoming touch called cellular touch. Cellular touch is explored from a specific quality of the body's cell membrane. The cell membrane consists of a semipermeable membrane that has the ability of selecting the substances which get in and out of the cell's internal environment. In micro-cellular level, there is a constant communication between the internal and the external environment, which occurs with the input and output of fluid through this porous membrane. This dynamics is present in the whole body, since all body tissues – as well as the shell of the skin – consist of a cluster of cells. In BMC, as soon as cellular touch occurs, contact is expected to be established with this silent and dynamic communication, which exists in the level of tissues. It is believed that tactile contact with the porous surface of the skin makes a contagious communication with the other body tissues possible. BMC makes a direct encounter with corporeal matters possible, through a touch that receives its intensive qualities: flows, speeds, vibrations, densities. Cellular touch suggests a quality of sensitive hearing in a micro-level that allows the access to the molecular dimension of bodies' tissues. Considering the encounter with the intensive dimension of matter by making it accessible to sensory-perception, it is possible to explore, in another moment, a movement improvisation. In these improvisations led by the intensive experience of the body, a becoming of the matter can break out.

Another example given by Godard concerns two perceptual modalities of hearing. "Hearing allows to listen from and through the body itself" (Godard, 2006b, p. 74). The author identifies an airy and a bony voice. The bony voice consists in letting the sounds of the voice or the sounds of the environment vibrate in the bones. In order to achieve this, it would be necessary to suspend the interpretation of representative contents for the airy voice. In this suspension, it is possible to be touched by the pure sound of the voice, and consequently rely on the sensations arising from this encounter. Or, in case of being touched by the sounds of the environment, to

initially inhibit the tendency of creating meaning for sounds that come through usual representations. With this initial inhibition, it will be possible to try a sensitive encounter between sounds of the environment and corporeal matter. Then, perception for new reverberations and expressive unfoldings is opened.

The subjective quality of the bony voice is often explored in somatic practices (for example, eutony), through which the modulations of the facilitator's receptive voice aim to produce, in the participant, a state of openness to the body's sensations. In BMC, many corporeal explorations guided by the facilitator lead the participant to the achievement of states of sensation of the matter that are aligned with qualities sent out by the voice. Thus, an imperative of the voice can lead – through resonant contagion – to contacting sensitive qualities in the blood fluid, which has a specific rhythmic quality. Likewise, a fluid voice can lead to a connection of the sliding quality of the fascia, a humid membrane that wraps all the organs, muscles, and bones in the body. BF suggest sound exercises with vibration that also activate bony hearing. In these propositions, the participants can direct vowel sounds towards an area of the body, while they pause or while performing movements, trying to activate the liquids and inner volume of the body. In BMC, sound is also often used with vibration directed towards an organ or tissue with the intent of activating the qualities of sensation coming from these tissues. Thus, it is possible to make an experience, in pairs, whereby one person produces a sound vibration directed towards an organ (for example, the lung) of their partner. Once the presence of this organ is awakened, it is possible to suggest to this partner an improvisation of sounds and movements. In this moment, they will be able to try to emit sounds themselves, towards this organ, or even try to emit sounds that vibrate from its vibrating tissue, letting these sounds created by inner space to occupy the surrounding space. It is thereby possible to resonate sounds projected in space from the expressive and sensitive qualities of bodily tissues. In this exercise, the voice gains expressions from specific corporeal matter.

These operations around the senses reveal the process of creation – whether in arts or in life – as a process that is accomplished through a coming and going between objective and subjective perception. It is exactly in this dynamic transit that excessively full and crystallized configurations are deterritorialized, so that a new one can be created.

Thus, in a conversation Godard (2006b), Rolnik remembers, about the process of painting, that Deleuze (2007a) indicates a procedure that is essential and prior to the act of painting. This procedure consists in an emptying operation of the canvas, by which the painter empties it from all the clichés that had filled it beforehand.

Godard also claims that it is necessary to empty the senses from their excessively full sense of pre-vision, pre-touch, pre-hearing, and then reach a zone of emptiness where fullness can be re-created. This state of emptiness, also identified as a full-emptiness, is precisely a state of suspension: suspension of pre-motion, suspension of pre-conceptions, suspension of perceptual habits. When accomplishing a perceptual emptiness, a new completeness can be reinvented. Thus, from new perceptual coordinates, a new singular behavior is reinvented towards what is geographic. Reciprocal relations are established between perception, imagination, space, and movement. Space is here understood as a plastic geography both in its corporeal and surrounding dimensions. The space of the body and the surrounding space are taken in mutual creation.

New modes of feeling bring forth new spatial and gestural relations. New spatial and gestural relations supported by new states of sensation create new landscapes for the body-space. Pauses in perception open paths so that a dynamic imagination can be put in action and create what is new through the material coordinates of the body. Facing suspension of usual references and the lack of already given definitions, the body starts creating amidst the reality of the own direct experience between the matter-body and the world's materiality. The senses, so considered in a full emptiness, have the possibility of nourishing from the work of sensations in an embodied imagination. Thus, it is possible to recognize the creation of images nourished by other senses other than vision: sound, tactile, hearing, olfactory images. These sensitive images can yet influence the creation of other ones: cellular images, fluid images, bone images, muscular images. Images – taken here not as representative or abstract configurations, but in their corporeal realism – are experienced amidst the very exploration of the matters of the body, redefining the landscapes of body-space: tactile, sound, olfactory, and visual moving landscapes.

The work based on sensation, with the action of an embodied imagination, allows to open volumes inside and outside the body; to

reinvent the relation with the ground through the contact between alterity-ground and alterity-skin; to connect bony landmarks; to enter multiple densities in the inner space of the organs, bones, and fluids, and to reverberate them in the external space, redefining a landscape of ever floating textures.

It concerns experimenting new movements and gestures based on the way space is designed, with different textures and densities from the encounter with the body's intensive matter. Emptying what is excessively full from organs and organisms to, finally, try a zone of contagion with primal forces that pertain to the matter-skin, matter-membrane, matter-iliac, matter-kidney. When reaching this indiscernible zone of the matter-body, in the realm of this complete emptiness of skin, fluids, bones, and organs, re-create new configurations for the body-space in motion. At the same time, re-create new spatiotemporal configurations of the body in its environment. Emptying what is excessively full from our tonic coordinates to experiment the possibility of re-creating new postural and flexible coordinates in new kinespherical landscapes afterwards.

From an aesthetic exercise revealed by dance, by performance, and by some theater genres, it is possible to verify a real body dilation practice, through which the body - no longer taken as a block - constitutes a cluster of relations between forces that lead it to becoming, through speeds, textures, weight, sounds. In a context of emptying processes in already given body representations in a sensorimotor scope, it is finally possible to experiment a body through which intensive and imperceptible flows circulate. In this opening process, to undo perceptual, postural and gestural organic automatisms. From the intensive dimension, it is then possible to reach a specific body experience that opens to a space of endless possibilities.

The Intense Body of BF and BMC

By bringing insights on CsO together regarding the somatic approaches BF and BMC, it is important to consider some aspects that mark the work of these two approaches.

By suggesting a necessarily corporeal deepening process, both give the participant a movement of turning to the body's inner

space. The possibility of inhabiting inner space refers to a body work that occurs in a micro and invisible level of the own corporeal matter. In fact, when drawing attention to these inner spaces, we can prove the existence of structures as bones, organs, liquids, tissues, cells that carry vibrational and energetic intensities differentiated in their qualities. In spite of being differentiated in their qualities and functionalities, these body structures are interdependent and connected, creating a dynamic inner space.

Canguilhem (2009) states that two main attributes of the bodily organs are their ability for substitution of functions and their polyvalence. Besides stable and defined functions, an organ can acquire functions which, originally, could be associated to another organ. Through polyvalence, organs are defined by their interconnected multiplicity and mutability. Deleuze and Guattari recognize the body both within its organic and its inorganic dimensions, in a permanent communication. The CsO, not being exactly prior to the body-organism, can be acknowledged by Canguilhem's statements, since the organs' polyvalence is seen here as a facet of the CsO present in the very organ. This ability to mutability and contagion present in the organs and other bodily systems concerns the intensive dimension of the CsO. BMC suggests a work of exploration of the bodily organs and systems in both their organic and inorganic dimensions. When considering these organic structures, Cohen is interested in accessing the energetic and expressive dimension of these matters, recognizing their mutant abilities.

Bartenieff realizes the existence of an inner corporeal architecture through which it is possible to find “[...] connections, proportions, equilibrium, and harmony within the body” (Fernandes, 2006a, p. 181). This dynamic relation between body and space consists in the fact that “[...] the body is in space, but space too is within the body” (Fernandes, 2006a, p. 299), creating volumes and living geometric shapes.

Fernandes (2006a), having the studies of Robert Lawlor as a reference, indicates the existence of a spacial consciousness in a cellular level, through which each cell knows its position in the space of the body and, consequently, the spacial relationship they have with the other cells. This cellular awareness of the space each cell occupies within the body would be determinative in establishing

its differentiated functions. Cohen suggests precisely this access to the cellular universe and its different consciences, from touch and the manipulation of tissues. Through this practice, it is possible to interact with the sensations and energetic vibrations of each specific cell and cellular community.

In Laban/Bartenieff System (LMA), energy is a flow or fluency. Deleuze and Guattari (1999) also use the term “flow” to think a body of intensive flows, released from the automatisms that stratify it. BF and BMC work with the energy flow using their exercises and corporeal sensitizations, through kinetic channels that run throughout the body, as well as liquids and bodily organs. Both approaches concern energy in a level prior to expressiveness.

In BF, as stated by Fernandes, flow “[...] refers to the muscular tension used to let motion flow (free flow) or to restrict it (controlled flow)” (Fernandes, 2006a, p. 123). Therefore, flow constitutes a dynamic of gradation between freer and less free, between free and contained, letting go and letting control. From this dynamics, it is possible to organize a movement phrase according to a rhythm of relaxation and contraction. Thus, free flow is always associated to controlled flow, creating rhythms and waves between one and the other. The flow factor would be a subliminal factor to all expressiveness and to each and every movement. When approaching motion and its expressive qualities in its dynamics, Bartenieff clarifies:

The main point about everything he [Laban] did was that everything changes. [...] all things based on variation and motivation – this is why it is, truly, a theory of movement. He talks about someone who goes from a state of more stability to a state of more mobility – but it is a matter of flow (Bartenieff apud Fernandes, 2011, p. 4).

The expressive qualities of motion are often used in the execution of a series of BF exercises to make postural habits and habits of rigid motion more flexible. Dynamic variations of flow can be used in order to promote a connection between different parts of the body. Free flow can also be used to relieve the tension in joints and muscles during the execution of preparatory exercises (Fernandes, 2006a, p. 69).

Thus, in BF, it is possible to notice the presence of the work on the energy through the execution of the exercises. By using them, functional facilitation is achieved, connecting energy’s fluidity

(dynamism of free flow/contained flow) through kinetic channels in the body, thus releasing expressiveness.

With the principle of movement Bone Connections, which allows the connection between different bony landmarks in the body, it is possible to observe that these connections occur through dynamic lines that create moving geometric shapes within inner space. It refers to a dynamic alignment produced by the interconnection between the principles of Bone Connections and Postural Dynamics. In BMC, on the other hand, by creating different stimuli towards a dynamic alignment through the body's organic structures, a qualitative difference is experimented in the execution of movements.

Likewise, when working with repatterning, Cohen (2002) claims that energy is what she is concerned with, observing intervallic spaces between one and another body pattern. Based on close observation, she tries to realize “[...] the continuity, the fluidity of the movement's flow, the cuts in patterns being reflected in the flow of energy” (Fernandes, 2006b, p. 316). Inhabiting this intervallic opening space for moments promotes a circulation of flows and the dissolution of rigid body patterns.

In BF, motion repatterning is suggested through exercises performed with the energy driving spring. Thus, abdominal breathing, which is present in the principle of Breath Support, triggers all the exercises included in BF, helping with the connection of flows along the anatomical structures. These flow connections, present in the principle of Kinetic Chains, along with Bone Connections, expand the space of the body through external space. Moreover, the principle of Expressiveness for Connection promotes the connection between different parts of the body from the use of expressive qualities. Thus, by conducting BF exercises, breathing and free flow are used to trigger motion, associating qualities of fast or slow time, heavy or light weight, direct or indirect focus on space.

Deleuze and Guattari resume Artaud's questions, according to which releasing the body from its automatisms refers to releasing it from a type of organization that is not only biological, but primarily a sociocultural organization. Thus, dividing the body into organs and functions in order to organize it, sorting and canalizing its flows, forces, and desires, produces closure in a body composition mode that prevents the passage of intensive and creative streams. Creating



a CsO for oneself would mean opening the body to multiple and imperceptible becomings, to endless possibilities of connections and crossings, turning this same body porous, from inside and outside, to vertiginous space – where there is no longer a homogeneous self, but a multiplicity of states, impulses, sensations, images. The recreation of the body from this intense matter assumes the dissolution of crystallized modes of organization and representation of the body, which, from another perspective, crystallize relationship modes towards oneself and the world.

Considering BF and BMC, the way someone mobilizes their energy or inner behavior in the accomplishment of movement concerns the ability of connecting the matter-body. BF and BMC make the work with bodily forces possible, through apparently simple exercises that help create a body that is available to changes and crossings in an internal-external dialogue. Producing a CsO through BF and BMC consists in producing a somatic experimentation plan for territory-tissues in the body, whereby it could be experienced through becoming.

Notes

¹ *Bartenieff Fundamentals* and *Body-Mind Centering* will be evoked throughout this text with the acronyms BF and BMC, respectively.

² Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) was a researcher, an artist, and a choreographer. He developed a research system based on dynamic principles of movement in space, which has strongly influenced western modern dance. His research addressed movement in general, making a language possible for dance with its own process of creation.

³ Today, BF integrate the Laban/Bartenieff System or Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analysis (LMA).

⁴ For more details, refer to Fernandes (2010, p. 37-42).

⁵ Cohen considers as traditional anatomy and physiology a certain anatomophysiological conception, which is socially instituted and based on biomedical scientific knowledge. Non-traditional anatomy and physiology, according to Cohen, consist in research that differs from the dominant conception, as is non-Western knowledge of Chinese medicine and Yoga.

⁶ The study on the patterns of development has been initiated by Bartenieff, who recognized six patterns. Cohen began this study with her master and has developed it later on, coming to recognize, altogether, sixteen patterns.

⁷ The Body without Organs will be evoked throughout the text with the acronym CsO.

⁸ Antonin Artaud (1896-1948) was a playwright, actor, and writer. In theater, Artaud rebels against the logocentric scene, suggesting a singular theatrical language defined by the presence of the body.

⁹ In 1947, Artaud writes *To have done with the Judgement of God*, where he first mentions the CsO. He announces here his protest against regulation models that are externally imposed over bodies as a transcending moral law, conditioning them in a cluster of functional organs.

¹⁰ Godard brings the image of the optical prism to exemplify the paradoxical relation operated by the dynamics of the senses. The optical prism is a geometric object made of glass, which can be used to break light up into its constituent spectral colors. When penetrating a prism's surface, a beam of light will suffer refraction while passing directly from one environment to the other. Afterwards, the same beam will split, within the prism, into a series of colors (like the colors of the rainbow that are reflected through the penetration of a sunbeam into raindrops). Just as a prism has the role of opening the colors of light, the dimension of subjective sense makes the experience of expanding perceptions and sensations possible, no matter if these are optical, tactile or auditory. The prismatic function evoked by Godard would refer to this experience of opening to a level of the senses, where it is possible to try some kind of trance. Therefore, it is necessary to inhabit the paradoxical dynamics of diving and counterdiving between an objective and a subjective dimension of senses, both being mutually present.

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