

## ***Papers I: PERSON IN MOTION***

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### **The metaphysics of kinaesthesia and personhood**

Kinaesthesia refers to our awareness of the position and movement of the parts of our bodies by means of internally directed sensory organs called proprioceptors. The word comes from the Greek *kinein* 'to move' and *aisthesis* 'sensation'. Since the movement is primarily taken to occur in the body, whereas the sensation is most naturally ascribed to the mind, the word origin already points to deep philosophical problems arising from the phenomenon of kinaesthesia.

In this paper, I will argue that such issues can be profitably viewed in the context of the metaphysics of personhood developed by the British philosopher E. J. Lowe in his book *Subjects of Experience* from 1996. In his work, Lowe does not deal with kinaesthesia or motion specifically. Therefore, part of my own contribution consists in sketching the beginnings of how the Loweian theory could be applied to the central themes of this conference.

Of course, the usefulness of the theoretical approach has to be demonstrated with reference to particular cases, and here, my focus will be twofold. On the one hand, I shall mainly concentrate on the notion of a person or a self as a psychological substance that can be a possessor of both mental and physical characteristics. This conception, it will be argued, is able to provide an adequate ontological analysis of kinaesthesia that does full justice to the aspect of movement as well as to that of sensation. On the other hand, I will also point to further topics that have to do with kinaesthetic perception, thought, imagination, and self-knowledge, characterizing the theoretical resources offered by the Loweian approach for dealing with these issues.

As a more general interdisciplinary point, this paper will present a working example of the kind of features that philosophy (and metaphysics in particular) can contribute to our overall theoretical understanding of the phenomena of kinaesthesia and motion.

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## **The embodied self – a perspective to broaden the understanding of MS-patients' experiences with physiotherapy**

This study is about MS-patients' experiences with neurological physiotherapy as a new element in the multidisciplinary package for outpatients at the Nordland Hospital. The current study highlights the significance of the patients' movement experiences during a systematic and individualized assessment which includes exploration of possibilities for change.

The study contains a strategic sample of 12 MS-patients, enclosing a variety of conditions in the MS-population. The assessments were observed and videotaped, followed by an in-depth interview of the 12 patients. Parts of the videotape where the patients express feelings and experiences related to movement were transcribed as well as all the interviews. A content-analysis was performed producing a summary of the transcribed material, terminating with three topics: "bodily relationships", "changes" and "I can – I know". These categories were exemplified and analyzed in a hermeneutic phenomenological framework based on Merleau-Ponty's theory of the body and Leder's publications.

The results show that the patients express surprise and appreciation that the physiotherapist addresses the whole body – both affected and non-affected parts as well as their expressions – while exploring activities of daily life and the patients' prerequisites for these by using: Observation, movement, physical handling and verbal dialogue, challenging the patients' perception and ability to change. The patients' experiences during this interaction may be interpreted as pre-reflective perceptions as living bodies. In this perspective, the patients experience the physiotherapist's interest in what the embodied self expresses, not only what the patients are able to tell through words. These perceptions seem to give the patients new knowledge about themselves.

The physiotherapist's observations and individually and carefully adjusted handling to explore the patients' alignment, muscular activity, sensation and perception may be interpreted as an assessment of the lived body's prerequisites for intentionality. The adapted physical interaction may be seen as an investigation of what the lived body expresses pre-reflectively and comprehended as an exploration of areas where the relationship between the body as a subject and as an object is displaced. The patients' experiences of reduced pain, increased range of movement, less effort and improved sensation in hands and feet followed with simultaneous improvement in walking, may be understood as changed intentionality due to changes in the unit of motility, sensation and perception. The experienced transformation from "I can not" to "I can" related to functional movement may be interpreted as a starting

incorporation of new knowledge or new access to more of the former “habitual body” as a prerequisite for the “present body”.

The patients’ pre-reflective experience as living bodies partly becomes conscious through active exploration of their own movement during physical interaction and dialogue with the physiotherapist. New knowledge is incorporated and makes the world more accessible. In the perspective of the embodiment, the physical interaction may be termed as communication between two embodied selves.

The theory of embodiment broadens the understanding of patients’ experiences through movement and expands the theoretical basis for physiotherapy.

Keywords: Movement, experience, physiotherapy, embodiment, intentionality, MS-patients

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## **Young dancers experience - an example from a contemporary dance practice**

According to the French philosopher Merleau-Ponty the capacity, even proclivity, for thinking in paradox, and integrating opposites, characterizes lifeworld research. The lived moving body is a basis for thinking in paradoxes and the living moving body has by its fundamental ambiguity also capacity to embody the contradiction of immanence and transcendence. This is chosen as a relevant perspective for experiencing movement in a contemporary dance context.

The presentation build on material from following a group of young dancers in their individual training during dance studies in Norway at The School for Contemporary Dance. Texts written by the dancers and field notes from the researcher represents the bases for the presentation, which is organized as a performative event that aims at actualizing the audience perception, sensations and kinaesthetic feeling. Movement as a creative tool is chosen to create access to the experience of immanence and transcendence and to illuminate the paradox as an experiential field. The aim is to manifest the bodily experience of being in the world and demonstrate its holism, making it possible to see and explore both visible and invisible phenomena, and bringing them to life through dance and movement resonating together. By listening to and following the movements as they happen continuously and precisely one can be able to differentiate different ways of mastering skills.

Dancers often, rather than articulating what they have learned, demonstrate in movement what they have achieved. This makes them able to master skills that are impressive to other people, but it also makes them vulnerable because the experience itself is exactly that—vulnerable. When the dancers have the opportunity to define their own experience, they transcend the expectations others have of them and there is more to be gained in the mutual encounters. The crucial aspect in dance practise seems to be allowing ambiguity in the exploration of movement.