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BODY of KNOWLEDGE

If the Body Is Part of Our Discourse, Why Not Let It Speak?

Maxine Sheets-Johnstone

Moving together in addition to talking together: what could be more natural? Don't we anyway need dynamic happenings to carry us forward, to sweep us off our seats into the afterlife of postmodernism, critical theory, the year of the brain, and other kinetically immobilizing academic movements? Moving together puts us at the brink of largely unexplored territory, plunges us into the largely unknown domain of kinesthesia, the felt dynamics of a moving body. When we improvise together in movement, we find that, precisely because movement is our mother tongue, we do not need a teacher or a class situation; neither do we need to fear being put on the spot since, moving together, there is no spot on which anyone can be put. Because movement comes with life, we have the capacity to improvise in multiple ways: sounds come from a piano; lines come from a crayon. In fact, we improvise all the time in words: we enter into conversations daily without planning what we'll say. The movement workshop will provide a communal experiential point of departure for discussions about our mother tongue, a tongue we as adults ordinarily tend to tie up. It will draw on wholly natural kinetic dimensions of our humanness and basic facets of our interpersonal lives that are anchored in elemental aspects of movement and human sociality.