

CHAPTER 1

The phenomenology of body memory

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Memory comprises not only one's explicit recollections of the past, but also the acquired dispositions, skills, and habits that implicitly influence one's present experience and behavior. This implicit memory is based on the habitual structure of the lived body, which connects us to the world through its *operative intentionality*. The memory of the body appears in different forms, which are classified as procedural, situational, intercorporeal, incorporative, pain, and traumatic memory. The life-long plasticity of body memory enables us to adapt to the natural and social environment, in particular, to become entrenched and to feel at home in social and cultural space. On the other hand, the structures accrued in body memory are an essential basis of our experience of self and identity: The individual history and peculiarity of a person is also expressed by his or her bodily habits and behavior. Finally, sensations or situations experienced by the lived body may function as implicit *memory cores*, which, under suitable circumstances, can release their enclosed content, as in Proust's famous *madeleine* experience. This unfolding or *explication* of body memory is of particular importance for therapeutic approaches working with bodily experience.

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We usually understand memory to indicate our capacity to remember certain events of our past or to retain and retrieve data and knowledge. But the phenomena of memory are by no means restricted to explicit recollection. As Descartes already noted, the lute player must have a memory in his hands, too, in order to play a tune with such skill.¹ He would certainly be lost should he try to remember the single movements that he

1. "Thus, for example, lute players have part of their memory in their hands, because the facility to move and bend their fingers in various ways which they have acquired by habit, helps them to remember passages that require them to move their fingers in that way in order to play them." See, *Descartes Lettre à Meyssonnier* 29.01.1640; also, *Lettre à Mersenne* 01.04.1640; 06.08.1640; (Descartes 1996), AT III, pp. 18–21; pp. 47–48; pp. 84–85; pp. 142–144.

once learned deliberately. Obviously there is a memory of the body apart from conscious recollection: Through repetition and exercise, a habit develops. Well-practiced patterns of movement and perception become embodied as skills or capacities that we apply in our everyday lives as a matter of course – the upright gait, the abilities to speak, read, or write, and the handling of instruments such as a bicycle, a keyboard, or a piano. If, following Merleau-Ponty, we regard the body not as the visible, touchable, and moving physical body, but first and foremost as our capacity to see, touch, move, etc., then body memory denotes the totality of these bodily capacities, habits, and dispositions as they have developed in the course of one's life.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the French philosophers Maine de Biran (1953/1799), Félix Ravaisson (1999/1838), and Henri Bergson (2007/1896) recognized and studied the habitual capacities of the body as an independent kind of memory. For instance, Bergson's distinction between *souvenir-image* and *mémoire habitude* refers to a voluntarily and representative kind of memory, on the one hand, and to an involuntary and mainly enacted kind of memory, on the other hand.

The latter, "this consciousness of a past of efforts stored in the present is certainly a memory as well, but a memory fundamentally different from the first, always directed towards action, based in the present and looking only at the future. (...) Indeed it does not represent our past, but enacts it."² Similarly, Merleau-Ponty, in his *Phenomenology of perception*, described the habitual body (*corps habituel*) as the basis of our being-towards-the-world (*être au monde*): The body establishes itself in every situation and attaches us to the world by the invisible threads of its peculiar 'operative intentionality' – threads that have formed already in our earliest contacts with the world (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 74, 114).

Merleau-Ponty developed his approach to body memory in particular by considering the role of *operative intentionality* in the formation of habitualities (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 122ff.). Considering the cases of a typist and of an organist, he emphasizes the peculiar kind of "knowledge" that allows them to type and play. While they first have to accustom their bodies to the instrument through consciously using the keys, both the typist and the player finally accomplish their tasks spontaneously, without explicitly recollecting the series of movements they have to perform. Their knowledge, as Merleau-Ponty puts it, is in the hands – not in the anatomical hands, of course, but in their lived-body; it comes forth by means of a bodily effort, and cannot be objectively designated:

Habit expresses our power of dilating our being-in-the-world, or changing our existence by appropriating fresh instruments. If habit is neither a form of

2. "...cette conscience de tout un passé d'efforts emmagasiné dans le présent est bien encore une mémoire, mais une mémoire profondément différente de la première, toujours tendue vers l'action, assise dans le présent et ne regardant que l'avenir. (...) À vrai dire, elle ne nous représente plus notre passé, elle le joue." – Bergson (1896/2007: 87). *Matière et mémoire* (italics by the author, T.F.).

knowledge nor an involuntary action, what then is it? It is knowledge in the hands, which is forthcoming only when bodily effort is made, and cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort. (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 127)

This kind of memory has been discovered and explored by cognitive psychology as *implicit memory* in the last three decades. Research concerning amnesic patients who may still learn simple motor tasks though being unable to retain any new memories has demonstrated the existence of multiple memory systems.³ As a consequence, explicit or declarative memory has been distinguished from implicit or procedural memory (Schacter 1987). Explicit memory contains single recollections or information that can be reported and described; it may also be called a *knowing that*. By contrast, repeated situations or actions have merged in implicit memory, as it were, which means they have become superimposed on each other and can no longer be retrieved as single past events. They have become a tacit know-how that is difficult to verbalize – we would have some difficulty describing, for example, how to waltz. Thus, explicit recollection is directed from the present back to the past, whereas implicit memory does not represent the past, but re-enacts it through the body's present performance. What we once had acquired as skills, habits, and experience have become what we can do today; hence, body memory is our lived past.

On the other hand, implicit memory is not a mere reflex program realized by the body machine. Merleau-Ponty rightly conceived of body knowledge as a third dimension between merely imagined movement and motor execution. The memory of the body is an impressive refutation of the dualism of pure consciousness and the physical body, for it cannot be attributed to either of them. When I am dancing, the rhythmic movements originate from my body without a need to steer them deliberately – and yet I am living in my movements, I sense them in advance, and I can modulate them according to the rhythm that I feel: I myself am dancing, and not a ghost in a body machine. The movements of my body are at my disposal, I am aware of my capacities, and thus I feel up to my present task as an embodied being. In the last analyses, all capacities acquired earlier in life point to a primordial capacity of the embodied subject, to a basic “I can” (Husserl 1952: 253).

The body is thus the ensemble of organically developed predispositions and capacities to perceive and to act, but also to desire and to communicate. Its experiences, anchored in body memory, spread out and connect with the environment like an invisible network, which relates us to things and to people. It is, as Merleau-Ponty writes, “our permanent means of ‘taking up attitudes’ and thus constructing virtual presents” (Merleau-Ponty 1962, p.181); in other words, to actualize our past and, with this, to make ourselves feel at home in situations. In a most comprehensive sense,

3. Thus, amnesic patients may learn to trace a contour or lay a puzzle and perform better from day to day, without being able to remember having seen the contour or puzzle before (cf. Milner 1962; Corkin 1968).

body memory enables and defines the operative intentionality of the body (Merleau-Ponty 1962).

Forms of body memory

Body memory appears in various forms, which have been elaborated upon in particular by Casey (2000) and Fuchs (2000, 2008a, b, 2011). Casey distinguishes and describes three types: habitual, traumatic, and erotic bodily memory. My own approach includes six forms: procedural, situational, intercorporeal, incorporative, pain, and traumatic memory. They are not strictly separable from each other, but are derived from different dimension of bodily experience – an experience that nevertheless is a unitary “being-towards-the-world.”

1. Procedural memory

Procedural memory consists of the sensorimotor and kinesthetic faculties that I have already mentioned before. These can be called procedural as they are realized in dynamic processes: patterned sequences of movement, well-practiced habits, skillful handling of instruments, as well as familiarity with patterns of perception. Without deliberation, my hand and my foot find the gear and the brake of my car, my fingers press the right keys of my keyboard, or I read the black figures on the page as script. My body anticipates the objects in their places, and I am surprised when it doesn't find them there. “It is possible to know how to type without being able to say where the letters which make the words are to be found on the banks of keys” (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 127). My thoughts are immediately converted into patterns of my fingers' movements. Originally, when learning how to type, I had to connect each key to a certain movement explicitly. Through repeated exercise, a unitary temporal pattern or a *Zeitgestalt* of movement formed in my body memory, until I could finally forget the single keys: One does not know anymore how one does what one does. Similarly, when learning to read, the child connects the single letters to the ostensive *Gestalts* of words, which he then recognizes “at a glance,” until he finally grasps the meaning of the whole sentence fluently. Through the single letters, which now recede from explicit awareness, the child is intentionally directed toward the meaning of the words.

As we can see, procedural memory unburdens our attention from an abundance of details, thus facilitating our everyday performances. It works in the background without being noticed, remembered, or reflected upon. The body and the senses become a medium through which the world is accessible and available. We are capable of directing our attention toward the *Gestalt* and the meaning of what we encounter. Action is facilitated, as we may intend its goal instead of noticing every single movement. The will becomes free since the bodily means and components of acting recede into the background. A primary goal-directed intention suffices to release the

complete arc of action. While his fingers move the keys, the pianist is able to direct himself to the music itself, to listen to his own play. Thus, freedom and art are essentially based on the tacit memory of the body.

Body memory thus mediates the fundamental experience of familiarity and continuity in the succession of events. It unburdens us from the necessity to constantly find our bearings again. Bodily learning means forgetting what we have learned or done explicitly, and letting it sink into implicit unconscious knowing. By this we acquire the skills and dispositions of perceiving and acting that make up our very personal way of being-in-the-world. As William James put it: “It is a general principle in psychology that consciousness deserts all processes where it can no longer be of use” (James 1950: 496). Pointedly, one could also say: What we have forgotten has become what we are.

2. Situational memory

Implicit memory is not confined to the body itself. It extends to the spaces and situations in which we find ourselves. Therefore, it is a spatial memory as well: It helps us to get our bearings in the space of our dwelling, in the neighborhood, in our home town. Bodily experience is particularly linked to interiors, which, over time are imbued with latent references to the past and with an atmosphere of familiarity. Dwelling and habit (in German *Wohnen* and *Gewohnheit*) are both based on the memory of the body. This has been nicely pointed out by Gaston Bachelard in his *Poetics of Space*:

But over and beyond our memories, the house we were born in is physically inscribed in us. It is a group of organic habits. After twenty years, in spite of all the other anonymous stairways; we would recapture the reflexes of the “first stairway”, we would not stumble on that rather high step. The house’s entire being would open up, faithful to our own being. We would push the door that creaks with the same gesture, we would find our way in the dark to the distant attic. The feel of the tiniest latch has remained in our hands.

The successive houses in which we have lived have no doubt made our gestures commonplace. But we are very surprised, when we return to the old house, after an odyssey of many years, to find that the most delicate gestures, the earliest gestures suddenly come alive, are still faultless. In short, the house we were born in has engraved within us the hierarchy of the various functions of inhabiting. (...) all the other houses are but variations on a fundamental theme. The word habit is too worn a word to express this passionate liaison of our bodies, which do not forget, with an unforgettable house. (Bachelard 1964: 92f.)

Of course, situations are more than spatial entities. They are holistic inseparable units of bodily, sensory, and atmospheric perception: a football game in a roaring stadium, a boat trip on the foaming sea, a night walk through the brightly lit city. The different senses – sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell – participate in various combinations

in situational perception and in the body memory left by it. Above all, intermodal, synaesthetic, and expressive qualities contribute to the atmospheric character of situations (soft contours, swelling noise, bitter defeat, warm welcome, peaceful sea, majestic mountain landscape, etc.). They create the peculiar impression of a situation that is stored as a whole in the intermodal memory of the body.

To be familiar with recurrent situations is what we call experience. Experience is based on the lived body's interaction with the world; it is a practical, not a theoretical knowledge. Experienced persons recognize immediately what is essential or characteristic of a complex situation. They have developed a "sixth sense," a feeling or intuition for it, and recognize familiar patterns where others are just irritated or helpless. In football, for example, the goal-getter has "a nose" for dangerous situations in the penalty area. The sailor senses the faintest signs of the gathering storm. Or to take an example from medicine: The experienced psychiatrist, in her diagnosis, considers not only the single symptoms and anamnestic data, but the entire impression that she gains from the patient and his life situation. And the more her experience grows, the easier will she recognize the illness even during the first contact.

Such knowledge may not be completely expressed in words. The encounter with a depressed patient is characterized by a certain atmospheric perception that is not analyzable in single elements. No textbook can replace one's own experience of a diagnosis and its peculiar coloring. The implicit bodily knowledge may be described only by phrases such as "what it is like" or "how it feels," for example, "what it is like to waltz," "what it is like to talk with a depressed patient," "how the clay should feel when spinning it," "how it smelled at home at Christmas," etc. Therefore, neither the skill of an experienced craftsman nor the diagnostic intuition of a psychiatrist may be conveyed to the learner discursively – he or she has to experience it first-hand, by imitating the teacher and taking up a similar bodily attitude in dealing with the situation.

3. Intercorporeal memory

Among the most important situations are of course our encounters with others. As soon as we have contact with another person, our bodies interact and understand each other, even though we cannot say exactly how this is brought about. Merleau-Ponty termed this sphere of pre-reflective bodily understanding *intercorporeality* (Merleau-Ponty 1960). These embodied interactions are to such a large extent determined by earlier experience that we may speak of an intercorporeal memory, which is implicitly and unconsciously effective in every encounter.

With the progress of developmental research, we can now better comprehend the history of intercorporeal memory. This research has shown that motor, emotional, and social development in early childhood does not proceed on separate tracks, but is integrated through the formation of affective-interactive schemata. From birth on, the infant's procedural memory incorporates an extract of repeated, prototypic experiences with significant others, thus acquiring dyadic patterns of interaction or

“schemes of being-with” (Stern 1998), for example, “mamma-feeding-me,” “daddy-playing-with-me,” etc. This results in what Stern has called *implicit relational knowing* – a bodily knowing of how to interact with others, how to have fun together, how to elicit attention, how to avoid rejection, etc. It is a temporally organized, musical memory for the rhythm, dynamics, and undertones inaudibly present in interactions with others.

This early intercorporeality has far-reaching effects: early interactions turn into implicit relational styles that form one’s personality. As a result of learning processes, which are in principle comparable to the acquisition of motor skills, persons later shape and enact their relationships according to the patterns acquired in their primary experiences. These implicit relational styles are also expressed in the habitual posture of the body. Thus, the submissive attitude toward an authority figure implies components of posture and motion (bowed upper body, raised shoulders, inhibited motion), components of interaction (respectful distance, low voice, inclination to consent), and of emotion (respect, embarrassment, humility). All our interactions are based on such integrated bodily, emotional, and behavioral dispositions, which have become second nature, like walking or writing. They are now part of what I call the embodied personality structure (Fuchs 2006). The shy, submissive attitude that we find in dependent persons – their soft voice, childlike facial expression, their indulgence, and anxiousness – belong to an overall pattern of expression and posture that is an essential part of their personality. Our basic attitudes, our typical reactions, and relational patterns – in one word – our entire personality is based on the memory of the body.

To summarize, each body forms an extract of its past history of experiences with others that are stored in intercorporeal memory. In the structures of the lived body, the others are always implied: They are meant in expression and intended in desire. Thus, a person’s typical patterns of posture, movement, and expression are only comprehensible when they refer to actually present or imaginary others. Embodied personality structures may be regarded as procedural fields of possibility that are activated in the encounter with others and suggest certain types of behavior. “I do not need to look for the others elsewhere, I find them within my experience, they dwell in the niches which contain what is hidden from me but visible to them” (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 166). The embodied structure of one’s personality is therefore most accessible in the actual intercorporeal encounter: The lived body can be understood by other bodies only.

4. Incorporative memory

The development of embodied personality structures in early childhood does not proceed through pre-reflective interactions alone. Starting with the second year of life, it increasingly includes what I call incorporations, which means the shaping of bodily habits by attitudes and roles taken over from others. This happens mostly by bodily

imitation and identification: In adults, too, one can observe subordinates adopting the characteristic facial expressions, gestures, or attitudes of their superiors. Similarly, by mimetic identification, for example, in their play, toddlers already adopt attitudes and roles from others, including the gender role, and incorporate them. With this, the body gains an external side; it becomes a body-for-others, a carrier of social roles and symbols, be it in deliberate poses, in clothing, adornment, or cosmetics. One learns to act or to pose, but also to play-act and to inhibit one's spontaneous expressions.

Thus, body memory becomes the carrier of what has been called the *habitus* in sociology (Bourdieu 1990). It may be understood as a set of socially learned dispositions, skills, styles, tastes, and ways of acting, which are often taken for granted or "go without saying," and which are acquired through the activities and experiences of everyday life. According to Bourdieu (1990), the *habitus* denotes the entire social appearance of a person including his or her posture, manners, taste, clothing, attitudes and general way of life. As a "system of internalized patterns," it produces a selection of culture- or class-specific styles of thought, perception, and action that the individuals take to be their own, but they actually share with the members of their class. "The *habitus* – embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product" (Bourdieu 1990: 56).

Incorporations may be a germ of neurotic developments since they can cause a rupture in the spontaneous bodily performance. To become conscious of one's own appearance in the gaze of the other gives rise to central self-conscious affects such as shame, embarrassment, and pride. They can lead to permanent dispositions such as shyness, sensitivity, vanity, or dramatic tendencies. Narcissistic or histrionic disorders may thus be regarded as an alienating adoption of roles and images that undermine the authenticity of the primary bodily self. Other internalized attitudes serve to inhibit spontaneous, but unwanted impulses. Norbert Elias has shown how the body has been subjected, in the "civilizing process," to a growing disciplining of posture and movement in order to increase individual affect control (Elias 1969). Education, school, and the army were the classical institutions of a painful restriction of the body. Heinrich Heine (1997) has caricatured a historical example of such incorporations when writing that the Prussian soldiers seemed to have swallowed the cane they were once beaten with. Similarly, in today's anancastic personalities, we often find a rigid fixation of body posture, an inhibition of abdominal breathing and of expressive movements, all serving as a means of self-control against unwanted or threatening impulses.

5. Pain memory

This leads us to the next type of body memory, namely, pain memory. It is well-known that painful experiences are taken into the memory of the body; think of the proverb "The burnt child dreads the fire." And the adult, too, may well become aware of this

connection when entering his dentist's room. Instinctively, one tenses up, withdraws, or dodges when pain is threatening. It is not only conscious recollection that establishes such impressive associations. In 1911, the French neurologist Claparède described the case of an amnesic patient who could not store any new information because of a brain injury (Claparède 1911). Each day he had to introduce himself to her anew; she could never remember him. One day he covered a tack in his hand when greeting her and the patient with a startle quickly withdrew her hand. The next day she refused to greet him, but couldn't explain why. Her body had learned that the doctor's hand meant danger without herself knowing it.

Thus, experiences of pain are effectively inscribed into body memory. Therefore, an education that is based on pressure, constraint, and deterrence has always known to use pain as a disciplining means. "A thing must be burnt in so that it stays in memory: only something that continues *to hurt* stays in the memory. [...] When man decided he had to make a memory for himself, it never happened without blood, torments, and sacrifices" (Nietzsche 1994: 38). So Nietzsche wrote pointedly in the second essay of his *Genealogy of morality*. Even the word *pain* is derived from the Latin *poena*, which means *punishment*.

Painful experiences have not only accompanied the development of morality, but may also lead to psychosomatic illness. Nearly half of all patients with somatoform pain disorders have suffered severe pain or violence in their childhoods; for example, they may have been frequently physically punished (Egle et al. 1991; Fillingim et al. 1999). The reactivation of pain memory may occur even after a long period of latency. Experiences of humiliation or failure in later life may then trigger acute pain syndromes, which remain unexplainable to the patients themselves. This is an effect not only of implicit pain memory, but also of relational memory. Through the constant alternation between punishment and affection, children may learn that pain and suffering are at least connected with the parent's attention (Engel 1959). Psychogenic pains may later become chronic because patients have unconsciously learned that their expressions of pain are rewarded with attention by their family members. Thus, not only is the pain inscribed into the body, but also the situations and relationships that were connected to its first occurrence.

6. Traumatic memory

The most indelible impression in body memory is caused by trauma, that is, the experience of a serious accident, of rape, torture, or threat of death. The traumatic event is an experience that may not be appropriated and integrated into a meaningful context. As in pain memory, mechanisms of avoidance or denial are installed in order to isolate, forget, or repress the painful content of memory. The trauma withdraws from conscious recollection, but remains all the more virulent in the memory of the lived body, as if it were a foreign body. At every turn, the traumatized person may come across something that evokes the trauma. It is re-actualized in situations that are

threatening, shameful, or in some other way similar to the trauma, even if the person is not aware of this similarity. Victims of accidents may panic when the present traffic situation somehow resembles the former traumatic circumstances. Women who have been raped while sleeping may always awaken at the time when the assault took place. The former pains of a torture victim may reappear in a present conflict and correspond exactly to the body parts that were exposed to the torture. The body recollects the trauma as if it were happening anew.

Thus, the victim re-experiences feelings of pain, anxiety, and terror again and again, combined with fragments of intense images. Most of all, the intercorporeal memory of the traumatized person has changed deeply: He or she retains a sense of being defenseless, always exposed to a possible assault. The felt memory of an alien intrusion into the body has irreversibly shaken the primary trust into the world. Every person is turned into a potential threat. Jean Améry writes that the survivor of the torture will no more be able to feel at home, secure, and familiar anywhere in the world (Amery 1966:58). An impressive example of traumatic memory can also be found in the autobiography of the Jewish writer Aharon Appelfeld who as a young boy survived only by hiding in the woods of Ukraine for five years:

Since the second world war, over 50 years have passed. Much have I forgotten, above all places, dates and names of people, and yet I sense this period with my whole body. Always when it rains, when it gets cold or stormy, I return into the ghetto, the camp or the woods where I have spent such a long time. Memory obviously has longstanding roots in the body. Sometimes the smell of scroungy straw or the cry of a bird suffices to throw me far away and deeply into myself. – All that has happened then has been imprinted into the cells of my body. Not into my memory. The cells of the body seem to remember better than memory although it is assigned for that. Even years after the war I did not walk in the middle of the pavement or lane, but always close to the wall, always in a hurry, like someone who flees. (...) I said “I don’t remember”, and yet there are thousands of details. Sometimes the smell of food, dampness in the shoes or a sudden noise suffices to take me right back into the war ... The war has gripped me to the marrow.

(Appelfeld 2005: 57, 95f.)

Here, it is a whole phase of life that has left its traces in body memory, and these traces are even more durable than autobiographic memories can be: bodily sensations, the senses of taste, smell, or hearing, even certain weather conditions may suffice to suddenly revive the past, and the haunted style of walking along the walls still reflects the behavior of the fugitive.

Final considerations

Having provided an overview on the most important forms of body memory, let me return once again to the polarity of explicit and implicit memory. It has become obvious that there is no strict separation between these memory systems. Body memory does not represent the past but re-enacts it. But precisely through this, it also establishes an access to the past itself, not through images or words, but through immediate experience and action. Thus, it may unexpectedly open a door to explicit memory and resuscitate the past as if it were present as such.

Sensations or situations experienced by the lived body may function as implicit memory cores which, under suitable circumstances, can release their enclosed memories; we may call this an *explication*. It is well known that a forgotten intention can often be retrieved when returning to the place where it had been formed. In particular, sensations of smell or taste, well-known melodies, or the atmospheres of familiar places possess the capacity to revive the past. They are loaded, as it were, with the most intense recollections that we know. If I return to the place of my childhood many years later, my former seeing reappears and my former feelings re-emerge. At the same time, I am seized by a peculiar alienation and bewilderment because the revived past strangely concurs with my present-day life. Thus, recognition reveals a particular temporality: Whereas explicit memory enters the memories in a schedule of the past, in recognition, past and present literally coincide, which comes close to a mystical experience. In the famous “*madeleine*” episode of Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past*, the narrator recognizes the taste of a tea-soaked cake known to him from his childhood, and an overwhelming feeling suffuses him:

No sooner had the warm liquid mixed with the crumbs touched my palate than a shudder ran through me and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary thing that was happening to me. An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, something isolated, detached, with no suggestion of its origin. (...) Whence could it have come to me, this all-powerful joy?⁴

The narrator strives to explicate the autobiographic content of this implicit memory, but at first in vain: There is just the immediate and overwhelming familiarity of the taste, no recollection of its origin.

Undoubtedly what is thus palpitating in the depths of my being must be the image, the visual memory which, being linked to that taste, is trying to follow it into my conscious mind (...) Will it ultimately reach the clear surface of my consciousness ...?

Finally, after several attempts, the core of the implicit bodily experience opens up and its autobiographic content appears.

4. This and the following passages are quoted from Proust (1913–1927: 48–51).

And suddenly the memory revealed itself. The taste was that of the little piece of madeleine which on Sunday mornings at Combray (because on those mornings I did not go out before mass), when I went to say good morning to her in her bedroom, my aunt Léonie used to give me, dipping it first in her own cup of tea or tisane.

This retrieved memory now triggers a cascade of childhood memories, and all at once an entire world awakens:

... in that moment all the flowers in our garden and in M. Swann's park, and the water-lilies on the Vivonne and the good folk of the village and their little dwellings and the parish church and the whole of Combray and its surroundings, taking shape and solidity, sprang into being, town and gardens alike, from my cup of tea.

Proust's *madeleine*-memory thus hides within a complex of bodily sensations and implicit, only intuited recollections and meanings. I would like to call such a complex a *meaning core*. It is a nodal point of bodily recollection into which the lived past has condensed, as it were, and from which new meanings may unfold. Vaguely felt emotions and impulses may take shape in the sensing of the body, implying reverberations of forgotten or repressed contents as well as forebodings and anticipations of a possible future. In this way, body memory also opens a way to what is latently present in one's own life and sometimes already known on a deeper level. Therapeutic approaches that focus on this "felt sense" of the body such as Focusing (Gendlin 1982), concentrative movement therapy, dance/movement therapy, and others, may help the clients to open the meaning cores of body memory and untangle their latent motives and feelings.

In sum, the body is not just a structure of limbs and organs, nor merely a realm of sensations and movements. It is also a historically formed body whose experiences have left their traces in its invisible dispositions. By installing itself in every situation, the body always carries its own past into the surroundings as a procedural field of possibilities. His experiences and dispositions permeate the environment like an invisible net that spreads out from its senses and limbs, connects us with the world and renders it familiar to us. Each perception, each situation is permeated by implicit bodily recollections. "What we call reality," as Proust writes, "is a relation between those sensations and those memories which simultaneously encircle us" (Proust 1934: 1008).

Body memory is the underlying carrier of our life history, and eventually of our whole being-in-the-world. It comprises not only the evolved dispositions of our perceiving and behaving, but also the memory cores that connect us most intimately with our biographical past. And even when dementia deprives a person of all of her explicit recollections, she still retains her bodily memory: The history of her life remains present in the familiar sights, smells, feel, and handling of things, even when she is no more capable of accounting for the origin of this familiarity and of telling her life

history. Her senses become the carriers of personal continuity, of a more felt than known recollection – the tacit, but enduring memory of the body:

But when from a long-distant past nothing subsists, after the people are dead, after the things are broken and scattered, still, alone, more fragile, but with more vitality, more unsubstantial, more persistent, more faithful, the smell and taste of things remain poised a long time, like souls, ready to remind us, waiting and hoping for their moment, amid the ruins of all the rest; and bear unfaltering, in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence, the vast structure of recollection. (Proust 1981:48–51)

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