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Movement Observation Analysis (MOA): How a new conceptual framework supports a better understanding of the coherence of the functional and expressive dimensions of movement

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Abstract

Our research proposes to bring together two approaches to qualitative movement analysis used in dance, Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) and Functional Analysis of the Dancing Body [*L'Analyse Fonctionnelle du Corps dans le Mouvement Dansé*] (AFCMD) in order to better represent the interplay between the functional and expressive dimensions of movement. The methodology designed for this research combines a phenomenological perspective and *explicitation interviews* with experts followed by an “activity analysis.” Our efforts led to two types of results: an understanding of the processes underlying the observation-analysis activity of the observers and a proposed crosscutting conceptual framework integrating the main precepts of the two approaches considered. The “Activity Analysis” epistemology allowed us to identify a distinctive configuration of activities specific to each approach. In addition, the new framework graphs the identified observables in three overlapping spheres – Ground, Space, and Dynamics – placing at the heart of the schema the integration of the dimensions of Function and Expression.

Keywords: Movement Observation-Analysis (MOA), Laban Bartenieff Movement Analysis (LBMA), Functional Analysis of the Dancing Body (AFCMD), Activity Analysis

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Introduction

The activity of analyzing movement, whether conscious or not, is all-pervasive in movement-related spheres: somatic education, dance teaching, training and making, performance, sports, aesthetic analysis, performing arts history, reception theory, art curating, and cultural mediation. The functional and expressive dimensions of movement are usually separated intellectually in order to analyze and discuss each aspect more specifically. However, in the light of the experience of movement, it is obvious that one does not exist without the other, they can be placed neither in order of importance nor chronology. In fact, function and expression exist in a dynamic and intrinsic complementarity, which takes part in the gestalt of the lived or observed experience of movement. On the strength of this simple observation, our research project emerged from the desire to generate exchange of practice and knowledge between two qualitative movement analysis approaches: Laban Movement Analysis (LBMA)¹ and Functional Analysis of the Dancing Body (*L'Analyse Fonctionnelle du Corps dans le Mouvement Dansé—AFCMD*)².³ As the interrelation between the functional and expressive dimensions of movement is central in both approaches, the research was an occasion to deepen our understanding of this fundamental aspect of human movement.

Clearly, LBMA and AFCMD emerged in different contexts and focused on different concerns. We do not develop this aspect in this article as it has already been the subject of another publication.⁴ Nonetheless, when we take note of what the analysis activity itself entails, a constant appears. Despite lexical differences and different orientations in terms of objectives (why we are observing), movement analysis bears witness to a singular subjective perceptual experience that brings kinesthetic empathy into play. Whether the discussion focuses, as in AFCMD, on the detailed physical description of perceptual-motor processes or, as in LBMA, on the identification of dynamic movement parameters, we find that each individual

1. Rudolf Laban, *The Mastery of Movement on the Stage*. London: MacDonald and Evans, 1950.

2. The Accord Cinétique association brings together the practitioners of this approach created when the State diploma for dance teachers was introduced in France in 1989. <http://www.afcmd.com/>.

3. Hubert Godard, “Le Geste et sa Perception.” Chap. postface In *La Danse au XXème Siècle*, ed. Marcelle Michel and Isabelle Ginot (Paris: Bordas, 1995), 224–29. Odile Rouquet, “Les Techniques d’analyse du Mouvement: Les Fondements.” *Balises—CESMD Poitou-Charentes 2* (décembre 2004): 13-29. Nicole Topin, “L’analyse du Mouvement, une Danse du Regard: L’enseignement d’Hubert Godard.” *Nouvelles de danse* 46-47 Incorporer (été 2001): 100–13.

4. Harbonnier, Nicole, Geneviève Dussault, and Catherine Ferri. “Regard Croisé sur Deux Pratiques d’Analyse du Mouvement – L’Analyse du Mouvement selon Laban (LMA) et l’Analyse Fonctionnelle du Corps dans le Mouvement Dansé (AFCMD)”. *Recherches en danse* 5 (2016). <https://doi.org/10.4000/danse.1404>.

construction of meaning emerges from an embodied gaze that weaves links between distinct observations.

Both approaches clearly place importance on affect as a driving force in the elaboration of gesture. However, their respective paradigms appear to be articulated through different areas of thought and practice. According to LBMA Effort theory, movement takes root in what is referred to as the inner attitude of the mover, and the proposed bodywork becomes a preparation for artistic or self-expression. AFCMD, which was specifically developed in a dance education context, is directed firstly towards an optimization and facilitation of danced movement, thus opening up the expressive possibilities of the mover.

In order to deepen our understanding of the interrelation between the functional and expressive dimensions of movement, we developed and conducted a research project over a period of three years, from 2013 to 2016, with a panel of sixteen certified and recognized specialists from France and North America, each of whom is an active practitioner of one or the other of these two movement analysis approaches.

We would like to note the patience and generosity called upon on behalf of the panel of participants who allowed us insight into their unique processes. The study entailed a specifically designed methodology which endeavored to watch them watching and, with their help, discern how they were watching, what indicators they were seeing, and how they made sense of the observations they were making. Thus, the phenomena of movement observation, in a wider perspective including the phenomena of the observer, are considered.

We believe that the above research project has provided insight into the potential value for the interweaving of the more contemporary philosophical framework of French movement theorists and practitioners Hubert Godard and Odile Rouquet, with the gestalt-oriented Laban and Bartenieff viewpoint, which was founded on earlier philosophical precepts. To this effect, the project has provided the material for the following overarching framework, which brings these two approaches into dynamic interplay. We hope, among other things, to enhance interprofessional communication and exchange.

Although it is implicit in both systems, we have noted that the phenomenological aspect of watching, which has significance for how we make sense of observed movement has rarely been considered as the object of research. Accordingly, the proposed framework below intends to bring to the fore the importance of the actual activity of observation, in itself. For this reason, we have entitled the framework “Movement Observation-Analysis” (MOA).

Developing a crosscutting proposal: The conceptual framework for MOA endeavors to highlight the circularity of the observation-analysis process, from the phenomenological immersion in the experience, to the description and identification of observed phenomena, to the act of making sense of that which is

perceived. As well, a particular organization of concepts has been chosen by analogy to the way in which the medical field has organized its knowledge of the human body in terms of functions and synergistic systems (respiratory, circulatory, digestive,). The MOA framework proposes to apprehend movement relative to its vital roles: phoric (support), haptic, and expressive functions. This point of view accentuates and articulates the interplay between those functional and expressive aspects, which underlie the psychophysical dimensions of human movement.

There are three sections in the following comparative analysis of the systems studied. In the first section, we will present the research methodology design, which we set up to combine “Activity Analysis” with a phenomenological perspective. In the second section, we will discuss the activities constituting the observation-analysis processes that were identified in the context of our research. We then describe the different activity-configurations that make it possible to understand the specific operating mode of each movement analysis experience. In the third section, we will describe the proposed conceptual framework itself, accompanied by the empirical and theoretical reflections that contributed to its emergence. In particular, these reflections helped us to better understand the theoretical convergences between the two approaches (LBMA and AFCMD), while taking into account the way they are currently applied. The three authors of this article are currently teaching in University dance departments. Harbonnier and Ferri have been trained by Hubert Godard (1992-2000), and Dussault obtained her certification from LBIMS extension program (1994-1996).

A Phenomenological Perspective on Movement Analysis

In order to explore the activity underlying observation-analysis, we conducted individual interviews with sixteen analysts who are certified recognized experts⁵ in their respective practice of movement analysis; half of the participants are certified in the American form of LBMA, the other half are qualified in France as AFCMD analysts. Each expert was asked to watch the same video recording of two dancers, each of whom danced the same choreographic sequence, in order to identify the dancers’ functional and expressive singularities. The experts were interviewed while watching and analyzing the sequence. Each analyst participated in a single interview lasting approximately two hours. These interviews were videotaped, enabling the research team to observe and keep track of gestures that accompany the analysis discourse. As we will see later, the recording of gestures was useful in identifying whether the observer was engaging in the activity which we named “moving with” (see figure 1).

5. All of the analysts involved in this research have more than 20 years of practice and are teacher-trainers or teaching instructors in their respective approaches. Many of them are involved in research and have published reference books in their field.

The “Explicitation Interview” technique chosen for this phase of the research was developed by Pierre Vermersch,⁶ based on Husserl’s theories of consciousness and attention. This technique adopts a fundamentally phenomenological perspective: it is designed to elicit a detailed, introspective, descriptive verbalization of specific experience. Within the framework of our study, this type of introspective interview has two purposes: to access the internal process of the experts while they conduct their movement observation-analysis and, secondly, to shed light on the implicit knowledge underlying that process. For example, the following questions seek to bring insight to specific points: How do the participants direct their attention? Which observable phenomena do they choose? How do they identify and name what they see? What is the knowledge that underlies and supports the orientation of attention? In this interview technique, the interviewer is very careful not to use leading questions and to remain neutral in his follow-up questions so as not to influence the interviewee's answers (see table 1).

*Table 1. Excerpt of Explicitation Interview with an LBMA analyst**

A1 (67): In this first moment there is this rocking of the upper body, I see that it happens for me at the top of the diaphragm, but not in connection with the ground.
B (68): Then what makes you say that? How can you tell it is not related to the ground?
A1 (69): Because there is a fixed quality of tone at the lower body level.
B (70): So, when you see something fixed, what do you see?
A1 (71): That is to say, there is no movement, there is no transfer, no play of weight, and no flow in relation to the ground. Therefore, there is a kind of support at the bottom of the diaphragm that does not move ... at the top of which there is this movement that happens at the top of the diaphragm, rather than a transfer of weight ... in relation to the ground.

*By convention, in the Explicitation Interview, the interviewee is identified as A and interviewer as B.

The interviews were then analyzed in two phases. The first-phase was carried out using the framework of Activity Analysis,⁷ developed at the

6. See: Pierre Vermersch, *L'entretien d'Explicitation*. Issy-les-Moulineaux: ESF, 1994; “Describing the Practice of Introspection.” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 16, no. 10–12 (2009): 20–57. <https://www.grex2.com/assets/files/2011Vermersch%20describing%20introspection.pdf>; and *Explicitation et Phénoménologie*. Formation Et Pratiques Professionnelles, edited by Jean-Marie Barbier, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2012.

7. Activity Analysis is an epistemological research method developed in French-speaking countries that favors a transversal, holistic, and situated approach, and is particularly used in the

Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers (CNAM) research center for continuing education. The Activity Analysis framework allowed us to pinpoint the specific activities favored by each expert while conducting his or her observation. The second phase comprised a detailed analysis of the interview's contents. This step allowed us to identify the movement characteristics that were selected by the expert and to identify the nature of the observed characteristics—whether cinematic, dynamic or functional.

An “Activity” Perspective on the Processes of Observation-Analysis

To break with the obvious and implicit nature of the activity of observation, and to distance ourselves from the specialized vocabulary of movement analysis, we felt the need to study its processes with the benefit of an approach coming from outside the field. The perspective offered by Activity Analysis⁸ enabled us to adopt this external point of view which brought to light the operational modes common to both approaches.

According to Barbier, the notion of “activity” refers to the set of processes through which a human subject is engaged in his or her relationships to different environments.⁹ Activity is both a transformation and perception of the world; it is rhythmic and regulated by the affects it generates within the environment.¹⁰ This holistic concept of activity takes into account the interdependence of perception, action, emotion, and self-transformation. As such, it provides a crosscutting approach to different areas of practice. Associated with the process of analysis, it aims to offer intelligibility to the activities of a given field of practice, by identifying regularities and singularities within the activities of this field. Activity Analysis is a constructivist paradigm and responds in particular to the need of academics, professionals, and research circles to know the “real activity”¹¹ of the practice in question for purposes of training, optimization, and understanding of this practice.

The perspective of Activity Analysis has enabled us to identify different activities involved in MOA, bringing to light an unexpected complexity that is rarely explicitly addressed in research studies. Indeed, analysts communicate about their activity using terms such as “seeing,” “observing,” “noticing,” “feeling,” etc.,

fields of adult training, ergonomics, and task analysis in general. See: <http://foap.cnam.fr/laboratoire-formation-et-apprentissages-professionnels-725159.kjsp>

8. Jean-Marie Barbier, *Vocabulaire d'Analyse d'Activité*. Edited by Formation et pratiques professionnelles. 2è ed. Paris: PUF, 2017; and Jean-Marie Barbier and Marc Durand, “L'activité: un Objet Intégrateur pour les Sciences Sociales?” *Recherche et formation* 42 (2003), 99–117.

9. Jean-Marie Barbier, *Vocabulaire d'Analyse d'Activité*, 15.

10. Jean-Marie Barbier, *Vocabulaire d'Analyse d'Activité*, 29–30.

11. Jean-Marie Barbier, *Vocabulaire d'Analyse d'Activité*, 11.

without necessarily measuring the richness of the processes underlying each of these. Our research has brought this richness into relief and, more specifically, the interdependence of and circulation between perceptual and cognitive activities.

We note that the continuity between perception and reasoning was clearly expressed by the psychologist Alfred Binet at the end of the 19th century. He states that it would be impossible to draw “a line of demarcation between perception and observation on the one hand and inference on the other ...”¹²

A perfect continuity exists between the simplest perceptions, as for example, the perception of a colour, and the complicated perceptions that verge upon logical and conscious reasoning; and in short a single act, in developing, in evolving, begins by being a simple perception and is transformed by degrees into a complex reasoning.¹³

On the basis of Binet’s reflections, MOA seeks to avoid the dichotomy between processes and the results of those processes. In conclusion, by associating observation and analysis we consider the obvious complementarity and power of reciprocal influence between the two activities.

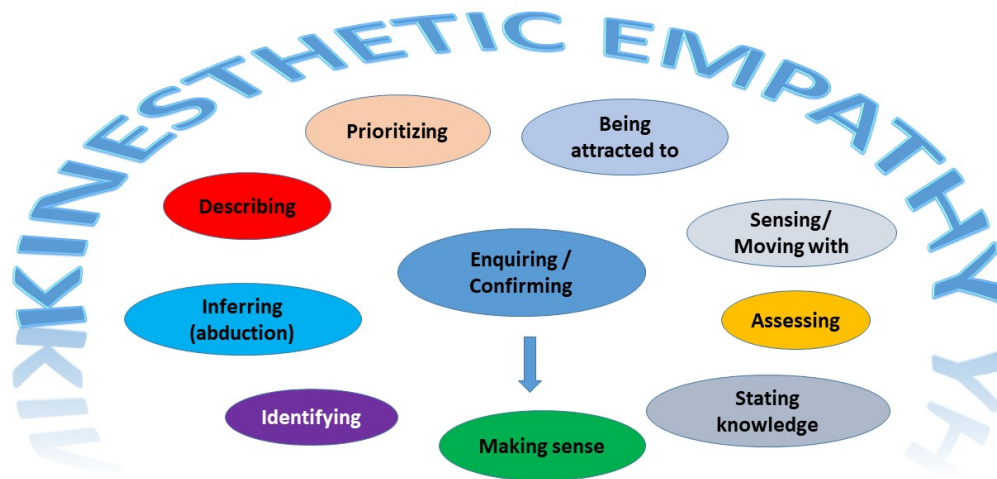


Figure 1. Types of activities comprising the observation process.

12. Alfred Binet, *La Psychologie du Raisonnement: Recherches Expérimentales par l'Hypnotisme* (1886). *Collection Encyclopédie Psychologique*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005, 66.

13. Binet, A. *The Psychology of Reasoning*. Bristol, UK & Tokyo Japan: Thoemmes Press & Maruzen Co. LTD, 1998, 77.

With regard to methodology:

- 1) The verbatim transcripts (as well as the videos in the case of the activity “move with”) of the interviews allowed us to identify the activities of each analyst and the chronology in which they appeared.
- 2) We counted the occurrences of activities for each analyst, and then grouped the results according to the approach. This exercise led us to see that each approach tended to favor distinct underlying activities (see figure 2).
- 3) The nature of the identified activities led us to differentiate them into three categories: Perception, Representation and Making Meaning (see figure 3).
- 4) We noted the chronology of the activities used by each analyst and identified the sequences preferred by the analysts in each approach. This step led us to the notion of “activity configuration” characterized by the specific sequencing of the different activities favored by each approach (see figures 4 and 5).

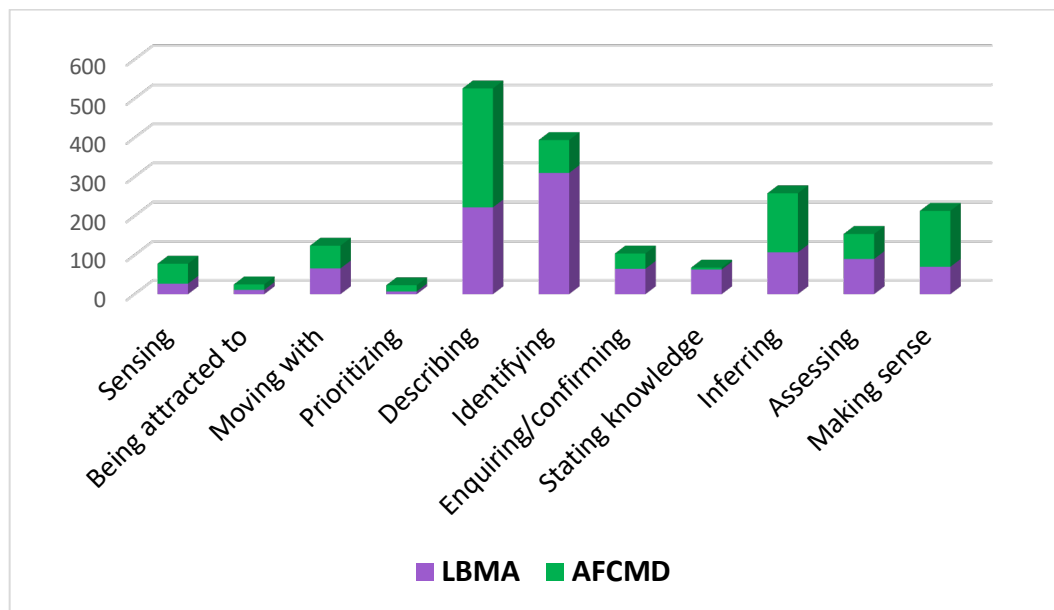


Figure 2. Occurrence of activities by approach.

Graphing MOA Processes

In order to better represent the relationships between the different MOA activities that we observed, we have placed the three overall activities of **Perception**, **Representation** and **Making Meaning** in concentric circles on a graph (see figure 3).

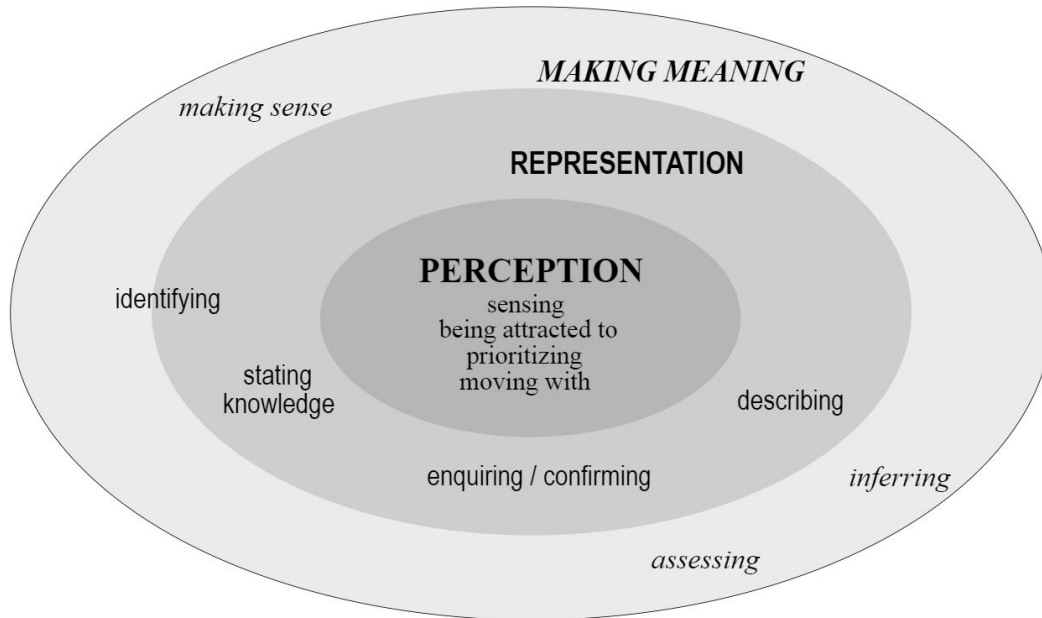


Figure 3. MOA activities graph.

Perception

In figure 3, the inner circle represents the intersubjective experience of the analyst in relationship to the observed subject. This is the domain of the preverbal processes of perception and of kinesthetic empathy.

In the proposed framework of MOA, the concept of perception is based on Merleau-Ponty's notion of "knowledge"¹⁴ combined with William James's notion of "recognition"¹⁵. The activity of perceiving, in our view, is also part of a wider system of somatic knowledge, identified by Gibson as "the haptic system,"¹⁶ which he describes as follows:

The sensibility of the individual to the world adjacent to his body by the use of his body will here be called the haptic system. [...] The haptic system,

14. Maurice Merleau-Ponty states that "Yet there is indeed a human act that, in a single stroke, cuts through all possible doubts in order to install itself in the fullness of truth: this act is perception, in the broad sense of the knowledge of existences." Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la Perception*. Bibliothèque Des Idées. Paris: Gallimard, 1945.

15. "I have just treated [...] the kind of knowledge called perception, in an article in the *Journal of philosophy*, for September 1, 1904, called "Does consciousness exist?". This is the type of case in which the mind enjoys direct 'acquaintance' with a present object". William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. Dover Publications, 1912, 27-28

16. We incorporate the haptic system as one of the three essential systems of our proposed conceptual framework.

then, is an apparatus by which the individual gets information about both the environment and his body.¹⁷

Table 2. Examples of perceptual activities

A7 (4): Immediately, I was also interested from the start with her grip on the ground [...] I was trying to settle down a little bit in her body.	Prioritizing Sensing
A9 (102): In fact you can't see anything in the feet, but it's just the feeling, in terms of the solidity of the body, that makes that there, just the weight, it's transferred to the support, and then it that goes that way [<i>makes a lateral movement of the rib cage</i>].	Sensing Moving with
A16 (102): I was attracted rather quickly by a verticality immediately very present	Being attracted to

We have identified four different activities to be placed in this central circle (see figure 3), comprising the perceptual aspect of the observer's activity (see table 2): Sensing, Being attracted to, Prioritizing, Sensing and Moving with.

Representation

Placed in the interjacent circle are the activities that involve putting perceptions into words, or the passage from observation to enunciation and to verbal description (see figure 3). During this type of activity, conceptual analysis takes place, which will serve as a basis for the construction of meaning.

According to Barbier, the notion of representation refers to the presence (for the subject engaged in a given activity) of objects which are absent from his environment, or of activities in which he is not engaged.¹⁸

In MOA, we have named four types of representational activities (see table 3): The activities "Describing" and "Identifying" offer representations which are in direct relationship to the observed subject. The activity "Enquiring/Confirming" boosts the retroactive loop between "Representation" and "Making Meaning". On the other hand, the activity of "Stating Knowledge" is not directly linked to the observed subject and constitutes, as such, a satellite activity of MOA.

17. James J Gibson, *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966, 97.

18. Jean-Marie Barbier, *Vocabulaire d'Analyse d'Activité*, 105.

Table 3. Examples of representational activities

A10 (63): I was wondering, as she had her back to me, what she was doing with the gaze. Now she is facing us, we can see, and I think, that in order to have something alert, she is really on the sense of her gaze and directs her gaze.	Enquiring/Confirming
A12 (81): even if she still raises her arms by her shoulders, she doesn't let go of her wrists, she lets go of her elbows, and it's faster.	Describing
A5 (13): low intensity bound flow, the containing, the hesitating with sustainment, also slightly limp, on the passive end, and that sense of going from directional into shape flow.	Identifying LBMA
A16 (121): I'm reading a succession, really, a successive movement that starts from the rib cage and very quickly circulates throughout the body.	Identifying and Describing
A5 (18): ...when the spine is used, generally, as the sense of coming inward into shape-flow, out of space Effort, and goes into also weight sensing, not totally passive, but weight sensing – sometimes it goes totally passive.	Stating knowledge and Identifying LBMA

Key: LBMA vocabulary, AFCMD vocabulary

Making Meaning

The activities Assessing, Inferring (including abductive reasoning) and Making Sense are placed in the outer circle, which contains the activities related to Making Meaning (see figure 3).

Various observables are identified or picked out by the analyst while conducting the observation-analysis task. These observables, when put into relationship with one another, enable the analyst to construct internally coherent meaning which we call Making Sense. The notion of internal coherence leads us back to the concept of the “construction of meaning,” as defined by Barbier (discussed further below). The participating movement analysts provided a number of indications and insights which made evident the importance of inferential reasoning in their process, particularly that of abductive inference.

Abductive inference, is a concept which has been attentively brought to light by the founder of semiology, Charles S. Peirce.¹⁹ According to Peirce, abductive

19. Charles S. Peirce, “Collected Papers.” edited by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960; and Charles S. Peirce,

inference is a human faculty enabling perceptual experience to develop into the idea, or the reasoning, that this experience evokes. Indeed, for Peirce, abduction represents, *par excellence*, both the inferential dynamics of creativity as well as the foundation of scientific reasoning. Simon Levesque, writing on the “mysterious functioning of abduction according to Charles Peirce,” points out that a kind of free-flowing observation of phenomena can lead to the emergence or suggestion of ideas.

This emergence, according to Peirce, is both creative and rational, since it stems as much from the free associative play of ideas emerging concomitantly with the continuous act of perception (belonging to the sphere of psychology), as it does from the process of inference by which our knowledge of the world and its coherence is verified (belonging to the sphere of logical reasoning).²⁰

This concomitance between perception and reasoning led Sebeok and Umiker-Sebeok²¹ to metaphorically liken the process to that of an investigation, invoking the iconic figure of detective Sherlock Holmes to illustrate Peirce’s theory.

With regard to the notion of “construction of meaning,” a preliminary remark is necessary to explain our choice of the term “meaning.” Barbier makes a clear distinction between the terms “meaning” and “signification” in that the construction of meaning refers to representations for oneself, whereas signification concerns representations addressed to others during a communication activity. He defines the construction of meaning as,

Mental activities/affects occurring in/for a given subject while drawing associations between the mental constructions/affects accompanying the activity in progress and the mental constructions/affects accompanying previous activities. These activities are suggested by the subject to himself and affect his subsequent activity; they are summoned by the intention of taking an action.²²

Reasoning and the Logic of Things the Cambridge Conferences Lectures of 1898. Edited by Kenneth Laine Ketner. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992.

20. Simon Levesque, “Le Mystérieux Fonctionnement de l’Abduction selon Charles S. Peirce.” *Cygne noir* 3 (2015). <http://www.revuecygnoir.org/numero/article/mystere-abduction-peirce:2>

21. Thomas Albert Sebeok, and Donna Jean Umiker-Sebeok. “*You Know My Method: A Juxtaposition of Charles S. Peirce and Sherlock Holmes*.” Gaslight Publications, 1980.

22. Barbier, Jean-Marie. *Vocabulaire d’Analyse d’Activité*, 49.

Table 4. Examples of “Making Meaning” activities

A6 (24): My impression was she’s... in the back of her body [...], behind her knees, so that her weight-bearing is behind her upper body. And that she’s not meaning to be that way; this is a functional issue for her.	Assessing
A10 (45): So, I'm going to talk about the pre-movement. I don't know if it's choreographic or not, to deal with all this asymmetry of the head, <i>it's as if it was actually going into the movement</i> , and it caused something, a bending of the head that actually readjusted the possibility of orientation.	<i>Inferring</i> Making sense
A10 (47): And so, in order to set the whole thing in motion, the pole had to be pointing upwards. <i>And she set that up to find it inside herself I think.</i>	<i>Inferring</i>
A2 (64): That’s a moment that I responded to as [...] self-confirming, a way of saying 'I am at the center of my kinesphere and this is my orientation to the world.' This is a congruent message to me [...] because I sense her weight [...] rebounding. And to me, committing to weight like that (gives) a sense of confirming self [...] my mass, my ability to be present...	Making sense

Key: *Inferring activity*; **Making sense activity**

Specific Configurations of Activities

The findings bring out, in particular, the functioning of retroactive loops between the different activities involved in observation-analysis, emphasizing the circularity of the process rather than linear reasoning. The orchestrating role of the activity of “constructing meaning” also became evident in the self-organization of these loops.

As stated above, the sequencing of the analysts’ preferred activities led us to identify “activity configurations.” To illustrate the notion of activity configurations, we present below some of the observations made during our research. Indeed, while our research has enabled us to note that there is quite significant convergence between LBMA and AFCMD analysts in terms of the results of their MOA, it also showed that the approaches each follow quite distinctive processes. These distinctive processes are expressed in terms of a predominating preference for the use of certain types of activities, as well as the way, and the order, in which the activities are associated. These differences can be visualized by the use of the graph. We were thus able to identify a type of “activity configuration” specific to each approach.

The LBMA analysts (see figure 4) tended to **identify** what are referred to as movement factors by using a specialized vocabulary. This process is quite rapid (dark grey arrows). It starts from **Perception** and leads directly to **Making**

Meaning. In LBMA, the use of a specific vocabulary can be considered as a pre-constructed meaning crystallized from reiterated experience. For this reason, “Identifying” appears at the intersection of the **Representation** and **Making Meaning** spheres. The flow of activities (white arrows) linking **Representation** to the activity of **making sense** through **inference** was also present to a lesser extent.

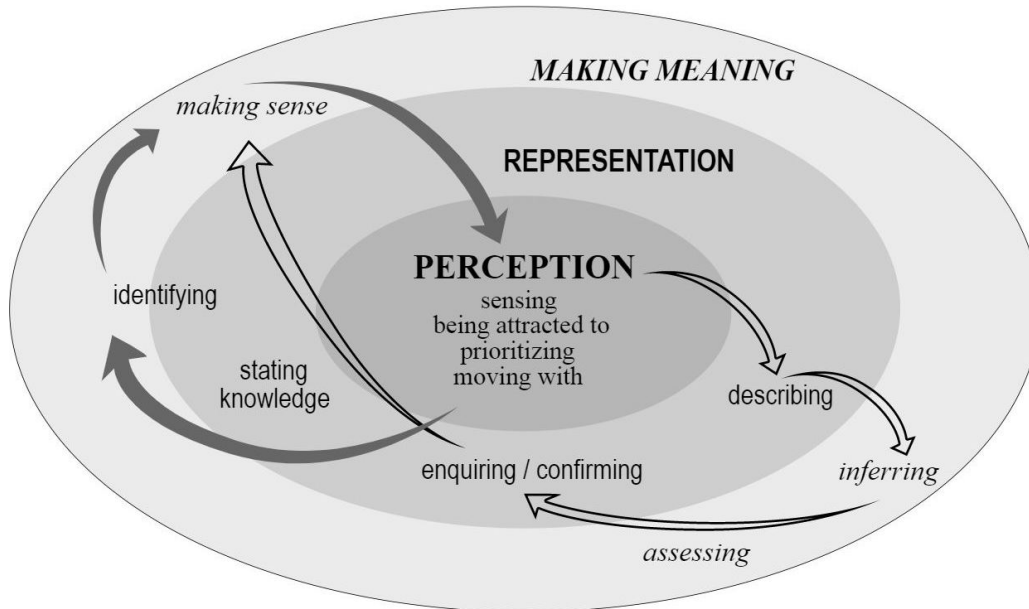


Figure 4. Typical flow of activities for the LBMA analysts.

AFCMD analysts (see figure 5), for their part, pick up several clues by returning to perceptual activity a number of times (white arrows). This process takes longer: having no domain-specific standardized vocabulary: they tend to make several round trips between **Perception**, **Making Meaning** and **Representation**; they spend time with activities such as **describing**, **enquiring/confirming** and **inferring**, and develop the activity of **making sense** (dark grey arrows).

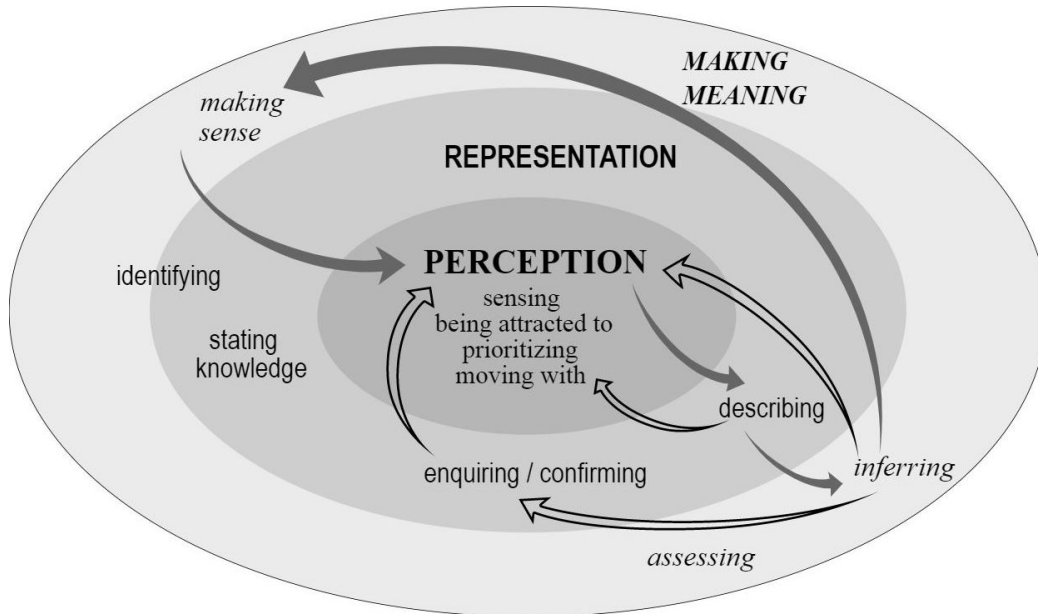


Figure 5. Typical flow of activities for the AFCMD analysts.

In summary, the framework provided by Activity Analysis enabled us to develop a model describing a complex overall activity by distinguishing different types of activities which comprise the whole, and which takes into account the sensory, psychological and cognitive aspects of the subject who is engaged in analyzing. The proposed model remains open to a variety of possible relationships between the different areas of activity and thus leaves room for the analyst’s creativity. The Activity Analysis framework enabled us to shift away from professional jargon to “a semantics of the intelligibility of the activity”²³. This semantic choice, by giving access to the analyst’s implicit phenomena—actions, thoughts, knowledge—brings these activities into the realm of explicit practice, potentially communicable and shareable.

The Conceptual Organization of MOA

Having laid the base for collecting our data by combining an interview approach which is phenomenological in nature and then analyzing the activities actually involved in the process of watching, we needed to organize this data into a coherent whole relative to what we know about how movement itself is organized. To this effect, we proceeded along three lines of study: we identified the terms chosen by the participants and associated them with our categories, whether Ground, Space,

23. Barbier, Jean-Marie, and Marc Durand. “L’Activité: un Objet Intégrateur pour les Sciences Sociales?” *Recherche et formation* 42 (2003): 99–117, 109

Dynamics, Intention, Coordination or Engagement. We then selected the vocabulary, which the analysts used to describe the indicators relative to these categories. Finally, we examined the interrelationship between the different terms used by the LBMA and AFCMD specialists.

Regarding the vocabulary, we have taken into account the consensus of terms used by the movement analysts as well as our desire to develop a shared vocabulary. For example, the inventory of all movement parameters identified by the LBMA and AFCMD analysts reveals common themes referring to posture, tonic modulations, coordination, gravitational relationship, notions of space and dynamic qualities (see table 5). Even though the vocabulary used by the LBMA and AFCMD analysts was slightly different, it was made clear that they were often referring to the same phenomenon. At this point of the research, the objective was to shed light on the implicit content of the vocabulary chosen by the analysts. Whether the vocabulary was a specialized jargon or taken from everyday language, it was clear that each term used by the analysts implied an in-depth process, which provided meaning beyond the usual and obvious sense of the words. Through the use of the Explication Interview technique, these vocabulary choices became explicit rather than implicit.

In table 5 below, the shared terms are identified in bold font and terms specific to each approach remain in normal font. It is important to bear in mind that many of these terms were originally in French and have been translated verbatim for the purposes of the research. For example, the observation of tonicity was expressed differently by LBMA and AFCMD analysts. In LBMA, the terms *shape flow* and *free flow* refer to the categories of *Shape* and *Effort*, whereas in AFCMD, analysts prefer to mention the freedom of the joints, the minimized involvement of the antagonist muscles and the continuity or fluidity of movement. In both cases, the term **flow** was chosen to qualify tonicity and its modulations.

As for the organization of the categories, by analogy to the way in which the field of medicine has organized its' knowledge of the body into synergistic systems (respiratory, circulatory, endocrine), it appeared of interest here to name and organize the observable parameters which were identified by the analysts according to the way in which they contribute to the articulation between the functional and expressive dimensions of movement (see figure 5, MOA conceptual diagram). It should be noted that by identifying three systems or functions (*fonctions*), which would appear to be fundamental for human life—the support (*phorique*),²⁴ the haptic,²⁵ and the expressive²⁶ functions—we have been able to

24. Pierre Delion, "Donald Winnicott, Michel Tournier et la Fonction Phorique." In *Winnicott et La Création Humaine*, edited by Alain Braconnier and Bernard Golse, 17–35. Toulouse: Érès, 2012.

25. James J. Gibson, *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*.

26. Rudolf Laban, *The Mastery of Movement on the Stage*. London: MacDonald & Evans, 1950.

highlight the psycho-corporal dimension which is present in both approaches to analysis.

Table 5. Emergent shared themes

Themes	LBMA	AFCMD
Posture	Verticality, lumbar lordosis, hyper-extended knees*	
Tonicity	shape flow , free flow	tonic modulation, flow circulation, joint freedom, lowered activity of antagonists, movement flow , continuity
Coordination	center-periphery connection, initiation, initiating from the support upper/lower connection	center-periphery coordination, from the center to the edges verticality in relation to the support
Gravitational relationship	yield, weight sensing, to push back, sequencing from bottom to top	gravitational, organization by weight , upward dynamics, organization from below
	Floor connection, anchoring*	
Space	spatial projection rising shape quality top/bottom opposition	To reach, prolongation of thrust of the leg along the spine two polarities: earth/sky
Dynamic qualities	acceleration, deceleration	
	Lightness, sudden, rebound*	

*Key: Terms shared by both approaches belonging to the category in the left column.

In addition, we required the new proposed framework to meet a number of conditions. First of these, of course, was to take into account the convergences we found in our research between the LBMA and AFCMD approaches, while progressing towards a new theoretical organization. From the outset, we were convinced that the integration of the functional and expressive dimensions of movement should be placed at the center of the conceptual model. Moreover, it must be possible to move freely among the different parameters without favoring a particular starting point, a purpose that the Venn diagram satisfactorily fulfills as a schematic model of our conceptualization. Our proposal was also designed to enable an organization of the observables that would bring out the unique arrangement of the functional and expressive dimensions of the movement of different individuals.

The center of the diagram below represents the integration of the functional elements of the movement with their expressive qualities. Irmgard Bartenieff,²⁷ Laban's close collaborator, makes this integration the primary objective of her approach to movement fundamentals. *Bartenieff Fundamentals* offer a way to experience the body that stimulates exchanges between sensations, perceptions and actions to find meaning in even the most everyday movement.

Even before any visible movement manifestations, there were inner impulses toward these preparations. First an inner impulse to attention to the space around him and what it included; second, to the sense of his own body weight and the intention of the force of its impact; third, to awareness of time pressing for decision. All of this inner participation interrelated with the flow of his movement whose inner impulses fluctuated between freedom and control. Such inner participation is a combination of kinaesthetic and thought processes that appear to be almost simultaneous at different levels of consciousness.²⁸

In AFCMD, the functional aspect of movement is the subject of a very precise analysis designed to help the performer achieve his or her artistic intentions. The aim is, among other things, to facilitate the relaxation of the muscles that hinder the expression of the poetic quality of movement. For Godard,²⁹ the function/expression dialectic mainly plays out at the level of the gravity response system,³⁰ which he calls the *fonction tonique*.

[The gravity response system] brings together three fundamental aspects of the quality of a gesture: it organizes the gravitational processes, thus regulating the tonus of the postural muscles, it reacts to the way in which the situation of the moment and its affective coloration is perceived, and finally, it coordinates the dynamic muscular actions specific to the execution of a movement.³¹

27. Irmgard Bartenieff, and Dori Lewis. *Body Movement: Coping with the Environment*. New York: Gordon and Breach, 1980.

28. Irmgard Bartenieff, and Dori Lewis. *Body Movement: Coping with the Environment*, 51.

29. Godard, Hubert. "C'est le Mouvement qui Donne Corps au Geste." *Marsyas* 30 (juin 1994): 71–77; and Caryn McHose, and Hubert Godard. "Phenomenological Space, Interview with Hubert Godard." *Contact Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2006): 23–38. <https://resourcesinmovement.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Phenomenological-Space-CQ-Article-1.pdf>.

30. The term "gravity response system" is taken from Kevin Frank, "Tonic Function: A Gravity Response Model for Rolfing Structural and Movement Integration," *Rolf Lines*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1995: 12–20. Accessible online at <http://www.pedroprado.com.br/articles/tonic-function-a-gravity-response-model-for-rolfing-structural-and-movement-integration/?lang=en>.

31. Hubert Godard, "C'est le Mouvement qui Donne Corps au Geste.": 72. Our translation and emphasis.

Diagram Representing the MOA Concepts

To satisfy the requirements presented in the introduction, we opted for the synthetic visual form of a Venn diagram, which provides a graphical representation of the possibilities of interactions between different categories of observables without imposing a hierarchy. We collected the different observables identified by the participants and organized them into three main spheres: **Ground**, **Space** and **Dynamics**, placing the integration of the dimensions of **Function** and **Expression** at the heart of the diagram. We have associated each of the spheres with a specific functional system: the support system, the haptic system, and the expressive system.

The intersecting spaces between these three spheres show interactions that mobilize different systems. **Intention** is situated at the intersection of **Ground** and **Dynamics**, **Coordination** at the intersection of **Ground** and **Space**, and **Engagement** at the intersection of **Space** and **Dynamics**. The central intersection illustrates the reciprocal relationship between **Function** and **Expression** (see figure 5).

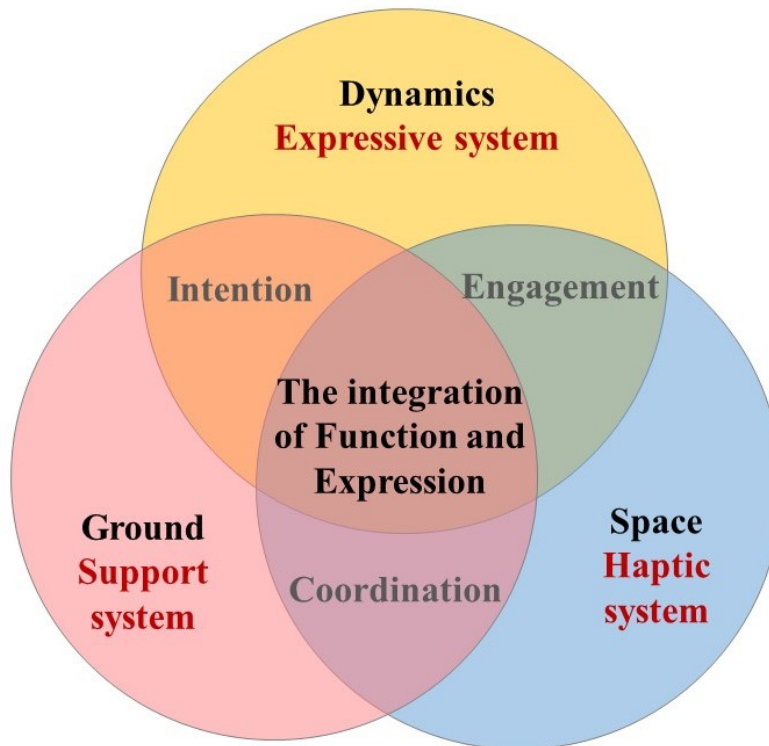


Figure 6. MOA diagram of basic concepts.

Ground – (Support System)

In keeping with the holistic perspective that we defend in OAM, we drew inspiration from several fields of knowledge, namely movement sciences (including neurophysiology of the musculoskeletal system), psychology (including psychoanalysis) and psychomotricity,³² in order to circumscribe the notion of Ground.

In seeking to define the singularity of a motor signature, we become invariably immersed in the question of the role played by a person's gravity response system and basic postural ground (*fond tonico-postural*) in the construction of a gestural identity. The notion of **Ground** (*Fond*) is central to the thinking of Hubert Godard, who often mentions the ground/figure gestalt to evoke the background, subliminally present to the observer, underlying the visible gesture.³³ For Godard, an individual's singular corporeity³⁴ develops through a gravitational triangulation with the object of love, a primary caregiver, and with his/her surroundings. Access to uprightness (vertical posture or standing), which develops throughout the first years of life, is thus closely interwoven with a nurturing relationship that has strong affective connotations. This *fond tonico-postural* eventually becomes the canvas on which all of a person's movement choices are painted. According to Godard,³⁵ the "tonic muscles specialized in gravitational response constitute the first memory and perhaps the first language, what has been called the *tonic dialogue*."³⁶ We would like to note that when referring to the *fond tonico-postural* as Ground we call upon several dimensions of the notion: the *fond* as background elaborated throughout one's life through a singular relationship to gravity and to one's surroundings, as well as the sense of grounding that comes from physical and psychological support.

32. Therapeutic approach initiated by the French psychologist Henri Wallon (1879-1962) that proposed the notion of tonic function, a key notion in Hubert Godard's thinking.

33. Hubert Godard. "Rolfing: Interview Hubert Godard." Production Camacro 2011. <https://vimeo.com/23724419>.

34. The philosopher Michel Bernard, inspired by the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, has proposed the notion of "corporeity", or body as a shifting entity: "unstable, heterogenous, and multiple, to be understood not as an objective reality but as a network [...] composed of perceptive and fictionalizing activities, formed by the subject's personal and collective experience, wherein corporal materiality, desire, drive, language, gesture and imagination are deeply interwoven...". Ginot, Isabelle. "Corporéité". In *Dictionnaire De La Danse*, edited by Philippe Le Moal, Paris: Larousse-Bordas, 2008, 554.

35. Hubert Godard, and Laurence Louppe. "Le Déséquilibre Fondateur. Le Corps du Danseur: Épreuve du Réel." *Art Press, hors série n°13 "20 ans, l'histoire continue" Entretien avec Hubert Godard* (1992): 138–43.

36. Hubert Godard, and Laurence Louppe. "Le Déséquilibre Fondateur. Le Corps du Danseur: Épreuve du Réel.": 142.

From his earliest writings, Rudolf Laban evoked, in his time, the possibility of a “motor thinking” that enables people to orient themselves in their inner world.³⁷ Isabelle Launay³⁸ underlines the importance given by Laban to this notion of motor thinking, which implies the importance of the subjective experience lived in the present moment, a lived experience that is connected to the flow that opposes daily life agitation in an increasingly industrialized world.³⁹

Dr. Judith Kestenberg,⁴⁰ in her movement analysis of young children, established clear relationships between rhythmic tensions, shape flow, and the psychological aspects of child development: “While tension flow is based on the biological properties of contractility and elasticity, shape flow refers to the properties of living tissue, in the areas of expandability and plasticity.”⁴¹

The presence of a “ground” of a psychosomatic nature is thus postulated in both systems of movement analysis, establishing in fact that “pre-movements”, often unconscious, carries messages as important as intentional movements.⁴² We propose to relate this fundamental and ontogenetic aspect of movement to what we have called “support system” in English, and in French, as the “*fonction phorique*,”⁴³ as described by Delion⁴⁴ and Godard,⁴⁵ to account for the concurrent physical and psychological dimensions of support. The inspiration for the conception and naming, in French, of this functionality was in fact Winnicott’s notion of *holding*,⁴⁶ which emphasizes the importance of support, whether physical or emotional, to develop an embodied identity.

37. Rudolf Laban, *La Maîtrise du Mouvement Essai*. Translated by Jacqueline Challet-Haas and Marion Bastien. L'art de la Danse. Paris: Actes Sud, 1994. The Mastery of Movement on the Stage, 1950, 39–40.

38. The author, Isabelle Launay's is one of Hubert Godard's close collaborators together with the philosopher Michel Bernard, with whom they both worked,

39. Isabelle Launay, *À la Recherche d'une Danse Moderne : Rudolf Laban, Mary Wigman*. Art Nomade. Paris: Chiron, 1996, 69–70.

40. Dr. Judith Kestenberg used the analysis of Effort and Shape developed by Laban in combination with Freudian theories to create movement profile categories. Among other things, she uses the concept of tension flow in relation to shape flow to analyze the movement of babies and children.

41. Susan Loman, and Rose Brandt. *The Body Mind Connection in Human Movement Analysis*. Keene, N.H.: Antioch New England Graduate School, 1992, 64.

42. Launay, Isabelle. *À la Recherche d'une Danse Moderne : Rudolf Laban, Mary Wigman*.

43. From Greek and Latin *phoria*: to bear, carry, hold up.

44. Delion, Pierre. “Donald Winnicott, Michel Tournier et la Fonction Phorique.” In *Winnicott et la Création Humaine*, edited by Alain Braconnier and Bernard Golse, 17-35. Toulouse: Érés, 2012.

45. Hubert Godard. “Fond/Figure Entretien avec Hubert Godard.” By Mathieu Bouvier. La Manufacture. 7 novembre, 2013. <http://www.pourunatlasdesFigures.net/element/fond-Figure-entretien-avec-hubert-godard>.

46. Donald W. Winnicott, *Through Paediatrics to Psychoanalysis*. Winnicott, 1958.

The term ‘holding’ is used here to denote not only the actual physical holding of the infant, but also the total environmental provision prior to the concept of *living with*. In other words, it refers to a three-dimensional or space relationship with time gradually added. This overlaps with, but is initiated prior to, instinctual experiences that in time would determine object relationships.⁴⁷

When speaking of Ground we are referring to the singularity of an individual’s support system (postural flow, relation to support, breath, and the labanian idea of imprint). A person’s basic postural ground can also be characterized by the prioritization of certain strategies of perception, emerging with the first autonomous movements, in order to manage his or her relationship to gravity and to her surroundings. These preferences, which Godard has called “functional predisposition,”⁴⁸ and which orient sensory-motor information, are thus among the observables which we have included in this sphere.

Space – (Haptic System)

The haptic system is a concept proposed by Gibson⁴⁹ which emphasized the interdependence between perception and action. According to Gibson, the senses (sight, hearing, touch, and kinesthesia) operate in an intersensory mode that constantly interacts with motricity. A sensation is at the same time a movement of exploration turned towards acquiring knowledge of the outside world and a trove of information to nourish our inner world. Every movement therefore mobilizes the haptic system that puts the individual in sensory relation with both internal and external spaces.

The sensibility of the individual to the world adjacent to his body by the use of his body will here be called the haptic system. The word haptic comes from a Greek term meaning ‘able to lay hold of.’ It operates when a man or animal feels things with his body or its extremities. It is not just the sense of skin pressure. It is not even the sense of pressure plus the sense of kinesthesia. [...] The haptic system, then, is an apparatus by which the

47. Donald W. Winnicott, *Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis [Ressource Électronique]: Collected Papers*. Collected Papers. Edited by M. Masud R. Khan. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2018. Collected Papers: Through Paediatrics to Psychoanalysis. Tavistock Publications Ltd. 1958. <https://www-taylorfrancis-com.proxy.bibliotheques.uqam.ca/books/9780429484001>, 43–44.

48. Our translation of “*terrain fonctionnel*” Hubert Godard, “À Propos des Théories sur le Mouvement.” *Marsyas* 16 (1990): 19-23.

49. James J. Gibson, “Observations on Active Touch.” *Psychological Review* 69, no. 6 (1962): 477–91.

individual gets information about both the environment and his body. He feels an object relative to the body and the body relative to an object. It is the perceptual system by which animals and men are literally in touch with the environment.⁵⁰

Laban's notion of Shape can be related to the haptic system in that our relationship to the environment involves reciprocity between touching and being touched, between action and perception. According to Peggy Hackney,⁵¹ an individual's preferred traces, or pathways, of movement in space are intimately linked to his or her ontogenetic development. It is through a succession of movement patterns that we build our relationship to the world and to space.

According to Laban,⁵² space is the primary organizer of movement, the "morphogenic" element. While a newborn baby expresses itself mainly by modulating breath in the early stages of awareness of its environment, he or she soon develops preferred pathways of coordination; the plasticity of the shape of its movements develops with an increased desire for more complex interactions with his or her environment.

The idea that space organizes movement finds an echo in the importance Godard places on the notion of a virtual space of latent potential preceding movement. Moreover, this virtual projection of movement carries meaning. The capacity to virtualize and imagine space is, in Godard's view, at the heart of our sense of belonging to the world. Space touches me, I touch space. The perception I have of the space available to me, this space of potential action, thus influences my movements by limiting them or, on the contrary, by opening up my possible choices.⁵³

Laban's concept of the kinesphere has been incorporated into the MOA framework. This conception enables us to see **Space** not as a random succession of directions but rather as a coherent organization of the observable elements of the haptic system.

50. James J. Gibson, *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966, 109.

51. Peggy Hackney, *Making Connections: Total Body Integration through Bartenieff Fundamentals*. London: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2004.

52. Rudolf Laban, *Espace Dynamique*. Translated by Élisabeth Schwartz-Rémy. Bruxelles: Nouvelles de danse, 2003, 76.

53. Patricia Kuypers and Hubert Godard. "Des Trous Noirs, un Entretien avec Hubert Godard." In *Scientifiquement Danse*, 56-75. Bruxelles: Contredanse, 2006; and Caryn McHose, and Hubert Godard. "Phenomenological Space, Interview with Hubert Godard." *Contact Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2006): 23-38. <https://resourcesinmovement.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Phenomenological-Space-CQ-Article-1.pdf>.

Dynamics – (Expressive System)

The definition of “dynamics,” whether in physical or human sciences, refers to the study of a phenomenon considered in its relationship with the forces that influence its motion.

One of Laban’s major contributions to movement analysis, known as Effort theory, or *Effort/Shape* in the United States, was to highlight the close interweaving between the alternating dynamics of the observable movement and the subject’s intention. “Yet, one has never observed movement itself, one has almost entirely ignored the dance-like formative element in the moving energy, and thus missed an important clue about the nature of the play of energy.”⁵⁴

Laban codified four Efforts, or Effort Factors, to describe our dynamic and relationship with our environment. The subject is seen as moving through a continuum of qualities expressing “resistance to” or “indulging in” these factors identified as Flow, Weight, Time, and Space.

According to Effort theory, the Efforts reflect the changes in inner attitudes made manifest by modulations between polarities of a dynamic quality of movement.⁵⁵ Parallels have been suggested between the Effort Factors theorized by Laban and the theories of his contemporary, Carl Gustav Jung⁵⁶. Thus, time effort is related to decision-making, space effort to the quality of attention, flow effort (external forces) to the sense of progression, and weight effort (internal forces) to purpose.

Taking as a starting point Laban’s Effort theory we revisited the vocabulary of the dynamic categories. While retaining the idea of four motion factors, we have labelled them in reference to the functional aspect, which underlies the expressive dimension. As well, each factor is stated in terms of relationship or mobilization. We have described the “relationship to space” according to whether it engages “focalized attention” or “multidirectional attention” and instead of weight factor we refer to the “intensity of the mobilization of muscular strength”. The “relationship to time” (that is, perceived time) is referred to in terms of a sense of urgency as opposed to a ductile sense of time (often observed as “acceleration” and “deceleration”). Finally, the flow factor, often referred to the baseline in Effort theory, has become the “interplay of agonist and antagonist muscles” in response to gravity and other motion-dependent forces.

As Laban has stated, the dynamic function is essential to the harmonious development of the individual.

54. Rudolf Laban, and Lisa Ullmann. *A Vision of Dynamic Space*. London: Laban Archives, in association with the Falmer Press, 1984.

55. Rudolf Laban, *The Mastery of Movement on the Stage*. Macdonald and Evans, 1950.

56. Frieda Fordham, *An Introduction to Jung's Psychology*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972.

Laban's realization was that all human beings need a balance of movement, and need to learn space, time and differing qualities in order to be able to redress the imbalances. Laban maintained that harmony with the outer world and within oneself comes through the use of contrasts and opposites.⁵⁷

Access to a range of variables–dynamics supports both the psychological balance of the individual and the community’s nonverbal communication capacity, whether through artistic or everyday forms of expression.

The Intersections

The intersecting areas in the Venn diagram appear to us to be particularly relevant. They show that movement is constructed through a very personal prioritization of certain moving-perceiving processes and rarely has a single function. The schema chosen to represent our conceptual framework provides the opportunity to name these intersecting areas according to specific organizing principles. At the intersection of **Ground** and **Space**, we find the **Coordination** process that mobilizes a person’s basic postural ground for the purpose of effectiveness of movement in space. **Intention**, situated between the spheres of **Ground** and **Dynamics**, is made visible by fine modulations of the tonic muscles, among other indicators. Observables attributed to this sphere show different mobilizing processes toward more engaged and expressive movements. **Engagement**, placed at the overlap between the haptic and expressive functions, reveals the mover’s self-organization in relation to gravity while moving in space.

Coordination

We have placed **Coordination**, which concerns corporeity seen as a vector of action,⁵⁸ at the intersection of **Ground** and **Space**. Coordination provides the means or access to the surrounding environment. In this section, we have found a convergence of ideas in terms of basic motor coordination and the physiological principles of movement organization. In this regard, there are similar bases underpinning the AFCMD approach and those of Irmgard Bartenieff as well as of movement therapist Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen. According to both the LBMA and AFCMD approaches, connectivity patterns relate to the ontogenetic dimension of

57. John Hodgson, and Valerie Preston-Dunlop. *Rudolf Laban an Introduction to His Work & Influence*. Plymouth: Northcote House, 1990, 18

58. Hubert Godard, “Fond/Figure Entretien avec Hubert Godard.” By Mathieu Bouvier. La Manufacture. 7 novembre, 2013. <http://www.pourunatlasdesFigures.net/element/fond-Figure-entretien-avec-hubert-godard>.

our development while serving as a template or mold for our motor coordination choices.

In the MOA proposal, **Coordination** observables involve, for example, motor development patterns, how and where in the body a movement is initiated as well as how it sequences through articular and muscular pathways, how the gaze organizes and colors the movement, all of which condition the functional organization of the body in its relationship to space.

Intention

Intention, which concerns also corporeity as a vector of action,⁵⁹ occupies the zone where Ground and Dynamics intersect. Intention, whether conscious or not, anticipates action and predisposes the whole body to move. To do so, one has to reorganize one's his relationship to gravitational forces, implying shifts in the overall organization of the body, involving subtle modulations of tonicity and breath.

At this level, the entire body manifests emotions as well as intentions through these less obvious tonic changes and modulations and it is precisely these subtle changes that provide the support enabling the manifestation of dynamic nuances. We are positing that the development of dynamic expressivity is tributary to the underlying intention of the mover, manifest at the level of Ground.

Warren Lamb, one of Laban's close associates, developed his Movement Pattern Analysis system⁶⁰ based on the detailed observation of the intention of individuals in the moments of decision-making. His theory regarding posture/gesture inspired our approach to the intersectional zone we call **Intention**. As we have said, the observables of **Intention** are subtle and they come into play before the broader dynamics become visible. The principal key to access this level of movement is the observation of the quality of changes in the tonic musculature or the gravity response system.

Engagement

Engagement is at the intersection of **Space** and **Dynamics**; it involves the mobilization of our relationship to gravity giving us access to what Laban called dynamic space. **Engagement** modulates our relationship with space by negotiating

59. Hubert Godard, "Fond/Figure Entretien avec Hubert Godard." By Mathieu Bouvier. La Manufacture. 7 novembre, 2013. <http://www.pourunatlasdesFigures.net/element/fond-Figure-entretien-avec-hubert-godard>.

60. Warren Lamb, and Eden Davies. *A Framework for Understanding Movement: My Seven Creative Concepts*. London: Brechin Books Limited, 2012.

our degree of resistance or letting go during the spatial progression of the movement.

For Laban, the material and physical aspect of body tends to mask its intrinsic spatial and dynamic realities. He saw no separation between inner and outer space but rather a network of vectors mapping the potentialities of human movement. These movements, which first exist in the form of virtual potential, constitute the fabric of dynamic space, an elastic and three-dimensional space with centripetal and centrifugal tendencies, thus morphogenic.⁶¹

Godard, for his part, draws our attention to a subliminal pre-movement mobilization of the deep-gravity-response muscles⁶² preceding all engagement. Concomitantly, Godard also emphasizes the importance of virtual space, which is modulated by the potential for meaningful gesture. This combined support vector carries the desires as well as the inhibitions of the individual and will influence the mover's engagement in the movement.⁶³

In the MOA conceptualization, we combine the morphogenic dimension of the dynamic space of the movement as proposed by Laban with the virtual and ontogenetic dimension of the way a person's gravity response system is organized, as proposed by Godard. This leads us to express the notion of **Engagement** in terms of lines of energy or spatial dynamics. These dynamics are deployed either on the vertical axis, or from the center of the body to its periphery or vice versa. These energy lines can also develop between two points of opposite direction, thus constituting a factor of stability, or exceed the limits of the body, thus promoting mobility.

List of MOA Observables

In table 6 below, still a “work in progress”, we have collected all the MOA observables. Because AFCMD has consciously chosen not to set a specific vocabulary, most of the terms chosen for MOA come from LBMA and its collaborators. Note that we have modified certain LBMA terms for the sake of clarity and inner coherence.

61. Rudolf Laban, *Espace Dynamique*.

62. Indeed, from a neurophysiological point of view, the deep musculature, responsible for the tonus of posture, is managed by an automatic nervous control (the gamma loop), not accessible by the will, but influenced by structures related to cognition (cortex), memory (hippocampus), emotion (amygdala), and state of alertness (reticular formation). This explains the interaction between the physiological, psychological, and cognitive dimensions, which is played out, most often without our knowledge, as soon as we commit to a gesture in space.

63. Hubert Godard, Daniel Dobbels, and Claude Rabant. “Le Geste Manquant, Entretien avec Hubert Godard.” *IO, Revue internationale de psychanalyse* 5 (juin 1994): 63–75.

Table 6. MOA Observables

Ground Phoric function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment of the three volumes: head, rib cage, pelvis (AFCMD) • Tonicity level • Postural flow (Shape flow) • Postural imprint • Functional predisposition: ascending or descending strategies to relate to gravity (Hubert Godard)
Space Haptic function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directions (27) • Planes (sagittal, frontal, horizontal) • Kinesphere (size, stable or mobile) • Movement paths in the kinesphere • Trace forms (directional movement and shaping) • Movement gestalt (Shape as body) • Gaze (foveal/peripheral)
Dynamic Expressive function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship to time (Time Effort) • Relationship to external forces / Mobilisation of internal forces (Flow Effort / Weight Effort) • Relationship to space (Space Effort) • Dream state, Awake state, Mobile state, Stable state, Near state, Remote state • Action drive, Spell drive, Vision drive, Passion drive • Effort phrasing (Vera Maletic)
Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental patterns (Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, Bartenieff, AFCMD) • Stability/Mobility (AFCMD, Bartenieff fundamentals) • Initiation • Body phrasing • Gaze
Intention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posture/gesture (Warren Lamb) • Spatiality of postural flow (Shape qualities) • Tonic modulations • Gaze (spatial, relational or inner)
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Pre-movement” (Hubert Godard) (spatial intent) • Vertical throughness (AFCMD, Peggy Hackney) • Spatial projection (spatial pull) • Spatial projection of the gaze • Spatial opposition (spatial tension and counter tension) • Space dynamic: centripetal, centrifugal (gathering, scattering)

Key: LBMA vocabulary, AFCMD vocabulary, LBMA and AFCMD shared vocabulary, MOA specific vocabulary.

Integration of the Functional and Expressive Dimensions

The center of the MOA conceptual schema represents the combination of aspects present in all three spheres and their intersections. Although of modest magnitude proportionally to the spheres, it actually represents the locus where observable elements of support, haptic, and expressive functions are integrated in a singular way, the heart of MOA. In this center, we can identify which parameter organizes the whole and which observables define the specific movement signature of an individual. The content of this central space represents the distillation of the overall analysis. It can be understood as the gestalt that gives meaning to the specific choices, whether conscious or not, made by the mover to fulfill vital phoric, haptic and expressive functions related to his/her embodiment in the world. We could paraphrase Godard by describing this center as a space of potential action and imagination, which speaks of our unique relationship with the world: “This relationship to space constructs a postural schema, specific to each person, which serves as a background to all coordination and perceptions, and therefore expressiveness.”⁶⁴

Conclusion

In attaching as much importance to processes as to conceptual organization, we have tried to better understand and present the way observation-analysis of movement works. We thus bring to light the fundamentally dynamic character of movement observation and analysis, which calls into play a veritable perceptual-cognitive choreography between observers and the observed subject.

The representation of different activities by giving them separate places on a schema, has proved to be particularly relevant in making the sensitive and cognitive dimensions involved in the MOA process explicit. Our development of these activity spheres also enabled us to highlight the circular interaction between perception, representation, and meaning, and so illustrating the holistic and dynamic qualities, which characterize both Activity Analysis and MOA. By explicitly naming the activities involved in MOA, their objectification becomes possible. They can thus become subjects of study and reflection and could potentially be integrated into a field of practice or training.

Regarding the conceptualization, we have opted for a framework that situates the components of movement in areas of possible overlap and interrelationship created by the dynamics between the three functions we have identified as the support system, the haptic system, and the expressive system. The

64. Patricia Kuypers, and Hubert Godard. “Des Trous Noirs, un Entretien avec Hubert Godard,” : 67.

Venn diagram (see figure 6), chosen to illustrate this framework, represents the complementarity of these three areas of functionality providing a comprehensive approach to movement. The relationship between function and expression remains at the core, serving to integrate the observables we have proposed.

Conscious of the limitations of any graphic for demonstrating the simultaneity of the observed elements, we still think that the proposed diagram does justice to an overall awareness of movement. We hope that this proposal will not be perceived as a normative framework; we have developed it in a spirit of openness to the diversity of practices and corporeities.⁶⁵ By investigating the words as much as that which connects them, this transversal conceptualization of MOA seems to us to present an opportunity for a renewal of practices. We are aware that the proposed framework may challenge some habitual ways of doing things; nonetheless, we hope it will also create a space for dialogue and exchange among movement analysts. It is within the perspective of a community of practice and with great respect for the theoreticians who inspired our current systems of observation and analysis that we take this crucial and delicate step for the advancement of research in qualitative movement analysis.

We share this proposal with humility, hoping that it will be enriched by contact with various movement practices while contributing to a better understanding of human diversity. With this in mind, we have started the development of a new project for research situated in the field, including practices in a wide variety of domains (dance performance, dance education, dance therapy, mime, and choir conductor's corporality). The processes and conceptual organization of MOA will be tested and its interest as well as the possible conditions of its application will be assessed.

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