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ARTICLES

Corporeity and own movement: dialogues with Merleau-Ponty and Buytendijk

Da corporeidade e do movimento próprio: diálogos com Merleau-Ponty e Buytendijk

Silva, Chrystian [i]

Fernandes, Bruno [ii]

Silva, Luiz [iii]

Bezerra, Judson [iv]

Nobrega, Teresinha Petrucia da [iv]

[i] Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte – UFRN, Educação Física, Natal, RN, Brasil. https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1483-5220, cglsousilva@gmail.com.

[ii] Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte – UFRN, Educação Física, Natal, RN, Brasil. https://orcid.org/0009-0007-5889-1343, brunofernandesfff@gmail.com.

[iii] Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte – UFRN, Educação Física, Natal, RN, Brasil. https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4541-6141, arthur_nunes@hotmail.com.

[iv] Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte – UFRN, Educação Física, Natal, RN, Brasil. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8307-179X, judsoncavalcantebezerra@gmail.com.

[v] Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte – UFRN, Educação Física, Natal, RN, Brasil. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1996-4286 pnobrega68@gmail.com.

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Abstract
This philosophical essay discusses education as an experience of the body in movement, via a dialogue between Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Frederik Buytendijk. Education is conceived as a continuous and experiential process, expressed by the body and movement, based on the concepts of "own body" and "own movement." Play is approached as a privileged space where movement is integrated with imagination and learning, functioning as a form of non-verbal thought. In this sense, movement goes beyond mere physical action, becoming a language of the body that reveals our relationship with the world. This perspective is crucial for the expression of identity, creativity, and sensitivity in educational and recreational contexts.
Keywords: Buytendijk, own movement, Merleau-Ponty, corporeity, phenomenology

Resumo
Este ensaio filosófico discute a educação como uma experiência do corpo em movimento, por meio do diálogo entre Maurice Merleau-Ponty e Frederik Buytendijk. A educação é concebida como um processo contínuo e vivencial, expresso por meio do corpo e do movimento, fundamentado nos conceitos de "corpo próprio" e "movimento próprio". O jogo é abordado como um espaço privilegiado em que o movimento se integra à imaginação e ao aprendizado, funcionando como uma forma de pensamento não verbal. Nesse sentido, o movimento ultrapassa a mera ação física, configurando-se como uma linguagem do corpo que revela nossa relação com o mundo. Essa perspectiva é crucial para a expressão da identidade, da criatividade e da sensibilidade no âmbito educacional e lúdico.
Palavras-chave: *Buytendijk, movimento próprio, Merleau-Ponty, corporeidade, fenomenologia*

Corporeity and expressive movement

In this article we present the ideas of Dutch anthropologist, biologist and psychologist Frederic J. J. Buytendijk (1887-1974), resuming his notion of 'own movement' found in *Attitudes et Mouvements: étude fonctionnelle du mouvement humain* (a French version of 1957), comparing this thought with that of French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), notably his notions of corporeity and expressiveness. In Brazil, some studies on this scholar of movement stand out, such as the several articles in the Special Dossier F. J. J. Buytendijk, organized by Claudinei Aparecido de Freitas da Silva and published in 2021.

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Buytendijk (1957) states that the body has a certain consistency capable of expressing both interiority and receiving forms coming from the outside, in its plasticity, statics and own structure. The "body-spirit" ontological relationship is not a reflection along Cartesian lines, but a phenomenological relationship. Corporeity has been understood as an essential condition of the individual subject; the matrix from which the expressions structured by humans throughout history—games, dances, sports, fights—would be founded in the sense of temporal, historical, living and significant expressions, therefore changeable, which can offer possibilities of reacting to the conditioning factors of market ideology and the mechanistic bias of the body trivialized by consumer society. Intentional action produces a tension directed towards a goal that, when achieved, causes a relaxation of the entire body in its dynamics, speeds and tonic components. The expressive character remains connected to the action at all times, being completely diluted when the action is finished and achieves its objective. Hence, the expression would be strongly marked at the beginning of the action, remains and animates its entire course, and is eclipsed when the intent is achieved.

This expressive capacity of human actions is already perceived from our first months of life: even before saying our first words, we respond through attitudes, gestures, and smiles; we lift and turn our heads, we extend our arms in relational actions; we shout, and then we begin to babble. Ancestral to language, this babbling is of extraordinary richness and has phonemes that do not exist in the language spoken around the child—who, upon becoming an adult, will be incapable of reproducing them—, and can be understood as a movement of the body participating in motor skills under formation, towards the world, and an intellectual activity, present and growing significantly in the first days of the infants life, as stated by M. Grégoire, cited by Merleau-Ponty (2006a) in his work *Child Psychology and Pedagogy*[1].

Another relationship between the expressive load present in the first moments of life concerns the child's smile. From his experience with electrical discharge in the facial nerve, Dumas (1937, as cited in Buytendijk, 1957), in his *Traité de psychologie*, which contains a classification of expressive phenomena, believed that smiling occurs due to a physiological predisposition of the zygomatic and orbicularis for such function, without necessarily coinciding with a significant condition or a regulation of the quality of feelings such as joy, exaltation or

[1] A collection of summaries of courses taught by Merleau-Ponty at Sorbonne (1949-1952), written by the students and approved by the lecturer.

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contentment. The smile would then have physical causes, as if there were muscles that react to the most varied stimuli and in the most varied ways without an intimate relationship with the facts:

> It is by chance of our physical organization that made us smile with our zygomaticus and orbicularis oculi: we would smile differently if our facial muscles were associated in another way in movement, and if, by chance, the contractions of pain were the easiest contractions of the face, they would certainly conform the human smile (Dumas, 1937, as cited in Buytendijk, 1957, p. 304).

Buytendijk (1957, p. 305) also states that smiling is easy, while crying is an effort marked by the trembling and lowering of the mouth in a gradual movement of blossoming sadness, without connection with a brief smile before crying sets in. Smiling leads to laughter, which is learned, and expands throughout the body in a movement of sensory opening, surrender and relaxation.

> A purely physiological explanation of the smile seems to be excluded. If, at the beginning, it is a reaction defined by the organism's structure, it is necessary, however, that this reaction be defined, at the same time, by the qualities of the sensitive impressions and by their dynamic characteristics. But such a reaction is only possible if the child is capable of a certain relaxed attitude towards the world. This capacity is the condition of possibility of all expressible interiority and, consequently, of every smile that is a true expressive movement.

For Merleau-Ponty (2006b), Dumas (1937, as cited in Buytendijk, 1957) formulates the problem in psychophysical terms, admitting the postulate of the body as a pure object, as a place of cerebral excitations arising from external stimuli, without involvement of the complete situation: joy and smile would not be related to a conduct proper to the body's organization in a given lived situation, but would be a motor reaction. "The current is not the cause of the gesture. It is the body's functional totality which is capable of smiling, and not the facial nerve" (Merleau-Ponty, 2006b, p. 553). Full expression is directly related to the general conduct of the body, in which emotions are provoked by situations that make sense for an existence.

Another point we highlight is the vegetative effects of emotions: there is a pronounced internal turgor and explosion in the injection of adrenaline, in the contraction or dilation of blood vessels, in the peristaltic movements of the intestine, in the widening or shrinking of the

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eyes, in the secretion of sweat, in muscle toning, in the dynamics of the diaphragm, in the mimicry of fish and amphibians, in situations of attack, defense and threat.

> As a result of these multiple innervations, the animal's appearance changes in various ways during an emotional disturbance. Some organs, filled with blood (the rooster's comb, the turkey's wattle), are inflated; hair and feathers stand on end; fish and amphibians change color. These external vegetative signs combine with attitudes and movements to form the total image of the affective reaction. They accompany the retraction of the head, the widening of the eyes or mouth, the ruffling of the mane or crest, the curling of the lips, the erection of the fins (Buytendijk, 1957, p. 312).

For Buytendijk (1957), humans still carry traces of these behaviors, such as blushing with anger, shame or shyness, turning pale with fear. However, blushing is related to one's culture—there is a component of significant experience interacting with existence and with the awareness of *Dasein* (being-there or being-in-the-world). For instance, situations like making a mistake, being praised, speaking in public, being observed and receiving criticism, committing something that makes us ashamed. On many occasions, blushing is the only way we realize that something is happening, as it does not entail acting in terms of taking a stance before the fact. A flush can appear for a variety of reasons.

Among these possibilities, blushing could also be, Buytendijk (1957) argues in terms of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, an expression of libidinal or erotic reactions, situations that are present in relations between the sexes, between undressing and discomfort, between nudity and modesty. But he states that, as a common character present in this multiplicity of interpretations about blushing, there is the discovery, the awareness of unworthiness and insufficiency. "A flush is the rise of this heat towards the face. Its origin is the futile effort to overcome an absurd and unacceptable inability.... There is no physiological predisposition to blushing" (Buytendijk, 1957, pp. 315-316). Awareness of this experience of blushing in corporeality takes place differently in men and women, according to the specific way in which sexuality is experienced.

Thus, the woman's worried psychological attitude is already expressed during girlhood through her care for her body, with the clothes purposefully chosen during puberty, and it is at this moment that she begins to give the dress a double function: the dress must veil and reveal. "This double function will be marked with a personal seal," states Buytendijk (1957, p. 316). It

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is during this same period that she will be most vulnerable, and the looks will be most embarrassing, and, at the slightest sign, the blush of her own nakedness, like a flame, rises to her face, as a place of relationship with the other: redness, in these terms, expresses the essence of an emotional movement.

Regarding puberty and its expression in women's lives, Merleau-Ponty (2006a) cites the psychoanalytic studies of Hélène Deutsch (1884-1982), a Polish-American psychoanalyst who became one of the first scholars on the psychology of women. She tells us that puberty has a direct relationship with the individual subject's psychological past. A revival of a problem experienced in the Oedipal period brings to light echoes of ancient psychological history. It returns with all the elements experienced during the latency period.

The girl feels misunderstood. She doesn't understand herself and tends to project this feeling outwards. She experiences a certain isolation and develops a narcissistic trait, a taste for exhibitionism. Menstruation can trigger fantasies of laceration and castration, it seems like a predisposition to perceive menstruation as a tragedy. In this case, menstruation does not mean puberty, as everything is still to be done when one menstruates. Puberty will only be achieved when menstruation is accepted by the girl, integrating the bodily transformations that occur:

> Therefore, a singular relation exists between the body and the total subject. The body must be thought of as a mirror: the expression of the total subject's psyche, the expression of a psychological history (Merleau-Ponty, 2006a, p. 503).

We consider therefore that we cannot explain physical development by psychic development and vice versa. Development is neither governed by consciousness, nor is it purely causal and corporeal. Development is not a destiny, nor is it an unconditional freedom, "for the individual always accomplishes a decisive act of development in a particular corporeal field... The individual only moves beyond his first states if he agrees to retain them" (Merleau-Ponty, 2006a, p. 504).

In other words, expressions are neither purely natural nor purely social, conventional. Nothing is casual in language. As a totality, language produces the meaning of a sign in relation to another sign, in the relation of use that one has with the other. It is not possible to consider establishing expressive conduct without meaning for those who experience it. "In expression,

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die body plays the role of a certain meaningful symbol of which it tries to be the emblem," as Merleau-Ponty states (2006a, p. 554). Corporeity assumes a certain style, a way of expressing oneself in the world, subjective but which contains the universal, what exists in the world. In this style, we seem to create a way of being in the world; there is an order that is particular to us, which not only highlights world data that are significant to us, but that has its own expression.

One's own body and own movement

We understand the notion of one's own body based on Merleau-Ponty's studies (2011) as a lived body of experience. This body, described by Merleau-Ponty (2011) in *Phenomenology of Perception*, begins from the understanding of "I can" as it shows the being in the world and the relation with their experience. Thus, the means by which we exist in the world occurs in the transit by which the world makes itself exist for us. This balance occurs through constant exchange since the body constitutes the vehicle that opens said communication:

> ...the permanence of one's own body, if only classical psychology had analyzed it, might have led it to the body no longer conceived as an object of the world, but as our means of communication with it, to the world no longer conceived as a collection of determinate objects, but as the horizon latent in all our experience and itself ever-present and anterior to every determining thought (Merleau-Ponty, 2011, p. 136-137).

Complementing the reflection on the concept of one's own body and movement, Buytendijk's (1957, p. 55) idea of *one's own movement*, in the work *Attitudes et Mouvements: etude fonctionnelle du mouvement humain*, shows that "one's own movement includes the very notion of subject." Hence, movement is attributed to its totality, part of the interior and is expressed as one's own movement and can be perceived as a manifestation of the being, as it reveals "a form that, when moving, transcends its limits" (Buytendijk, 1957, p. 55). Similarly, Buytendijk (1957, p. 58) argues that "phenomenal understanding gives us the movement itself arising from a subject, 'underlying' its own determinations, included in the limits that imply the possibility of its own overcoming."

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To characterize one's own movement within a theory of human movement, Buytendijk (1957, p. 55) conceives "moving" as a particular form of movement which comes from "inside," that is, it is spontaneous, which in his words "… is seen as the expression of an autonomous, independent and individual subject." He adds to this notion the concept of subject: "the subject of one's own movement is a state that manifests itself as a whole within its own limits. He is a form that, by moving, transcends his limits…. He possesses his own limits and has them. Thus, he appears by extending and moving" (Buytendijk, 1957, p. 55-56).

He therefore relates the concept of one's own movement to a subjectivity that is the source of movements, not belonging to the contents of consciousness, but regulated by the sensory field in which it places the subject that "moves" and is "moved by sensations," maintaining specific relations with the environment and its own corporeity.

> Humans can move, they can communicate movement to things, they perceive themselves and perceive others, without ever changing their subjectivity. The individual subject is the foundation of all movement and change (Buytendijk, 1957, p. 61).

This involves the intentional understanding of movement, because when we move, the expressive body can be perceived in its gestures, spatiality and temporality, among other categories studied by Buytendijk (1957).

Said approach emphasizes subjectivity. To demonstrate the need for the notion of subject, Buytendijk (1957) distinguishes between reflex movement and spontaneous movement (related to one's own movement), using the patellar reflex and the spontaneous and involuntary movement of the foot when walking as examples. The first is simply a muscular contraction, while the second is an involuntary reaction done by us, in the author's words "as a living person forced to do the movement" (Buytendijk, 1957, p. 62). In one example the subject does nothing: it is just a process; in the other, the subject "necessarily moves."

From this perspective, Buytendijk (1957, p. 63) states that the notion of subject becomes essential for distinguishing between "mine" and "not-mine" or "foreign," contributing to the notion of one's own body, of corporeity.

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> The body is the phenomenal object that is closest to us, the one that is least contrary to ourselves. The body is what we perceive as ours, and as ours because it is available. In the lived consciousness of the subjectivity of one's own movement, corporeal reality is the mediating sphere between "mine" and the world or "not-mine" (Buytendijk, 1957, p. 64).

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty (2011, p. 212) argues that the body should be understood as:

> ...a grouping of lived-through meanings which moves towards its equilibrium. Sometimes a new cluster of meanings is formed; our former movements are integrated into a fresh motor entity... our natural powers suddenly come together in a richer meaning, which hitherto has been merely foreshadowed in our perceptual or practical field, and which has made itself felt in our experience by no more than a certain lack, and which by its coming suddenly reshuffles the elements of our equilibrium and fulfils our blind expectation.

For Buytendijk, the tangible body is the margin of "mine" to "not mine," in the same way that we perceive nails (lifeless part of the body) as being ours, as a thing that can also belong to us, if it participates in our movements as clothes do. However, in both cases, if the object or "my" dead part is taken away from me, I will stop perceiving it as being "mine" and will start perceiving it as "not-mine."

"What belongs to me most is my body," says Buytendijk (1957, p. 63). This statement is based on the experience of the body that captures senses and sensations through movement. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty (2011, p. 212) proposes that movement and feeling are the fundamental elements of perception: "Learning to see colors is the acquisition of a certain style of vision, a new use of one's own body; it is to enrich and to reorganize the body schema."

What is inside and what is outside have an intimate relationship, as everything is found in the same fabric of the world. Thus, the world perceived with its meanings and values reveals itself to the living body that moves. Merleau-Ponty (2011, p. 114, 471) presents the individual subject's perceptive experience from a world that is marked by the presence of *others*. For him, this relationship between one body and another's body is referred to the body itself, with one completing the other. He writes:

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> ...just as the parts of my body together form a system, the other's body and my own are a single whole, two sides of a single phenomenon, and the anonymous existence, of which my body is continuously the trace, henceforth inhabits these two bodies simultaneously... I can only understand the function of the living body by accomplishing it and to the extent that I am a body that rises up toward the world. ...thus...the consciousness of the body invades the body, the soul spreads across all of its parts.

Both Buytendijk and Merleau-Ponty find in movement the configuration that is expressed in the body through existence in experience, in which this movement put before the subject has an intention, which is tied to the world and part of the body itself. Thus, the notion of intentionality postulates that our movements occur in the sense of a connection between our body and the world (Merleau-Ponty, 2011). In *Attitudes et Mouvements: étude fonctionnelle du mouvement humain*, Buytendijk (1957) criticizes the physiological view that considers movement only as the result of a complex set of reflexes and denies one's own movement as an exclusively psychological phenomenon, going further by elaborating the notions of one's own movement and subjectivity, stating that "… the theory of movements must be founded on anthropology and, consequently, cannot be a chapter of physiology or psychology" (Buytendijk, 1957, p. 65).

With this explanation, Buytendijk (1957, p. 65) does not discard the value of the areas cited in explaining the origin of the movements and the specific structures of the senses, but adds the notions of one's own movement and corporeity to a theory of movements, assuming that the consideration does not start only from the movement itself, but it is the subject that moves. Thus, "the foundation involves the phenomenological approach to phenomena, aiming at both understanding the human essence and the essence of the attitudes and movements in question."

Space and time of one's own movement in Buytendijk

Buytendijk (1957) presents a phenomenological perspective on movement, one that challenges traditional models of explaining space and time. He argues that movement is not something that happens *in* space and time, but that the subject's own movement is what creates and redefines these two concepts. In his words: "The movement of an organism does not occur in space and time; the organism makes space and time move at the same time" (Buytendijk, 1957, p. 94). This statement places the individual subject as an active agent in the creation and

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transformation of space and time. It is not just a physical displacement, but a profound experience that involves the body's perception and action in the world.

For Buytendijk (1957, p. 89), human movement is immersed in a vital space-time, in which the subject, when moving, not only travels through physical space, but also modifies his perception of the world. He observes that "in our relation with the world, all time is time of movement and therefore a sign of change in space." This understanding implies that movement is the key to understanding the very notion of time and change. When a car passes us, it not only physically moves from one point to another, but it generates a change in our temporal and spatial perception, which is closely linked to our ability to move and perceive the world around us.

Movement is not a mathematical or physical abstraction; it is the very human experience in his environment, becoming the means by which one experiences and understands the world. This perspective reflects that of Nóbrega (2008), who highlights the importance of the body in movement for knowledge formation and sensitive experience. According to the author, the "being-in-the-world" is a "body in motion" whose ability to learn is directly linked to its sensitivity, that is, to the way the body perceives and interacts with the world. For Nóbrega, movement is not just a physical response to a stimulus, but an experience that synthesizes the biological, the affective and the social spheres.

The relation between perception and action, according to Buytendijk (1957), is key to understanding the nature of movement. The author states that the subject's perceptions of the world are closely linked to their spontaneous functions, which are revealed in the body as a "power of movement." Movement, therefore, constitutes an expression of this spontaneity, which emerges from the interaction between the subject and their environment. The author highlights that "movement is in itself a relationship with space and time" (Buytendijk, 1957, p. 93), indicating that the experience of movement cannot be dissociated from the perceptions it generates and the changes it causes in space and time. Each movement of the body is a response to the environment, but also a modification of that environment, an "updating" of the space around the subject.

This power of movement that Buytendijk describes is not something that can be reduced to the simple execution of a physical action or the coordination of muscles. Rather, it expresses the subject's experience in the world, which incorporates the sensitive and affective dimension

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of experience. Movement as a "relationship with space and time" suggests that when we move, we are not only moving our bodies in three-dimensional space, but we are also shaping and transforming our perception of time and the environment. This continuous interaction between the subject and the world reflects Merleau-Ponty's (2011) phenomenology, which describes the body as the fundamental means through which we perceive and relate to the world.

Merleau-Ponty (2006a, p. 244) states that the "environment emerges from the world through the actualization or the being of the organism," that is, the human organism is not a passive being that reacts to external stimuli, but an active being that constructs its perception of the world based on its own bodily experience. For the French philosopher, the body is the center of our experience, and it is through it that we relate to space, time and others. This view resonates with Buytendijk's (1957) proposal, which emphasizes that movement is not a simple physical action, but an existential manifestation of being-in-the-world.

Another important point in Buytendijk's (1957) analysis of movement concerns the way it is structured in space. For the author, the space of movement is structured schematically, with a left-right division that precedes the movement itself. This space is not something given; rather, it is an existential condition that makes movement possible. Buytendijk (1957, p. 83) states: "This structured space is not a content of consciousness, it is the existential foundation as a condition of possibility of movement itself." One's perception of space, therefore, is not something fixed, but a continuous construction that occurs as one moves. This view aligns with the ideas of Merleau-Ponty (2006a), who also considers space as something dynamic and related to the body. For the French philosopher, space is not an abstract or objective entity, but experienced and perceived by the subject based on his corporeity. Movement, therefore, is what allows the subject to experience and construct space in a unique way. By moving, the body makes space not just a physical place, but an extension of its own sensory and existential experience.

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The expression of play

Play is a central concept for understanding human dynamics, especially in regards to movement. Games and play have been widely discussed in the field of social and human sciences, with references that connect the body, movement, and experience not only as physical practices, but as activities that carry cultural, symbolic, and pedagogical dimensions.

The relationship between the body and human movement has been addressed by several thinkers, including Buytendijk (1957) and Michel Serres (2004), whose works help to expand our understanding of the nature of movement and play. Buytendijk (1957, pp. 67-68), in his phenomenological analysis, describes the "play back and forth" as a movement that is not only physical, but also involves the appearance and reality of the game:

> Back and forth would not only be the manifestation of the play element, but characterizes the essence of human play, as long as it is always a dialectical relation between appearance and reality... the sphere of play is the sphere of images and, with that, the sphere of possibilities and fantasy.

He emphasizes that game is in the sphere of images, possibilities and fantasy, and is therefore a creative expression of the human being that goes beyond the mere repetition of movements. Buytendijk (1977, p. 78) uses Merleau-Ponty (2006b) to affirm that "when a child tries something, it is equivalent to a wordless thought." This happens when we learn to ride a bike—it is a wordless thought. It is a transformation of being in the world: it is not just a contingency of intelligence, it is educational experiences that put the being in motion. In Buytendijk's (1977, p. 80) reflections on children's games, what predominates is the joy of surrendering to the harmony in how the game object is treated intentionally. Thus, "we find the unreflective and lived equivalent of an intentional irony in children's games—and this equivalent is rediscovered as happiness when the adult chooses the practical existence of the youthful character."

This idea that the body and movement are inseparable and that learning involves a dialectical exchange between the individual subject and the world also finds support in Michel Serres (2004). In his work *Variations sur le corps*, the author reflects on our ancestry and the evolution of human movement. He reminds us that, since humans came down from the trees, posture and basic movements like walking, running and, later, cycling, have been part of our

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essence. Movement, therefore, is not something external to the human being, but rather an extension of our identity, something that permeates our existence. For Serres (2004), the bicycle is a metaphor for this profound relationship between the body and movement, a means of locomotion that brings to light the fundamental questions of our postural existence and our connection with the world.

Play, however, is not limited to mere physical or motor activity, but also involves a creative and affective dimension. Buytendijk (1977), in his reflections on children's games, emphasizes that play is essentially an experience of surrender and attunement. He observes that in children's games, joy and freedom predominate, and the child gives himself over to the game without the need for conscious reflection on it. For Buytendijk (1957), this process is a form of wordless thought, an action that occurs in a space of open possibilities, in which the subject expresses himself and connects with another in an authentic and spontaneous manner.

This view of games and play as a space for freedom and creativity is corroborated by Santin (2003), who also focuses on the concept of play in his analysis of physical education. According to the author, to truly understand play one must abandon some rigid and scientific definitions and allow oneself to explore creative attitudes. He suggests that it is necessary to renounce a technical and disciplined vision of movement, often associated with sports, to make way for the sensitivity, the irrational, and the "heart" that emerge in the game and in relationships with others. Santin (2003) proposes that, by connecting with play, we can access a deeper level of human experience in which creativity, intuition and pleasure are at the center of physical activity.

Buytendijk (1952), when addressing football in his work *Le Football*, also discusses the expressive relation between the player and the ball. For him, the game of football is an experience of "optical palpation," a way of identifying with the simplicity of the object (the ball) and the relationship between players. Body movement in football, especially the act of playing with the feet, is described as a process of body control in which skill, agility and perseverance become essential elements. The game, in this case, is not just a physical practice, but a form of bodily expression in the world, an aesthetic and symbolic experience that connects players with the environment, with teammates and opponents.

The expressive dimension of human movement is something that can be observed from the first months of life. As Merleau-Ponty (2006b) states, before learning to speak, children

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already respond to the world around them with body language, mimicry and gestures. Babbling, for example, is a form of pre-linguistic communication that carries extraordinary richness, containing phonemes that do not exist in spoken language. This ability to express oneself through the body is indicative of developing motor skills, a process that involves body coordination and growing sensory intelligence.

Movement, in this sense, is not just a physical activity, but also an intellectual activity which involves the perception of the body in the world and its interaction with it. As Merleau-Ponty (2006b) observes, by babbling or making movements the child is actively participating in a process of constructing meaning and knowledge. From this initial movement, the body becomes increasingly capable of participating in more complex activities like games and sports, which embody a playful and creative dimension.

Movement therefore is not just a mechanical action, but an expression of our identity, of our creative and affective capacity. When learning to cycle, play soccer, or perform any other physical activity, the body not only executes a technique, but is constantly transforming, seeking new meanings and new ways of connecting with the world. Play, in its various forms, offers a space in which these dimensions of the human being can be explored, experienced and expressed. Play is thus fundamental not only for learning motor skills, but also for creating a bodily and relational identity that is essential for building a more creative, sensitive and human education.

Final Considerations

By considering education as an experience of the body in movement, this study established a dialogue between the philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the physician Frederik Buytendijk. We understand educational experience as continuous and lived throughout life, expressed through the body and movement, based on Merleau-Ponty's "one's own body" and Buytendijk's "one's own movement."

Merleau-Ponty already explored the relation between body and movement in the educational context, and Buytendijk coined the notion of "own movement," a way of expressing oneself and overcoming limits, in which subjectivity and intentionality are central. Interlocutions between Merleau-Ponty and Buytendijk shows a fruitful dialogue between philosophy and

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science, with both recognizing the body and movement as fundamental to education and human development.

The concept of play, as discussed by Buytendijk (1957) and Serres (2004), emerges as a privileged domain in which movement is articulated with imagination, creation and the learning process. In the context of play, the body is not limited to performing a physical action, but takes on an active role in expressing meanings, emotions and interpersonal relations. Play movement, in this sense, becomes a form of non-verbal thinking characterized by a spontaneous interaction that allows exploring new possibilities, building connections and experiencing freedom. This play process, therefore, plays a fundamental role in constituting the individual's bodily, relational and affective identity.

Consequently, movement cannot be reduced to a mere technical or physiological dimension. It involves a constant exchange between the body and the environment, between the individual subject and the other. By understanding movement as an intrinsic relation with space and time, and by considering the body as the essential mediator of this experience, we recognize that movement is a key point for understanding our existence in the world. The body in movement, whether in the context of games, dance, sports or other activities, represents a manifestation of the individual subject in a continuous dialogue with the world, in which meanings are continually constructed and deconstructed.

Buytendijk (1957) and Merleau-Ponty's (2011) conception of body and movement reconfigures our daily experience, emphasizing that we are, above all, bodies in motion. We are not just beings who inhabit the world, but agents who actively experience it through perception and action. This perspective offers us a broader and richer understanding of the human being, challenging the view of the individual subject as something static or passive and presenting them as a dynamic, creative and constantly transforming being.

In summary, the reflections presented here suggest that movement transcends the simple physical response or the execution of automatic bodily reactions. It represents a profound expression of our relation with the world and with others. Movement, therefore, must be understood as a language of the body through which our intentions, feelings and our position in the world are manifested. This understanding is essential for building our self-understanding and recognizing our place in the world. In the educational and recreational sphere, movement

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plays a crucial formative role, not only in developing motor skills, but also in promoting the individual's creativity, sensitivity and identity.

Our research also highlights the need to further study Buytendijk, especially in Brazil, where the author's work remains little explored. His focus on human movement, play and expressiveness opens new avenues for physical education, but many aspects of his work still need to be better understood. Despite its limitations, this study planted a seed for further research and reflection, highlighting the importance of taking the body and movement as an essential part of education and human development.

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Corresponding author:

Fernandes, Bruno – Lagoa Nova, S/N, Natal - RN, Brasil, 59078-970.

Authors' contributions:

Silva, Chrystian Souza – Conceptualization (Lead), Data Curation (Lead), Investigation (Lead), Methodology (Lead), Validation (Lead), Visualization (Lead), Writing - original draft (Lead), Writing - review and editing (Lead).

Fernandes, Bruno – Conceptualization (Equal), Data Curation (Equal), Formal Analysis (Equal), Funding Acquisition (Equal), Validation (Equal), Visualization (Lead), Writing - original draft (Lead), Writing - review and editing (Lead).

Silva, Luiz Arthur – Conceptualization (Supporting), Data Curation (Lead), Investigation (Equal), Validation (Equal), Visualization (Equal), Writing - original draft (Supporting), Writing - review and editing (Supporting).

Bezerra, Judson Cavalcante – Research (Supporting), Validation (Supporting), Visualization (Supporting), Writing - original draft (Equal), Writing - analysis and editing (Supporting).

Nobrega, Teresinha Petrucia da – Conceptualization (Lead), Data Curation (Lead), Formal Analysis (Equal), Funding Acquisition (Lead), Investigation (Lead), Methodology (Lead), Project Administration (Lead), Supervision (Lead), Validation (Lead), Visualization (Lead).

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Responsible editors:

Associate editor: Edivaldo Góis Junior <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0521-1937>

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