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## A Commentary on Sally Goddard Blythe's article 'The body learns too'

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In her recent article 'The body learns too', Sally Goddard Blythe (2020), a psychologist and Director of the Institute for Neuro-Physiological Psychology (INPP) – created in 1975 by Peter Blythe, a psychologist who had worked in psychotherapy and taught applied psychology and education – has given us an optimistic and vital account of how a partially formed 'immature' brain of a healthy young child learns to 'grow up' to maturity in engagements of the body with the world. How use of body movement builds the time-space arena of a cultivated physical and social environment. Through practice of our body movement, directed in a brain aware of the environment offering what James Gibson identified as the 'affordances' for a healthy and creative life, we become contributors to an inheritance of human work. The principles of the neural theory of mastery of movement – for independent locomotion, use of the agile and cleverly balanced trunk and head vigorously moving about on two feet with delicate and expressive hands, inquisitive head with ears, eyes, face, mouth and voice – must be directed to explain how, from birth, we flourish in intimate communication which builds plans and rich memories as stories for making use of the world.

I share Sally's conviction that our life as human persons with human brains is a creation of motives for muscular vitality, and that our education must strive for a co-operative and inventive life in enjoyment of moving, in sport, the arts, literacy and technical work. But my work as a developmental psychologist has been focused on the beginning of ideas of shared experience, before the child can walk or talk, not the aims of training in activity.

For human living – moving the body with hope of enjoyment, anticipating rewards in comfort and fearing risks of bodily harm or disease and loneliness in the space and time of the immediate world – we join the story of a culture in kinship. In my home country New Zealand it is legally confirmed that two ancient cultures can share education of modern customs and laws in two languages, English and Maori. The curriculum for schooling in all parts of New Zealand has been made more natural, liberal and creative by basing its principles of the innate creativity and sociability of children before and through schooling (Richardson, 1964), a philosophy promoted by the Maori tradition of *Te Whāriki*, a metaphor which conceives education as weaving the child's gifts into the fabric of the community,

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