

Trauma Solutions through PME

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MAPP - DAN 4630 - Proposal for Research Inquiry

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This proposal is explaining the inquiry into theoretical and practical possibilities of helpful and healing solutions of trauma impacts through the somatic method “Physio-Mentale Entwicklung” (PME).

As research method I will use theoretical inquiry and the stages of the somatic dialogue as somatic research followed by a somatic and creative analysis.

This research is important, because it connects the practical knowledge of my somatic work with new scientific research in related fields, and it also utilises the already existing tools of my somatic work for solving pain and suffering as results of traumatic impact, and furthermore it can help to give my somatic work a broader and more academic background about how it is working and why it is being helpful.

For years I have been asked by my clients and students:” isn't PME also a very good method for healing trauma?”. First I did not know, than It seemed that trauma is just a new fashion and marketing gag of the psycho-industry. But for 5 years I am now studying, reading and taking classes about trauma, and I am getting more and more excited about the knowledge that I gained so far, and I am seeing the potential for a huge development in theory and practise for my work. I also hope to get some insight into whether trauma theory can serve as a new complete concept of mental health and a new explanation of the development and treatment possibilities of mental and physical illnesses.

That is why I am really looking forward to being able now to do structured research that is focused on my professional practice, and that will hopefully bring both somatic and cognitive insights about the trauma solution possibilities of PME for me.

In the spirit of radical constructivism I want to use this research as the production site of viable paths for my professional practice. (Glaserfeld, 1995)

Although I position my work mostly in the fields of health, education and the arts, all somatic methods are strongly based on research, specifically on individual self-research.

In my AOL I wrote: ‘Somatics is the research of studying the self from within. (Hannah (1986)) (Bainbridge Cohen (1993) p1.) The researcher and the object of research are the same person. All somatic methods work with sensing the body and moving’ (Rehberg, 2022).

Throughout my education and professional practice I learned a lot of different methods and anticipated the writings of a lot of different somatic scholars.

In this research I am not referencing definitions and practices of other somatic scholars and other somatic methods, because this research is specifically focusing on the somatic method PME only. But In the theoretical inquiry of my research I will try to find articles and research in which other somatic methods are directly treating traumatic impact, to learn from their research design and gained knowledge.

I developed my own method, ‘Physio-Mentale Entwicklung’ (PME), 20 years ago as a creative comprehension of my education and professional experiences, trying to find an

essence and a safe, easy and sustainable practice. PME is client-centred and process-oriented, its main tools are sensing the body and moving and it is applied in group teaching as well as in one-on-one sessions.

The method PME has four keystones that distinguishes this method from all other somatic methods. These keystones are:

- 1.) Working with the quality of sensing, which utilises buddhist psychology for somatic work.
- 2.) The somatic dialogue, which describes the steps of the somatic process in great detail, and will be used in this research as well.
- 3.) Self-Organisation as the basic principle of healing and development, meaning that all helpful and healing change is coming from the somatic self, the unconscious body.
- 4.) Reflection within the somatic dialogue is an important part to foster holistic understanding and development.

The Aim of the method 'Physio-Mentale Entwicklung' is to develop body and mind.

Development for me in this method means four things:

Firstly improving performance of body and mind, secondly connecting and balancing body and mind, thirdly supporting health of body and mind and fourthly solving problems in the connection between body and mind.

Before starting the actual somatic research I will conduct a contextualization and theoretical inquiry of the research field. In this proposal I am presenting what theoretical inquiry I could do so far and what still needs to be done.

To access given research about the body I will rely in this research on the vast positivist scientific research of anatomy that is easily accessible on the internet, for referencing I am using the 3D computer program 'Visible Body' (Argosy Publishing, 2019), the best resource for somatic thinking about the body is the book from 'Trager' practitioner and scholar Dean Juhan 'Job's Body' (Juhan, 1987).

For my theoretical framework of the mind, I am using different scholars that are coming from different traditions: In his book 'the mind and its functions' the buddhist monk Geshe Rabten is describing the sophisticated buddhist theory and practice, which is not scientifically proven but incorporates 2500 years of experience and reflection. I extensively use Rabten's theory and practice in my teaching and therapeutic treatments and made excellent experiences, as my work really improved. (Rabten, 2003)

In his book 'Mind' neuropsychiatrist Daniel Siegel is trying to distil a philosophy of the mind from the latest scientific brain and nerve system research. (Siegel, 2017)

Both philosophers Michael Pauen and Jaegwon Kim give in their books an overview over the most important philosophical discourses about the mind in the last centuries. (Pauen, 2005) (Kim, 2011)

Neurologist Robert Scaer is explaining in his book '8 keys to brain-body balance' the function of the brain always referencing trauma and trauma healing and possible balances between brain and body. I hope to find ideas for the content of my somatic research in this book. (Scaer, 2012)

One context that is important to evaluate possible trauma solutions through the somatic method PME is psychology and psychotherapy.

Psychologist Seymour Epstein was able to present a concept of self, with which most schools of psycho-therapy and also psychotherapy science and psychology could agree: the experiential and cognitive self concept. (Epstein,2003)

Due to Epstein's concept the self can be divided in two different information processing systems that operate in different ways:

1. the experiential system, which is preconscious, holistic, emotional, pain and pleasure oriented and making associationistic connections.
2. And the rational system, which is conscious, analytical, logical, reason oriented and making cause-and-effect connections.

The interesting fact for my inquiry is that according to Epstein other research has shown that psychotherapy is only successful, when it is able to also work in and with the experiential system of the client. As all somatic methods work mostly in and with the experiential system of the client, this is a theoretical starting point for the somatic research about if and how PME could also be successfully used for helpful and healing psychological developments.

For trauma theory I rely on the scholars Bessel van der Kolk, Babette Rothschild and Pat Ogden. (van der Kolk, 2015), (Rothschild, 2017,2021), (Ogden,2006) They all are explaining how traumatic impact has a big impact also on the body, especially the nerve system, and why that is the reason to also use physical and somatic therapeutic methods for healing and resolving trauma. I will try to get access to the data of research van der Kolk was doing about physical trauma therapy methods that are related to practices of PME. Babette Rothschild is important to my research, because she is pointing out that healing trauma has to happen in the here and now and not in remembering the traumatic event. Pat Ogden's sensori-motor approach of healing trauma is very close to the main tools of PME, which are sensing the body and moving.

Trauma means injury. Trauma can be physical, like a broken leg, or trauma can be mental. Latest research suggests that mental injuries come from events that are injuring our basic mental needs. These basic mental needs are freedom, connectedness, self-esteem and pleasure gain. In his book 'Neuropsychotherapie' the German psychologist Klaus Grawe is combining his research about basic mental needs and the most important impact factors of psychotherapy with latest research about the brain.(Grawe, 2004). With this he lays the ground for understanding healing possibilities of brain and nervous systems that were injured through traumatic impact.

Grawe's research also suggests that the mental system cannot really forget old strong patterns, but these patterns can be over-written and balanced by new patterns. (Grawe, 2004) One research question of my inquiry is whether PME can provide new patterns to solve trauma suffering.

In the Video series 'Trauma Treatment' (2013) the leading experts of trauma treatment come to the conclusion that trauma treatment needs to work with the body, needs to be stabilising and supporting resources, and needs to be building new resilient patterns. Theoretically PME would fit into these categories, in this research I want to find out if PME with its concept of self and its tools and modalities can also be a responsible trauma treatment and furthermore if I can find out about that with this research design.

In my practical inquiry I will introduce a new method of somatic research, the somatic dialogue. I will apply the following standards of qualitative research to make the somatic dialogue an accepted method:

According to Lea Genau (Genau 2020) there are 3 main standards of qualitative research: Transparency, intersubjectivity, and outreach.

To make my inquiry with the somatic dialogue transparent, I will describe all stages of my inquiry including the preparation in great detail. To meet the standard of intersubjectivity I will clearly try to define research data and reflective and creative analyses. To comply with the standard of outreach I will lay out if and why generalisations can be made because of this research, and how gained knowledge could be used in professional practice or not.

I will try to make the somatic dialogue be describable as a phenomenological research method using Michael J. Gill's article: 'Phenomenology as qualitative methodology' (Gill, 2020) and Glenn Hartelius article 'Quantitative Somatic Phenomenology - Toward an Epistemology of Subjective Experience' as a guideline. (Hartelius, 2007)

The research will be both positivist and non-positivist. For anatomy, the brain and the nerve-system, psychology, psychotherapy, trauma - therapy, health-promotion and mindfulness I will base this research on positivist science. For the mind, the philosophy of mind, applied mindfulness and the somatic research with the somatic dialogue I will use individualistic non-positivist research. Although Glenn Hartelius (Hartelius, 2007) is opening an interesting discussion by claiming that somatic research can be quantitative, I still am placing the somatic research part of this inquiry as qualitative research.

These are the proposed stages of the somatic dialogue used as somatic research method:

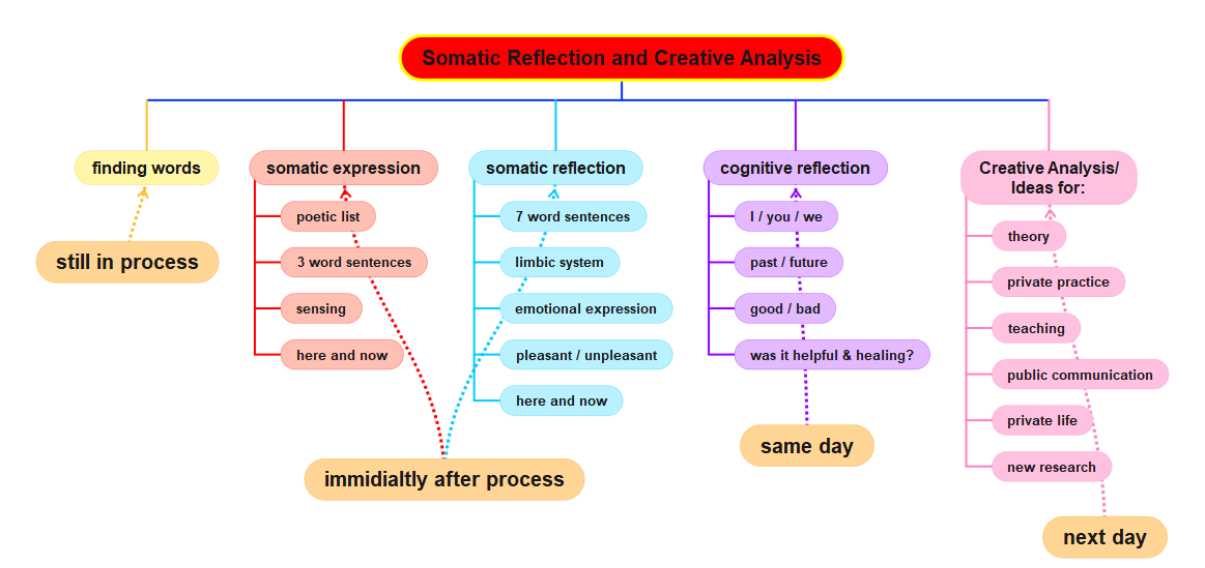
1. Preparation:
 - a. Theoretical preparation see theoretical inquiry.
 - b. Practical preparation:
 - i. setting a timeframe
 - ii. preparing a space for undisturbed sensing and moving.
 - iii. make preparation for written reflection. (paper, pen, computer)
 - iv. Prepare an audio with guiding ('teaching') the stages as a guide for listening
2. Deciding of the specific research question, theme or area for one cycle of research
3. Being present: Calibrating the mind of the researcher: focus on the attention of the own body in the here and now.
4. Quality of perception: intentionally applying helpful and healing mind factors such as trust, mindfulness and compassion to:
 - a. Overriding other biases by deciding to use specific intentions.
 - b. Directing the research into a helpful and healing direction.
 - c. Taking care of the health of the researcher.
5. Somatic Movement: unspecific free sensing and moving to warm up and getting body and mind ready for a somatic process.
6. Apply the given research question, theme or area to sensing and moving in helpful and healing mind-factors.
7. Explore in a given amount of time.

8. Be aware of the polymorphic nature of the mind. All following entities can be happening separately, overlapping at the same time, or in any other combination:
 - a. Physical sensation
 - i. In the here and now
 - ii. Memory of past sensations
 - iii. Imagination of future sensations
 - b. Emotions and feelings
 - i. In the here and now, connected to the physical body
 - ii. Old feelings, connected to memories
 - iii. Feelings about future considerations
 - c. Thinking in words:
 - i. In the here and now:
 1. Finding words
 2. Somatic expression
 3. Somatic reflection
 - ii. About the immediate past:
 1. Cognitive reflection
 - iii. About future considerations & ideas
 1. Creative analyses
 - iv. Abstract intellectual realisations
9. Listen to any answer, outcome of the exploration that is:
 - a. A change and development in the body
 - b. A change and development in the mind
10. Be aware of the cyclic and fluid nature of this research process:
 - a. Any change in body and mind is a new reality on which the research question can be applied again
 - b. This is happening at the speed of the stream of consciousness.
 - c. The border between data/capta and reflection/analyses is fluid.
11. Consciously step out of the immediate somatic exploration at a given time (guided by the audio)
12. Use automatic walking for integration, finding words and reflection.
13. Write or share your experiences:
 - a. Poetic list / free association
 - b. 3 word sentences
 - c. 7 word sentences
 - d. Cognitive reflection
14. On the next day do a creative analyses with future research considerations and future outside consideration for theory and professional practice

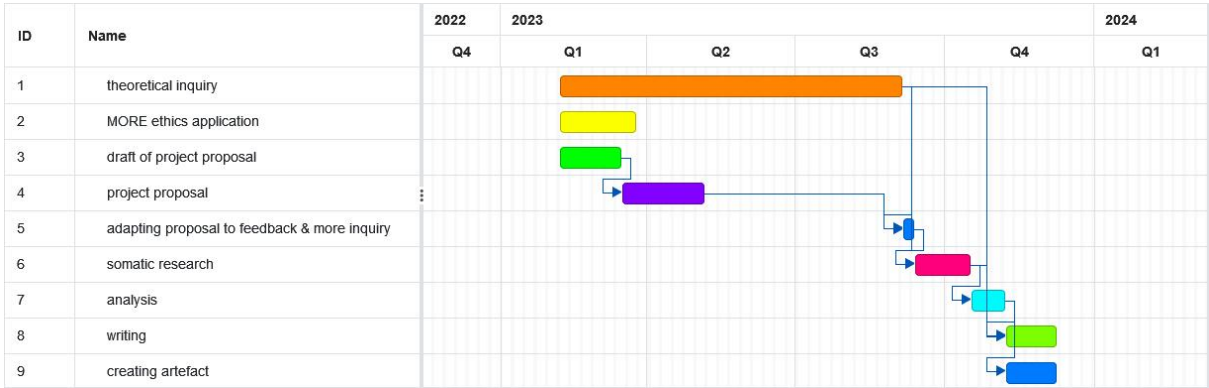
After 4 months of contextualisation and preparatory inquiry I will conduct a 5 weeks period of somatic research through the somatic dialogue with 10 three-hour research sessions. In each of the three-hour sessions I plan to have 3 cycles of a somatic dialogue with one specific research question. This will sum up to 30 different somatic research cycles.

Below you can see a chart about the reflection and analysis possibilities that are already happening in and close to the somatic research that will influence the questions of the

somatic research in a cyclic manner. This mutual influence of theory and data collection in a cyclic way is comparable to such methodologies as ‘grounded theory’ (Ralph, Birks and Chapman, 2015) or ‘action research’ (Reason and Bradbury, 2001).



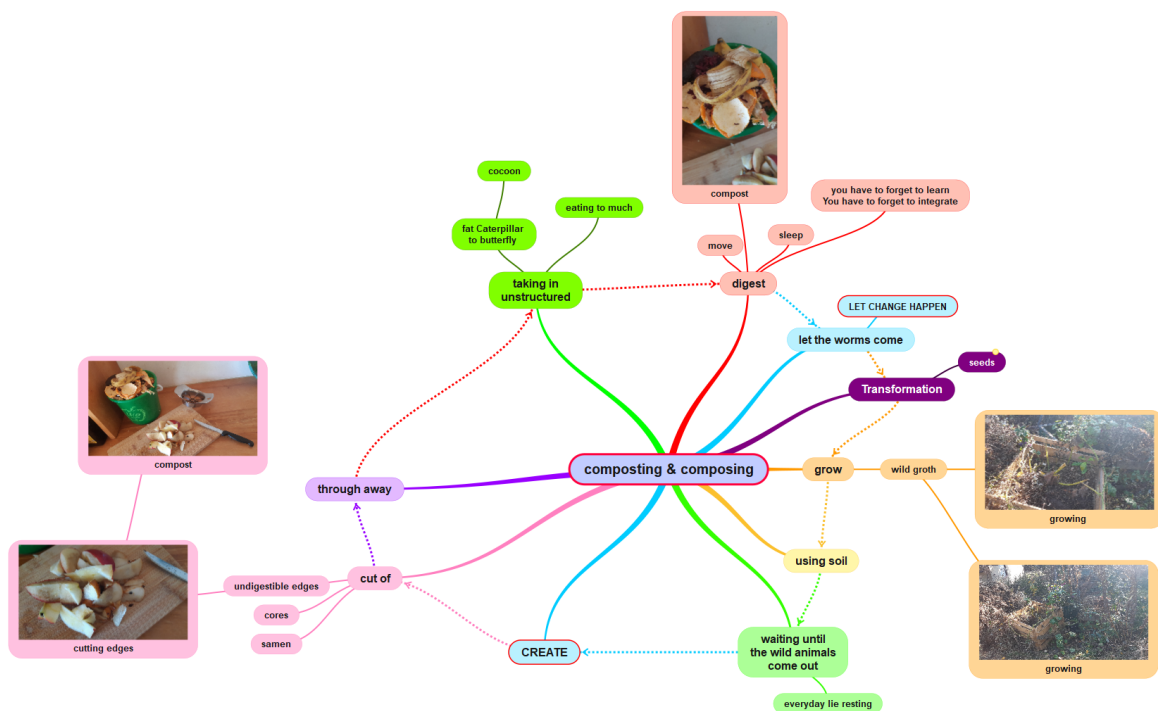
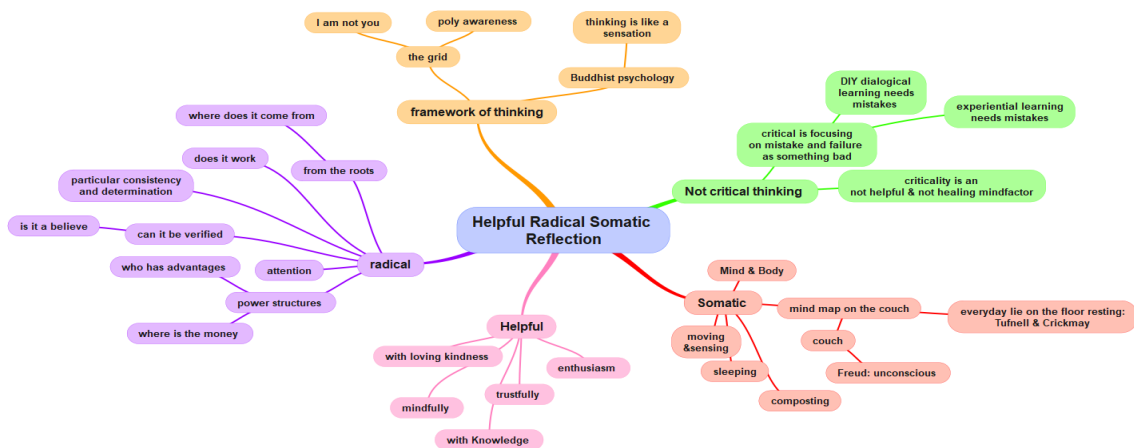
Below you can see the time structure of this research project in a gantt chart.



Following is a brainstorm list of possible research questions to be used in the somatic research through the somatic dialogue:

1	relaxing fluid cellular communication between nerve cells
2	balancing sympathetic and parasympathetic nerve system through sensing inwards and acting outwards at the same time in somatic movement
3	balancing the senses of the head into a not fight and flight response with soft and gentle movement
4	using facial expression and touch of the face to balance the limbic system
5	balancing cerebellum with frontal cortex with touching, sensing and movement
6	touching the brain by touching the skull with the hands
7	moving the brain inside the skull
8	sensing the brain from the inside / asking for need and fulfillment
9	calming the adrenals on the kidneys (with connection to the diaphragm)
10	Activating cortisol from the adrenal glands on the kidneys (cortisol is rebalancing after a fight/flight reaction is over) (Rothschild, 2017)
11	softening the eyes and the optical nerve
12	embodiment of the hypophyse (pituitary gland)
13	balance nerve system / hormonal system
14	Balance in the hormonal communication system
15	mindfulness and other mind factors
16	interoception (body - scan)
17	slow movement
18	self-expression through free movement / emotional expression for co-regulation
19	transformation of emotions through movement
20	physical localization of emotions
21	Movement as tool that repatterns huge parts of the brain (even more with mindfulness, interoception, free movement - self expression)
22	Movement as integrating sensing - feeling - thinking
23	Building patterns through basic neurological patterns
24	Gravity and our relationship to it patterns all movement > brain connections
25	rhythm is balance (breathing - walking - heart pulse) > swing (pendeln) disco dancing - lose yourself to dance
26	Bonding and attachment and co-regulation through touch and dance
27	Balancing the sensory nervous system (Rothschild, 2021)

After the period of somatic research there will be a 4 week period of analysis. As methods of analysis I will use 'helpful radical somatic reflection' and 'composting & composing'. Both methods do not have a strict order and are cyclic and creative in nature. 'Helpful radical somatic reflection' is an alternative for critical thinking and also includes a mindful and compassionate intention to be helpful, and a moving and sensing part to be somatic. In 'composting & composing' I will try to access my unconscious system by forgetting and composting data, trusting that from the unconscious new creative realisations can be composed.



Ethical considerations for the theoretical inquiry are to keep the safe balance of respecting intellectual property of others on one hand, and also being open to being inspired by the ideas of others on the other hand. For self-inquiry in the somatic research my ethical considerations are to keep good self-care through using helpful and healing mind factors for the self inquiry and to keep a good study-work-life balance throughout the whole research process.

In Conclusion, I want to lay out some plans for further theoretical inquiry.

For the philosophical background of sensing the self I will study the phenomenological ideas of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, for the philosophical background of moving I will study the writings of Maxine Sheets-Johnstone.

I will try to gain more theoretical knowledge about health promotion, resilience and salutogenesis in order to explain the 4 keystones of PME in these terms and to be able to develop a concept of trauma solution in contrast to trauma healing.

More practically I will try to find research about the effects of mindfulness for health and put some thought into the relationship of human homeo-stasis and cybernetic understanding of self-regulation.

I will also research how other somatic methods deal with traumatic impact in a theoretical and practical way.

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