

2018

# Mountain Dance: A Transdisciplinary Exploration of Environmental Dance as an Autopoietic Expression of Ecological Connectivity and Synthesis

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# ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY

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## NEW ENGLAND

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DISSERTATION COMMITTEE PAGE

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**Mountain Dance:  
A Transdisciplinary Exploration of Environmental Dance as an Autopoietic Expression of  
Ecological Connectivity and Synthesis.**

presented by Dianne E. Eno

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Defense Date: July 22, 2011.

Date Submitted to the Registrar's Office: August, 24, 2108.



**Mountain Dance:  
A Transdisciplinary Exploration of Environmental Dance as an Autopoietic  
Expression of Ecological Connectivity and Synthesis**

by

Dianne E. Eno

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

The requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Environmental Studies

Antioch University New England

2018



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## Dedication

With much gratitude, I dedicate my work to the memory of:

Wayne Brink, multi-talented DEFDW company photographer, intrepid hiking buddy, and member of the dance company board of directors:

Wilbur LaPage, friend, doctoral committee member, Director of NH Parks and Recreation (responsible for making the first Mt. Monadnock Celebration of Dance possible), poet and a true transdisciplinary;

Bessie Shoenberg, a dear friend, dance mentor and muse, a gentle spirit (always with a twinkle in her eye); and

Hollis Littlecreek my spiritual teacher (who guided me during my vision quest on Mt. Monadnock, and inspired me to realize the vision that is embodied in this work).

## Acknowledgements

This dissertation represents the realization of a lifelong personal and artistic vision. While the journey has not been an easy one, it has been marked by those who have stood with me and have consistently encouraged me onward--and to never give up.

I am grateful to all those who I have encountered on this transformational and always self-organizing academic journey. I thank my cohort members, peers and colleagues and faculty at Antioch University New England and the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development, New York University for wonderful gifts of friendship and intellectual inspiration.

To each of the members of my committee, Dr. Fred Taylor, Dr. Tomoyo Kawano and Professor Emeritus Susan Loman, who have generously provided me with advice, wisdom and encouragement--I offer my deepest thanks and appreciation for all that you have done to help me along to the finish line. I would especially like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Fred Taylor for being a consistent tour de force, always willing to field a phone call, to read over my chapters, or to discuss the more philosophical aspects that have helped to shape and articulate my work. I am blessed to have such a great writing coach, trouble shooter and friend.

To my friend(s) who have supported me, and have given me the time and space to do this work, knowing that our friendships would always endure—thank you!

I would also like to acknowledge all of the dancers (and crew) who have joined me in so many grand adventures, dancing through the years, on Mt. Monadnock. You have graced that rocky stage with your presence and diverse talents! And as I acknowledge Mt. Monadnock, I look forward to the next chapter of mountain adventures.

Finally, I wish to express my sincere appreciation and deepest gratitude for my wonderful and always amazing dance company/ research team members. Thank you for all your many sacrifices, to help me bring this project to fruition; for your enthusiasm, endurance, insights, perspectives, artistry, creativity and trust in my vision. I thank you for the vital gifts that you have contributed to this work.

## Abstract

This research explores the complexity of the human-nature relationship through the emergent arts-based lens of environmental dance. The work is guided by a transdisciplinary mission—to actively create bridges and connections between and among disciplines typically thought to be independent bodies of knowledge in their own right: here they merge and become synergistic partners, producing a new way of knowing that is greater than the sum of two independently-partnered disciplines. A transdisciplinary approach opens us to know a multiverse where a holistic perspective expands the traditionally singular viewpoint of the existing predominant Cartesian paradigm. The study allows space for “environmental dance” to emerge as a true transdiscipline.

Furthermore, this project is based upon the intuitive sense that the arts, once again, as exemplified by “environmental dance,” can offer nuanced insights and pedagogical strategies for future research and development, which may inspire and guide holistic, imaginative, creative and systems-oriented engagement of humans with the natural world. The groundwork for reaching this goal lies in the emergent “environmental dance” theory that has directly originated as a “product” of this research. The emergent theory known as Satori Loop<sup>©</sup>™ provides an underlying prerequisite shift in perspective, mindfulness and embodied awareness that restructures the way humans have previously chosen to engage the natural world, while celebrating the unifying concepts of diversity and connectivity in a self-organizing universe.

The research design draws upon a dual methodology: phenomenology and grounded theory, in tandem with a “pastiche” of arts-based methods that work together in complementary synergy, opening up a nuanced way to study and further describe the phenomenal interface of the

dancing human body embedded in the dynamic, living landscape. As a thorough inquiry into the “lived experience” of the environmental dancer, a prominent feature of this study is the adaptation of the Goethean scientific process/method as a model for the “environmental dance” creative process, effectively enjoining “art “with “science”. Finally, this research aims to demonstrate how the arts can become a viable, complementary balance to science offering an equilibrium in the ways we can choose to more holistically *know* and *be in* the world.

Key Words: arts-based research, dance, environmental dance, Goethean science, holistic science, phenomenology, systems ecology, transdisciplinarity.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction to the Research Project

*Let us become like stones, plants, and trees. Let us be animals, think and feel like animals. Listen to the air. You can hear it, feel it, smell it, taste it. Woniya wakan—the holy air—which renews all by its breath. Woniya, woniya wakan—spirit, life, breath, renewal—it means all that. Woniya—we sit together, don't touch, but something is there; we feel it between us, as a presence. A good way to start thinking about nature, talk about it. Rather talk to it, talk to the rivers, to the lakes, to the winds as to our relatives.*

~John Fire Lame Deer

### Prelude: Background for the Research and Rationale

The seeds of my dissertation research were certainly planted several decades ago, when as a child I set forth into the world, intuitively discovering and establishing patterns of recognition, perception, feeling, and acting. I can close my eyes and still remember with detail, the forest—the piney incense of the conifers, the sounds of the blue jays, the music of the babbling brook. I can also remember dancing on my boulder like it was yesterday. That special place in the woods was imprinted in me and has become a part of me forever.

My research and work as a teaching environmental artist is driven by a mission of reconnecting humans with the natural world. It assumes that humans, in this particular point in time, are isolated and separated in a deleterious way that puts all life at risk; we have become “wounded” in the ways in which we have come to engage the natural world. These wounds are evident in both human thought and action, particularly those associated with Western culture.

To put it another way I am passionately committed to the notion that we *can* heal the “wounds” that one may associate with the human/nature split. This particular isolation of humans-from-nature reflects a predictable condition, a dysfunctional state that can be transformed into a mutually-beneficial wholeness. What we may ultimately find as an effective way to encourage the kind of psycho-social transformation I envision, may emerge from unexpected and alternative



ways of knowing that are most accessible through the arts. That is why this phenomenological, arts-based grounded theory research is dedicated to exploring the aesthetic experience of site-specific environmental dance as a way of knowing (and being) that through its expressive, creative and interpretive nature may be able to replicate the long-lasting and residual effects of positive and transformative experiences in nature. I am faithfully inspired by this mission. This work is borne from those early seeds of inspiration and a deeply rooted vision that comes from nearly twenty-five years dedicated to experimenting with and honing a body of developing work aimed to directly serve this effort. During a period of creative incubation and development, this has taken the form of free public performances at the summit of Mt. Monadnock, North America's second most-climbed mountain (Brandon; 2007; Clark, 2002; Mansfield, 2006; Older & Older, 1990; Timlow, 1922).



*Figure 1: Summit of Mount Monadnock, Jaffrey, NH, research and performance site. Dianne Eno Fusion DanceWorks has presented annual summit performances of “environmental dance” since 1985 (Photo: Larry Davis/ DEFDW©).*

From the experiences I have shared there on site in this remarkable mountain landscape, with my dedicated dancers and thousands of supportive audience members from around the world, I believe I have identified a single, crucial starting point in this healing transformation process.

### **Embodiment: Sense of Place through a Phenomenological Lens**



*Figure 2: Mountain pool near the summit on the White Dot Trail (Photo-Courtesy Larry Davis/ DEFDW ©).*

The starting point is in relearning how to embody the natural world, in recalibrating ourselves and our thinking and doing in

terms of re-envisioning a collective and inclusive humanity as an integral part of a larger whole, and to experience the language of nature opening, once again, the possibility of a deep, holistic experience of belonging. We begin by intentionally seeking a deep and abiding sense of connection to place. Such a sensorial connection to external landscape enables us to heal the split by spontaneously bridging the inner affective, psychological, and cognitive realms of the individual, to the outer physical realm of the human body experiencing or being physically

present to the fleeting moments that the environmental dance performance unfolds at once in time and space (Abram, 1996; Cohen, 2007; Thomashow, 1995).

Taken further, one might say that this kind of environmental dance--a quasi-ritualistic act of site-specific environmental dance has the unique ability to transform space into place; and in doing so, the human-made boundaries between individual and place seem to fade and dissolve. True ecological integration<sup>1</sup> happens when humans at once become place and place becomes human. The kind of environmental dance that my research team and I explore and describe is a reciprocally-based collaboration among the natural landscape/ performance

site, environmental  
dance performers and  
research team  
members and audience  
that results in the  
metaphorical,  
symbolic version of  
the human experience  
we have come to know  
as a sense of place.

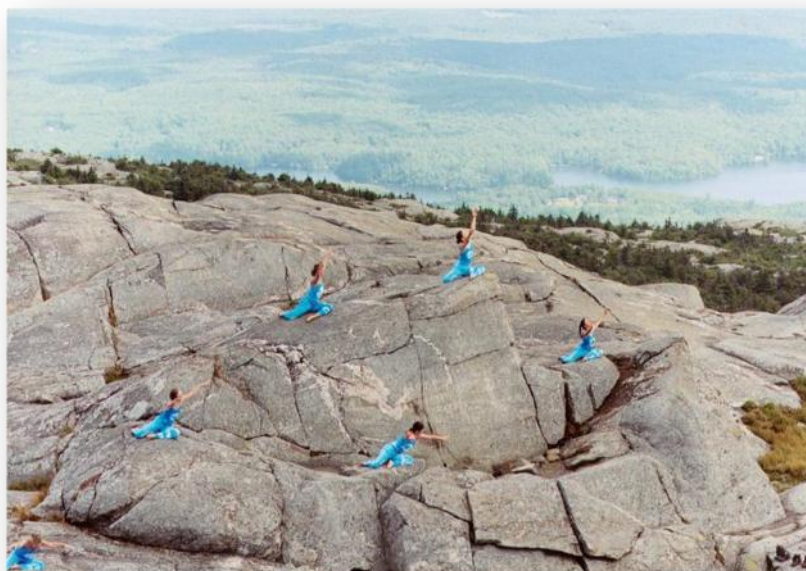


Figure 3: *The Resting Place*--the ritual of return (Photo DEFDW ©).

Years of experience  
and reflection suggest that the environmental dancer is likely to feel a sense of bonding with  
“place” as a direct (and indirect) result of this performance experience and through the new lens

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<sup>1</sup> My own rendering of the concept of *equality* in an ecological context in order to overcome/ resolve the privilege of humans over nature prescribed in a more conventional hierarchal model.

of a perceptual ecology, a way-of-knowing concept set forth by philosopher and phenomenologist David Abram (1996, p. 49). His idea of “the body’s silent conversation with things” aptly describes my own similar notion of such a reciprocally-based collaboration. There is a unique synergy between dancing body and natural site (and the human eyes that bear witness to the performance)—site-specific environmental dance models this kind of synergy, symbolically and metaphorically using the systems thinking and values upon which it has been founded: unity, diversity, complexity, connectivity, community, balance, adaptation, affiliation, self-regulation and self-organization. What may emerge from such an approach is an expressive aesthetic discourse that illuminates the potential of these values and ideals to underwrite a transformed human/ nature relationship.

Related to values, an important part of this research is aimed at understanding better how one experiences a deeply personal sense of place and develops a mindfulness of one’s own ideological/ worldview underpinnings. A likely place to begin such exploration is in seeking to know what it is like to experience environmental dance. This is important because how we perceive the world is greatly influenced by our direct experiences (and what transformations result from these), our core beliefs and how we communicate them. It is crucial to recognize the interplay between such thought and action. This becomes especially important as we reflect upon our own relationships with and moral obligations to the natural world and all its inhabitants. This non-linear research focuses on these considerations within the special circumstance of environmental dance yet to be described, which in turn gives us clues with regard to perception, feelings and attachment to place. In this way, this research project reflects systems thinking (and doing), a process that can be envisioned as a hermeneutic circle, which entails understanding the parts in the context of the whole. Likewise, the grounded theory approach paired with



phenomenological exploration as the methodological basis of this inquiry is by definition a *self-organizing* venture, as it seeks to illuminate the emergent qualities of environmental dance and its supporting theory (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Moustakas, 1990 & 1994; Van Manen, 1990). This is in stark contrast to an approach that would externally force existing theory to account for environmental dance-as-phenomenon.

### **Toward a Future Environmental Dance Eco-Pedagogy**

Another focus of this research has to do with an important organic outgrowth of the site-specific performance work. There is an assumption that an environmental dance pedagogy is a logical outgrowth of environmental dance performance and this research. It may potentially enable children and adults of all ages and physical abilities to experience firsthand what it is like to physically, emotionally and symbolically bond with place through the ritual of dancing in nature. The emergent, essential features of environmental dance as a creative/ learning experience will become the infrastructure of an environmental dance curriculum as a true transdisciplinary project—such a project is the purview of future development and applications of this research. I believe that this body of developing work may have something to offer more traditional forms of environmental education (especially those with a greater emphasis on pure science), as well as non-traditional, informal learning. This research envisions environmental dance as inspiration for sustainable living values and behaviors (leading ultimately toward an eco-centered environmental ethic by exploring the holistic values that are foundational to environmental dance) (Brady, 2003). A paramount goal of an environmental dance pedagogy as holistic and expressive learning, is to thwart some of the existing cultural trappings of a technocratic society's influence on the young, developing minds of our children. Such are the determined seeds of a new idea ready to take root at this time.

I envision the development of an “environmental dance pedagogy” as the future extension of this research; I also see it as a potential antidote to the detrimental abstraction of nature that emerges from lifestyle altered by technocracy and some of its symptomatic behavior as it manifests in young people: countless hours in front of computer and television screens, and a pathological fear of nature--biophobia (Louv, 2005) at the expense of biophilia (Wilson, 1984). Instead, environmental dance pedagogy encourages the experience of natural places as endless sources of wonder and awe, imagination and creativity, inclusivity and belonging. Respect, reverence for and a deep sense of belonging to all of nature is the foundation of this approach. These attributes are complementary to the predominant science-based environmental education approach and enjoy traditional forms of learning in a holistic way.

### **A Critical Ontology**

We may look to epistemologies and ontologies of indigenous peoples to see a very good model of such a way of being in the world—of existing within the constant mindful reality of a sense of place that is at the same time reflective of the universal concept of Gaia, Earth, our Mother. Thoughtful reflection may inspire one to challenge the status quo of predominant Western culture as it has manifested over the course of humanity’s short tenure on the planet. This also holds true for the active, on-going knowing that accompanies a holistic, systems-based ontology (Bowers, 1987; 1993; 1995; 97 2000; 2001; Kahn, 2010, Marshall, 2002). We can also look to the wisdom of those, like the many and diverse nations of our own continent’s First Peoples, to find our way back to an image of the Earth as a whole and dynamic living system. In our process of healing and transformation, we not only mend a broken Earth and human spirit but we also can address the related issues of environmental justice, indigenous rights and challenge predominant ways of being. The diverse strands of local knowledge that, when taken together,

weave a magnificent global tapestry of nature-based wisdom. This is the great gift of humans opening themselves to place. Through such opening we also open a reciprocal dialogue with nature that enables us to live, celebrate and ritualize local knowledge, a sense of place and community as an integrated whole. Throughout the evolution of the human being, the ritual practices and displays of dance have consistently served as a way to express, interpret and understand our place within nature's living system.

### **Role of the Arts**

So, why art—why environmental dance? Why this particular research focus? The arts, including (and especially) site-specific environmental dance may be uniquely suited to provide an organic, holistically-oriented pathway toward meaning-making, through particularized, personal experience. The arts transcend language, as well as cultural barriers and diversities, and allow for intersubjective, multicultural discourse and multi-layered understanding (Cornett, 2003; Gardner, 1982; 1994). The arts help us to deepen our bond with nature/ the planet (in the abstract macro sense), with place (in the very real, here-and-now micro sense) and with fellow humans. With the help of art we begin to transform ourselves; by deeply knowing and loving what is immediately around us, we become capable of expanding local knowledge and affective connections of place and bioregion to the wider and broader global, whole-Earth concepts and issues.

We may not be able to effectively comprehend nor address issues such as global warming until we deeply and holistically know and understand our own embedded *place(s)* in the world, first. This is the necessary starting point. Visual artist and author Peter London (2003), in *Drawing Close to Nature*, adds:

A fresh new language is necessary to perceive and name the world anew, for our prevailing language stems from a worldview that accepts a schism separating

human nature from the rest of Nature. The artistic processes that shape art offer the power to create a worldview and a view of our Selves that are in accord with the necessary and inextricable symbiosis of humans and Nature. Nothing less sufficiently credible to create a replete and durable sense of being in the world. Art is such an endeavor. Art [environmental dance] is a holistic language that is uttered from the mind, body and spirit. In this way, art is the perfect form of expression with which to imagine, investigate, propose, and engage in a new worldview” (p.2).

Another goal of this research was to study the personal attributes of human connections to nature via the experientially-subjective ways that each human comes to know and be in the world.

Ironically, it is from the personal and particularized realm that we most readily arrive at universally held thinking (which, in turn, begins to approach theory); through the phenomenologically art-based grounded theory orientation the personally lived experience becomes a gateway for emerging theory and expanded knowing. This research illuminates dance as a valid and powerful way of knowing and seeks to show that this is also the case for an emerging genre known as “environmental dance” (Carter, 1999; Fraleigh, 1987; Fraleigh & Hanstein, 1999; McNiff, 1998; Hervey, 2000; Leavy, 2009; and Sheets-Johnstone, 1966).

### **Setting the Stage for the Research: Childhood Origins**

*You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.*

~Max Erhmann

To understand how I have arrived at this very point in time now, and how germinating visions can be seen as the mirror-reflection of the life-world of an environmental dance artist, educator and scholar, it is necessary that I reach backward into the past. I return to the past to journey down the spiraling staircases of my own autobiographical spaces and moments, to all of the *particular* places along that cycling continuum where I had my first memorable encounters



with nature—the outdoors, where, for hours I would run and play with a sense of joyous spontaneity. This fresh experience was filled with a sense of magic, mystery and an intense sense of belonging.

It has been this way for me from the first moments I can recall. The world was a gargantuan living and breathing web of vibrant, amazing things! Growing up in rural southwestern New Hampshire afforded me the optimal laboratory in which these basic lessons formed and then, became fortified and solidified. My nearby woods (sixty (60) acres of pine, hemlock and hardwoods) defined, in part, by a giant resident boulder, an ancient glacial remnant, that looked like a whale-out-of-water to me, the familiar and ever-present iconic Mt. Monadnock and countless excursions to forest and stream with my dad (a knowledgeable outdoorsman) created the landscape and body-mindsapes of a blissfully imaginative childhood. I learned early on, how to unify and traverse between the realms of my inner and outer worlds.

I began a lifelong journey that has been shaped and guided by these predispositions and experiences allowing me to be a true “child of the universe”. A simple message yet a powerful affirmation of belonging and wholeness, and another artifact from my childhood—Max Erhmann’s *Desiderata*. The one-word title is Latin and quite simply translates as “things that are yearned for” or more simply “essential things”. It is no mistake that this famous little line of poetry has been with me, echoing within, a wholeness of being, a mantra of my own early mindfulness of this deep and personal relationship with the natural world for which I am most grateful. What I recognize here, is a way of being and knowing nature that emanates from an attitude of the human spirit that allows awe, respect, wonder and love to underwrite our interactions with the universe. These are surely the essential things Erhmann romanticizes about. Such an attitude seeks to counteract raw arrogance and human privilege over other lives and life forms, to consider and respect other

perspectives and points of view. It also honors the timeless wisdom and power of the nested natural systems that allow the miracle of our existence and provide us with a deep and abiding sense of place and home. Such an attitude also properly situates humans within the web of life (Capra, 1996, Sahtouris, 2000).

In retrospect, I now see that my love for the natural world came first—not my love of the dance. I would even say that something in my early interactions with the natural world inspired my dormant, latent creative side, which ultimately led me to dance. Just as hours of free play in nature shaped mind and body, so dancing added to my growth and personal evolution. I was a true balletomane, even at such a tender age!

As much as I loved my weekly childhood ballet classes, I could not wait to get home, pull off my shoes and tights and run barefoot through the grass, down that root-filled and winding path to my wooded sanctuary. It was on one of those typical days after my dance class that I became consciously aware that my two loves, dance and nature had so serendipitously converged. I marvel to this day, how dancing in place, on that rock, had somehow so vividly preserved my memories and my love for that place deeply within the body-mind; this is muscle memory! I recall very clearly the memory of suddenly jumping up from my rocky perch and beginning to replicate the lessons from ballet class. I moved precariously across the boulder, extending legs, arms, turning, spinning and yes, falling. As I recall, I may have suffered a nasty bruise to one knee, which my mother quickly passed off as a sign of my inherent tomboy nature. Little did she nor I know that what I was doing then, I would be doing now!

From those early days of dancing on my backyard boulder, I carry with me the simple pleasures of feeling at home in my body-mind and in turn, my natural surrounds—my vision grew out of this permanently etched feeling as a way to find new ways to holistically reintegrate each

child's body-mind-nature (Nabhan & Trimble, 1994). In retrospect, I now understand that I was intuiting an important, almost primordial connection there and I consistently experienced this synchronous bonding with everything I encountered (no matter how big or how tiny as they appeared before me) in those wild wooded spaces. I never ceased to find my interactions with these anything but thrilling. Part of this very particular dynamic that defined my nature encounters is surely attributable to what Edward O. Wilson called "biophilia"<sup>2</sup> (1984). This seems to be only part of the story—something more that I believe has to do with the power of the arts and specifically dance encourages humans to become open and expressive conduits of the natural world which has plenty to say to us. This research sought to unearth that something-more aspect.

Therefore, it appears likely that what may be missing in our myriad of environmental education approaches aimed at getting kids to interact with the natural world is creative and imaginative engagement through art. Art is what unleashes creativity, self-expression, vision, hope, love and compassion. It is what makes us whole in a magnificent framework of a mirrored wholeness generated by the laws and forces of the universe. As E.O. Wilson (1984) describes how artistic expression is part of our human biology and therefore a natural process:

The mind is biologically prone to discursive communication that expands thought. Mankind in Richard Rorty's expression, is the poetic species. The symbols of art, music and language freight power well beyond their outward and literal meanings. So each one also condenses large quantities of information. Just as mathematical equations allow us to move swiftly across large amounts of knowledge and spring into the unknown, the symbols of art gather human experience into novel forms in order to evoke a more intense perception in others. Human beings live—literally live, if life is equated with the mind—by symbols, particularly words, because the brain is constructed to process information almost exclusively in their terms (p. 74).

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<sup>2</sup> *Biophilia*, a term coined by E.E.O. Wilson, meaning affinity, affection for nature and the natural world.

Fritjof Capra also identifies a link between creativity and natural systems: “Like Prigogine’s theory of dissipative structures<sup>3</sup>, the theory of autopoiesis shows that creativity—the generation of configurations that are constantly new—is a key property of all living systems” (Capra, 1996, p. 221). Conceptually, this is something that all children (and artists) intuitively know. Nature herself, is the original source of our creativity (Cohen, 2007).

My childhood experience dancing in nature was not a fleeting moment never again recaptured. Instead, it was rather solid, real and enduring—a creativity-driven, on-going lifelong process. Louv (2005) and now a growing number of concerned like-minded parents, educators and researchers identify this vital and organic connection between child-and-nature as a relic of childhoods past, now a decisive marker in our new age of human-nature relationship dysfunction. Along with the vital connection to nature are our children also losing their creativity?

### **The Problem**

*The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.*

~Albert Einstein

Today, many years after my own childhood encounters with and adventures in my own backyard fantasy world of wild nature, my passions have evolved through this deep connection to nature and have come to life through my art. Together, both have led me to the work that is dedicated to creating and opening up an alternative space in which humans may come to experience and express a natural world in which they are integrated, embedded extensions of that world. And I have a very clear vision of what kind of world such alternative space might be able

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<sup>3</sup>Ilya Prigogine, Russian-born chemist and physicist formulated the “theory of dissipative structures” won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1977 for this paradigmatic-shifting work in *non-equilibrium thermodynamics*.

to offer. In this natural world, the false dichotomies that separate out and isolate human flesh from the flesh of the Earth organically fall away.

Archaic (and perhaps even damaging) dualities collapse and reconstitute themselves as complementary forces that bring into sharp focus, visions of a kinder more equitable world. Such visions are symbolically rendered by the ritualized dance steps of wholeness and unity that instinctively emerge from the established rhythms and discernible, repeating patterns of nature. This is a kind of renaissance of the human spirit that recognizes the vital need for such wholeness and through this we can reclaim the embodied sense of the “genius loci” (Feld & Basso, 1996; Gallagher, 1993; Lippard, 1997; Milton, 2002; Nast & Pile, 1998; Tuan, 1974; 1977).<sup>4</sup> In this dance between the microcosm and macrocosm a sense of place also becomes a way to grasp the enormity of a grander universal scale while simultaneously leading us to deepen our sense of our



*Figure 4: Monadnock rainbow (Photo courtesy of Larry Davis/ DEFDW©).*

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<sup>4</sup> “Genius loci” is the spirit of place.

presence as an integral, interactive phenomenon nested within the larger phenomena that manifests within the universe.

It is from a perspective of holism that we are able to define our human spheres of existence simultaneously in terms of the particular and universal. It allows us the necessary bonding with place that infuses and informs our global awareness with a place-based founded wellspring of intelligence, commitment, compassion, integrity and empathy. In the absence of such unity and interplay between perspective and scale, we may undercut a holistic relationship with the natural world. We have then only limited ourselves, by default, to the fate of an imbalanced, fractured, isolated, and dichotomized ontology and epistemology.

Western culture's age-old tradition of reducing and conceptualizing nature into smaller, atomistic parts led us unwittingly astray in innumerable circumstances and created grave problems for us as a species, while driving other species into extinction altogether. Our ontological and epistemological history reveals that either by choice or by default humans have adopted in many instances a way of relating to and interacting with (and thus, coming to know) the natural world in such a way that has directly and indirectly caused us to become estranged from ourselves and in turn, from our world. The body-mind-nature integration (as intelligence) that I mention above, remain separate and detached parts of what needs and yearns to be whole.

My work explicitly seeks to challenge the status quo of existing (historically predominant) ontological and epistemological orientations of the western mind toward the natural world. As an environmental artist and educator, it concerns me greatly that this has led to a serious imbalance in our thoughts and actions that now infiltrates and profoundly impacts all aspects of (human and otherwise) life on this planet. Lacking is the wisdom of organic balance; the balance I speak of is in principle, metaphor and in material form and function, so clearly and beautifully modeled in the

ongoing, dynamic flux of nested systems (Capra, 1996; Capra & Luisi, 2014; Meadows & Wright, 2008). These are set within the complex give-and-take negotiations and adjustments that nature herself, systematically brokers at both atomic and cosmic scales and the never-ending, interactive dance that perpetually unfolds among the natural systems of the universe. Implicit in nature's organic approach is a shift from focusing on individual parts and separate entities toward embracing the wholeness of things and their vital relationships to one another. This elegantly simple idea inspires, permeates and drives my creative and scholarly work.

Keeping this image of nature's own model of dynamic, ever-dancing balance in mind (what von Bertalanffy (1975) called flux-equilibrium/ *fliessgleichgewicht*) but applying it here metaphorically, I seek a more ecologically-based foundation of thought upon which to rest my own thinking and practice (Goleman 1996; Goleman, Bennett & Barlow, 2012; Orr, 1992; Stone & Barlow, 2005; Thomashow, 1995; 2002). In this search I discovered an emergent paradigm called eco-humanities. This theoretical bridge between binary ways of knowing and being, originated rather recently through the work of scholars from Australian National University in Canberra. Debra Bird Rose, Libby Robin, (and Carolyn Merchant) who are credited with having brought "ecology to the humanities, while introducing 'an ecologically informed method of historical inquiry which links changing imagery and language to material change'" (Eckersley, 1998). A succinct mission holds the promise of connectivity which acknowledges a wisdom of interconnectedness and nestedness that springs from the natural world: "The ecological humanities bring together ways of knowing and interacting with the world from the sciences and the humanities, as well as from indigenous and other 'non-western' worldviews, nourishing the

interconnections and possibilities that these dialogues produce for people and the more-than-human environment.”<sup>5</sup>

Philosophically, this re-visioning of humanities provides a lifeline—a way out of our existing dilemma of competing dichotomies, habits of western self-privilege and a dangerously myopic, single-sightedness. It draws forth the powerful ecological concepts of diversity, plurality, unity and connectivity—reflecting at the same time the values that I espouse as artist, educator and scholar. What was once reduced to isolated pieces is now re-imagined as whole (and thus “healed”) through synthesis. In “The Ecological Humanities in Action: An Invitation” (Issue 31-32, 2004), Rose explains this paradigmatic tug of war:

Open any newspaper or magazine on any day of the week and you will find stories that discuss some aspect of global environmental crisis. The concept of crisis alerts us to the existence of major changes which are running out of control. Most scholars assert that the driving forces in out of control processes are primarily social and cultural, although it is also true that environmental processes can turn into runaway systems driven by their own internal dynamics. Major ecological change, much of it in crisis, is situated across the nature/culture divide. Our academic division between arts and sciences compounds the problems of that divide, inhibiting the work we need to be doing. So too, does the ranking of knowledge systems that places western science at the top of an epistemological ladder; it impedes our capacity for knowledge sharing within fields of plural and diverse knowledges (Issue 31-32, 2004).

Furthermore, Rose and Robin articulate the identical indicators of the *shifts* that have also inspired me explore what a critical ontological approach could do to clarify and position my own research within the ecological humanities movement (Kahn, 2010). As Rose and Robin describe, “ecological humanities in action” becomes a dynamic, new way of being—one that challenges the old paradigmatic interactions and relationships of long-existing binaries. This research is

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<sup>5</sup> For further information on ecological humanities, please see the *Ecological Humanities* website at Australian National University, Canberra ([www.ecologicalhumanities.org](http://www.ecologicalhumanities.org)).



dedicated, in much the same way, to challenging the ontological human—nature status quo, that especially includes uniting the arts and sciences. Rose and Robin add:

While the divisions are pervasive, the possibilities for convergences took a quantum leap in the twentieth century. Major shifts in thought were achieved on each side of the science- humanities divide; many of these shifts are in intellectual tandem, making the work of cross-cutting these divides more obviously necessary, and at the same time offering grounds for greater interest and comprehension. The major shift is from atomism to connectivity (Mathews 1993), and thus from a belief in certainty to acknowledgement of and creative work with uncertainty (Prigogine, 1996; 2004).

My own research and its associated emerging “environmental dance” form and a vision for a derivative pedagogy is intentionally focused on ways of accomplishing this necessary shift, at its rudimentary epistemological and ontological roots.

Aligned with the ideology and mission of the eco-humanities is the notion of critical ontology<sup>6</sup> (Kahn, 2010). The discovery of this new concept resulted from my own skepticism that a constructivist approach offers sufficient support to my aim to develop environmental dance as an eco-pedagogy (Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2009). Constructivism views learning and “knowledge” as the personal “construction” (interpretation) by the individual learner and therefore, it seems to implicitly exclude collective, holistic, intersubjective learning (Vygotsky’s concept of “scaffolded learning” notwithstanding) that must include the environment itself as a vital contributor to that process of gaining new knowledge (Berk & Winsler, 1995; Daniels, Cole & Wertsch, 2007). As it stands, constructivism with its primary focus on the individual is

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<sup>6</sup> See also, “Critical Ontology and Indigenous Ways of Being: Forging a Postcolonial Curriculum”, authored by Joe. L. Kincheloe. In: Yatta, Kanu (Ed.), *Curriculum and Cultural Practice: Postcolonial Imagination*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006.

problematic when attempting to establish what I call an *eco-epistemology* that actually seeks to transcend the problem of individuality. Kincheloe adds:

An important dimension of a critical ontology involves freeing ourselves from the machine metaphors of Cartesianism. Such an ontological stance recognizes the reductionism of viewing the universe as a well-oiled machine and the human mind as a computer. Such colonial ways of being subvert an appreciation of the amazing life force that inhabits both the universe and human beings. This machine cosmology has positioned human beings as living in a dead world, a lifeless universe. Ontologically, this Western Cartesianism has separated individuals from their inanimate surroundings, undermining any organic interconnection of the person to the cosmos. The life-giving complexity of the inseparability of human and world has been lost and the social/cultural/pedagogical/psychological studies of people abstracted—removed from context. Such a removal has exerted disastrous ontological effects. Human beings, in a sense, lost their belongingness to both the world and to other people around them (p.182).

It is plausible that an eco-epistemology can be derived through a necessary critical ontology, as explained by Kincheloe (2006). The logic is thus—if we begin to thoughtfully question our human *being* in the world, then our ways of knowing are going to organically evolve. It seems likely that this would create a self-informing, self-supporting feedback loop, as a challenging new way of knowing that, in turn, organically might inspire new ways of being--a re-conceptualizing of the human-nature relationship that is intimately and complexly interconnected, interactive and interdependent; I am hopeful that a critical ontology is helpful in addressing the bias of individuality and in so doing, it may also elevate the educator/ researcher awareness so that this limitation may be overcome.

What I find most fascinating and apropos to my research is the idea of enactivism, which Kincheloe (2006) introduces (see more on enactivism in Chapter II). As I understand it, enactivism has to do with how phenomenal entities engage (or interact) with (or within) their environments. This is an important consideration in my research that seeks deepen and heal the

human-nature relationship through the development and application of a specific brand of environmental dance which acts as a vehicle of relationship-building. This literally (and figuratively) becomes a dance between humans and the natural landscape/ environment.



Figure 5: "Dialoguing" with the Monadnock. landscape (Photo: DEFDW©).

This distinguishing interaction I use to identify "environmental dance" is Kincheloe's concept of enactivism. The dancer and landscape enjoin in an expression that is more than the sum of the individual and separate phenomenal

entities of "dancer" and "landscape". There is an immediate sense of "relationship". The shift of perception and perspective that consequentially takes place in this circumstance, begins to at once challenge and restructure a longstanding condition we recognize as the human-separated-from-nature ontology.

As I explore this concept further I am intrigued to find enactivism linked with and relevant to systems theory and the concept of autopoiesis, derived from the work of Maturana and Varela (1980). Implicit is a continual, self-adjusting, self-organizing dance between self and other, between environmental dancer and landscape, where reality [and survival] depend upon the relationship between the two:

Employing an understanding of the complexity theory, Maturana and Varela's Santiago Enactivism [theory] as the process of life, a postcolonial appreciation of

indigeneity, critical theoretical foundations, the critique of Cartesianism, and poststructuralist feminist analysis, we can lay the conceptual foundation for a new mode of selfhood. Such a configuration cannot be comprehensively delineated here, but we can begin to build theoretical pathways to get around Cartesian limitations on the ontological imagination. With Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela's concept that living things constantly remake themselves in interaction with their environments, our notion of a new or a critical ontology is grounded on the human ability to use new social contexts and experiences, exposure to new knowledges and ways of being to reinforce subjectivity (Kincheloe, 2006).

From this I now recognize an important distinction between knowledge construction—a product, a static thing; and knowing—as process, and ever self-organizing action. A critical ontology favors process, diversity, synthesis and wholeness. It overcomes separate duality through unity. This research takes these ideas steps further still, into the realm of transdisciplinarity (Nicolescu, 2008), which I utilize as the unifying concept of Chapter II.

With the current state of the planet indicating that humans are well beyond the threshold of moderate concerns, we need only consider the ominous signs and symptoms of global climate change now bearing down upon every living creature on Earth. In my vision of a parallel universe to the current one characterized by the ever-growing and overwhelming realities of environmental degradation, “nature-deficit disorder”<sup>7</sup> crisis and extinction and the prevailing specter of the “double bind”<sup>8</sup>, there is still reason for hope if we can open ourselves to the possibility of new ways of engaging with the “nature” and the “natural world”. Through new approaches via the arts and education, through newly emerging over-arching orientations such as the above-mentioned

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<sup>7</sup> A concept originated by Richard Louv in: Louv, R. (2005). *Last child in the woods: Saving our children from nature-deficit disorder*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books.

<sup>8</sup> The “double bind” is a reference to science made by Einstein, here paraphrased as “using the same mindset to solve a problem that created it” (Western conventional science in the context of being both cause and cure of existing environmental crises). From Bowers, C.A. “How Language Limits Our Understanding of Environmental Education” in *Environmental Education Research* (Vol. 7, No. 2, 2001, p. 142).

nuanced eco-humanities and by taking a reenergized second-look at transdisciplinarity, we can encourage the potential unity and synergy between the rational and the intuitive and imaginative ways of knowing. Furthermore, we may be able to illuminate that primordial, pre-human source of organic wisdom that can help us to once again re-establish the order of balance in how and what we think and in how and what we do.

### **“Environmental Dance” Lineages**

*The systemic understanding of life that is now emerging at the forefront of science is based on three fundamental insights: life’s basic pattern of organization is the network; matter cycles continually through the web of life; all ecological cycles are sustained by the continual flow of energy from the sun. These three basic phenomenon—the web of life, the cycles of nature and the flow of energy—are exactly the phenomena that children experience, explore and understand through direct experiences in the natural world...*

*Education for sustainable living fosters both an intellectual understanding of ecology and emotional bonds with nature that make it more likely that our children will grow into responsible citizens who truly care about sustaining life, and develop a passion for applying their ecological understanding to the fundamental redesign of our technologies and social institutions, so as to bridge the current gap between human design and the ecologically sustainable systems of nature.<sup>9</sup>*

~Fritjof Capra (Center for Ecoliteracy)

My dissertation research is, therefore, dedicated to bringing forth a new scholarly contribution to this vision, as a potential fertile ground of engagement. It is based, in part, on the notion that art and science can (and must) come together in synergistic union at this critical time—in the spirit of and quest for a more unified and complete knowledge of ourselves and our embedded place in the world. The creative medium for accomplishing this qualitative research is an emerging genre of dance (see “disclaimer” below) that I refer to as “environmental dance”. I define “environmental dance” as the expression of the reciprocal and fluid relationship of human

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<sup>9</sup> From Stone, Barlow, & Capra, (Eds). *Ecological Literacy: Educating our Children for a Sustainable World*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Book, 2005/ (pp. xiv-xv).

(dancer/ audience participant) to nature and nature to human. This reciprocity physically and metaphorically comes to life through the art of organized movement and motion that seeks to embody the landscape and to speak the primordial “language” of the land (and of nature, herself) in an abstract, often non-literal contemporary style--the performance of environmental dance unfolds at once in time and space, in the theater of the natural landscape.

### **Delimitations: Differentiating My Brand of “Environmental Dance”**

I must add a necessary disclaimer: It is necessary that I explicitly clarify that what I define above, is the brand of “environmental dance”, that I have developed as an individually-evolving offshoot based on the unique combination of my own idiosyncratic dance training and artistic vision; and where my research team and I exist within a universe of innumerable other diverse offshoots of “environmental dance.”. This “universe” have been derived from the lived experiences and artistic visions of other dance artists, choreographers and educators. Given, is the notion that collectively, we (all “environmental dance artists”) share the common goal of contextualizing expressive dance within what I refer to as “the theater of the natural environment” and further, systematizing it (in some way) as a form of site-specific performance dance.

I am admittedly, slightly skeptical that the term “environmental dance” is adequate in its ability to capture comprehensively what my specific brand of dance-in-and-with-nature is and does, but in order to historically locate my body of evolving work in the larger historical lineages and contexts of dance, the term environmental dance still remains the most appropriate one, for the purposes of this research. I acknowledge the limitation integral to the naming of this (or any) phenomenon—naming, it seems, is almost always a problematic process. I intend to delimit this study, as the study of my own brand of evolving “environmental dance” while acknowledging the inspiring, collective history of “environmental dance”.

However, it is critically important to acknowledge that there is no one single, identifiable founder or originator of “environmental dance”<sup>10</sup>; it is not a highly stylized genre, or technique nor is it a bounded, iconic tradition like ballet or modern dance. Even as such, ballet is a generalized universal term for various styles and long-enduring schools and traditions as well—from the French school to the Vaganova system, to the Royal Academy of Dance school to the Checchetti style and more, each offshoot with its own identifying characteristics, although all are unmistakably what we know and call and love as ballet (Foster, 2010). The same is very true for modern dance—interestingly, though, many of the styles are identified by the name of a single artist who branches off into the development of a variation (a.k.a. “brand”) that capture the nuances of that artist’s training, the cultural “age” in which they live, as well as nuanced style, unique lineage, personal discoveries, original vision, etc. My own dance training is an eclectic mosaic of modern styles (in addition to a strong classical ballet background) that include (but are not limited to) Duncan (Isadora Duncan) dance, and the techniques of Erick Hawkins, Hanya Holm, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Merce Cunningham, Liz Lerman, Jose Limon, Lester Horton (Anderson, 1992).

Interestingly, each of the members of the research team come from very diverse dance backgrounds reflecting a rich mix of dance genres, styles and techniques. I purposely chose such

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<sup>10</sup> “Environmental dance” is what I refer to as a meta-dance form: it is not a genre that is characterized by a single school of thought or defining technique. It is a derivative form of dance with a primary interest and mission in interfacing with the natural environment in some distinguishing way, reflecting the training, philosophical point of view and artistic vision, typically of the artistic director or choreographer of the performing environmental dance group. When I speak of my “brand” I am referring to environmental dance that reflects my own idiosyncratic dance training background, philosophy and artistic vision.

diversity<sup>11</sup> as it strengthens and expands our collective approaches to applying ourselves in a myriad of ways, in our site work on the mountain (or any natural site where we might perform).

Some dance historians may credit the “happenings” of the 1970’s as the stirrings of highly charged experiments and inspiration for a new dance movement--of an approach to dance (as a universal social

connection to nature); or the timeless danced rituals of indigenous cultures (Bresnahan, 2017). While we can accurately (and inclusively) include these environmental dance-related events as part of a larger



*Figure 6: An emerging genre--Trayer Run-Kowzun and Mary Madsen, Research team/DEFDW Members. DEFDW©.*

collection of nature-based dance idioms I refer generally to as fitting the environmental dance mold, it is also true that environmental dance has existed for as long as humans have lived on the planet. Noteworthy artists and practitioners emanate throughout the universe of environmental dance and those that have substantially influenced and inspired me include: dance

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<sup>11</sup> Diversity is an important concept in the genesis of my brand of “environmental dance”—just as diversity in nature works to create and promote an organic wholeness to a thriving ecosystem, so does diversity in the cultural backgrounds and eclectic dance training of dance company and research team members



therapy pioneer Norma Canner, dance phenomenologist and somatics expert Sondra Fraleigh, Bandaloops Dance Company, Jennifer Monson (iLAND); Anna Halprin (healing dance ritual/Tamalpa Institute), Gabrielle Roth (5 Rhythms), Bessie Shoenberg (composition/ Jacob's Pillow/ Dance Theater Workshop, NYC), Janet Adler (authentic movement), Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen (experiential anatomy/ School for Body-Mind Centering); Andrea Olsen ("Body and Earth") and Dancing Earth Indigenous Contemporary Dance Creations (performing earth-based dance company).<sup>12</sup>

In addressing "environmental dance" and the expansive breadth and depth of dance traditions from which it can be said to originate, we must especially include and acknowledge all forms of primitive indigenous dance (that I previously reference) and ritual. Both of these cultural phenomena honored and celebrated a human life lived so close to nature; I recognize that my emergent brand of "environmental dance" is heavily influenced by the notion of the ritual (and even perhaps those Native American dance forms) as a template for metaphorically expressing the basic, primal human-connection-to-nature that I often refer to, as my indigeneity (to borrow Kincheloe's term) (2006). It is my own personal acknowledgement of this powerful force which serves to preserve an everlasting connection to both Earth and ancestry, through the

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<sup>12</sup> Artists, scholars, practitioners, authors and educators who have inspired and influenced my work and the development of the body of work I call "environmental dance: Norma Canner (see "A Time to Dance: The Life and Work of Norma Canner available at <https://vimeo.com/206250642>); Sondra Fraleigh (see [www.eastwestsomatics.com](http://www.eastwestsomatics.com)); Bandaloop Dance Company (see <https://www.bandaloo.org>); Jennifer Monson/iLAND (see [www.ilandart.org](http://www.ilandart.org)); Anna Halprin (see <https://www.annahalrin.org>); Gabrielle Roth (see <https://www.5rhythms.com>); Bessie Shoenberg (see [www.danceheritage.org/schonberg.html](http://www.danceheritage.org/schonberg.html)); Janet Adler ([disciplineofauthenticmovement.com/circles-of-four-faculty-janet-adler.html](http://disciplineofauthenticmovement.com/circles-of-four-faculty-janet-adler.html)); Andrea Olsen (see <https://andrea-olsen.com>); and Dancing Earth Indigenous Contemporary Dance (see [www.dancingearth.org](http://www.dancingearth.org)).

matrix of time and space where I have experimented with dance on the summit of Monadnock--a unique feature that, in part, differentiates my own vision of environmental dance from those independent visions of other environmental dance artists and peers.

I conclude my disclaimer by highlighting both the limitations and delimitations of this study. The goal is to set the defining boundaries of this research project—therefore, my aim is to exclusively focus on the emergent qualities and the lived experiences of my dance-research team, and that which is “indigenous” to my own brand of environmental dance, as it is revealed through the unfolding process of the research. Furthermore, each subsequent use of the term “environmental dance” will refer to my own body of work (whether couched in quotations or not) and the specified focus of my doctoral research project unless otherwise explicated.

### **Research Mission: A New Way to Engage the Natural World**

I propose that what may emerge from this research is a new environmental discourse fashioned as a symbolic, artistic expression speaking to reclaim a lost sense of a deep and primal bond of humanness-with-earthliness. To say it another way I envision “environmental dance” to be an alternate form of communication—a non-verbal, autopoietic<sup>13</sup> language that holds the potential to manifest and mediate a dialogue of ecological connectivity between human and nature: One based upon synthesis and unity to counterbalance a standard of analysis and separation inspired by Cartesian ways of knowing.

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<sup>13</sup> Autopoietic means self-organizing. See Maturana & Varela, *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living...* Dordrecht, Boston and London: D. Reidel Publishing Company (1980).

What may come next in the organic development of this alternate form of expression (poised to help establish a new ontological reality that celebrates the unity of humans with the natural world) is an even newer, more radicalized educational strategy. This research is inspired by a vision of a new way of teaching and learning that illuminates a key difference-- learning that happens *in nature* to learning that happens with nature as a guiding pedagogical force and as model of the collaborative creative process. In the former example, learning in nature carries with it the



Figure 7: “Reciprocity”--Research team member Dianne Eno on Monadnock- (Photo: DEFDW©).

prescriptions of analysis and subject-object distance and isolation—this kind of learning tends to establish a feeling of humans-separate-from-nature. In the latter example, an ecological (non-hierarchal) approach underwrites the learning experience—ideas (even those ideas thought to be disparate ones) are brought together in synthesis and humans become embedded participants in nature; in this sense, the distance-gap between the learner and nature is intentionally closed and learning becomes embodied learning.

This is an authentic eco-pedagogy (Darder, Baltodano & Torres; 2003) with a mission to inspire fluency in this expressive, symbolic language, allowing for a “spoken” reciprocity between the moving, dancing human body and an animate (natural) world where the borders that might separate two entities are merged into a unified, synchronous whole. This new way to know



*Figure 8: T. Run-Kowzun, M. Madsen and D. Eno in "Shapes of Trees" (Photo-DEFDW©).*

nature and our place within the complexity of nested natural systems is necessarily based on principles and laws written by nature herself. This is why I purposefully begin with an ontological (perception-oriented) point of departure where the essence of “being” and “reality” reigns supreme in the discussion above. From there, knowledge (epistemology/ conception) emerges from its embodied, authentic origin within the self-organizing system of the dancing human body nested within and among the systems of an inclusive and unified natural world. Reflecting a true paradigmatic shift, new knowledge is drawn forth from the unified body-

mind, directly challenging knowledge generation that comes hierarchically, first from the mind and then from the body. From this unique vantage point, humans are viewed as living, breathing fractals of a universal whole that need only to dance their truths. I propose that environmental dance is, in fact, a new way of being and knowing the natural world.

### **Multi-modal, Transdisciplinary Engagement of the Research Process**

Environmental dance becomes at once a primary research tool, becoming both the subject of my research as well as the final vehicle of performed scholarship and knowledge transmission where the human body is intentionally illuminated as the site of new knowledge-making. The body is also the locus of all interaction with nature. This point is illustrated by two notable features. First, the research has a dual focus intentionally built on the relationship and influence of environmental dance as performance and environmental dance as eco-pedagogy (acknowledging future research based upon a strong curriculum development component while exploring the relationship and interaction between theory and practice). It is my hopeful goal, that at the culmination of this project, what emerges is a singular, viable and identifiable sub-discipline of traditional artistic dance that is contextualized and given life by nature, herself. Second, the end product (i.e. the dissertation research, its culminating defense in the form of danced “performances” and finally, this traditional academic document) will take on a new dimension of performance in tandem with a conventional written format--as a way to convey this new knowledge through its own unique “language”, to a more far-reaching audience. This is in keeping with the underlying notion expressed by this research focus—that there are multiple ways of knowing. An underlying diversity and plurality of ways of knowing is desirable in this work that highly values whole-picture thinking as linked with holistic experience.

### A Nested Series of Research Questions

This project has been organized around a nested series of research questions. As an arts-based (environmental dance and complementary arts methods), grounded theory (allowing a “theory” of “environmental dance” to emerge from the research rather than the research attempting to prove existing theory), phenomenological (examining the “lived experiences” of the members of the research team) study, guided by the Goethean scientific method (a holistic phenomenology of nature and model adapted by my team and I as our creative process and research method) we have sought to holistically explore and answer each question. In lieu of a more traditional, hierarchical arrangement of research questions, the nested approach reflects the cross-referencing and interconnected relationships of the questions to each other. Questions, as they have been addressed in the field, were not necessarily answered in a linear fashion; instead, layers of new knowledge have been gleaned from the iterative nature of data-collection methods employed in this research design. The goal was to carry out this project as a multi-faceted inquiry into an equally multi-faceted phenomenon, I identify as “environmental dance”.

The “nested” research questions acknowledge and highlight the complexity of the focus of this project. The questions include:

- Question #1—“What is the lived experience of the environmental dancer/researcher? What is the personal development and “dance journey” of the dancer/researcher (from childhood)?”
- Question #2—“What are the historical dance roots (lineages) of environmental dance (as practice, performance and pedagogy)? How does the dancer/researcher thread of development reflect the historical development of dance and environmental dance? How does one define environmental dance?”

- Question #3—“What is it like to dance (engage) with the natural site?”
- Question #4—“How does a systems science paradigm inform this research? How is the Goethean Scientific (5-step) Method adapted as an effective environmental dance research method?”
- Question #5—“What is the significance (and the process) of “bridging inner and outer geographies to the practice of environmental dance?”
- Question #6—“What is the significance (and the process) of “site channeling” (giving an expressive voice to the landscape/site) to environmental dance inquiry?”
- Question #7—“How does environmental dance reflect ritual action? How does environmental dance act as a catalyst for the transformation of the human/nature relationship?”
- Question #8—“How does environmental dance inspire and promote a critical ontology? How is environmental dance a transdisciplinary practice? And for future research consideration, what would an environmental dance (K-12) eco-pedagogy look like?”

### **Dissertation Overview—Summary of the Chapters**

The dissertation is composed as a series of six (6) chapters. The chapters are presented in the traditional dissertation sequence although the nature of the grounded theory protocol allowed for the chapter content to “emerge” out of the usual linear sequence, in order to best serve the unique requirements of the research methodologies. For example, Chapter II (literature review) was not written in advance of the study, as it normally seeks to provide a more traditional theoretical framework upfront; instead, Chapter II content emerged throughout the duration of the research process and was treated as another source of data. This dissertation also provides a

separate chapter (Chapter III) providing the reader with a detailed discussion regarding the adapted use of the Goethean scientific process as an integral tool of the research.

Chapter I provides the reader with a broad overview of the research process. Sections and topics discussed include: Background for the Research/ Rationale; Embodiment, and a Sense of Place Explored through a Phenomenological Lens; Role of the Arts; Setting the Stage for the Research: Childhood Origins; The Problem; “Environmental Dance” Lineages; Delimitations: Differentiating My Brand of “Environmental Dance”; Research mission: A New Way to Engage the Natural World; Multi-modal, Transdisciplinary Engagement in the Research Process; and finally, an overview of the Nested Series of Research Questions.

Chapter II presents a unique formatted “literature review” that is intentionally written as a personal memoir. The title, *Dancing Indra’s Net: An Emergent Web of Literature and a Personal Journey through an Ecology of Ideas and Experiences*, aims to present literature as emergent data, through a series of inter-related areas of interest that seeks to illuminate environmental dance research as a transdisciplinary endeavor, as suggested by the reflective, cross-referencing nature of the organizing myth of Indra’s Net.

Chapter III presents a thorough discussion of Goethe’s 5-step protocol which is utilized in this research as a vital research method. I also explain how the process was transformed into a true creative process and how it was practiced and applied in the field. Illustrative field journal entries provide context for this adapted method and further show how Goethe’s phenomenological analytic/synthetic process informed and guided this research.

Chapter IV offers an in-depth discussion of the methodologies and methods my research team and I employed in all aspects of the research—including, field work (data-collection, dance-movement sourcing, and related performances. The chapter addresses the following



topics: An Introduction—the Pairing of Grounded Theory (GT) and Phenomenology as Methodology; A Nuanced Approach to the Dissertation as the “Danced Dissertation” and a specific combination of methods involved in this non-traditional format; The Traditional, Written Dissertation as a Supplemental Foundation for the Danced Dissertation Performance; A Brief Review of the Chapters to remind the reader of the sequence of the research process; A Discussion of the Danced Dissertation Performance, including a description of each of the five (5) research dance pieces presented; A Review of the Nested Research Questions and how they align with the emergent literature and corresponding literature “seed questions”; a discussion of Emergent Literature-as-Data; a description of The Dancer/Research team and the Research Site(s); a description of the Multi-modal Qualitative Methods utilized throughout the research project; and finally, a Comprehensive Synopsis Outlining All Research Activities and tasks and how they unfolded in the field.

Chapter V offers the reader an arts-based re-presentation of “essential findings and syntheses”. These findings of the study are presented in distinct, cross-referencing sections. These include: “Section #1: The Mountain Dances”; #2: “My Heuristic Profile: s Research Baseline and Context”, which serves as research baseline and to provide context; “Section #3 Dancer-researcher Individual Phenomenological Profiles”; “Section #4--Literature as Data: Open Coding and “Found Poem”/Essences-- Interpretations of Literature Review/Memoir Narratives”; Section #5 a discussion of each of “The Research Dance Pieces” and finally, “Emergent Connections of Research Questions to the Research Dance Pieces”.

Chapter VI provides a further synthesis and interpretation of emergent findings. This final chapter highlights several features of the research that provide a defining foundation for the practice of “environmental dance” as performance and for the future systematization of

“environmental dance” as eco-pedagogy. Special areas of focus includes a description of how I conceptualized the “Satori Loop”© and how it helps to define this particular emergent form of “environmental dance” and the evolutionary changes that have occurred in my own “environmental dance” creative process. Various appendices supplement the chapters.

## Chapter II

### Dancing Indra's Net: An Emergent Web of Literature and a Personal Journey through an Ecology of Ideas and Experiences

*"I have been and still am a seeker, but I have ceased to question stars and books; I have begun to listen to the teaching my blood whispers to me."*

~Hermann Hesse, *Demian: Die Geschichte von Emil Sinclairs Jugend*

*"When you reach the end of what you should know, you will be at the beginning of what you should sense."*

~Kahlil Gibran, *Sand and Foam*

*"The Net of Indra is a profound and subtle metaphor for the structure of reality. Imagine a vast net; at each crossing point there is a jewel; each jewel is perfectly clear and reflects all the other jewels in the net, the way two mirrors placed opposite each other will reflect an image ad infinitum. The jewel in this metaphor stands for an individual being, or an individual consciousness, or a cell or an atom. Every jewel is intimately connected with all other jewels in the universe, and a change in one jewel means a change, however slight, in every other jewel."*

~Stephen Mitchell (*The Enlightened Mind*)

#### A Unifying Metaphor

This is my story, as it unfolds within my personal corner of the universe. It is written with a voice that intentionally reaches outward to each reader, in a spirit of inclusivity, illuminating and celebrating those jewels suspended in Indra's net that draw out the sparkle of common ground and shared meaning. At the same time, I want to acknowledge the sacred autonomy of the very personal passions, visions and dreams we, as artists, are often compelled to manifest in some unique way. The dynamic that drives such a mission is, in my mind, most certainly a reciprocal one—a give-and-take exchange between the universal and the individual; mortal earthly beings and the earthly material plane; and on a grander, perhaps more esoteric stage, a dialectic mediation between the artist/researcher and Indra's immensely infinite universe, enabling each one of us the ability to traverse freely between the inner and outer landscapes that determine our personal and collective spheres of existence and to brilliantly reflect back our own

fleeting human experiences on this earth. By telling our stories (which is, in this case, a juxtaposition of my life with my doctoral research inspired by a single passion in my life, environmental dance) we keep Indra's net vital, alive and ever-reverberating to the heartbeat of the universe. Our memoirs crystalize life and mission as collages of jeweled moments that truly add up to something more than the sum of their parts.

I have chosen the metaphor of Indra's Net as an organizational structure, a schema that serves to hold unifying space for an eclectic and extraordinary collection of seemingly disparate phenomena that comprise the research project explored here. Bringing together ideas, concepts and experiences becomes both the mission and challenge of this written review. These would otherwise have seemingly no relational meaning or relevance to one another at a more traditional first glance, but have for one reason or another, emerged as data, demonstrating an unexpected connection to related experience and other forms of emergent data. Various metaphors with a similar mythology including Grandmother Spider's Web a Native American take on the Jeweled Net of Indra suggest the notion of the "web of life" is a universal symbol of the interactive, dynamic nature of the cosmos. Concerning the specific mythology of Indra's net:

We may begin with an image which has always been the favorite Hua-yen method of exemplifying the manner in which things exist. Far away in the heavenly abode of the great god Indra, there is a wonderful net that has been hung by some cunning artificer in such a manner that it stretches out infinitely in all directions. In accordance with the extravagant tastes of deities, the artificer has hung a single glittering jewel in each "eye" of the net, and since the net itself is infinite in dimension, the jewels are infinite in number. There hang the jewels, glittering like stars of the first magnitude, a wonderful sight to behold. If we now arbitrarily select one of these jewels for inspection and look closely at it, we will discover that in its polished surface there are reflected *all* the other jewels in the net, infinite in number. Not only that, but each of the jewels reflected in this one jewel is also reflecting all other jewels, so that there is an infinite reflecting process occurring. The Hua-yen school has been fond of this image, mentioned many times in its literature, because it symbolizes a cosmos in which there is an

infinitely repeated interrelationship among all the members of the cosmos. This relationship is said to be one of simultaneous *mutual identity* and *intercausality*. (Cook, 1977, p.2).

I am fascinated with both the antiquity of this long-enduring myth and its long-reaching, enduring universal appeal. Its truth and wisdom is clearly transcendent of time and culture.

However, what I am most drawn to, is its characteristic reference to the concepts of interdependence, self-organization within a decidedly systems orientation. I adhere to this worldview and take its platform a step further, suggesting that my work seeks to explore meta-relationships as a frontier for nuanced research inquiry and, as the title of this memoir-literature review declares, and “an ecology of ideas”:

Only very recently has the word “ecology” begun to appear in our discussion, reflecting the arising of a remarkable new consciousness of how all things live in interdependence. The traditional methods of analysis, classification and isolation tended to erect boundaries around things, setting them apart in groups and thereby making easier their manipulation, whether intellectually or technologically. The ecological approach tends rather to stress the interrelatedness of these same things. While not naively obliterating distinctions of property and function, it still views existence as a vast web of interdependencies in which if one strand is disturbed, the whole web is shaken. The ecological viewpoint has not, that is, brought into question the ancient distinctions of property and function which lie behind a brilliant technology (Cook, p.1).

Cook goes on to describe the “revelation” of interdependency:

Honey bees and apple blossoms remain what they have always been in our eyes, but added to this way of knowing is another, newer way—the knowledge that these entities need each other for survival itself. This understanding comes to us in the nature of a revelation; an eternally abiding truth has burst upon our consciousness, with an urgent message concerning our life. This new knowledge demands, in fact, a complete reassessment of the manner in which things exist. Perhaps this revelation is not yet closed, and in time we may come to perceive that this interdependency is not simply biological and economic, a matter of bees and blossoms, of plankton and oxygen, but a vastly more pervasive and complicated interdependency than we have so far imagined. (Cook, p.1).

This conceptual path opens up a brave new world of inquiry and corresponding emergent ways of knowing that support a dynamic organicism over the dominant mechanistic view of the universe and everything contained within it.

This alternate orientation distinctly relates to transdisciplinarity as a radical, holistic way to generate new knowledge. Since my research-related exploration of pertinent literature and the experiences that inspired this emergence process reach beyond the areas that are considered purely disciplinary or even multidisciplinary epistemologies and ontologies, Indra's Net answers the call for a truly transdisciplinary organizational structure. This metaphor becomes the unifying literary device that constantly references the defining characteristics of a new paradigm of emergent, holistic, interdependent ways of knowing. A transdisciplinary orientation has evolved as a foundational component of the research referenced in this review, and is wholly compatible with the grounded theory protocol—it has also supported the organic, non-forced, unpremeditated, emergent literature presented here. It serves to guide the mission of this memoir-review as it seeks 1) to discern the whole entity over its parts, in addition to its parts; 2) contextualizing rather than isolating interactive phenomena; 3) dynamic, relational interplay between entities rather than static co-existent; and 4) transcendence of temporal and spatial scales (Montuori, p.48).

### **Literature Review-As-Personal-Memoir**

By modelling the genre of the personal memoir, and by elevating my own personal story, I am able to capture the rich and descriptive perceptions of an environmental dance artist-scholar as a vital, dynamic way to do research and to preserve these fleeting authentic moments on the written page. The goal is to do this in a way that honors three areas of interest that may be seen as landmarks along the path where we, as artists, process and integrate perception: 1) individual

experience as the first step in an iterative process of self-discovery (outer realm); 2) the emerging vision reflected from that experience (inter realm); and, 3) the creative urge and resulting expression of the artist that is borne from the alchemical interplay between the inner and outer landscapes I speak about here. At the point where we negotiate between our inner and outer “worlds” we can begin to unearth our own multi-faceted sense of meaning and place within this dialectic universe.

This process of negotiation is in a sense, the reflective nature of Indra’s net set in motion—aspects of one’s internal dimension is a dynamic reflection of our external experience. Reality is a constantly emergent negotiation process, seeking to establish a sense of wholeness within our ever-evolving individual selves. There is also an intriguing interplay of scales of perception, as well--the micro-scale sense of place that deeply anchors us in the homeland of the here and now and the macro-scale sense of belonging to something bigger still. Self-reflection, for instance, as it transcends scale, allow us to find the connecting thread that tethers the microcosmic singular life of the environmental dancer to the gargantuan macrocosmic principles infinitely reflected in a boundless universe.

It is as if my dancer/researcher team is scanning the universe, looking for clues in our ordinary and extraordinary experiences with which to ground environmental dance, hold it within the scope of this research in order to define, describe and delimit just what environmental dance is and what it can offer in terms of perhaps transforming the ways in which we humans engage the natural world. Selected storied accounts, narratives of our research “lived experiences” set up a discussion of the “jewels” of literature that in some noteworthy, novel way, organically emerge to reveal profound discoveries of connection to those experiences.

This is also the story of how the practice of self-reflection (which I can describe more specifically as an enlightening process of reflecting upon one's own life and lived experience), allows me and my research team to bring back to life, the pertinent on-site environmental dance experiences that live on in the muscle memory of our dancing bodies. This dance-to-paper ritual that intentionally pairs dancing with writing, acts in the poetic service of preserving the data that organically unfold on site, as a way to triangulate and concretize the fleeting, ephemeral moments of the environmental dance unfolding on Monadnock's rocky summit (Brandon, 2007; Older & Sherman, 2003). As a balance-inducing yin to the yang of the environmental dance experience-as-inquiry, I believe that the process of narrative journaling lifts the memoried experience out of the mundane and elevates it to a place of high status in this radically qualitative research (Clandinin, 2007). We become narrative inquirers, who, in turn, become the reflective nodes of Indra's magnificently infinite net that allows unexpected relationship to emerge in the most exquisite and unexpected ways.

### **The Places Where Dance and Life Collide**

Recurrent themes reveal themselves throughout this storied journey constructed from snippets of life and dance intentionally mingling and colliding on the stages of the natural world and life, in a radical quest for multi-faceted new knowledge having to do with the lofty prospects of transforming the human-nature relationship. These thematic structures include 1) reciprocity (a give and take exchange), 2) tension (a static pause), 3) iteration (cycling accumulation) and 4) synergy (powerful interactive complements). These act as the forces that help to shape perception from experience (Clandinin, 2007). Like tools in our experience toolkit we begin to sort out and weave together a new knowledge—a gestalt of knowledge specific to the lived experiences of environmental dancer. As a process, primary experiences are then, layered with



journalled accounts which allow both predictable and unsuspected literature-as-data and other inquiry-related discoveries to organically emerge as they will. We find delightful revelations and nuances along the way in what we learn directly (and indirectly) through our organs of perception, to borrow Goethe's term (Bortoft, 1996, p.). I refer to as the body-mind, from our on-site work reflected back to us through the literature that emerges in iterative cycles, revealing unsuspected relationships, unlikely pairings and startling "aha" moments.

We see ourselves and perceive ourselves as reflections within the living landscapes where we dance and alternately, we know that those living landscapes that leave an indelible mark on us and live on in our bodies in ways that change us forever. This is the very essence of Indra's net, my choice metaphor for the transdisciplinary project I undertake here. As reflective jewels ourselves, we become the voice, and our environmental dances become the language that interpret, translate, re-present and finally, express the wisdom of the raw places in nature where we create dance, explore dance and perform dance, as we also seek to constantly orient ourselves in the vast wholeness of the universe. We are forever cycling through a process of connecting our dynamic inner landscapes with the ever-shifting outer universe through what David Abram's calls "the body's silent conversation with things" (1996). As we reach outward in this way, we ironically begin to find our way home:

For those of us who care for an earth not encompassed by machines, a world of textures, tastes, and sounds other than those we have engineered, there can be no question of simply abandoning literacy, of turning away from all writing. Our task, rather, is that of *taking up* the written word, with all its potency, and patiently, carefully, writing language back into the land. Our craft is that of releasing the budded, earthly intelligence of our words, freeing them to respond to the speech of the things themselves—to the green uttering forth of leaves from the spring branches. It is the practice of spinning stories that have the rhythm and lilt of the local soundscape, tales for the tongue, tales that want to be told, again and again sliding off the digital screen and slipping off the lettered page to inhabit these coastal forests, those desert canyons, those whispering grasslands and valleys and

swamps. Finding phrases that place us in contact with the trembling neck-muscles of a deer holding its antlers high as it swims toward the mainland, or with the ant dragging a scavenged rice-grain through the grasses. Planting words, like seeds, under rocks and fallen logs—letting language take root, once again, in the earthen silence of shadow and bones and leaf (Abram, p. 273).

Our experiences as garnered through this study, as environmental dancers, artists, writers, poets, researchers and scholars have opened a new dimension for us—that being, a gateway enabling such a reciprocal dialogue with nature, (a “conversation” between body-mind and earth), that Abrams references. As our bodies become full with the stories the earth wants to tell us, we in turn, become more earthly in the ways of knowing and being, allowing us to deepen our loosened roots as we gradually remember our long-lost “language of nature”. In turn, the very process of becoming “more earthly” enables us to renegotiate our relationship to the universe, by reunifying the binary splits that historically have kept us isolated and distanced from the natural world. We are no longer part of the old regime that splits humans from nature, or bodies from minds. Each is invested in the other—this is an unbreakable bond.

### **Unifying Dual Narratives—The Coming Together of the Body-mind**

The intentional pairing of dancing and writing is a way to literally enjoin body, mind and nature, where the old school paradigm wishes to maintain a distanced separation of the three. I propose that the reader may vicariously experience the effect of this synergy, of dancing-in-the-landscape with a purposeful journaled reflection capturing those exquisitely rich primary experiences in the field. What evolves from this trinity is a nuanced language that transcends our normal, everyday dialect and the disjointed compartmentalization of the human faculties I aim to holistically reunite. John Lee refers to his own early educational upbringing in his book *Writing from the Body* (1994), as a way to illustrate how we have been indoctrinated to deny the spirit of

our inherent wildness, and thus, became disconnected bodies and minds in the foreign landscape of the natural world:

The whole educational system of the time, both secular and religious, was at pains to deliver us from our own “primitive” impulses, the natural rhythms and needs of our bodies...Only the brain and the spirit were to be worshipped, elevated and educated, while the body’s wild energies were left to wither. From the beginning it was a hopeless task. Where did our brain and spirit exist, if not in the body? And how could we hope to learn anything if all our selves—the muscle, the mind, the mystic—were not working together as equals? (Lee, pp.3-4).

Lee reminds us as dancer-researcher-writers journaling about our lived environmental dance experiences:

Everything we write comes from what we are, from what we have inside. If we commit to inhabiting our bodies completely, our writing will be the poetry or prose of transformation, and it will carry in it the power of this insistent inner movement...when we allow that inspiration to break up stored feelings, letting them wash over and through us and on downstream, then the stream is cleared and cleansed. Then a new face and voice, born of different energy, will become evident in our written creations. Our words will carry the energy of initiation, for we will have been through the fire of an ordeal in making them (Lee, pp.27-28).

There is a shift that occurs within both modes of expression—dance and reflective journaling when experienced as purposefully embedded activities within the natural landscape/research dance site.

I believe that my choice in purposely pairing dance and writing as an iterative, synergistic research protocol has expedited the refinement and liberation of the expressive voice of each journal writer-within-the-dancer that makes up my research team. Just as environmental dancer embodies the natural phenomena of the landscape, there is a transfer of this power from body to pen, resulting in a poignant collection of journaled stories that are likewise, infused with the power and purity of nature’s truth and wisdom. Journal writing becomes an integral extension of the environmental dance explorations, adding a harmonic expansion to this melodic experience of dancing on site. I note that as I write this memoir-as-literature-review, the same organic force that

Lee describes and that I have witnessed and experienced firsthand in the field while gathering data, continues to guide and inspire this writing.

As a result of the intentional interplay between environmental dance and its corresponding research writing tasks, we, as dancing researchers, become fluent in a long-forgotten primal language that re-emerges from the dancing human body's union with the dynamic sites where our dances are inspired, created and unfold, at once in time and space. There is an initial dialogue between dancer(s) and site, an experience process through which the landscape becomes physically, mentally and spiritually embodied--integrated in ways that elude compliance with more traditional Western norms of linear thought and methods of conveyance. What my dancer-researchers and I have discovered is that our experiences have allowed us to tap in to a deepened poetic sensibility that turns the expected, established norms on its head. This paradigmatic shift is evidenced in both the ways we move, dance and engage with the dance site as well as the way we write about those movement and dance experiences. We are dancing in excitingly uncharted territory!

### **Toward Breaking down the Walls of Separation**

As inquiring artists, we become the bridge that links seemingly disparate disciplines of knowledge in ways we might never consider. We begin to break down the dull walls of bounded knowledge that traditionally exist only within separate disciplines and begin to see the infinite reflections of all realities, knowledge and experiences within ourselves as artists and researchers and outwardly illuminating in an all-knowing unbounded universe, all like the fractal reflections of the illuminating network of gems in Indra's net. And as we willingly take root in nature, we enable nature, once again, to take root within ourselves. We speak for the earth, we defend the earth, we celebrate the earth and we are the earth.

Because the research is intentionally guided by the conventions of grounded theory research, this chapter also serves another purpose—a place where the pertinent literature is presented as it has emerged, throughout the duration of the research project. In lieu of the traditional literature review which normally precedes the research, the literature that informs our environmental dance research experiences becomes another source of emergent data which reveals itself as the research process unfolds (Charmaz, 2006; Fraleigh, & Hanstein, 1999). Instead of choosing predetermined theories to test, a theory of environmental dance has been encouraged to organically evolve through the emergent literature and the tapestry of data that helps us to illuminate the complex phenomenon of environmental dance. This approach has only enlivened the research—while we may be focused on some single facet of environmental dance, a newly emergent literature discovery may suddenly take us off in another exciting, and as it turns out, critical direction. What may have been once a one dimensional goal now becomes a multi-faceted gem of new ideas and possible new horizons to explore!

Further, it becomes the vehicle through which we may actually connect our microcosmic selves to the greater universe and “universes” outside of and beyond ourselves. Such a process of introspection and recalling embodied memory rewards the questor, like myself, in the multi-role of academic researcher, creative artist and writer with a very satisfying if not comforting sense of belonging and contributing to a greater universal whole. I liken it to a form of Shamanic journeying where linear time ceases to reign supreme in the kingdom of our perception organs—instead, we can become the unbounded agents of inquiry by choice--shapeshifting time-space travelers, moving at warp speed backward, into the worlds of memory and experience. And in a nanosecond and without warning, we can be hurled into the here and now, where memoried experience transforms and changes us forever in some delicate, yet spectacularly unique way, as

we simultaneously garner new layers of experience in this journey we call life. These are the inner and outer landscapes where we dance our dreams and visions and worlds live. It is where our hearts and minds become intertwined in the service of unearthing our spirit's deepest truth, which, in turn, creates the ephemeral yet resilient and self-organizing foundation of ever-shifting sands of the lived experience. Ironically, it is this dynamic circumstance that provides the sturdy balance, support and power of our own worldview-directed way of knowing and being in this world.

This is also the story of personal journey through the “universe” of doctoral research which in turn, is inspired by my parallel “life” as an environmental dance artist. With a focus on

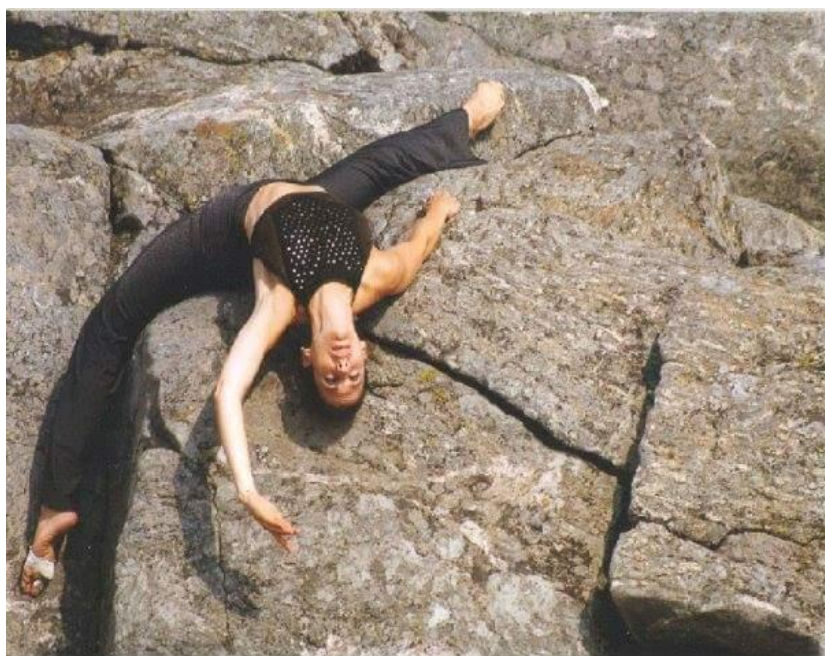


Figure 9: D. Eno in "Prayer to the Universe" (DEFDW©).

exploring the boundaries of the emergent phenomenon of “environmental dance”, I revel at how the duality of one’s life and one’s art intersect in a simple elegance. I revel at how defining, informative and transformative this pin-pointed place of intersection is—this is the nexus where my co-

researchers and I discover that we are the dancing fractals—reflective translators of a dynamic, expressive natural world! And I revel at the notion that from within our artistic mission to engage the natural landscapes in a grand, reciprocal dialogue, expressed and made visible to an

observing audience through the patterned language of human movement I call “environmental dance”, there emerges a Gestalt-like experience that unfolds within the time-space continuum.

In that moment of clarity we recognize that the perception of two distinctly separate phenomena is only illusion. We see the dance reflected in and illuminated by the natural landscape where it lives momentarily and we experience the liveness of the landscape channeled through the dancing, expressive human form. The artistic and academic missions become unified—to mine the treasures of the environmental dance experience and share this new way of



*Figure 10: Indra's Net--A Multi-jeweled web of the universe (DDEFDW ©).*

knowing and being in this earthly moment through performance and practice. We share this knowledge as model for a new way to engage the natural world and in doing so, we begin to dismantle an antiquated paradigm of at-arms-length separation and redefine the human-nature relationship as a multi-faceted jewel, like each one of us, dancing within a fascinatingly infinite universe.

In the truest spirit of doing grounded theory research, I am composing this radically non-traditional literature review-memoir, well after all pertinent “research” has been bounded. My approach adheres to the grounded theory methodology that calls for bracketing<sup>14</sup> the review (in actuality, a preview) of any existing seminal knowledge related to the focus of my own study, in order to have allowed for the purest data to organically emerge throughout the duration of this research journey. My intentional choice of the term bounded over complete suggests that there is an infinite quality to the new knowledge that my study has only thus far generated, and therefore, there is always more to be discovered within this creative process; it has been a fascinating side discovery that such qualitative inquiry is not a terminal endeavor. Rather, the process is much like a dynamic spiral that begins with a single, central focus and then self-perpetuates and propagates itself again and again, in researcher-directed cycles of ever-evolving and emerging questions, discoveries, quests, data and refining new knowledge that build, expand, interweave, cross-pollinate, and go deeper still, with all that enters this research matrix. What is more, an additional feature of this review reveals a new pathway where once disparate, isolated and compartmentalized disciplines of knowledge become enjoined in a nuanced alliance of reciprocity and partnership. Delightfully unexpected discoveries of wholeness and unity are thus reflected as new ways to re-envision what we seek as ways of knowing and being in this world.

### **Eight Jewels of Emergent Literature**

The review-as-memoir is presented in intentional and distinct sections. In keeping with a unifying metaphor I have previously introduced that illuminates “Indra’s Net” as the multi-faceted model for visualizing the interactive, dynamic nature of lived experiences, journaled

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<sup>14</sup> “Bracketing” is a term referring to a process of setting aside preconceptions, judgements and prior knowledge, as a preparatory step in the research process. The goal is to allay personal biases.



memories, recounted observations and personal reflections that have organically enticed the eclectic array of literatures that have emerged from within this research process, I describe each particular reflective “jewel” of literature (corresponding to groupings of seminal works and specific areas of exploration). Each jewel reveals a grouping of conceptual ideas that reference those specific corresponding literature disciplines and discusses how these emerged from within the design of this study. Each section is illustrated with my own narrative field journal/memorial account<sup>15</sup> entries that aim to weave in strands of the personal, reflective experiences of me recounting and concretizing my own on-site research experiences as well as the experiences of members of my environmental dance company, who have also served as my team of co-researchers in this project.

In the order of evolution as emergent topics and specific categories of focus, I begin with the first of eight “jewels”, which reflects my own childhood experiences in nature. Here I explore the outstanding literature referencing corresponding emergent concepts and categories having to do with Nature Deficit-disorder (Louv, 2005), place-based education (Cajete, 1994; Eisner, 1982; Fixio, 2003; Goleman, Bennet & Barlow (Eds.) 2012) , biophilia (love of nature) (Wilson, 1984), constructivist learning theory (Bruner, 1996; Duckworth, 1996; Fosnot, 2005; Gallas, 1994; Foran & Olsen, 2010; Sobel, 1996 & 2005), direct experience in nature (Dewey, 1958; Fisher, 1998; Steiner, 1988; Steiner & Creegor, 2000; Steiner & Trostli (Ed.), 1988), learning in nature (Leff, 1978), children in nature (Louv 2005; Clayton & Opatow, 2003; Kahm & Kellert, 2002; Stone & Barlow, 2005), dance as a way of knowing (Gilbert, 1977; Gilbert, Bronwan & Rossano, 2006; Zakkai, 1997), multiple intelligences (Gardner, 2006), eco-

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<sup>15</sup> “Field journal” entries include written notes and reflections on on-site research, throughout the research project; “memorial accounts are reflective journal entries that recall and reflect upon past experiences of particular relevance to the research.

psychology (Clayton & Opatow, 2003; Clinebell, 1996; France, 2008; Garrison & Magoon, 1872); and eco-perception (Gibson, 2009, Macy, 1991; Thomashow, 2002). A journal narrative illustrates how dance and nature were both central features of my childhood and how the unique confluence of the two disparate phenomena occurred at an early age. A defining “seed” question emerges to pinpoint this early stage of my evolution as an environmental dancer and educator—“Who am I (as a child of nature)”?

The second jewel offers an overview of dance history (H'Doubler, 1957; Hanna, 1979; Copeland & Cohen, 1983; Foster, 1996; Turner, 1986), dance genres and traditions (Anderson, 1992; Kloetzel & Pavlik, 2009), and other areas of related interest that include dance therapy, somatics and other dance derivatives (Canner & Klebanoff, 1968; Chaikem & Wengrower, 1983; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, Fraleigh, 1987; Fraleigh & Hanstein, 1999; Halprin, 1979; Marcow, 1990), in the context of my own dance training and experiences. This wide-ranging survey helps to situate my brand of “environmental dance” and its development (as the primary focus of this research) within a broader dance universe. It explores how my personal experiences as a lifelong dance student, performer, choreographer and teacher helped to shape the development of my life's work as an environmental artist and educator. Two journal narratives recount particular experience of being a dance student at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival School and then, dancing with my company on Mt. Monadnock, as culminating moments in this evolution and shows the transformation from dancer to “environmental dancer”, a rite of passage shared by me and my dance company/ co-researchers. A corresponding “seed” question emerges as—“How did I/we get here”?

The third jewel unearths the hidden treasures found in the extraordinariness of experiences in nature and how they can fuel the creative imagination. Relative areas of

exploration include the literatures of human experience (including areas of related interest such as dance therapy, somatics and other dance derivatives) (Canner & Klebanoff, 1968; Chaikem & Wengrower, 1983; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, Halprin, 1979; Nachmanovitch, 1990), perception (Gibson, 1996), eco-perception (Bochemuhl, 1985; Elgin, 1993; Gallagher, 1993, Thomashow, 2002), phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), eco-phenomenology (Brown & Toadvine, 2003), the phenomenology of nature (Bortoft, 1996) and dance phenomenology (Cataldi, 1993; Fraleigh, 1987; Sheets-Johnstone, (1966)); corresponding emergent concepts include how experiences in nature shape the individual (specifically, how nature informs and inspires the process of creating environmental dance in the theater of the natural performance site) (Fisher, 1998), how imagination and memory may influence how we experience and recall those experiences in nature (“muscle memory”), reciprocity and “dialoguing” with nature, inner and outer geographies and landscapes, the lived experiences of being in nature, dancing with/in nature, and being one with nature through the artistic experience (Lopez, 1998). A journal narrative recounts the experience of creating the site-specific solo piece “Monadnock Angel”<sup>16</sup> and shows how each of these concepts emerge and merge to inform the site-specific environmental dance process. The “seed” question emerges—“How do I/we speak with nature?”

The fourth jewel illuminates the holistic sciences (Allen & Hoekstra, 1992; Odum, 1983), systems theory and thinking (Bohm & Hiley, 1993; Bohm & Nichols, 1998, Boem, 1981; Cajete, 2007; Jantsch, 1987; Lerner, 1963; Marshall, 2002; Meadows & Wright, 2008, Naydler, 1996), and Johann Von Goethe (Goethe’s scientific process) (Bortoft, 1996; Brook; 1998;

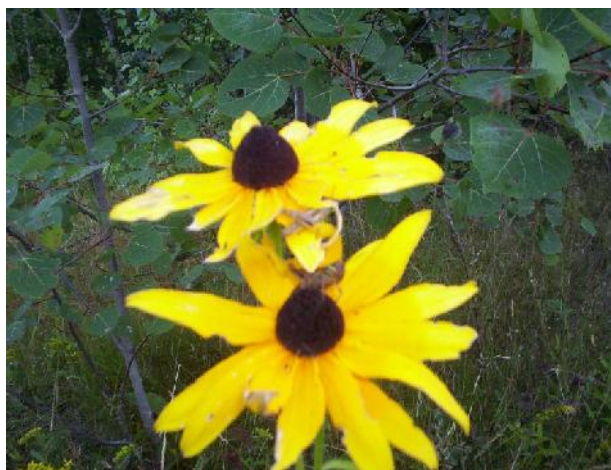
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<sup>16</sup> “Monadnock Angel”, the iconic painting created by Monadnock artist Abbott Thayer. See also: “Monadnock Angel” is permanently housed at Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy, Andover, MA. See also: <https://addison.andover.edu>.

Cameron, 2005; Colquon, 1997; Holdrege, 2004; Hoffman, Holdrege & Dalton, 2007; Miller, 1995; Peat, 2005; Peroff, 2003, Prigogine, 2003; Seamon, 2005; Seamon & Zajonc, 1998; Steiner, 1988; Storey, 1998; Wahl, 2005; Willis, 2004). Here, I explore the literature that supports a visionary, systematized radical science (that is not a derivative of the dominant western scientific paradigm which features Cartesian duality, analytic inquiry, a reductionist perspective, linear cause and effect and pure objectivity) as a synergistic partner to an artistic creative process that seeks to celebrate a holistic view of the universe. A journal narrative that offers a descriptive analysis/ synthesis of the collaborative dance work “Ayllu” (created by my research team and me, from the dance data gleaned from hours of site work on Mt. Monadnock, and later, transformed into a co-choreographed stage performance piece) illustrates the holistic, collaborative potential of artistic environmental dance works created through a process based on the Goethean Scientific Process as well as systems thinking and doing. The concept of “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and autopoiesis (Maturana & Varela, 1980) is highlighted here, to explain the extraordinary ease experienced by the research team in creating this particular dance piece. A “seed” question emerges as “How can we experience and express human-nature unity?”

The fifth jewel offers an in-depth exploration into what I call “the language of nature”, with supporting literature focusing on the concepts of ‘language’ (in its verbal and non-verbal forms), the “language of nature”, patterns in nature, fractals and holons which are derived from the archetypal, repeating patterns found in the natural world, evidenced at virtually all scales (Alexander, 2012; C. Alexander, 1970; Ball, 1999; Bartal & Ne’eman, 1993; Conforti, 1999;

Edwards & Calderwood, 2006; James, 2007; Kryder, 2000; Pickover, 1995; Stevens, 1974; Volk, 1995). It is a study of how nature organizes herself and expresses that self-organization. Further, it provides the movement vocabulary of the dancing human body expressing its deep conversation with nature and the natural world. A supporting, illustrative journal narrative gives an in-depth description of dance-researcher orientation process where the process of becoming fluent in nature's own dynamic and metaphorical dialect. Its' "seed" question asks "How does environmental dance give voice to nature?"



*Figure 11: Learning to speak the language of nature through "environmental dance"; (DEFDW ©).*

The sixth jewel references art literature, and highlights the power of the arts (including dance, specifically environmental dance) as a powerful and complementary way of knowing (Chabott & Chabott, 1987; Clark, 1996; Coomaraswamy, 1934; Cornett, 2003; Dewey, 1958; Dissanayake, 1992; Gablik, 1991; Gardner, 1973, 1982, 1993; Grande, 2004; Franklin, 1996; Goldberg, 1986; London, 2003; Nachmanovitch, 1990; Painter, 2010; Parsons, 1987; Press, 2002; Reed-Danahay, 1987; Rhyne, 1973; Schlain, 1993). This section specifically focuses on literature that supports the radical, emergent paradigm of art-as-research-method (Bagley & Cancienne, 2002; Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995; Cancienne & Snowbers, 2003; Hervey, 2000; Leavy, 2009; McNiff, 1998; Pelias, 1999; Schram, 2003; Spry, 2001; Sullivan, 2005; Todres, 2007; Wilson, 2008), narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2007; Ehhis & Bochner, 1996; Pelias, 1999; Richardson, 2000; Riessman, 1993; Scholes & Kellogg, 1966) and the holistic, synergistic relationship between narrative/ writing and dance, in its

mission to unify body and mind and earth (Olsen, 2002; Schama, 1995). In this section, I reference how we, as researchers, use narrative (field) journals to explore and record experiences rooted in the intentional pairing of environmental dance site-work for research purposes. This process is one of intermittent journaling (on-site and off-site) (Cameron, 1985; Capacchione; 1979; Chancer & Rester-Zodrow, 1997; Doh, 2012; Ganim & Fox, 1999; Goldberg, 1986; Kraffel, 1999; Lee & Kritsberg, 1994; Leslie, 2003; Ludwig, 2007; Press, 2002; Reed-Danahay, 1997; Rhyne, 1973) . Additionally, the creative process of journal-making and journal-keeping as a companion activity to the researchers' "danced dialoguing" with the landscape becomes another rich source of data and further, it becomes a way to concretize the physical dance experience and thematic exploration inherent to the site-specific creative process (Hieb, 2005; LaPlantz, 1995; Matthiessen, 2005, Tourtillot, 2000).

Additionally, one entry in particular aims to recount my own on-site exploratory research experiences and to also observe and recount in journaling, the research team members at work, alternating between specific and improvisational movement tasks within the site and the accompanying journaling about those experiences. Here, the purposeful engagement of the unified "body-mind" becomes a paradigmatic alternative, aiming to heal the Cartesian split through the act of creative dialogue between dancer and dynamic landscape. The thematic, synergistic triad of "body-mind-earth" becomes the defining, emergent artistic mantra for the creating, researching, performing environmental dancer/ researcher. Here, a "seed" question asks "How do I/we "speak" the *language of nature*?"

The seventh jewel provides a reference to and a reflection of ritual theory and practice as a potential way to frame the emerging practices of environmental dance (Bado-Fralick, 2005; Bell, 1997; Doty; 2000; Grimes, 1996; Halprin, 1999; Heine, 2000; Kryder, 1994; Mc Cauley &

Lawson, 2002; Segal, 1998). Through the inclusion of the seminal literature in ritual studies, I illustrate how site-specific environmental dance becomes a ceremonial way to connect dancer to site, audience to site and human to human—the dance unfolding at once in the time-space of the mountain landscapes opens up a pathway through direct experiences on-site, that I believe create a spontaneous, reciprocal bond (Abram, pp.52-53) between humans and landscape. Further, the research indicates that the environmental dance experience begins to bridge, if not override the long-existing sense of dichotomous separation and a false sense of “otherness”, even in those fleeting moments in which the site-specific dance performance “lives” and is experienced.

There is sufficient anecdotal evidence to suggest that the power of the landscape ritual of the environmental dance lies, in part, in its ability to create an intense sense of community that results from such experience (Bado-Fralick, 2005; Fisher, 1998). This, coupled with the memorable extraordinariness of this unusual application of dance, crystalizes as an enduring way to help humans to feel a deepened connection to the site, and a true sense of belonging. Since humans-bonding-with-the-landscape (whether they are dancers, audience members, or as students, in the case of environmental dance as pedagogy) has emerged as a key characteristic goal of environmental dance performance, I must extend this idea to the development of the practice of environmental dance as a potential “eco-pedagogy” (Bowers, 1987, 1993; 1995; 2000,2001; Kahn, 2010) as well, so that, in effect, environmental dance may be used as a tool to help develop, (if not teach each dancer how to experience) a true “sense of place” (Jackson, 1994; Kwon, 2002; Lippard, 1997; Schama, 1995; Twon, 1997).

An illustrative journal entry captures my on-site research/rehearsal observations of the dancer/researcher team practicing the “ritual” of returning to the site where each of them

dialogued and danced within a micro site<sup>17</sup> of their choice. Additionally, I include another short journal entry that captures my own experiences and process of bonding with the micro-site.

As the phenomenal intersection of dancing-human-within-the-dynamic-landscape, I see the power of environmental dance to bridge existing dichotomies of the dominant paradigm (Capra, 1982, p. 30). In a real sense the ritual of site-specific environmental dance can be seen as the agent of healing the prevalent Cartesian splits. And, as Indra teaches, all things are a reflection of the other, so we must not have one paradigm or another—rather, the idea of ritual compliments the beautiful philosophy of Indra’s net to balance the yin with yang; and in so doing, unifying the mind with body, humans with nature, and parts with the whole. A “seed” questions asks: “How does environmental dance transform human/nature experience”?

Finally, the eighth jewel becomes a central hub where the emergent literature reaches across a universe of seemingly separate (if not disparate) disciplines to conjoin in nuanced ways that fortify, validate and expand the emergent new knowledge. This central jewel reveals the fractal nature of each discipline that reflects as well, the guiding principle of Indra’s net as metaphor—that all reflects everything else; that one reality, one factor, one thought, one phenomenon cannot exist without reflecting the reality of the interwoven universe in which it belongs.

It is here, that the idea of transdisciplinarity (Nicolescu, 2008 & 2010); (Mantuori, 2013); (Marshal, 2014); (Max-Neef, 2005); (McGregor, 2015), shines brilliantly—and, is illuminated as it becomes the fertile ground allowing for the emergent new knowledge to spring from this grounded theory research process. In arranging the “universe” of environmental dance literature

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<sup>17</sup> “Micro-site” is my term for a place within the larger context of the mountain summit dance performance site where each dancer practiced the Goethean five-step process as a creative process of discovery, and dialogue, throughout the duration of the research project.



as I have done, I have honored the methodology and have allowed it to organically reveal itself in its own autopoietic<sup>18</sup> way and in its own time, within the research project duration. (Maturana & Varela, 1980) In doing so, I have explored the relatively new perhaps “repurposed” is a better term to describe its elusive presence lurking in the shadows of the predominant educational paradigm) area of transdisciplinary education as a viable model that supports each unearthed facet of the phenomenon of environmental dance revealed from this study. As part of this journey of discovery and process of (re)defining and giving boundary to a new dance genre (and evolving eco-pedagogy) I could only have arrived at this evolutionary point by exploring the literature of critical pedagogy/eco-pedagogy and its undeniably relationship to transdisciplinary thought in tandem (Bowers, 2001; Bowers, 1993/1995/1997 ); Darder & Baltodano, 2007; Orr, 1992/1994; Chabot & Chabot, 2004, Goleman, Bennett & Barlow, 2012; Kahn, 2010; Naperud, 1995). What is reflected back and forth between the two disciplines as I explored the literature is the shared evidence of the necessary changing perspectives that allows one paradigm to evolve into the next as a radical new way to transform a world of separated and disparate disciplines into an inspiring gestalt of new ways of knowing and being in the world. These ideas are particularly compatible with the emergent qualities of environmental dance and as such, this new genre of dance is to be deemed a transdisciplinary endeavor. This “conclusion”, in turn, has directly lead to the emergent conceptualization of the Satori Loop©, which significantly embodies the differentiating features of this brand of “environmental dance”, giving it, its unique edge.

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<sup>18</sup> Autopoiesis means self-organizing.

In order to properly emphasize and elevate the eighth jewel as the central organizing hub for this emergent “ecology of ideas”, I have chosen to include illustrative journal excerpts, aimed to capture the essence of environmental dance as a radical agent of changing perspectives and ways of knowing and being. The dual entries recount both the observed and lived experience of co-creating with the dynamic phenomenal forces of nature. The entries describe the creation of the site-specific environmental dance piece called “Cloud Study” that intentionally enters the “dialogue with nature” by shifting the choreographic “power” from dancer to phenomenon (here, the ephemeral nature of the ever-shifting clouds at the summit of Mt. Monadnock). A “seed” question asks: “How do I/we embody a paradigm of holism?”



*Figure 12: “Cloud Study”, Research team members Carin Torp, Amy MacQueen and Dianne Eno (DEFDW ©).*

## **Dancing with Indra's Net**

*(a "found poem")*<sup>19</sup>

*In the truest spirit, this—  
Radically non-traditional,  
Purest data, organically emerge  
Like a dynamic spiral.  
Cycles of ever-evolving and emerging  
Questions,  
Discoveries,  
Quests  
That build, expand, inter-weave, cross-pollinate.  
And go deeper, still...*

*Delightfully unexpected discoveries of wholeness and unity.  
New ways—  
Of knowing and being in this world.  
Indra's net—dynamic, eclectic.  
Each jewel reveals reflective experience.  
Who am I (as a child of nature)?  
Dancing on Mt. Monadnock,  
A culminating moment in this evolution—  
How did I get here?*

*Unearth the hidden treasures—  
Extraordinariness of experiences in nature  
Shape the individual.  
Imagination and memory,  
Reciprocity.  
And dialoguing with nature,  
Inner and outer geographies—  
The transformed relationship with nature.*

*Visionary, radical science  
To celebrate a holistic view of the universe.  
Dance data gleaned  
On Mt. Monadnock,  
Transformed into the holistic, collaborative potential of*

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<sup>19</sup> "Found poetry" is an arts-based, CAP ethnographic method (See Laurel Richardson ("Writing: A method of Inquiry" (pp. 923-948) in: Denzin & Lincoln, (Eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. 2000) that I employ throughout the research, as a nuanced approach to re-present data in a way that is complementary and parallel to "environmental dance" as meaning creative expression. See Chapter Four (4) Methodologies and Methods, for more on "Found Poetry".

*Collective human-nature unity.*

*The language of nature—  
At virtually all scales, nature organizes herself.  
The dancing human body expressing its deep conversation,  
Becoming fluent in nature's own dynamic and  
Metaphorical dialect.  
Nature gives voice—*

*To unify body and mind and earth,  
To concretize the physical dance experience:  
Purposeful engagement,  
A paradigmatic alternative.  
The act of creative dialogue—  
Between dancer and dynamic landscape.  
Body-mind-earth—  
The emergent artistic mantra.*

*Reflections of ritual.  
Connect dancer to site,  
Human to human,  
In the time-space of the mountain landscape.  
A true sense of place,*

*The ritual of returning.  
The power of environmental dance to bridge  
Existing dichotomies, Cartesian splits.  
All things are a reflection of the other,  
Expand the emergent new knowledge,  
The fractal nature and the guiding principles of Indra's Net—  
All things reflect everything else:  
Transdisciplinarity and  
The ephemeral nature of the ever-shifting clouds.*

### **Jewel One—Childhood Development and Education**

With a childlike curiosity I invite my readers to imagine the unlikely union of dance with the wild-natured, out-of-doors landscapes we commonly refer to as the natural environment. At first glance, this iconic physical human act of creative expression as it atypically unfolds in this imagined scenario, at once in the time-space continuum that reveals nature, herself, as a living,

breathing “thing”, may seem to be an artificially forced, if not a contrived pairing of two very disparate phenomena.

However, I make the humble claim that when dynamic, lively nature partners with the dancing human body-mind, a magical alchemy results and evokes an organic, synergistic presence—a kind of gestalt-phenomenon that elevates both nature and human to new heights of relational possibilities and potentials. This is the storied account of the personal journey of discovery which has sought to unearth an extraordinary set of illustrative and defining attributes that gives dimension to this new dance form. I use the contrasted voice of my narrative journal excerpts to map the emergence of literature along the way; these signpost delineate the evolution of a once fleeting and insufficient description of dance-unfolding-in-nature, toward what I now can justifiably call the emergent genre of “environmental dance” which, in turn, mirrors the intriguing twists and turns that mark out the pathway of my own evolution as environmental artist and scholar.

***Journal Entry (Memoried Account—“Childhood”) [1.1]***

*I close my eyes and I am instantly skipping, barefoot, down that familiar path of my childhood, a winding obstacle course of old, exposed tree roots and pine needles that lead to the darkened forested areas where I spend a great deal of my time. I am convinced that the woods behind my house are magical—I am certain with an infallible childhood faith that there ARE special spirits that dwell there and speak to me through a bodily language and earthly discourse that I have been taught to hear and comprehend by everything around me in this place. The only proof I have to offer of this claim is that I FEEL this presence through my senses and so therefore, it must be my own native tongue, too—the wind that blows gently through the giant “grandfather” pines and hemlocks that surround me here is at once song, spirit and sensation. And to seal this truth in a fitting ritual I have ceremoniously taken my crayons with me into these woods on another day in order to properly draw them faces with mouths from which they most certainly would speak directly to me!*

*My forest muse draws me into the eternal cadence of this mysterious and magical place and I do not hesitate nor do I draw back even though the giant trees darken this—my world-within-worlds.*

*I have no fear of this place and I am calmed by the intermittent scent of drying pine and spruce needles that carpet the ground where I walk. I pass by the nearby brook, babbling as it always does—another sign of a harmonic familiarity that “brings me home” here, time after time. A warming late spring sun filters in—here and there—darting in through the swaying rhythms of the canopy above—this surely feels like home, safe and familiar yet it also feels oddly set apart and separated from everything else in my life. Then I turn quickly to the right and run-climb up the hill to “my rock”. I intend to stay here FOREVER!*

*Slightly out of breath, I throw myself down on the ground carpeted with hemlock needles and stare at the blue sky and clouds that dance and sparkle in contrast to the shadowy, deep green boughs of the giant trees above me. I hear blue jays and crows and the nervous chatter of my red squirrel friend who knows my dog Sam is not far away. I make “peace pipes” and elegant necklaces out of acorns and twigs and on bright red minty brief moment of repose quickening escape route away relentlessly in am in a timeless spot, minutes seem like a*

*So, this is my rock. MY as well. This is our my favorite things is to It isn't even so much the it is most surely the matter most. So I deep and imaginative year old body-mind. this behemoth rock boulder that looks just*



Figure 13: "My rock", and magical childhood "place", as it is today (DEFDW ©).

*roots and hastily snack “checkerberries”. This transcends the ever of linear time that ticks some other dimension—I where even a few blissful eternity.*

*rock. And I belong to it, sacred contract. One of just sit here and think. WHAT of my thinking—WHERE and HOW that indulge myself in the ruminations of my seven When I “think” here on (which is really a like a humpback whale),*

*I sense my rock thinking with me, telling me things that I might otherwise miss. Important things like how to be strong and patient; how to just “be” while the world busily moves about in confusing, jagged fits and starts; how to silently witness the unfolding, kaleidoscopic forest-scape that envelopes me and my granite friend in swirling, circular and spiraling moments of here and now. It is a constant rush of new inspirations and outward connections continually being born with iridescent wings and sent aloft into the world, momentarily perching in the tree branches above and around us. And I hear each one’s radiant and exalted melody—my imagination is bursting with a symphony of feelings, textures, colors and images—and the intuitive knowing-in-my-gut that I am a part of this excitement and magic that swirls about the place. When my fleeting*



*thoughts have apparently run their daily course along with those of this great and noble boulder, I get up, stretch toward the sun and I do the only thing left for me to do here: dance!*

*It is as if I am filled to capacity with these magical, glistening, sparkling “things” that emanate from every possible nook and cranny: from under rocks, out of the moss, from within the shadowy port de bras of forest branches, leaves and needles, from the babbling brook, from the fairy dust dirt that derives its glitter from large chunks of embedded mica-mirrors everywhere! I am filled with the breeze, the sun, the birdsong and even the rhythmic percussion of bullfrogs pulsing in the adjacent pond. I marvel at the gentle, delicate movement of a lily-of-the-valley corps de ballet, slightly to the left of me. The lights dim once again as I take my place on this unlikely yet perfect stage of granite and flicks-of-mica...and so I dance.*



Figure 14: "My Rock", view #2 (DEFDW©).

### **“The Singular Magic of Place”**

As a young child I intuitively knew that the world was an animated, dynamic and magical place. In my tacit knowing<sup>20</sup> (Polanyi, 1958), I bonded with nature in a strong and permanent way that would shape the rest of my life and inspire a lifelong dedication to my work as a teaching artist. In my forested playgrounds I saw trees as living, breathing individuals who towered over

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<sup>20</sup> Tacit knowing is a sensed knowing, inherent and personal to the individual, as opposed to universal knowledge that is often taught and culturally-shared. Intuition is tacit knowing.

me like friendly, guiding giants, to whom I would go for plain, good old conversation. To this end, I would often take my crayons with me into the woods and would ceremoniously draw faces on my “tree people” so they could talk to me. My weekly ballet classes inspired me to stage my own “productions” on a huge granite boulder in the woods that bordered my backyard.

There, I happily danced for my tree friends, squirrels and my dog. My young imagination bloomed like wildflowers on the forest floor. I developed a keen sense of place, or what David Abram calls “the singular magic of a place” (1996, p.182).

Growing up in rural Southwestern New Hampshire afforded me with an idyllic, outdoor-oriented childhood (with plenty of trees to converse with and rocks to dance on). An integral part of my childhood was a regular ritual which entailed the adventuring into the wilder places of nature, accompanied and guided by my dad, a knowledgeable outdoorsman and amateur naturalist. These profoundly shaping experiences not only transferred a legacy of deep love of and respect for nature from one generation to the next, but I was also exposed to a universe of intriguing knowledge and wisdom through improvised, hands-on tutorials in tree and plant identification (including what was edible and what was not), bird identification (by song, feather and by sightings), mammal and animal identification (by tracks in mud and snow, by visual observation and yes, by scat), rocks and mineral collecting (quartz crystals were among my favorites), and on a grander scale, the curiosities of the weather, the changing of the seasons and generally, how nature “worked”. By giving names to the inhabitants of the fields, forest, ponds and marshes that I explored with my dad, I know that I was also giving the natural world my attention, awareness, respect and love. Such intimate knowledge of, and acquaintance with countless species of flora and fauna, rock and mineral forged a deep sense of belonging to nature as well. This was how I oriented myself in the world—nature, herself, became my steadfast reference point.



## Nature as a Lifelong “Teacher” and Metaphor

I believe that humans are gifted with the unique ability to sense an inherent order within nature, a master plan of organization and self-regulation that pervades all life and underwrites the animate, dynamic earth from which we originate, of which we are an integral part. That this gift lies dormant in a world presently and unwittingly smitten by technology, and seemingly hopelessly adrift in the human subconscious serves to fortify my own inspiration and motivation as a teaching artist—my mission is to activate and elevate this innate sensibility in my students. At the same time, I strive to do so in the creation of site-specific dance performances in the natural settings, where my audiences experience them in the theater-of-the-natural-environment.<sup>21</sup> This ability that I reference is neither peripheral nor trivial. Instead, it is partly what distinguishes us as distinctly human. It is derived from a deep-seated awareness that stems from a deliberate and cultivated self-consciousness that can allow us, if we open ourselves to this new way of knowing, to perceive ourselves and each particle of the world around us, as a contributing microcosmic hologram of the greater, magnificent universe.

Being particularly sensitive to this inherent order or patterning in nature, I can see the spiraling nautilus seashell reflected in the Milky Way. Intuitively, I know that these independent yet interconnected entities share something profoundly in common with each other. I dance a spiraling pattern, inward toward an indeterminable, fleeting center as a journey indefinitely into my internal landscape. Alternatively, I reverse the spiral dance to travel into the infinities of the universe. Through the power of this spiral form (and through the alchemical magic of the metaphor), I am at once the nautilus shell and the Milky Way and sense a profound “unity

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<sup>21</sup> “Theater-of-the-natural-environment” is a term I have coined to represent the transformation of “space” (new, unknown, unfamiliar) to “place” (intimate, known through deep bonding) that happens during the preparations for (including site work, rehearsals) the site-specific “environmental dance” performance.

without unification” (a Goethean concept) (Seamon & Zajonc, 1998, p. 129) that reveals a miraculous continuum of shared commonalities that can only be detected from this humbled vantage point. It is through the synthetic process of becoming the spiral (and the miracle that allows each human to do this in a uniquely different way), that I am able to experience (and thus, come to *know*) my own inherent qualities of spiral-ness. I believe that it is through this experience that I vicariously and holistically come to know both shell and star with a level of intimacy and depth that is unattainable by any other method. This is how I have come to *know my world, my universe*. This is how I construct such meaning for myself—I discover both the shell and the star within me, and I *know* with great faith that reciprocally, I exist within each of them as well. It is this model for *knowing* that I wish to share with my students. Through such a holistic perspective, I believe we may be able to reawaken this primordial gift of perception through the profound sharing of individual visions and thus, begin to heal the damage caused by the dysfunctional ways humans have come to relate individually and collectively to the natural world.

### **A Sense of Wholeness**

This is the source of inspiration for an emergent philosophical underpinnings of an eco-pedagogy of environmental dance--a pedagogy that reflects a Goethean-inspired holism and at the same time illuminates constructivist ideals while it rejects reductionism as the only way of understanding and framing the world. Such is in answer to and directly addresses my own growing uneasiness and skepticism toward existing environmental educational practices that espouse to illuminate ecological principles yet, for the most part, insist on following a paradigmatic model (i.e., objectivist/ reductionist stance) that is incompatible and at odds with such concepts as systems thinking, self-organization, holism and the like. This is not to say,

however, that the ultimate answer lies in some blind leap into the arbitrary oblivion of pure subjectivism. Instead, I suggest that there is a brilliant middle ground that allows a more complete way for each human to construct his or her own unique understanding of the world, the universe and his or her place (and integral part) within such.

The middle ground that I refer to is decidedly reflective of Goethe's own approach (see the literature section ahead, specific to Goethe, holistic science, ecological concepts and systems thinking) to understanding the wholeness of nature by allowing it to reveal itself as a collection of unique yet interconnected and related holographic parts of a greater whole. By consciously participating in and engaging with nature, as demonstrated through the example of the archetypal "study" of the spiral described above, for example, we can happily relinquish the reigning limitations of the pervasive at-arms-length objectivity by allowing the phenomenon to present itself to us through our own (subjective) experiences of it, which essentially calls us to become (in a poetic sense) that which we experience. We are able to construct meaning because of our uniquely human ability to have subjective experiences. The holistic nurturance of the physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual through a purposefully creative and imaginative act can greatly enhance such meaning making.

### **Child Development: Nature, Education and the Arts**

This optimal teaching and learning condition that I identify as such a middle ground (or at the very least a suggestion of a balanced, thoughtful compromise between the age-old duality of objectivism and subjectivism) therefore, curiously suggests a synergistic compatibility between a holistic (Goethean) phenomenology of nature (that sets aside our Cartesian philosophical heritage) and constructivist teaching and learning theory. For me, this has been a remarkable key discovery in this research project. Additionally, it has also been through my

exploration of the bodies of work by leading constructivist theorists, including Vygotsky, 1962; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978; Piaget & Gabain, 2004 Bruner; Duckworth, 1996; Fosnot, (Berk & Winsler, 1995, Bruner, 1996; Duckworth, 1996; Fosnot, 2005; Gardner, 2006; Piaget & Warden, 1926) that I have refined and clarified my own sense of a truly ecologically-based pedagogical philosophy—seemingly my Goethean and constructivist tendencies go hand-in-hand with each other.

For the purposes of this exploration of supportive ideas and relevant emergent literature, I want to illuminate those contributions made by each of the aforementioned theorists in the context of how they relate to my own childhood learning-in-nature experiences as well as my current developing teaching philosophy and practice strategies. These have been punctuated by many fortuitous “aha” moments that have enabled me to make new connections and move forward in the development of my work through a number of invaluable insights, such as the connection I am now able to make between Goethe’s work and the values associated with the constructivist ideology. Special focus will be given to Maxine Greene’s essay in Catherine Fosnot’s *Constructivism* because it uniquely addresses the teaching and learning theories and issues that have especially caught my eye, while addressing my own areas of interest through the perspective of the artist/ art educator.

### **Constructivism**

My side-journey into constructivist theory begins with *Constructivism: Theory, Perspectives and Practice* (Fosnot, 2005). This collection of essays is a primer on all matters concerning how the constructivist approach has historically come into being, how practices have been developed and refined over time even as it has existed as a “parallel universe” to the preeminence of positivism, and how these constructivist practices are actually inspiring a “quiet”

revolution within the institution of education as both alternative and reform to what has been for some time, the established, status quo paradigm of Western education.

Of particular interest to me is Maxine Greene's contribution, "A Constructivist Perspective on Teaching and Learning in the Arts" (in Fosnot, 2005, pp.110-131). Her thoughts mirror my own strong convictions as to why the arts in particular, have much to offer in support of the process of coming to construct an understanding of the natural world and our place(s) in it. This essay also coincidentally, directly addresses and links the work of the major theorists who lay the foundation of constructivism and served as an invaluable overview of the developing network of like-minded theorists. It also provides a sense of synthetic relationship amongst these theorists as well and has been instrumental in guiding my own process of synthesizing the interrelated threads of the teaching and learning ideas discussed here. Greene explains the evolution of the constructivist approach from an artist's point of view, which serves as a unifying context:

In my view, a whole variety of streams have fed into what is now called constructivism: currents of thought since the days of the great romantics with *their* distinctive concern for the role played by human mind or consciousness or spirit in sense-making by means of transactions with the impinging world. They have clustered into an attack on objectivity, on instrumental rationality, on disembodied abstract ways of defining meaning—against a usually empty sky. Existentialism, phenomenology, interpretivism, experientialism, certain modes of idealism: These have been the sources of constructivist thinking, particularly...since philosophy has gradually receded from its position as the "mirror of nature" and traditional conceptions of knowledge-getting have given way to hermeneutic conceptions, to efforts to *understand* rather than to know (Greene in Fosnot, p.111).

In the constructivist's universe, there is no absolute, pre-existing world out there just waiting to be objectively observed and therefore known. In fact, much of the world would be left "unknown" if we were left to rely solely on the quantification of such to attempt to delineate the

borders and boundaries of a single reality. Instead, we are the co-creators of our own individually-experienced worlds and universes and it is from these experiential realms that we construct meaning and negotiate a social consensus of the reality that is derived through one's own cultural habits and attributes. As prerequisite in this process as enhanced through the arts, we must bring a multiplicity of "realities" to life through this creative, imaginative act of construction. As I look back and reflect upon my child-self having those exquisite moments in my own wild-nature landscapes I was surely creating my own magical world, and I was fully immersed, enmeshed and ecstatically lost in the realms of wonder, imagination and unbridled creativity afforded my hours of uninterrupted free play. And I daily re-created my world over and over again, as the rocks became my stage for countless celebratory dances!

Focusing on Piaget, Greene offers insight toward the concepts of assimilation and accommodation and how these may directly account for how the arts generally function as a viable way to actively engage the learner; specifically, I recognize this learning potential existing within the environmental dance experiences I provide for audiences and students alike—the goal is to *engage* humans (the idea of engagement is also an important Goethean emphasis, as I reiterate the meaningful and inspiring connections of his "approach" with those theorists discussed here) with the natural environment in holistic (body, mind, psyche and spirit) ways that inspire the construction of multi-layered (holistic) meaning from such experiences:

[E]ncounters with the arts become in some fashion paradigmatic when we recall Piaget's emphasis on assimilation and accommodation in connection with symbolic play and drawing as a semiotic function...The move from a dependence on one's own logical and other structures to a desire to move beyond, to break with the ordinary is characteristic of the aesthetic experience (Greene in Fosnot, p.111).

I suspect that the unique ability of environmental dance experiences to engage student, dancer and audience directly, holistically and profoundly with the natural environment has to do with its unexpected, extraordinariness. By taking the familiar dance experience out of its usual and expected context of the traditional (indoor) theater or studio and further, by recreating the theater/ studio as an embedded part of the natural environment, ordinariness gets purposely shaken up and exciting, new possibilities suddenly emerge. This creates highly a charged learning environment—by linking the creative, aesthetic dance experience to the site-specific places in the natural environment where engagement literally happens, allows dance to become the symbolic system through which student and audience come to know nature in deeply engaging ways. Such knowledge leads toward the development of a reciprocal relationship (human to nature/ nature to human) which can only help to inspire affinity, empathy, compassion, love through a felt recognition of a profound sense of belonging and embeddedness (of human within the natural environment). Environmental dance, therefore, appears to hold the promise as an optimal and productive form of an ethics-centered environmental education (Berlient, 1992; Brady, 2003; Carlson, 2000; Light & Rolston, 2003; Kay, 2002, Taylor, 1986).

Greene also makes a number of interesting points about the use of metaphor (the importance of metaphor in relationship to the emergent qualities of environmental dance is explored in further depth—see Jewel #6) in the process of meaning construction: “[T]hey release unexpected meanings by bringing together very different notions whose difference makes certain things clear that were never clear before (p. 119). Quoting author Mary Warnock from her own book *Imagination* (1978) she adds a categorization of how metaphors function as part of a symbol system or language: “metaphor has to do with “seeing, hearing, tasting; interpreting what we see, hear, or taste as of a particular kind; interpreting as signifying something beyond self,

perhaps something other than the kind of which it is a member; creating it as symbolic; using symbols to suggest meanings and thoughts for others (p. 119).” The idea that language is a system of symbols is also similarly expressed by Vygotsky, and these symbolic tools are attributed with linking the psychological and social realms (Berk and Winsler, p.21). Bruner elaborates on the vital function of the symbolic realm:

For the evolution of the hominid mind is linked to the development of a way of life where “reality” is represented by a symbolism shared by members of a cultural community in which a technical-social way of life is both organized and construed in terms of that symbolism. This symbolic realm is not only shared by a community, but conserved, elaborated, and passed on to succeeding generations who, by virtue of transmission, continue to maintain the culture’s identity and way of life (Bruner, p.3).

This immediately refers back to Vygotsky’s theory which is dependent upon the notion that such elaborate symbolic systems of signs provide a dual function: (1) to mediate the individual experience to members of the group/ culture and (2) to allow the individual to internalize the collective symbolic meaning rendered by the group/ culture (Berk and Winsler, p.20; Fosnot, p.45). Where one translates and transmits information (knowledge) from the individual to the group the other route conveys symbolized knowledge from the culture to the individual, thus creating the psycho-social dialogue and symbolic exchange.

Finally, the exploration of some of the finer, distinguishing details of leading development theories has led me to clarify the distinction between the cognitive theory and socio-cultural theory. It is a distinction that parallels my own interest in the specific and defining differences between micro and macro perspectives. In this sense, one perspective does not preclude the other; instead I have come to see these two facets of experience as complimentary and reciprocal. Of these differences Fosnot notes: “in general, sociocultural accounts of psychological development use the individual’s participation in culturally organized practices and face-to-face



interactions as primary explanatory constructs” and “in contrast, cognitive theorists are typically concerned with the quality of individual interpretive activity, with the development of the ways of knowing at more of a micro level (p. 44). Of the two, I resonate with the former instance since the very basis of my work seeks to engage humans collectively (as a group of students, or dancers or as the audience), and since my pedagogical goals are dependent on the power of the collective experience in the natural environment.

Greene characterizes the kinds of constructivist learning that are availed through the arts as being “active, reflective and interpretive” (Fosnot, p. 116) and goes on to further describe this as being “dialogical” and based on an underlying spirit of multiplicity and diversity, a shared, collaborative investment in meaning-making. This idea, of course, nicely parallels Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences (2006), as the author points out. The concept of multiple intelligences celebrates and illuminates the diversity of each individual’s perspective and the idiosyncratic tendencies that ultimately shape and mold a unique “take” on the world. The emphasis is on the social aspect of human nature that allows this “dialogue” to take place, thus, making a consensus of constructed meaning possible. Greene also directs my attention to Vygotsky’s basic premise as to how humans develop into socially and culturally grounded beings:

In the realm of the arts, as in other realms of meaning, learning goes on most fruitfully in atmospheres of interchange and shared discoveries. There must be those who can point out what is not yet noticed, not yet heard, people who can provoke the young to go beyond where they are. To reach beyond is to realize that there exists a tradition and a community of knowers, of seekers, none of whom has the final answer to any question, all of whom are engaged in a communal construction of knowledge. It is as much social as it is individual, as much part of a culture as it is personally, privately constructed (Greene in Fosnot, p. 116).

The social constructivist will surely recognize this passage as an apt description of the basic Vygotskian concept of scaffolding, which is yet another manifestation of the psycho-social function of the individual/ collective exchange. In this sense, “the child is [metaphorically] viewed as a building, actively constructing him- or herself. The social environment is the necessary scaffold, or support system, that allows the child to [autonomously and individually] move forward and continue to build new competencies” (Berk and Winslar, p. 26).

My body of work (and the proposed environmental dance art-based curriculum which will be a direct future by-product of this research) seeks to employ environmental dance experiences as the vehicle to build such new competencies as well as to break down the false conception of an existing barrier or divide between the inner and outer landscapes that encompass the realities of our existence. Rather than a dualistic inner and outer world that we must constantly negotiate between, humans are extensions of the natural environment, are a vital and dynamic part of the environment/ natural world/ universe, rather than a separated, isolated entity, apart from. In a similar, complimentary vein articulated in the ideology set forth by John Dewey, Greene draws out this important theme out as being essential foundational wisdom of the constructivist approach:

When active learners find themselves reaching beyond to wonder and imagine, they may find themselves deliberately constructing worlds. This does not seem to be a solipsistic building, something they conduct in some interior place. John Dewey and other philosophers have asserted repeatedly that there is no “inner world” somehow set of against the social and the natural (Greene in Fosnot, p. 116).

The active creative mind (Dewey reminds us that the mind is a verb not a noun) (Dewey, 1934) provides the vital functions of “transforming, reorganizing, reshaping” established meanings, interpretations and values—the way we set out to cognitively digest what we “live”. It is, in a

sense, a recycling or a nuanced recreation of the lived experience (Fosnot, p. 117). This notion contributes, again, toward building the bond between constructivist and the phenomenological perspective.

### **Aligning Ideologies**

As my interest grows in the area of teaching artist-as-researcher, I recognize the wisdom of aligning methods, methodologies and paradigmatic ideologies as synergizing fractals; such intentional compatibility is not only desirable of both scholar and practitioner but should be held as a best practice model to be followed and more importantly, to inspire change. It is this issue of aligned and compatible approaches that is at the root of a deep-seated, paradigmatic problem (one that I feel is reflected in the way humans have ultimately come to relate to the natural world and the physical environment of the planet). For too long, we have been content and complacent as educators with what I have come to call an apples-and-oranges-in-separate-baskets approach; can we now afford to prolong an approach that attempts to apply a positivist ideology as a primary way to “know” the world, as the predominant way environmental educators often attempt to promote objective knowledge through the models of ecological principles that are completely at odds with such. Can students successfully grasp holistic concepts (systems, complexity, diversity, self-organization, autopoiesis) through an exploratory lens that reduces wholeness to isolated parts void of any original context? Can we truly *know* or better yet come to *understand* a world through intentional objectification that denies any authentic human contact and primary engagement with it?

As I have pointed out, my particular interest in Maxine Greene’s essay is how she has coincidentally linked Piaget, Gardner, Vygotsky and Dewey together through a common interest in how humans develop the ability to construct meaning. I see this as a viable alternative to the

above description of what I passionately characterize as an outmoded approach. That she also contextualizes this shared focus through the lens of the arts, is an extraordinary testimonial to the power of the arts to provide the vital means to this constructivist end. I also take this as the editor's own strong commitment to the arts and the critical role that it is destined to play in the educative process.

I find this to be a heartening and spirited attempt to empower the arts and to thrust them into the foreground of the field of teaching and learning. Through this effort, two important goals are accomplished: 1) The arts, themselves, are elevated to a well-deserved place of recognized value and the field of teaching and learning is also the beneficiary of such innovation; 2) This, in turn, provides the increased likelihood that teaching artists like myself will become a mainstream feature of the new education of the not-so-distant future. I am encouraged as I recognize an apparent underlying synergy between the arts and the constructivist movement and it seems likely that they will continue to serve each other well. My hope is that this extraordinary synergy will be put to good use as the impetus of reform in environmental education as well.

### **A Child's Relationship with Nature**

As a child growing up in a small rural New Hampshire town, I have vivid memories of endless summer days adventuring in and exploring my backyard forest. The trees lived there and were my constant, dependable friends—while I experienced many solitary moments entertaining myself in my fascinating natural playground, I was never lonely! Star-lit nights, fluffy white snow storms and other magnificent natural phenomena provided the additional elements of a blissful magic that shaped my perspective of the world and universe. It provided me with a deep reassuring sense of belonging to this special place and, ultimately, to nature. In what feels like a natural progression of these profoundly influential experiences, I have continued a life-long love affair

with the natural world. I have been nurtured, humbled and inspired by nature, and have crafted a career as an environmental artist as a result of this passion.

Now, as that environmental artist and educator, I have often wondered how it is that humans have become, over a relatively short period of time, so alienated from the natural world, when it provided (and continues to provide) me with limitless inspiration, and sustained me, personally, in so many ways. I am also struck by the visible, tangible effects of this alienation, and the toll it has taken (and will undoubtedly continue to take) on the environment, and every other facet of human life. Over time, I have speculated about and observed the progressive effects of this profound and handicapping shut-down in my students, as well as other humans. I have worked to counter the effects of this often physical, psychological and spiritual exile of humans from nature, in a way that is uniquely my own. I have done so through creating and presenting site-specific environmental dance for an audience hungry to rekindle a lost meaningful and enriching relationship with the natural world.

Consequently, Richard Louv's seminal work *Last Child in the Woods—Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder* (2005), presents a credible evidence that my perceived, observed human alienation from nature does prevail and has been formally named Nature-deficit disorder by the author intuitions and that further, my own intuitions have been confirmed as the actual experiences of other educators and artists like myself. While the immediate prognosis may seem dim, there is a glimmer of hope in naming and identifying the challenge before us. Louv defines Nature-deficit disorder (shortened as N-DD) as a phenomenon characterized by the following:

Nature-deficit disorder describes the human costs of alienation from nature, among them: diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties and higher rates of physical and emotional illnesses. This disorder can be detected in individuals, families and communities. Nature-deficit can even change human behavior in

cities, which could ultimately change affect their design, which could ultimately affect their design, since long-standing studies show a relationship between the absence, or inaccessibility, of parks and open space with high crime rates, depression, and other urban maladies (p.36).

Louv also believes that N-DD, is an observable set of relational behaviors and through learning experiences focusing on awareness-building, can be reversed. We, as humans, as educators, artists, parents, policy makers, scientists, corporations, have our missions well-defined for us if we are to create an atmosphere conducive to this shift in relating to the natural world. Thus, the recognition of N-DD may be a vital warning that we must rethink the importance of nature as a requisite to the healthy, holistic development of a child's body-mind.

Louv's research reveals that a critical shift in how we relate to the natural world has occurred in Americans born during the past 20-30 years. He uses the example of the "camp" experience (a once sacred American icon) to illustrate this dramatic and relatively sudden change in consciousness:

Not that long ago, summer camp was a place where you camped, hiked in the woods, learned about plants and animals, or told fireside stories about ghosts or mountain lions. Today, "summer camp" is a weight-loss camp or a computer camp. For a new generation, nature is more abstraction than reality. Increasingly, nature is something to watch, to consume, to wear—to ignore. A recent television ad depicts a four-wheel drive SUV racing along a breathtakingly beautiful stream—while in the backseat, two children watch a movie on a flip-down video screen, oblivious to the landscape and water beyond the windows. (p. 2).

As a poignant and powerful example of how N-DD has infiltrated every aspect of American culture, this description cannot help but inspire a sense of urgency. Perhaps the systemic problems revealed and illustrated by the author's research should be given the full attention and weight of a serious environmental crisis.

A prevailing attitude of humans toward nature is one of rightful dominance and unquestioned ownership. This is manifested and exhibited in the boundless consumerism and relentless desire for more control over nature that is so prevalent, termed by environmentalists, environmental ethicists and philosophers as “anthropocentrism” (Capra, 1996, p.11). This term literally refers to a human-centered world view, which privileges human species in a position of power and importance over any and all other aspects of the natural world.

Louv suggests that this predominant outlook contributes to the dire circumstances of our current environmental and planetary conditions, including Nature-deficit disorder. However he speaks optimistically about the prospects of reversing N-DD, but he stops short of suggesting that we must drastically alter this prevailing world view in order to accomplish that. Yet, I would suggest that the prevailing western worldview is the root cause of the very disharmony with nature Louv attributes to creating new generations of children, who are clearly developing and growing up in a way that supports a trend toward chronic isolation from the natural world. I agree with those who propose a radical, alternative attitude toward the natural world is needed at this time, if we are to reverse the complex social, cultural and paradigmatic ideologies that encourage ND-D. In support of this shift in paradigm, it may be in our collective best interests to adopt an ecocentric or an even more radical biocentric view (Taylor, 1986), both based on a value set and worldview attitude that seeks an equitable balance and unity between human and nature. The existing tension we are feeling now, is reflective of the place humans find themselves historically—one paradigm which no longer serves the collective, interconnected interests of humans and nature, while posing an existential threat the ecological health of the planet and all its inhabitants, struggling to prevail while an entirely new age of thinking is manifesting. The tension is real and creates a sense of

urgency—we are at that very crossroads the Hopi Indians call “Koyanasqaatsi”<sup>22</sup> (Hill, Sekaquotewa & Malotki; 1998, p. 154)

What would the world look like if we lived by a new earth-centered philosophy? If the natural world was highly valued, and humans habitually extended a genuine attitude of respect towards nature, profound levels of awareness would be common; we (humans) would be thoughtful, cautious and respectful in all our dealings with nature. As a result, we would live in a world free from degraded air, land, and water. Louv’s seminal contribution to the sub-disciplines of environmental education and eco-psychology would never have been written.

Louv points out that modern technology (and the prevalent human obsession with gadgetry) has presented another factor that has altered the social and cultural landscapes. Children and adults are plugged into this gadgetry, which may take the forms of cell phones, smart phones, computer games and computers. Headphones and ear buds remove humans from being present and aware—in some ways they have checked out of this world, and have retreated into their worlds of their own, often unaware of what is going on around them. Daily life now includes larger and larger doses of sensory deprivation and a new form of isolation from the rest of the world. Seemingly, there are no limits to where this may lead—as I was hiking in a wooded area I crossed paths with another “hiker” who was fully “plugged into” her cell phone. She was surely missing the auditory excellence of the moment (the bird songs were beautiful and a constant backdrop to the scenery provided by nature), and the other sensory delights the forest had to offer. When we passed each other, this young hiker barely noticed that I was there, and nearly stumbled into me. One thought flashed in my mind: Nature-deficit disorder! Sensory deprivation aside, there are also

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<sup>22</sup> Koyanasqaatsi is a Hopi word roughly translating to “life out of balance”, “need for a new way of living”.



safety issues at hand—our senses, and awareness, are what alerts us to danger (I could have been a bear...). When people habitually plug in and check out, we are all in danger.

It is no surprise, we are now creating a future from generations of children who, instead of having free time in nature to unwind and play, are now staying inside. Without regular time in nature, they sit for hours in front of television or computer screens, or spend the day in the mall, or they choose to participate in an overly structured, overly competitive sport like soccer, where the natural urge to nourish the body, imagination and soul by free play in the outdoors is severely limited. We live in an age where some neighborhoods and associations even prohibit backyard baseball, tree climbing, jump-rope, hopscotch, lemonade stands, sidewalk chalk art, bike riding and/or driveway basketball hoops—all of the fun activities my own generation enjoyed while growing up. Vacant lots once seen as an adventure spot for fort-making and exploring are now forbidden as dangerous areas that kids must avoid. This is not the spirit of joy and freedom and spontaneous creativity I enjoyed as a child.

Accordingly, in order to fully understand the potential impact on our present and future generations of children, we must acknowledge nature's own profound relationship to healthy human development. While our world continues to change at a rapid rate, humans have biologically remained the same creatures as their early ancestors. We are still subject to the flight or fight rush of adrenalin in threatening situations (provided we have not plugged in and checked out). We still remain genetically similar to our human predecessors. We are still wired as our original hunter/gatherer forefathers and mothers were. We have all of these instincts and urges originally developed and honed in the natural environment. To see how distanced and incompatible we have become with the natural world, we need only imagine our ancestors trying to survive in their world without full and appropriate engagement of their senses and cognitive abilities.

Louv adds:

Today, we find ourselves continually on alert, chased by an unending stampede of two-thousand-pound automobiles and four-thousand pound SUVs. Even inside our homes the assault continues, with unsettling images charging through the television cable into our living rooms and bedrooms. At the same time, the urban and suburban landscape is rapidly being stripped of its peace-inducing elements (p. 43).

More and more researchers are in agreement that this kind of loss, as well as the physical, psychological and spiritual disconnection to nature previously noted, is detrimental to our health, well-being and development in every possible way, and “the quality of exposure to nature affects our health at an almost cellular level” (p. 41). Genetically, we have inherited a basic need for intimate and complex interaction with the natural world (a large part of being human), and now we are recreating a world which denies fulfillment of that requirement. The underlying purpose of the natural urge to experience an intimate and complex relationship with nature was almost certainly to ensure the proper sequence and circumstance of the developmental process of the human being, ensuring his/her effective functioning as a participating member of the community within the larger environment, to interact with the world (and other humans) and to be able to survive.

### **Nature’s Gifts**

The following are some of the important “gifts” provided for us in nature, that have a direct influence on human development, as emphasized by Louv; these areas of interest are of particular importance to me, as I look for the foundational details and guideposts for a future environmental dance pedagogy to emerge through this research :

(1) Nature provides the conditions for the expansion of all cognitive development, which involves the process of acquiring knowledge (learning), and synthesizing and integrating this body of knowledge (Louv, 2005) and the source of age-old wisdoms and boundless discoveries. This

naturally encourages an expanded view of the world, this particular developmental diamond-in-the-rough is needed more than ever: “Not surprising, as the young grow up in a world of narrow yet overwhelming sensory input, many of them develop a wired, know-it-all state of mind. That which cannot be Googled does not count. Yet a fuller, grander, more mysterious world, one worthy of a child’s awe is available to children and the rest of us.” (Louv, 2005).

(2) Nature provides meaningful, memorable primary experiences. This is real-life, “hands on” learning as contrasted with the more abstracted, secondary learning that is a prevailing educational format. Inspired by John Dewey’s writings, as I referenced above, I have adopted the principles of the primary experience in learning (experiential learning) in my own emerging pedagogy, seeking to integrate the arts, specifically environmental dance, into a place-based environmental education model. Dewey believed that “experience [outside of the school] has geographical aspects, its artistic and its literary, its scientific and its historical sides. All studies arise from aspects of the one earth and the one life lived upon it” (p.91). Experiential learning draws from a concept of wholeness, of understanding whole aspects, countering against compartmentalized, isolated (and often meaningless) lessons. I refer to this approach as “gestalt teaching” (Rhyne, 1973).

(3) Nature provides patterns, models, archetypes and blueprints which through awareness-building, identification and transfer learning can re-inspire children and adults in the understanding and comprehension of the concepts in a complex world. Further, as a practical application of nature pattern study, archetypes are easily recognized, understood and many avenues of exciting transfer learning are made possible because of this. In my own teaching practice as an environmental artist, whether it is daylong workshops, classes or extended residencies or camps for children and adults, archetypal study has consistently been my starting place. It creates for the learner a “language of

nature” based on repeating, reoccurring, discoverable and observable patterns occurring in nature, and provides a meaningful way (and common-ground) for discussions, as well as access to a layer of metaphorical connection between individual vision and nature as a source of creative expression (Kryder, 1994). Kryder reveals the primary building-block archetypes that are elegantly simple in form and function—these ubiquitous archetypes allow nature to communicate with us via point, circle, line, spiral, etc. The specific exercises I design and implement as a teaching artist, all include an introductory “excursion” into a natural area/ site, where learners as well as members of my research team/ performing dance company search for and discover these exciting patterns, and discover how we embody them—this initial study becomes the subject matter of journal work and/or exploratory movement studies, or even the beginnings of a new environmental dance piece. Classic examples of fractal patterning in nature are found in the veining of leaves, the shapes and formations in rocks, the straightness of a tree trunk, the spiraling greenery of a fiddlehead fern, the concentric circles created in a pond splash and in the intricate weave of a spider web. Louv reiterates the importance of nature pattern study:

Nature offers a well from which many...draw a creative sense of pattern and connection...nature experiences “help children understand the realities of natural systems through primary experiences. They demonstrate natural principles, such as networks, cycles and evolutionary processes. They teach that nature is a uniquely regenerative process”. An appreciation of these patterns is essential in fostering creativity, which of course is not the sole domain of the arts, but of science and even politics (pp.92-3).

(4) Experiences and regular time spent in nature encourages a high degree of development of observation skills. This kind of observing goes beyond mere looking and becomes a holistic process of seeing. This implies a special kind of knowing and comprehending that happens via the observation process. Development of the skill of observation allows children to recover a lost sense of awareness of and being in their surrounding (especially if they are unfocused and over-

stimulated) and to be able to focus intently over an extended period of time. This, in turn, may help them to feel the presence of nature, to understand how they fit in to nature and how they are active, participating members of the natural world community. This kind of understanding is believed to contribute to “instilling intellectual confidence” in the child (2005).

(5) Nature directly enhances the development of the sensory mechanisms. Nature provides an endlessly diverse array of constantly changing sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures. Senses give meaning, distinction and information about the elements that make up our surroundings. In the process of discovery afforded by the activities and explorations (aimed at deepening the human ability to connect with phenomena of the natural world) that have been employed as actual methods of research in this project, I have come to appreciate that we, humans, have many more senses<sup>23</sup> than the standard five we all readily acknowledge and that are noted by Louv (2005). In *Reconnecting with Nature* (2007), author Michael J. Cohen reminds us that our conditioning has not only shaped how we experience the natural world but has limited and dulled the faculties humans utilize such experience (p. 49). I liken these extended faculties as identified by Cohen to what Louv simply calls “senses” to Goethe’s own “organ(s) of perception”.

(6) Nature provides access to unstructured “play” which engages the physical body, the senses, as well as the imagination. It expands (or perhaps even suspends) our sense of time and may counter the hurry-up, fast-food pace. The emphasis of unstructured play is on *process* rather than *product* as Louv describes: “It takes time—loose, unstructured dreamtime—to experience nature in a meaningful way” (2005). Additionally, there is danger in engaging children in overly structured activities such as endless soccer seasons and other organized sports that may actually

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<sup>23</sup> Cohen’s comprehensive list of fifty-three (53) human-experienced senses and sensations are included in Appendix

hinder the development of a child's sense of autonomy and his/her ability to engage in solitude activities. There is a real need for balance between structured and unstructured play and time.

(7) Nature provides a necessary and valuable “restorative” environment for all humans.<sup>20</sup>

It is biologically and anthropologically known that the human brain was designed for an agrarian, nature-based lifestyle that has remained essentially the same organ for thousands of years. Neurologically, the human brain has not evolved or adapted to deal effectively with the present onslaught of sources of over-stimulation to which we are routinely exposed. This has obvious implications for the consideration of a “nature therapy” approach in the treatment of ADD/ADHD in both children and adults (as well as for a host of other emotional, psychological and spiritual disorders and problems) (Roszak, 1995). Presently, we are as chronically over-medicated (i.e. children on high doses of Ritalin) as we are systemically over-stimulated. The research presented by Louv (2005, p. 102) suggests we already have an effective alternative treatment in nature. This latest research is the work of environmental psychologists Stephen and Rachel Kaplan, and focuses on two types of attention—“directed attention” and “fascination” (involuntary attention). What the Kaplans have found is that: “Too much directed attention leads to what they call “directed-attention fatigue”, marked by impulsive behavior, agitation, irritation, and inability to concentrate [these are, coincidentally, the symptoms of Nature-deficit disorder, as well] (pp. 102-3). Directed-attention fatigue occurs because neural inhibitory mechanisms become fatigued by blocking competing stimuli. As Stephen Kaplan explains: “If you can find an environment where attention is automatic, you allow directed attention to rest. And that means an environment that’s strong on fascination.” The fascination factor associated with nature is restorative, and it helps relieve people from directed-attention fatigue” (quoted by Louv, from The journal *Monitor on Psychology*) (2005, p. 102).

(8) Related to this discussion, the restorative power of nature also provides the conditions and environment for optimally experiencing and learning from time spent in solitude. Closely related are all other spiritual development considerations, because nature provides the fertile ground for this area of personal growth as well. Nature reminds us who we really are as individuals, and as humans, and helps us through self-reflection and deep concentration (not unlike meditation) to put life issues and problems in proper perspective. Nature fills us with awe, humbles us, inspires us, empowers us, and reminds us that we are part of a fantastic whole. Nature is not only a restorative force, but a transformative one as well.

### **A Sense of Place, Magic and Creative Inspiration**

I have always considered nature to be the macrocosmic model of the creative process concept. Everywhere in the natural world are found perpetual cycles of creation or regeneration, growth-death-rebirth processes as revealed to us in the changing of the seasons, the sunrise or the sprouting of seed ultimately growing into a tree. Nature provides a bountiful spectrum of color, form, content and composition possibilities. Her patterns and archetypes provide the blueprints of future creations (or re-creations, for we are, in fact, reinventing nature's wheels) and inventions. Every observable, sensed feature of the natural world holds the potential for great human creations and original ideas that lie just beyond the threshold that separates humans from nature. That potential lies in a dormant state waiting to be sparked by a single moment of inspiration. For me, this is the starting place in the creation of any original piece of environmental art—a creative exchange, which requires crossing that magical threshold and stepping fully into the natural world.

From the beginning of my process of creating environmental site-specific dance whether as a means to performance or as a nuanced method of my research, success and completion depend on becoming fully engaged within the natural environment. It is a collaborative process between

nature and me and my dancer/co-researchers that is informed, enhanced and shaped by all the developmental elements previously discussed. I believe that these elements allow one to be able to engage in a deeply intimate and meaningful relationship with nature. The process of creating art in the natural environment, for this reason, is an obvious possible antidote to Nature-deficit disorder. I have consciously included in my evolving practice, an acute awareness that many of my students (and audience members, even the performing members of my company) may suffer from the effects of N-DD in varying degrees. A much needed new layer of sensitivity has emerged and has been added to my work.

Other ways that nature may contribute to human creativity (or the creative process) are illustrated in Madeleine Grumet's article "No One Learns Alone" (2004). Her phrase "we learn what we care about" (p.64) is particularly applicable to my area of focus and professional experiences. It occurs to me that as an environmental artist and educator, my learners, dancer/researchers and audiences are experiencing vicariously through me, my company's performances, my workshops and classes, etc. my deep connection and personal relationship with nature. In fact, this speaks directly to my own mission as choreographer, performer and educator: to become a vehicle through which my dancers, co-researchers, audiences and students can develop (or rediscover) their own personal connection (and later relationship) to the natural environment. Grumet's article has lead me to reflect upon my work as an environmental teaching artist as a vehicle for transfer learning. Grumet continues to expand the concept of transfer learning:

These processes of art--abstraction, recognizing and forming patterns, analogy and modeling—support another form of transfer, essential if learning is to be meaningful to us outside the classroom. How are citizens to make sense of our ever-surprising society, of our constantly changing jobs, partners, children or the ozone layer, if we cannot extrapolate from past and similar experiences (p.64)?



I have also discovered through my own teaching experiences that by integrating the arts into environmental education programming, transfer learning in the form of nature informing everyday experience is quite possible and in reality, creates a bridge between the natural world and the everyday world, allowing students to discover an enriched source of information and inspiration that adds a new dimension of meaning to life.

Louv highlights a very memorable statement from art critic Bernard Berenson, who, like developmental psychologist Erik Erikson, claims that creativity begins “with the natural genius of childhood and the “spirit of place” (p.85). It would also appear to be true that children have an innate, in-born connection and bond to the natural world (a dormant 8<sup>th</sup> Intelligence, as Howard Gardner describes it that when encouraged and allowed to develop and thus, become part of their lives, would ward off the intrusion of development-impairing N-DD (p. 71). Perhaps N-DD is likely to appear in those children whose natural bonds to the outdoors have been stifled and in some way disrupted. If nature can be viewed as our natural human developmental reference point then a shared mission of environmental artists and educators (including teaching artists like myself) should be refocused toward reaching out to these nature-disenfranchised kids (and their families) in order to rekindle that critical birthright bond with nature.

While my own teaching experiences as well as more nuanced illuminations afforded by this research have led me to conclude that perhaps the most critical time to engage children in environmental art (including environmental dance, archetypal (“language of nature”) study, mask-making, creative nature journaling, etc.) is the stage of development identified by Piaget (1926) as “concrete operational”; these children, in the age group of seven to eleven years of age, are the ones that I find can easily grasp all aspects of this work and become easily engrossed in all related

activities, demonstrating amazing enthusiasm, creativity and effort. Anecdotally, I have also observed through my practice, that there also exists the same classic signs of N-DD as described by Louv (2005) (lack of general ability to focus and concentrate, lack of interest in hiking or spending extended periods of time in nature, lack of comprehension of basic nature/ecological concepts, nature phobia, restlessness, inappropriate behaviors, etc.) in older children in the age group of eleven to fifteen years of age. These children are equally, in need of such remedial learning experiences in nature.

### **Place-Based Learning**

Building upon the idea of Berenson's "spirit of place", there is also a growing body of research focusing on "place-based" learning. Once again, the focus is on nurturing child development through a process of educating in a localized, centralized acknowledgement of home-as-a-specific-place in a universe of looming nature (Louv, 2005). Such education emphasizing a sense of locality and origin and the idiosyncratic elements that make a place unique and elevates a sense of belonging to nature, and the natural world, but at the more individualized and personalized scale. Such allows for an emergent sense of connection to place if not encouraging a sense of "indigeneity" (Kincheloe, 2006, p.187). As a current trend in environmental education, this grassroots educational movement has been inspired by scholars and researchers including David Sobel (1998; 1999; 2004) Ann Swinger (1999).

Grumet identifies the need to create balance between educational exposures to "complicated systems" versus "complex systems". Complicated systems are defined as man-made machines and include computers and other technology while complex systems abound in nature. Grumet points out that the most effective way to create balance between these two distinct realms is by integrating the arts into every educational setting. She writes:

In contrast [to predictable complicated systems], complex systems like weather, economics or the human brain “exceeds their components. They are more spontaneous, unpredictable and volatile—that is, alive [and organic]—than complicated systems. [They] are self-organizing, self-maintaining, dynamic and adaptive”. Human learning depends on the complex interactions of several complex systems. To imagine that education could be reduced to the predictable mechanics of a complicated system is a denial of the fundamental nature of learning (p. 59).

It may be that education has generally fallen short in recognizing this, and in doing so, has contributed unknowingly, to yet another factor leading toward the existence of N-DD.

In this particular instance, Grumet’s example reveals a recurring theme of the human-constructed environment versus the natural environment (classic culture/nature duality). Vital to the educational process, is the apparent need for balance between the two, if not the emphasis on complex system learning. Are N-DD children exhibiting a lack of this needed balance in schools where the emphasis is on complicated system learning (characterized by an overly-competitive academic approach that includes an over-emphasis on computer training, organized sports programs and secondary experiences) at the expense of complex system learning (typified by creative time in nature, art, unstructured time and primary experiences)? Is my vision of a truly integrated environmental art curriculum perhaps the missing link that could help to provide this needed balance? Surely, this is worth considering.

Related to John Dewey emphasis on the importance of primary experiences (1958), Louv points out the equally important need for a “place-based” orientation as a way to optimally provide meaningful primary experiential learning. Place-based education is a very prominent area of research and a prevalent trend in current environmental education—it is the focus that I have chosen in my own environmental education endeavors. Since children already possess an instinctual inclination of attachment to special places in nature, placed-based education as a

concept is both logically related and complimentary to the developmental needs of children (Sobel, 2004).

Back-tracking from the development of this educational concept, placed-based environmental education was probably inspired in part, by the child's natural urge to seek out places in nature ("special" places) that have or develop over time a special, personal meaning, relevance and become a life reference point for the child—these places may take a variety of forms such as tree houses. These special places, also identified by Louv (2005) as "places of initiation" are also where the seeds of creativity and imagination are planted and nurtured (p.172). I refer to the personal significance of my own place of initiation in the beginning portion of this chapter and directly attribute my own deep relationship with the natural world, my memories of childhood and my career as an environmental artist to my experiences within this special place. Places of initiation experiences are thus, a life-shaping necessity in the complicated development process of children and logically, would be a strong N-DD deterrent.

As I reflect on my own work as an educator, which, again, has evolved directly from my own learning experiences as an environmental artist, choreographer, performer and scholar), I have discovered (and have been reminded of this once again, by Louv) that I have intuitively sought to include many of the elements brought forth and identified as critical to the kinds of learning experiences needed to address the damaging effects of N-DD. I have concluded from current research and now, from first-hand research experiences of my own, that N-DD is a much greater (and growing) social, developmental and environmental problem than I had previously suspected. Louv's work has re-energized my focus for future educational projects and teaching with a heightened awareness and sensitivity to the work at hand. I am convinced that an integrative arts/environmental educational model is the most effective way for me to pursue this

this renewed mission as an artist and educator.

### **An Eighth Intelligence**

I have purposely reserved the inclusion of Howard Gardener's theory of multiple intelligences (2006) as my concluding discussion. As Louv points out: "Gardener's designation of the eighth intelligence [naturalistic intelligence] suggests another rich area for research, but his theory has immediate application for teachers and parents who might otherwise overlook the importance of natural experiences to learning and child development" (p.72). His specific Naturalistic Intelligence theory is of paramount importance and relevance both to the discussion of N-DD, as well as my own work. Through this theory, Gardener has identified and clarified the developmental mechanisms that exist in the human-to-nature relationship. Moreover, by declaring this a variable (the 8<sup>th</sup> intelligence is more or less apparent in humans) component, his theory helps to shed light on environmental education topics related to human development (such as N-DD), and to guide education towards a best practice approach. While the theory still awaits "proven" status within the scientific community, many in the environmental and other education fields have adopted its principles because "Gardener has drawn needed attention to the fact that intelligence should not be narrowly defined as linguistic or logical-mathematical [complicated systems orientations] (p. 73). Further, Gardener (2006) emphasizes that children may have several of the eight identified intelligences, or all, in different degrees." In my work, this is a critical point to consider—I believe that all children inherently variably possess the eighth intelligence at birth. Some children are naturally able to "run" with it, some lose this gift as well as opportunities for the optimal development it affords. Place-based integrated arts/environmental education learning which provides hands-on primary experiences reflect the premise of Gardener's theory.

On the one hand, we as educators have been warned by overwhelming evidence of a severe educational and developmental shortfall, namely Nature-deficit disorder (which I believe to be a symptom of this imbalance). On the other hand, and at the opposing end of the educational/developmental spectrum, there seemingly exists an inherent eighth intelligence that we may encourage in humans and draw future hope from. I believe we need to heed the warning signs of N-DD, embrace the concept of the 8<sup>th</sup> intelligence, and take a lesson from nature herself and infuse our educational practices with integrated arts/environmental education learning, based on the wise, ecological principles of balance.

### **A “Child of the Universe”**

As I remember my own childhood, so greatly influenced and shaped by those magical moments I spent in my backyard New Hampshire woods, I cannot help but to reflect on the defining “seed” question of Jewel One, as it has emerged as an integral function of this research, to fully grasp the full-circle evolution I have experienced as an environmental dancer and educator—“Who am I (as a child of nature)”?. To that I would answer, one fortunate human who still carries that magical “muscle memory” of the developing body-mind of the inquisitive seven year old, who reveled in those endless summer days of lying in the grass, punctuated by the passing ephemeral masterpieces of puffy white clouds; hours of blissful, uninterrupted free play in my forest playground where I spent glorious time creating dances on rocky stages for unsuspecting woodland mammals. Like all magical tales, what I have learned from my journey from childhood to teaching artist and scholar, lives on in the earthy roots of that animated forest that helps me bring my story to life.

## Jewel Two—Parallel Dance Histories

*“The true dance must be the transmission of the Earth’s energy through the body.”*

~Isadora Duncan

### ***Journal Entry (Memoried Account—“A Dance Student at Jacob’s Pillow”) [2.1]***

*In my drowsy awakening, I hear the unmistakable clanging of the breakfast bell down at the dining hall. I am reluctant in my awakening, as I crawl out from under my warm, cozy bed covers and plant my first foot on the cold, bare wooden floor of the “Red Shoes” Cabin where I and my two (still-sleeping) cabin mates make our home for the next six weeks. Inspired by this uncommonly crisp mountain morning air, I am ready for the day in mere minutes, clad in dance clothes and sweatshirt with hair pulled back in a hasty bun, dance bag flung over my shoulder and out the door. I am now moving quickly down the worn path through the wooded area that connects the residence cabins with the main farmhouse, part of the morning ritual migration of sleepy dancers from bed to breakfast—the smell of strong coffee wafts through the air, birds sing and flutter above my head, tree to tree, as if leading the way to the hall...At Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival (and school where I am one of a hundred or so students from around the world) we rise each morning for a communal gathering for breakfast before the first class of the day. The quaint dining hall spills out into the backyard/field and preferring the fresh morning air, I join some classmates at our picnic table nestled near a grove of oak trees, hands hugging and warmed by my soothing mug of coffee.*

*In a short while, now anxiously anticipating the demands of morning ballet class I enter the big old rustic barn structure, called Bakalar Studio where my first class of the day takes place. As is customary, I make a quick stop next to the door, sitting on a bench against the wall where I pull on ballet slippers—I take my usual place (it is tradition among Jacob’s Pillow ballet students to respect each other’s chosen location at the barre as if it were sacred personal territory—each day we make our way to our self-designated and self-claimed spots at the ballet barre where we continue another dance class tradition of stretching and warming up before the arrival of the instructor—extending, twisting, and generally contorting our legs, arms and spines in carefully controlled ways meant to wake up our often still-sleepy muscles and bones and minds.*

*As I continue my warming ritual, I stand with both hands resting on the barre, looking straight out the open windows of the barn and into the wooded grounds of the Pillow. I am struck by an intriguing and inspiring juxtaposition of dance to nature—ballet class with a direct view into the wild, exterior world of the nature, “out there” yet, so very close by. It is easy to get distracted and to be drawn in by the ‘choreography’ of the birds’ song and flight patterns, the sun’s warmth, the cooling morning breeze and the orchestral arrangement of rustling leaves and grasses. Many rich shades of green add a calming, hypnotic effect on all of us lucky enough to be standing near a window. In a flash, our attention leaves the detailed fascination of the outdoors as Igal (Perry)*

*enters to the center of studio, calling for a beginning first position. Jess (Meeker), our intrepid pianist hits the first note and we enter another world altogether—we begin the first descending movement into grande plie (the gateway into the structured world of classical ballet) and the birds and the trees are, for the moment out of sight and out of mind. As we move through the barre warmup, plies progressing to tendus, fouettes and developes, I find myself facing the window often enough to sense this “dance between two worlds” and the pleasant and at times unnerving distraction this provides. And of the barn wall that so obviously separates dancer from the external inspiration and attention-catching nature so close by!*

*I am at certain moments during class, very aware that I am self-reflecting and feeling a magnetic interest in what is happening outside—I am aware of a compelling contrast between the regimented, linear movement qualities of our dancer-bodies to the random, spontaneous darting and gliding birds, who seem at times, courageous and inquisitive enough to fly through the barn windows in order to get closer and closer to Jess’s beautiful piano melodies. Birds and ballet dancers! I am again facing the window and a chipmunk has managed to crawl up onto the open window sill, inches away from my hand on the ballet barre! It is difficult to concentrate while being stared down by such sweet, curious little creature—I am grinning and bearing it! Yet the body somehow automatically continues the process of these ritualized machinations of ballet class. Body and mind and chipmunk—interesting, and this experience will be forever among my more memorable moments here. I have heard the stories of birds flying into, around and through the studio at will. It occurs to me how grounded we are, in our art, although we aspire to dance otherwise. Birds, on the other hand dance in flight—how free they really are. The chipmunk makes eye contact with me one last time and in a blink of an eye, he is gone...*

*Often after class, I would customarily join others for some conversation or quick rehearsal before our next class. Today, however, I decide to take a short walk through the wooded areas around the grounds. Down a path and past the farmhouse where the dining hall is housed, not far from the studio where I observed from my window, a vivid and dynamic nature unveiling her own dance, I arrive at a large boulder, surrounded by a protective backdrop of trees. This is the namesake rock, affectionately and traditionally known as the “pillow” (hence, Jacob’s Pillow) where founder Ted Shawn often retreated to for repose and reflection. The rock has also become one of my favorite spots to do the same. In the heat of the summer day, it is a great place to retreat to between classes--to enjoy the cold granite to rest against and absorb the beauty of the day--a refreshing moment of quiet solitude and inspiration during an intense daily assortment of classes, rehearsal and performances. I so love this place!*



***Journal Entry (Memoried Account)—“Two Decades Later on Monadnock” [2.2]***

*I take my “place” on the rocks, as the wind buffets the landscape, in a way that does not discern the human form from any other land or living feature here. I hold no special privilege here, simply because I am human. I am aware of this sense of equality and in a way I am demonstrating this idea through performance. This equality, in a most interesting way, reassures me with an unexpected and nearly overwhelming sense of belonging here. Belonging--not in a temporary, momentary way, but in a timeless, eternal way—this feeling— is what I seek to share with my audience and that which I seek to more fully understand myself. I want my audience to “feel” this—to know this truth. The buzz of the audience quiets and I become aware that I can now hear the wind. Wind is soon joined by the first notes of the musical accompaniment. Time stops...or rather passes in an extraordinary way. It seems like hours before the first strains of music reach my ears. In that time I note the rapidly moving shadows of clouds above me, affirmed by the felt moments when the heat of the sun emerges to warm me and then retreats as the clouds gather and rush by. I feel an anxious, anticipating heart beating in my chest. I feel the cool granite beneath my feet and feel grounded and a part of the landscape. I am conscious of the fact that I am about to attempt to give voice to this landscape through the dance that animates the rocks and their own “stories” as if channeled through my own physical body. I express what I know and I know what the rocks have to say. In my deepened awareness of rock and rock-ness I become a dancing proxy for the mountain and its elements. And I dance between two worlds—the world of human-ness and the otherworldliness of the mountain environment. I give myself to this thought and this moment.*

*In an instance, I am moving over the rocks in the prescribed way that I have done so many times in rehearsal. Every cell in my body—alive, activated and responsive to the environment and musical cue. I know and trust the rock beneath me; I feel the energy of the mountain fueling the dance and I am aware of a connection between my audience and this place that happens through me and the actions I am now experiencing. At once I hear and feel the music and a familiar melody and rhythm carries me through the sequences of the dance and I seek to fill this with my own deep affinity for this special place, this site, this one square foot of precarious Monadnock granite that supports me. I feel the familiar pattern of dance steps and movements engrained in muscle memory and the corresponding terrain where each step falls. I fall to the rocks, purposely and this releases my feet from the task of locomotion and stability and balance and demands much from spine, arms and hands. I move now, with full-body contact with the rocks. Unity and communion.*

*I am aware of the uneven contour and roughness and coolness of granite. I see lichens at close range and for a split second marvel in the intricacy of their patterns on the rocks where I lie prone, breathing into the earth. I am aware of the support the rocks afford me in this unfolding moment. For an instance I become part of the contoured landscape, filling the negative space that allows me to be held there, only briefly. I move on-- rolling, twisting, contracting muscle to elevate arms at one moment, a leg the next. Stretching arms and face toward the sky I see clouds and ravens and know that they are somehow caught in the rhythm of this dance, too. I am suddenly thinking*

*(how odd, these thoughts now float across the landscape of my mind) of Merleau-Ponty's idea of reciprocity—here, in this instant a profound exchange and sharing between landscape and dancer. I recall my own version of this notion—the “touch and be touched” principle. I “dance” the rocks and in turn, they dance me. There is a real sense of collaboration, as I navigate the landscape in this not-so-normal way. In this respect, I am allowed a rare alternative point of view—a new way to experience the mountain—new insights--growth. I am aware of this thought as I dance...I wonder what the audience sees, thinks, feels?*

*I am amused at how my own thoughts ebb and flow as I dance. I am now aware of the sun emerging again, from behind the recurring, intermittent cloud cover. I feel the warmth of this emergence. I look to my right and catch the eye of a fellow dancer—we exchange a brief smile and continue on our way, together and apart, but all the while with the rocks, the wind, the clouds, the sun...*

### **Historical Contexts**

The mission of Jewel Two is to situate my life's work as an environmental dance artist and educator, within the larger universe of theater dance and to find further clarity through a time-centered mapping of its evolution over a time span of over thirty years. A secondary goal is to tell the story of how it is, that my company of traditionally-trained dance artists (doubling as my faithful research team for this project) and I have ascended the rocky, wind-blown summit of Mount Monadnock to perform annually for an uncharacteristic audience: a hybrid tribe of hundreds of seasoned and novice hikers-alike, and dance enthusiasts. The audience take their pre-performance seats on the naturally rocky terrace leading straight to the mountain's celebrated peak, just as if it were the normally expected velvet-covered seating in any traditional theater venue, and finally, the curiosity-seekers who stand, sit or kneel under the weight of backpacks against the mountain boulders, bemused and befuddled at the moving human montage before them.<sup>24</sup> Further, this mission is not just about creating and delivering an aesthetic experience; it

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<sup>24</sup> This is a description of the setting atop Mt. Monadnock in Jaffrey, NH, as the “audience” gathers at the summit for the annual site-specific environmental dance performance. The performance unfolds on a prominent boulder situated on the eastern side of the mountain, just below the summit. “Seating” is comprised of a tiered arrangement of rock that cascades down from the pinnacle to the “stage area”.

starts with the aesthetic experience that forces the unexpected expression of an outwardly shared act of connecting with the natural landscape in a unique and powerful way; but, for this research, this is really only a means to an end. What we, as researchers seek to do here, is to study that phenomenon of environmental dance and to allow its own teachable, shareable, defining theory to emerge of its own accord, in its own time.

As I reflect on the choice of words used in the above journal entry, I see phrases that may be key in helping to discern what environmental dance is, and to reveal, through such analysis, the beginning traces of a definition that accurately sets the disciplinary boundaries of environmental dance. In journal entry [2.1], I observe: *“I am struck by an intriguing and inspiring juxtaposition of dance to nature—ballet class with a direct view into the wild, exterior world of the nature, “out there” yet, so very close by. It is easy to get distracted and to be drawn in by the ‘choreography’ of the birds’ song and flight patterns”*. I am clearly aware of the existence of two distinctly separate “worlds” and I am dancing (literally and symbolically) in and out of each of them. I also a desire to somehow unify—bring together—those two worlds. Later, in journal entry [2.2], I declare that: *“I hold no privilege here”*. The entry is expressing a way to be human yet, on equal ground with the natural world, through adopting an ecocentric attitude that intentionally seeks to unobjectify nature; the landscape and dancer are equitable, dialoguing, reciprocating, interconnected, interacting phenomena. Environmental dance is capable of bringing this notion, this shift in perception and paradigm, metaphorically to life and makes it visible for audience through the unfolding of the environmental dance performance. In a similar way, much is revealed about how environmental dance-as-experience influences and transforms the human/nature relationship, even more: as I express an *“overwhelming sense of belonging”*, I

am expressing what it is like to deeply connect to the site where I am performing, inspiring a true sense of place. The experience of dancing on the mountain is a transformative one.

Thus begins a retracing of the many intricate paths and winding trails that transform a group of traditionally-trained dancers into what I have come to call “meta-artists”<sup>25</sup>. It is at this pinnacle, where an intriguing synthesis occurs, whereby my dancer-researchers and I, who come from drastically different training backgrounds, who hail from different places of origin geographically-speaking and who are also an inter-generational mix, find both a powerful common ground of vision and a unity of expression as artists in this nuanced genre of dance known as environmental dance. And that unity of expression is delicately captured in those radical moments where disparate forces and beings and natural phenomena come together in the creation of something much greater than the sum of its parts.

Now, with the research process, squarely behind us, this memoried account accurately situates and contextualizes environmental dance (the particular kind of environmental dance that is the focus of this research and of this chapter) within a vast, evolutionary lineage of dance as a complex phenomenon. As a concurrent series of signposts along this path, I also juxtapose my own personal evolution (apart, for the moment from the individual pathways of my dancer-researchers) as first, a dance student; to becoming an academic student of dance and finally as a performer, artistic director, choreographer and teaching artist of environmental dance. This journal entry immediately takes the reader to the place where the environmental dance unfolds at once in time and space. It is in the unique circumstances of its unfolding that one begins to sense

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<sup>25</sup> “Meta-artist” is my term for the artistic status of the dancers in the company: while they are professionally-trained performing artists in diverse styles and genres of dance, performing “environmental dance at the summit of a windswept mountain requires a special set of adaptation skills—each dancer, transforms herself, in the context of her own training and professional performing experience into the meta-artist, who transcends the limitations of traditional concert dance and dances with artistic ease and proficiency on the mountain.

the succession of prior experiences that have culminated here, on a mountaintop stage. It is the essence of these experiences that I seek to distill for the reader in order to begin to define the discernible boundaries and mark the territory of the genre of dance known as environmental dance.

True to the reflective nature of Indra's net, Jewel Two, which is focused on the historical context of environmental dance, my research team and I have allowed this unique history to organically evolve over time. My nested model employed to legitimately connect seemingly unrelated disciplines and literature as it has emerged through this research process, now promotes a noteworthy connection of my childhood experiences in nature with the experiences my dancer-researchers and I have shared on site on, in the natural landscape where we danced with rock, wind, sun, rain, coldness and heat, season after season to collect the data that has brought forth. Now, through the intentional reversal of this process of gathering data through direct experiences moving forward in time, it is possible to retrace the steps of our research process to reveal the true nature of environmental dance, where the visible representation and distinguishing appearance of dancing humans bodies on a windswept mountaintop enables the viewer to say "yes, this is environmental dance" and helps me to move toward fashioning a method of teaching human beings how to embody this danced theory of human-nature dialogue and interconnectedness as a bona fide pedagogy.

### **Evolution—From Ballet Pink to Granite Grey**

My own story, as to how I came to dance in the first place (or rather, how dance came to me) is most definitely not the same story line shared by countless little girls who at a certain young age, dream of becoming a ballerina. Instead, my circumstances were different and I do not recall ever really sharing that childhood dream—it never really entered my mind. In fact, I would even

say that I was a consummate tomboy from the moment I could walk, loving to splash in puddles, climb trees, get lost in the woods or go fishing with my dad as a way to dispense with all of my wild energies. I could also say, that this worried my mother, who decided one fateful day, that I needed to channel my characteristic wild energies into a decidedly more refined activity—I have her to thank for the gift of the dance that would shape me as a developing child and forever change my childhood and my life. It was as if she had introduced the ballet yin to my tomboy yang.

I remember walking the entire short distance from my house to the dance studio teetering along the top of a stone wall, while my mother guided and balanced me by grabbing my arm, attempting to keep me from ripping my new pink tights. I had no idea what I was in for, as we entered the unfamiliar, slightly foreboding, looming Victorian structure that looked like a castle to me. That first day, I recall meeting other little girls in the dressing room and I marveled at how we all looked exactly alike in our pink and black attire. I loved my new “ballet box” which contained my brand new pink ballet slippers. I watched the “older girls” who were putting on the strangest looking shoes (pointe shoes) with pretty pink satin ribbon lacings—and I instantly wanted my own. I wanted to dance like that. I sat in amazement at what these magical shoes allowed these girls to do. To stand on their tip toes—what a great new way to get around! As the big double doors of the studio opened, my dance teacher summoned me and my new dance friends into a very big and open sun-drenched room with large windows, where we were all finally contained in our exuberant enthusiasm and we were introduced to the ballet barre. I knew in an instant, that I was going to like this.

It is for certain, that dance has always been a vital part of my life. From my experiences as a little girl enchanted by childhood ballet classes that inspired me to intuitively take my dance into the magical forest that I loved and that so deeply shaped my development in the formative

years, to my later training at Jacob's Pillow Dance School<sup>26</sup> in the Berkshires as a young adult, dance has been a defining force in my life, and a way that I have always been able to explore my world, make sense of that world--as a powerful way of knowing, feeling and expressing what it is to be human—and my own discovery of its synergistic relationship with nature (of which humans are an integral part) as I directly experienced it, has always been there, too. In fact, I now realize that there is a profound connection to that point in time, where the child-me danced on that backyard boulder to that quintessential time years later when I danced and studied at Jacob's Pillow and just happened to find myself sitting on Ted Shawn's rock, one fateful and inspiring day. And now, most recently, I return to the same Berkshire Mountains once again, to begin a new chapter of this journey with nature-and-dance as a way of knowing, to become a certified nature and forest therapy guide.<sup>27</sup> I marvel at each and every one of these serendipitous overlapping, interwoven story-lines and the full-circle feeling of completion, appreciation and full comprehension of its meaning that can only come with the passage of time. On a more subliminal level, I am deeply aware that any process of evolution is dependent upon the willingness for the inquirer to be patient and to foster the ability to connect the seemingly disparate events of one's life that unfold over a broad scale of time. Such inquiry seeks to honor those extraordinary connections and to make sense of them all; it also celebrates these many sparkling gems of human experience, intricately woven into Indra's net--specifically, the emergence of one gem in particular, environmental dance. Through this research process, I have come to realize that my academic inquiry, and my lifelong inquiries, adventures and discoveries have been seamlessly connected and one profoundly reflects and affects the other. Dance in one

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<sup>26</sup> Jacob's Pillow dance Festival and Dance School; <https://www.jacobspillow.org/>.

<sup>27</sup> ANFT is the acronym for Association of Nature and Forest Therapy: <http://www.natureandforesttherapy.org>.

way or another has always nourished my body, mind and soul and has made my outward relationship with the universe deeply enriched.

### **“To Dance is Human”**

In her seminal work, dance ethnographer and scholar Judith Lynne Hanna reminds us that dance (on a macrocosmic scale) always has been integral to our shared humanity. As a universal “language” of expression dance in its many forms and permutations, has a unique power to unify and to transcend our differences and illuminate our common bonds:

To dance is human, and humanity almost universally expresses itself in dance. Dance interweaves with other aspects of human life, such as communication and learning, belief systems, social relations and political dynamics, loving and fighting, and urbanization and change. It may even have been significant in the biological and evolutionary development of the human species. When dance is suppressed for moral, religious or political reasons, it rises phoenix-like to assert the essence of humanity. Dance appears primary among aesthetic forms and the instrument of dance, the human body, contributes to other forms which use its spatial, temporal, and kinetic elements. Such dance dynamics persevere in the broad spectrum of non-dance aesthetic phenomena. (Hanna, p.3)

It is generally held by leading dance scholars that dance, in basic terms, acts as a social mediator, a cultural institution that conveys through artistic expression and a specific contextual lens, shared feelings, thoughts, visions, beliefs and as a metaphorical, symbolic tour-de-force that ameliorates conflict and differences (Hanna, p.104, 1979; Copeland, R. and M. Cohen (Eds.), 1983; H’Doubler, 1998). It aptly becomes the expressive container that holds the sacred “essence of humanity” (Hanna, p. 104).

### **What is Dance? The Ritual of Naming**

In the quest for a comprehensive, working definition of dance, I refer to the seminal work and research of anthropologist Judith Hanna. She defines dance as:



...human behavior composed, from the dancer's perspective, of 1) purposeful, 2) intentionally rhythmical, and 3) culturally patterned sequences of 4a) nonverbal body movements 4b) other than ordinary motor activities, 4c) the motion having inherent and aesthetic value. Aesthetic refers to the notions of appropriateness and competency held by the dancer's reference group which act as a frame of reference for self-evaluation and attitude formation to guide the dancer's actions. Within this conceptualization, human behavior must meet each of these four criteria in order to be classified as "dance" (Hanna, p.19).

Further, Hanna describes how her dance-defining criteria were formulated:

For research purposes, abstract terms must eventually have (provisional) empirical indicators. The [previous] conceptualization of dance is a researcher's abstraction (an *etic* concept)<sup>28</sup> partially generated from analyzing native (*emic*) definitions. This working definition was reached through empirical observation, a survey of literature relevant to dance, consideration of dance movement elements and the human body (the instrument of dance) in motion, and through adhering to a holistic approach. Holism does not mean an attempt to know everything, but it assumes that dance is essentially meaningful in its sociocultural context. It implies functional relations within a system but does not assume total interrelatedness nor relationships of equal importance. Dance movement elements are those basics generally accepted by movement analysts as intrinsic to motion: space, rhythm (time), and dynamics (force, effort and quality). It is implicit that dance exists in time and space and is affected by its physical environments (light, precipitation, heat, topography, etc.) as are other motor phenomena. The instrument of dance is the human body, and its analysis is dependent on kinesiology (Hanna, p. 19).

I have formulated a definition of environmental dance as thus: The dance genre known as environmental dance is the expression of the reciprocal and fluid relationship of human [dancer] to nature [and nature to human] through the art of organized movement, motion and stillness, in an abstract, often non-literal, contemporary (post-modern) style, as it unfolds at once in time and

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<sup>28</sup> Miriam-Webster defines and differentiates the terms *etic* and *emic*, as the following: 1) *Etic*-“of, relating to, or involving analysis of cultural phenomena from the perspective of one who does not participate in the culture being studied” [“outsider”] and 2) *Emic*-“of, relating to, or involving analysis of cultural phenomena from the perspective of one who participates in the culture being studied” [“insider”]; <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>.

space, in the theater of the natural environment. Through the ritual of naming and defining what I do as an environmental artist, I am able to sense the stirrings of a new genre as it begins to emerge from it many points of origin and development, from a slightly murky and ambiguous beginning, now evolved, experienced and better understood as a discipline of its own accord, concisely contained by its well-delineated boundaries.

### **A Heritage Rich in Diversity**

Though my professional dance training began with ballet (study with Igal Perry, Rosalind DeMille, David Howard and more), modern dance and dance composition became my passion. I was fortunate to study a wide range of techniques from the modern (and postmodern) dance masters and their proxies; my technical training is a mosaic of the techniques of Isadora Duncan, Hanya Holm, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Merce Cunningham, Liz Lerman, Jose Limon, and Lester Horton among so many others. I studied composition and improvisation with Bessie Schoenberg (an original member of the Martha Graham Dance Company) and eventually she became my lifelong friend and mentor—she greatly influenced the development of an artistic vision. As I reflect on how my Hawkins training (my initiation into the world of Modern dance) influenced my artistic development and creative process, the following analysis accurately captures the ideals I was drawn to, and how modern dance icon Eric Hawkins embodied these ideals in his artistic philosophy (as described by his personal compose, Lucia Dlugoszewski):

For him [Hawkins], the purpose of having art as well as nature is to help man. Nature is already perfect, but the function of art is a ritual to help “imperfect” men become identical with this perfect nature. We are only beginning to learn that while perfect nature is always aesthetic, meaning fully alive, man is often unaesthetic, meaning not experiencing directly, really unalive, enslaved by the thinking and feeling diseases of his psyche... The aim is to present man, not man instead of nature, but man identical with perfect nature, that is man at his very best, real, alive, and free (Hanna, p. 104).

This passage reveals an underlying philosophy that resonates within my own inquiry where dance becomes the vehicle 1) to intentionally raise the human/nature relationship as focus of consideration; 2) to reconcile the human relationship with the natural world has longstanding endeavor and 3) to potentially transform the human/ nature relationship. Clearly there is a deep connection between the artist and his/her artistic upbringing. I recognize that Modern dance, which arose as a “movement” that rebelled against the classical ballet which symbolically and physically embodies so much of the mechanistic Western dominant paradigm (separation of body and mind, humans and nature, etc.) strives to “heal” those paradigmatic splits. I suggest that environmental dance further advances the mission of modern dance and radically seeks to heal the body/mind and human/nature splits, in order to reinstate humans in their rightly role as an integral part of nature. Dance, as mediating force to reunify the dualities and dichotomies of the Western culture, is the “force” that I believe moves us in the direction of a paradigm shift.

### **Dance as Language**

As I seek to locate where environmental dance may justifiably fall along the evolutionary timeline of Western dance genres, I must look beyond the beautiful, poetic traditions of the ballet in order to find the point at which the ideological seeds were planted that brought forth the prolific crop of Modern dancer pioneers, I previously acknowledge. I must even look past the beginnings of the twentieth century explosion of modern dance styles, techniques and iconic artists that brought them into the world of dance, for I attribute my richly diverse exposure to Modern dance techniques as having transformed a ballet dancer into an environmental dancer.

Concerning the ideological contrast between ballet and Modern dance:

In modern dance the body acts in dynamic relationship with gravity. For Humphrey the body was at its most interesting when in transition and at a moment of gravitational loss, that is, when it was falling. Modern dance has often been termed ‘terrestrial’, that is, floor-bound and inward-looking. As such it has been

negatively compared to the ballet and the aerial verticality and openness of that form. But as Graham has stressed, ‘the dancers fall so they may rise’ it is in the falling, not in being down, that the modern body is at its most expressive (Dempster in Carter, (Ed.), 1998, p. 288).

According to Martha Graham, the mission of modern dance was to free the expressive, dancing body from the social constraints that would impede what she called “true speech” (Dempster, p.225). As the evolution of modern dance continued through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century however, in spite of the rebellion against the highly systematized techniques of classical ballet, the modern techniques themselves, outgrew the ideals of the earthy, organic purity of the moving body (Dempster, p.225.)—in other words, in many ways, modern dance became defined, in part, by what it originally sought to overcome—the perceived constraints of a highly systematized technique. This, in turn, led to the postmodern movement which is characterized by a deliberate rejection of many of the classic and modern dance ideals; postmodern dance is focused exclusively on dance for dance’s sake. It is about the raw body performing raw dance, allowing the body to express through a language of its own. Authentically envisioned, created and performed, “postmodern dance does not present, perfected, ideal or unified forms, nor bodies driven by inner imperatives, but bodies of bone, muscle and flesh speaking of and for themselves” (Dempster, p. 227). It is worth noting that the realm of educational dance has not evolved in the same manner as performance dance at all, but rather in a slower, alternate universe that as Margery J. Turner identifies as a time lag in keeping up with the constantly evolving dance scene (Turner, 1971, p.XV). The current trend of teaching artists in the schools and the growing interest in and development of certified professionals designing integrative dance educational curricula in K-12 has helped to close that gap (p.XVI). It seems likely that a growing interest in dance education in the schools will continue to flourish and develop as dance is recognized as a powerful way of knowing.

## **Toward Clarifying “Environmental Dance”**

Two areas of Hanna’s comprehensive inventory (1979), in particular, help to clarify how “environmental dance” functions, as an emergent genre as 1) a dance form that acts as a complex system of symbols and 2) as a dance form that acts as a conduit for connecting emotions (realm of inner geography) to the outer world (p. 59). Hanna posits in general, universal terms that dance is language (p. 85). I link this notion directly to the idea of environmental dance as a conduit of nature’s pattern language of archetypal form, movement, shape and expression that may originate from an ancient “remembered” source stemming from embodiment of nature; and at the same time, providing a contemporaneous way to authentically bond human to natural world in deeper ways than we may realize:

Dance is a whole complex of communication symbols, a vehicle for conceptualization. It may be a paralanguage, a semiotic system, like articulate speech, made up of signifiers [a potential link to my “language” of repeating patterns in nature] that refer to things other than themselves. Subsequently, information necessary to maintain a society’s or group’s cultural patterns, to help maintain its goals, to adapt to its environment, to become integrated, or to change may be communicated. Dance may support or refute through repetition, augmentation, or illustration, linguistic or paralinguistic, or other nonverbal communication; it may anticipate, coincide with, or substitute for other communication modes...meaning is thus transcendent, going beyond or outside the dancer (Hanna, p. 26).

Environmental dance shares these universal characteristics as a quasi-language where the environmental dancer and the natural site dance each other into being through process of co-creative expression—while the focus, subject matter or source of inspiration for the dance may vary, every environmental dance piece replicates this potent rite of bonding human with landscape and landscape to human. Further this reciprocal dialogue through a shared language is emotionally charged, seemingly at a deeply, primal level, as anecdotally and consistently described by my research team and I, as we work on site.



*Figure 15: Surreal summit as heavy fog and mist envelopes DEFDW Dance Company/ research team members; research performance at the summit of Mt. Monadnock, April 2011 (DEFDW©).*

Hanna clarifies this point, as well, in the context of her theory of nonverbal communication:

The affective function of dance is to provide an immediate and sensuous experience. The appeal of the processual, sequentially unfolding dance form, with its arresting, seductive essence..., the presence of dance may evoke a single emotional response or range of responses, sometimes for pleasure or well-being, sometimes to cope with problematic aspects of social involvement [human-nature relationship]. Dance as a psychological defense mechanism, embodying psychologically or socially unacceptable impulses, fall within this latter category. Such emotions as anxiety and fear, made sensorily perceptible, thereby become...accessible to purposive action by the individual, group, or society. Thus, dance may be like play, rituals of rebellion, or cathartic outlets for deviance, a way of representing a segment of the psyche or world to understand or cope with it. Symbols are established, emotional associations may be employed; emotion-arousing events, people or supernatural entities depicted; or combinations of dance elements capable of arousing emotions in themselves used.... p.27).

Environmental dance becomes a gateway of entry into the depths of our own inner geographies—here, in this wellspring, it is possible to rediscover our inherited legacy that includes a lost yearning for communion with the more-than-human-world, a forgotten method of “communion” through outward communication (nature’s language of repeating patterns), and a way of intersubjectively moving through the external landscape of our outer geographies and through life, in ways that honor these gifts of our ancestors and seeks to bring them back to the surface of our being. While the inner world is more the realm of cultural myth, supernatural, ancestral wisdom, archaic forms of “knowing” through ritual and ceremony, and emotionally charged instincts, feeling and memories, the outer world exists in the physical realm where we manifest what we hold inside of us as a way to connect to the land. Environmental dance becomes the conduit for remembering this forgotten story. I am reminded of how David Abram (1996) poetically captures the idea of moving with ease, from one realm to the other by drawing on the powerful metaphor of the human breath: “Breathing involves a continual oscillation between exhaling and inhaling, offering ourselves to the world at one moment and drawing the world into ourselves at the next...” (p. 106). Through the act of breathing we also experience that symbolic communion with nature, and in doing so, we become unified.

### **Improvisation as Autopoiesis**

While honoring the history of dance and my own lineage of technical training as well as the richness and diversity of that training shared by the research team and me, one of the single most paramount artistic skills that we bring to our work as researchers and artists of environmental dance is dance improvisation (Kloetzel, M. & C. Pavlik, 2009; Olsen, 2002; Olson, 2014), This is the spontaneous (or structured flow) of instantly generated movement that originates from within the physical body, and that can be inspired by internal and/or external

inspiration and stimulus (Turner, 1971, Blom & Chaplin, 1988; Nachmanovitch, S.,1990). I nurture this skill in my dancer/researchers in warmups and specific exercises that are often task-oriented with a very specific discovery/goal in mind (structured). Other times, it may be a discovery process that is more akin to stream of consciousness writing or speaking, whose nonspecific origins are allowed free reign to flow forth as it will (unstructured).

Improvisational dance is employed in this research in a number of ways: 1) as creative process by which dancers and choreographers can source movement material and is task-oriented; 2) as a way to holistically engage the body-mind in direct dialogue with the landscape/dance site; 3) as a way to embody the Goethean five-step process with optimal efficacy; 4) as a method of mining data; 5) as a way of exploring and “mapping”<sup>29</sup> the dance site; 6) as a way to orient dancers to the dance site and 7) as a ritual-of-return, where dancers “greet” the dance through an improvised warmup on-site, at the beginning of each site-specific rehearsal period, and 8) as performance.

Improvisation and improvisational dance are the pre-eminent discovery process employed by environmental dance researchers in this project. It is the method by which we make contact with the earth, as we acclimate ourselves to the dance research site. It is our “point of entry” into direct, spontaneous, self-organizing (autopoietic) dialogue with the land—as such, improvisation (or improv) is what gives us, as researchers, those magical, transformative “aha” moments of flow (Nachmanovitch, p.19), revealing precious holy grail glimpses of the “truths”

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<sup>29</sup> “Mapping” is my term referring to how my team/company members have been able to specifically recall the geological details of the large expanse of mountain summit terrain that comprises the performance area(s) on Monadnock. There is a perceived sense that the body-mind is able to associate the distinguishing characteristics of the terrain with how the body-mind engages with the site. It is a felt sense of deeply knowing place that is residual, as we work on site for long periods of time and intensity.



we seek, of the sparkling illumination of new knowledge, of recognizing fully that illusive thing we seek as artists:

Improvisation is intuition in action, a way to discover the muse and to learn to respond to her call. Even if we work in a very structured, compositional way, we begin by that always surprising process of free invention in which we have nothing to gain and nothing to lose. Our outpourings of intuition consist of continuous, rapid flow of choice, choice, choice, choice. When we improvise with the whole heart, riding this flow, the choices and images open into each other so rapidly that we have no time to get scared and retreat from what intuition is telling us (Nachmanovitch, p. 41).

Improvisational *flow* is so profoundly powerful and integral to both the study and creation of environmental dance, I would like to make the claim that it is the very force that allows the body-mind in creative dialogue with the Earth (land) to become infused with Spirit. Thus the loop is made complete through the creative process of environmental dance: body-mind-earth-and-spirit in a perfectly integrated unity.

### **Jewel Three—The Phenomenologies**

#### ***Journal Entry (Field journal—“Angel of the Mountain”) [3.1]***

*I begin my hike in this early morning coolness, up the Dublin Trail with the inspiring ambition of making it to the summit via the Pumpelly Ridge Trail. The Dublin Trail is a longish, somewhat vertical climb through a beautiful, peaceful mixed forest. An occasional sniff of balsam moves on the breeze while it stirs the senses. Early morning birdsong fills the air with melodious scales that drift off into the treetops—these help to keep my mind off the rigors of hiking up a steep trail with a seemingly heavier-than-usual pack. I reach the well-cairned trail junction where my actual excursion along the beautifully-isolated Pumpelly Ridge begins. And, where I imagine that artist Abbott Thayer loved to wander and contemplate magical thoughts of a higher order. I am researching today, for the dance piece called “Monadnock Angel”, as part of my collection of dance-as-data dance pieces that comprise my dissertation research project. I contemplate and marvel how Thayer (and the other Transcendentalists) and I share the same muse, as I plod along.*

*It would surely be exactly HERE, where the mountain spirits dwell. And it is here, that artistic inspiration invades the spirit as it nurtures the body-mind and enlivens all senses. I can easily conclude how someone (like Mr. Thayer) would unquestionably be so certain that this particular stretch of the Monadnock trail system was heaven-on-earth! In all its solitary splendor I sense the*



Figure 16: Research dance piece "Monadnock Angel", performed by D. Eno (Photo courtesy of P. Rein/ DEFWD©).

*omnipotent presence of Thayer's angel-spirit icon. She protects this beautiful place and spreads a perceived blanket of peace, solitude and magical wonder over this sunlit rolling landscape on this glorious day on the mountain. The contrast of the lush green forest and flora with the backbone ridge of granite that makes Pumpelly trail so unique. Such an elevating and healing place!*

*I decide to sit for a bit upon reaching the first of three ascending mini-peaks along the ridge. It feels good to take the weight of my pack from my shoulders. I reach for my water bottle and journal and turn to a photo of the original painting, "Monadnock Angel" I have purposely attached to a page. I make a mental note that I must visit her, in person, soon. I sit quietly here, and take in the ridge, its elevated view to the east and toward the summit. I begin to contemplate how the angelic spirit of this magical place, possessed the creative thoughts of the painter who created her to watch over*

*the mountain. I am suddenly aware of my own lightness (as I have laid down the burden of my back pack) and I sense her "lightness" too, as she surely hovers above the favorite path of her creator. I look to the sky and marvel at the ever-changing shapes of the billowing white clouds against the most vivid blue sky. Golden sunshine makes the landscape sparkle like gems, as I continue to take in this extraordinary experience. I begin to move at the inspiring suggestion of the clouds—I must remember this experienced lightness of the clouds—how angelic. I am moving with her, making some choreographic notes and I have lost track of the time...*

*Back on the trail once again, I move onward and the summit looks so far ahead—a sparkling gemstone of a peak, in the distance still! I can still feel the angel's presence here, along the trail and I know the artist's sense of inspiration from her, is my own as well. I am overcome by how different it feels here. More so, than on any of the other frequently-traversed, well-worn trails. Sacred birdsong, sacred, forest, sacred rock, sacred clouds, sacred steps—even a sacred feather to commemorate this hike! I move onward, down into a mossy gully of coolness on this very warm summer day and up to the next out-cropping...and onto the next, and the next. At the trail junction that meets up with the Red Spot Trail (that continues on to the summit) there is a cairn with a rather large wooden cross post sign. As I approach the cairn, I imagine this to be a shrine, or an*

*altar to the angelic being, missioned to protect this sacred mountain. Here, she surely dwells...I shall return to this place again.*

### **A Complex Phenomenon**

In as much as the previous section seeks to situate the emergent and complex phenomenon<sup>30</sup> of environmental dance within the larger universe of artistic dance, Jewel Three focuses on the exploration of its dynamic aliveness, its characteristics and its unique particularities as captured in direct experience; each of these areas of interest are to be considered, both from the perspective of the dancer-researcher and the land, itself. From that static moment that acknowledges and designates a point in time when environmental dance comes into its own, I move from the universal structures of dance in a historical context to the detailed particulars of the individual experience of environmental dance. In other words, the scope of inquiry now changes in scale, from the universal (history and lineage) to the specific (and site-specific primary human experiences); this is also a shift from examining the theoretical/philosophical underpinnings of the emergent genre called “environmental dance” to the very real, “lived experience” of the environmental dancer-researcher embedded within the natural landscape/site (Merleau-Ponty, 1945; Welton, 1999).

I have outlined numerous conceptual areas of interest that have floated to the surface of my own expanded understanding of environmental dance as it has evolved throughout my research. From my initial heuristic self-study, which I will detail below, I have gathered these areas of interest together for further exploration. These include: how experiences in nature shape the individual (specifically, how the landscape shapes the environmental dancer-researcher and

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<sup>30</sup> “Complex phenomenon/a” is my term for a dynamically-interacting coupling or grouping of natural phenomena. Here, in the context of this study, the complex phenomena is the coupling of the dancing, expressive human body-mind in dialogue with the natural environment/ site of the mountain’s summit.

how the environmental dancer-researcher, in turn, shapes or re-presents the landscape), how imagination and memory may influence how we perceive, experience and recall those embodied creative moments in nature (I call this “muscle memory” as the body-mind holds the experience and integrates it within), reciprocity and “dialoguing” with nature, inner and outer geographies and landscapes, the lived experiences of being in nature, dancing with/in nature, and being one with nature through the artistic experience (Abram 1996; Cohen, 2007; Dewey, 1958; Dewey, 1954; Harding, 2006; Lee, 1994; London, 2003; Nachmanovich, 1990; Thomashow, 2002; Todres, 2007).

On-going cycles of iterations of the literature allow for the emergence of a “second string” of relevant writing and scholarly works which supports the grounded theory treatment of literature as emergent data. This manifests as a seemingly eclectic collection of diverse subject matter originating from numerous disciplines yet, through the lens of this research, nuanced relationships reveal themselves and add integrity, strength and new knowledge to the project. For instance, I begin with the emergent idea of embodied knowledge as a way of connecting with the natural world; moving into the actual activities of this research project, journaling becomes an effective way to embody our experience of nature through the physical act of writing about those experiences (Lee, 1994). Or, through the twists and turns of this research, I arrive at a point of discovery that finds common ground between Merleau-Ponty’s concepts of sensation as a unit of perception, (1958) and Thomashow’s concepts of perceptual ecology (1995) and memory of place (2002). Or, the distinctions between such concepts as *perceptual ecology* (Thomashow, p.5) and *ecological perception*--Gibson’s claim is that perception has to do with the environment and cannot exist without the environment, emphasizing the difference “between information [gathering] and qualities of experience” (Gibson, 1966, p. 47). Indra’s net, the

unifying metaphor of this transdisciplinary treatment (see Jewel Eight) of emergent literature, allows us to clearly see new relationships of scholarly connections develop that were once bounded and rendered impossible or even irreverent pairings, by an over-riding tradition of impenetrable disciplinary territories. The premise is simple—new relationships between once disparate disciplines--if we make allowances for such--create new sources and dimensions of knowledge.

### **A Study of Lived Experience**

In this special circumstance, experience is not solely limited to the moments where the dancer-researcher participates in the unfolding environmental dance in the final, culminating public performance but, instead, I necessarily broaden the scope of experience to include the following environmental dance research activities: 1) time spent on site, interacting and engaging in ways with the site and/or natural phenomenon of interest in search of conceptual material for the creation of the dance—this is considered a critical preliminary research process; 2) the dancer-researcher working holistically with the Goethean five-step process and becoming agile and fluent in all stages of this creative process (see Jewel Four)—the dancer-researcher is thus able to reach a level of high proficiency in applying the Goethean scientific method (GSM) as research tool, adapted in my work as the creative process of making environmental dance; 3) the dancer-researcher stepping out and observing team members in a kind of vicarious experience of the site—the meta-experience; 4) the dancer-researcher journaling to recount, reflect and re-experience the original experience as it unfolded on-site—concretizing the experience and allowing a reflexive analysis (or the iterative process of reflecting on the research experience) of the site-work expressed in the dancer-researcher’s journal entry; 5) team de-briefing discussions—verbalizing experience as another way to concretize and expand awareness of the

original field work; 7) the lived experience of on-site rehearsals; 8) the lived experience of studio rehearsals and dancer-researcher orientations and workshops and 9) the lived experience of the culminating environmental dance performance. These nine activities convey the comprehensive aspects of the environmental dance experiences involved in this phenomenologically-guided research project and provides a framework for exploring the multi-faceted process undertaken by my research team and me.

Environmental dance research presupposes the engagement of two distinct, dynamic phenomena in direct relationship with each other. These relational, interacting phenomena of interest are the dancer-researcher, herself and the natural environment/site (and/or the complexity of phenomena that comprise the site). With a primary interest in the “lived experience” of the dancer-researcher, my research team and I relied upon the blending of various strands of phenomenology (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985; Heidegger, 1962; Moustakas, 1990; Moustakas, 1994; Merleau-Ponty, 1945; Polanyi, 1964; Van Manen, 1990; Welton, 1999).

### **Multi-faceted Phenomenological Lens**

It is possible to map a pathway through this creative/ research process by following the nested contributions of this synergistic, multi-faceted phenomenological lens. Each adds a dose of rigor to the study on its own merits, while taken together they add dimensional depth and breadth to the study. While imagining an inverted funnel, I begin with first-person phenomenology, positioned at the peak of the funnel, as the heuristic study of my own lived environmental experiences—the focus is intentionally on the micro/ particularities of the phenomenon known as environmental dance.

Next, by applying the existential phenomenological lens, I focus on the idiosyncratic and collective lived experiences of the dancer-researcher team (macro, universally shared, common

patterns of experience) (Heidegger, 1962; Merleau-Ponty, 1945). A third broadening, that of hermeneutic phenomenology, allows for the interpretation experiential data relative to the study and “reads” the on-site dancer-landscape engagements and other arts-based data as text (Heidegger, 1962; Ricoeur, 2003; Van Manen, 1990). Expanding the scope even further, dance phenomenology grounds the research through a bounded lens that focuses exclusively on the lived experience of the environmental dancer as she dances on-site (Fraleigh, 1987; Sheets, 1966;). Sheets further explains:

For the phenomenologist, any quest for knowledge about a phenomenon begins with the direct intuition of the phenomenon, apart from any prejudice, expectation, or reflection; hence, this direct intuition is *pre-reflective*. The phenomenologist’s attitude toward the phenomenon is neither objective nor subjective, but rather an attitude of being present to the phenomenon, fully and wholly, to intuit it as it appears, without pre-shaping it in any way by prior interpretations or beliefs [bracketing]. He [she] is thus led to describe the “lived experience” of the phenomenon, the essential relationship between consciousness and its world. Through his [her] description of the lived experience, he is able to elucidate *structures* apparent in the phenomenon, forms existing within the total form of life. Thus, if dance is the phenomenon, the phenomenologist describes the immediate encounter of dance, and proceed from there to describe the analyzable structures, such as temporality and spatiality, inherent in the total experience (p. 12).

Sheets also elaborates on the special circumstance of dance—that it is a “kinetic” phenomenon, and as such environmental dance unfolds at once in time and space, in the theater of the natural landscape/site (Sheets, p.13). Dance scholar Sondra Fraleigh describes dance phenomenology as a “lived metaphysics” and it inherently requires the act of attending:

Making dances, performing dances, and interpreting the dances we see involves a lived metaphysics, one that functions in our single, unbifurcated world, where mind and body are continuous and where thinking, willing, moving, imagining, intending, perceiving, feeling, sensing, and even transcending are continuous with the life-world. That is, dance involves us in the metaphysics of human movement. Because it has an aesthetic intent, it involves us in intentionally

created movement, which is meant to be transferred from performer to audience and grasped immediately through intuition. It thus involves us in continuities of thinking, feeling, willing, and moving, as well as in imagining and intuiting (p.167).

Fraleigh illuminates the concept of the true unity of the environmental dancer's body-mind:

“The dancer is not doing two things called *moving* and *projecting meaning*. *She is doing one thing, which is dancing*. In the moment of its execution, her movement is of her thought; if it is thought of before or after, she will not be in the middle of it” (p. 169). This is an apt description of my own time-suspending experience, that day on Pumpelly Ridge, as I began the long process of creating *Monadnock Angel*.

Ecological phenomenology expands the research by offering a holistic outlook that acts as container of the cumulative phenomenological building blocks of this research. The goal is to illuminate the nested, holistic qualities of the environmental dance lived experience, which unifies dancer-researcher and site in equitable dialogue. It celebrates the potential afforded by the artistic and philosophical vision of a complete and continuous circle of a body-mind-earth and spirit way of knowing and being. This, as an epistemological and ontological system, provides a solid foundation for the emergence of environmental dance as art and practice.

### **In the Beginning—A Baseline Heuristic**

While this study is intended to be a comprehensive, far-reaching one that is missioned to provide a useful and full description of the environmental dance experience, this journey necessarily had to begin with me. All aspects of the research project originate from years of my own accumulated experiences as a dance artist who indulges in the passion of creating and performing dances and dance performances in the theater of the natural landscape, manifesting as annual performances at the rocky summit of Mt. Monadnock, in Jaffrey, New Hampshire. Admittedly, this is a curious endeavor that has gained interest from a growing, supportive



audience and following. Auditioned dancers from diverse training and performance backgrounds embrace the work and welcome it as a new challenge as they apply their own knowledge, experience, expertise and artistry to the task of performing environmental dance on a mountaintop. However, it is necessary to explicitly acknowledge that the emergent dance genre of which I speak, and which is the focus of research, emerges first and foremost from and within me—therefore, it is necessary that the research process, begin with me.

In this ritual of beginning, I must make decisions on initial focus of the research, the design of the research, and the selection and orientation of my research team. I must provide territorial boundaries and delimit the scope of the study (which, otherwise, could very easily become a never-ending, ever-widening endeavor). And then, as part of this paramount beginning phase, I must make myself the subject of my own introspective study of environmental dance—from this heuristic (self-directed discovery) study, I create a singular, referential profile of the lived experience of environmental dance which is used as a kind of “control”, helping to delimit while contributing a design protocol that addresses how the research team builds upon this initial, foundational phenomenological exploration: “The focus in a heuristic quest is on the capture of the lived experience; full and complete depictions of the experience from the frame of reference of the primary experience. The challenge is fulfilled through examples, narrative descriptions, dialogues, stories, poems, artwork, journals and diaries, autobiographical logs, and other personal documents” (Moustakas, p.39). In this particular instance, the heuristic self-study does not end before the team research efforts and activities begin—instead this heuristic process continues as a parallel, on-going part of the larger research process. This provides useful guidance, reference points, models, templates and other pertinent, practical information (via

periodic discussions, workshops and de-briefing sessions) to the team as the study continues over time.

I have included the journal narrative above to illustrate how I undertook the task of a preliminary heuristic self-study of my lived experience of environmental dance. The entry tells the story of my solo hike, one day, on Mt. Monadnock, on a quest to research and source movement ideas and material for a solo research dance piece titled *Monadnock Angel*. It attempts to capture my inner musings, thoughts, impressions, moods and, in general, my physical and sensorial experience of the mountain landscape that summer day, where artist Abbott Thayer had habitually trekked. It is said that he was smitten by his own muse there, which, in turn, inspired his iconic painting, *Monadnock Angel*. The experience became an interesting and intense sensation of a shared experience, a shared understanding and a bonding with Thayer (on a spirit level), and to Pumpelly Ridge, the place where I was hiking and researching that day. This field experience also helped me to deeply explore my understanding of environmental dance, and I learned much about myself and my passion for dancing in the natural landscapes of the mountain that fateful and very productive day—of paramount importance, is the ever-present realization that in embracing evolutionary change as our lives unfold, as a nature-generated, organic unfolding of ourselves, we move towards our fullest potential.

### **Reliving the Lived Experience: On the Ridge**

From that initial experience I began the process of creating the solo dance piece as a re-presentation of dance data (and dance-as-data), as an integral part of the five environmental dance research pieces that comprised my dissertation presentation/concert at the Colonial Theater in Keene, New Hampshire (Bagley, C. & M.B. Cancienne, eds., 2002; Bartal, L. & N. Ne'eman, 1993). The following winter I revisited the Ridge again and marveled at the magical

qualities of experiencing this landscape in the frostiness of February. I spent much of my time that day, dancing and moving around an ice-covered cairn that had the mesmerizing appearance of an ice sculpture of an angel—my spontaneous, improvised dance phrases became a nonverbal dialogue with the angel, herself:

The non-verbal is the immediate way of communicating and discovering the many layers of individuals... Without words, reality and fantasy readily intertwine, unfolding many layers of individual and cultural traits. We find the non-verbal to be a practical method that cuts across many barriers, stimulating the senses and leading to invigorating exchanges of physical communication, forming a body language that is beyond speech. Thus the prime source of learning is rooted in the body-felt experience (Bartal & Ne'emen, p. 3).

As environmental dancers, our creative and interpretive expressions characteristically occur at the preverbal level through the instrument of the body-mind. Such expressions emanate from this kind of non-verbal dialoguing with the phenomenon of the land (from the landscape at a comprehensive, all-encompassing scale to each and every elemental phenomena within the landscape, existing and experienced at the micro level), and allows for the integration of spirit (think *genius loci*, *anima mundi*)<sup>31</sup>—“hence, the dance of body/ mind/ spirit becomes the metaphor for transformation—its most potent guide—on the journey of inner and outer growth. Environmental dance created in this manner manifests a closed, integrating loop enjoining body-mind-earth and spirit.

The imagined vision of her standing as sentry there at the trail junction was a transformative experience and inspired a lengthy movement exploration on site, in spite of a single-digit wind chill. Those simple movement phrases became another layer of data gathered, and gave form, conceptually and choreographically, to the dance piece. The research for

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<sup>31</sup> “Spirit of place”.

*Monadnock Angel* continued with a visit to the Addison Gallery of American Art, on the campus of Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. I arranged for a private viewing (she was archived at the time of my request to visit with her) and was able to spend a couple of hours with the breath-taking full-sized original portrait of Monadnock's angelic protectress. There, standing before her, I was compelled to dance with her (and I did)--I moved, dialogued with, journaled about and stood in awe of this beautiful creation, an omnipotent presence in the private gallery viewing room. I could feel her angelic aura fill the room, and in my mind, I was instantly transported back to Pumpelly Ridge, on that magical day, years ago—it was a very powerful and moving experience. I had no doubt that I was experiencing what had inspired Thayer to create her image. *Monadnock Angel* was premiered that Spring, on the summit of a misty, shrouded Monadnock—this initial onsite public performance served as another iterative layer of “research” which inspired yet another iteration of the dance piece--it was finally performed on stage several months later, at the Colonial Theater, forty-five minutes away from the mountain, in Keene, New Hampshire. Several years later, I still do not feel that the dance piece is “finished”, which means that she has more to say to me and I have yet more to learn from her, Abbot Thayer, about environmental dance and its powerful, transformative effect on me and my relationship to the mountain, herself. I look forward to dancing this piece again and to the new discoveries that will come from that. Until then, I know she dwells within me until I draw forth this rare knowledge I hold regarding Thayer, his mountain and his angel.

### **Dance-as-Data**

A unique feature of this research as it relates to its phenomenological underpinnings is the concept of dance-as-data. “Listening to our body data is just the beginning of probing the possibilities of a physicality of knowing” (Bagley and Cancienne, p. 22). From our external

experiences, we, as environmental dancer-researchers internalize and learn from them, process this information and then transform it as first, a creative process and second, as a phenomenological research tool. By recalling site experiences (the data gathered on site) we begin sifting through this “muscle memory” with iterative, movement explorations (on and off-site), reflections, journaling, discussions, etc., with the grand goal of transforming data to the environmental dance piece:

Our bodies have a memory. Of course, this is substantiated in a variety of fields within both the human sciences and the biological sciences as well as by body practitioners working in the fields of dance therapy, physiotherapy, and other body-oriented disciplines. However, novelists and poets more provocatively state embodied memory. It is not uncommon for us to recall a memory through smell, a return to our childhood geography... We are awakened to memory through our bodies, the reminder of the smell of the sea... One can have all the analytical data about the relationship between memory and body, but the poet [or the environmental dancer] captures glimpses of the power of a physical remembrance in an intimate encounter with the other” (pp. 22-23).

Through our creative process of dialoguing nonverbally with the land, we mine the data which is holistically transformed to knowledge within the body-mind-earth-spirit “loop”.

I began my creative journey by seeking to know what inspired Abbot Thayer to paint the *Monadnock Angel*. I wanted to understand her symbolically, conceptually and phenomenologically—I accepted that my undertaking was going to be a complexly rich and challenging one. First, though, I needed to understand the artist himself, his motivations, his thoughts about the mountain, his experiences there (even though over a century separated our lives). That was to be my prerequisite in this creative venture—to physically retrace Thayer’s own steps on his (our) beloved mountain, on his beloved trail (Pumpelly Ridge Trail) where, I myself, trod in deep contemplation of his process, his motivation and his deep, abiding connection to this place, while experiencing the familiar waves of my own love of this magical

place. Steeped in a methodology where I have intentionally combined the phenomenologies I have differentiated above, my research was designed to build upon each thread, desiring to allow the generation of new knowledge to emerge like a multi-faceted gem—here, I began with the most obvious phenomenological quest—to study the *place* that inspired both painting and environmental dance, through my own “being in the world” (Heidegger, 1962) that captured in a first-person experience of the mountain, where, Thayer, just like myself, sought to do the same.

The mountain becomes the shared “noema” (object, focus, obsession of our consciousness/shared first-hand experience) while, through “noesis” I discern the actual process of how we experienced the mountain through directed consciousness, and perceiving actions (hiking, journaling, thinking, observing, sensing, imagining, and ultimately reflecting, etc.) (Gibson, 1966; Merleau-Ponty, 1958). All the while, I could imagine the angelic figure of a protective, amiable spirit floating above me on my journey along the trail, just as I could imagine that Thayer and I shared many of the same perceptions of the trail, even as subjective as experience is. The lived body of the dancer-researchers, affords us with just such a vessel to accomplish this—experience, then, becomes a vitally-integrated part of us, dwelling within us, transforming the inner landscapes of our lived worlds.

Through the heuristic process I have described above, I began to sense a deeper understanding of the art of environmental dance. I relinquished all that I may previously held as knowledge on the subject. I did so, in order to holistically explore the realm of this research topic and all of its numerous dimensions. These dimensions I speak of, are each reflected in the “seed” question posed at the end of each description of the eight jewels of Indra’s net, at the beginning of this chapter. In revisiting the seed question for this Jewel Three, we, as researcher

and artists sought to know: *“how has the environmental dance experience been shaped and/or transformed by my/our relationship with nature?”*

### **Evolution and Transformation of a Creative Process**

Originally, as a (pre-doctoral) performing environmental dance artist, my process drew site-specific dance pieces out of a conceptual vision which consistently inspired the creation of thematic movement sequences designed to fit within the thematic framework as well as the landscape, itself. While this long-enduring process worked well at the time and through numerous years of my developing work and practice, it was always my intuitive sense that what I really sought to create was something more deeply connected to and originating from the landscape (phenomena) itself. Something derived from less-than-me and more-of-the-site, it occurs to me that what I was struggling with, was grounded in issues surrounding the balance of power and agency between choreographer and landscape. In simpler terms, this is what I refer to as a problem with paradigm. There is tension between artist and landscape that is reflective of the macro tension between humans and the planet. My former process held the assumption that the dancer/ choreographer as the preeminent creative force in the artistic endeavor of making environmental (site-specific) dance (see more on the evolution of my creative process in Chapter VI).

Through the evolutionary process afforded by this research, my self-study (heuristic) proved to be the source of many transformational revelations. In short, I was inspired to deliberately loosen my white-knuckle grip of control on the process I was using to make dance works. This was a bold move, inspired by the aha moment afforded me through the discovery of Goethe’s five-step approach (See Chapter II, Jewel Four) which I adopted as the guiding creative process and data-gathering method of my research. I am reminded that:

...to work with this phenomenology, we must rekindle in the words *theory, idea, whole*\*\*\* their fiery, creative character. A “spiritual organ” awakens when we “think” the phenomenon from its dimension of unity, from potentiality to actuality. This style of thinking is not abstract but has the character of an *action*. Such a notion of thinking becomes more comprehensible when we realize that this is what an artist does to create a work—forming it from its generative idea. And this is exactly the capacity we are cultivating through a Goethean phenomenology—an artistic mode of cognition that enables us to realize the creative process of nature, to actually experience an organism’s or landscape’s self-generated activity. We experience the creative gesturing of the wholeness of place... (Hoffman, in Seamon & Zajoncs, (Eds.), 1998, p.129).

It is this very action in thinking that I have sought to infuse into my own research process and guidelines.

Goethe’s systematized process has allowed me to create from an entirely renewed perspective—I suddenly recognized the inequitable way I had been working. I was a reflection of the Western paradigm that I intuitively resisted intellectually and philosophically! I was a holistically-minded artist creating dances within a paradigm of reductionism and dualism! I had unearthed the source of the tension I had intuited all along. Steven Harding articulates this perceived tension in *Animate Earth: Science, Intuition and Gaia*:

The problem is at root one of perception; we no longer see the cosmos as alive, nor do we any longer recognize that we are inseparable from the whole of nature, and from our Earth as a living being. But there is hope, for as the crisis deepens, the call of *anima mundi* intensifies. More and more people are waking up to their deep connection to the intelligence of the cosmos, and are seeking to find ways of living that do not violate their rediscovered ecological sensibilities. It is as if the *anima mundi* is trying to express herself in our consciousness in ways which move beyond the dualistic animism of Plato and the otherworldly dualism of the old Church (2005, p. 29).

Harding articulates the power of the *anima mundi* metaphor:

In this time of crisis, we need only pay heed to our thorough embeddedness within the earthly web of life to feel the buried seeds of *anima mundi* begin to stir and blossom in our minds and sensing bodies. As the seed breaks open, we see the wisdom in letting go of the objectivist assumptions of modern science,



without abandoning the considerable achievements that it has undoubtedly brought us. This dawning awareness of the *anima mundi* in our times is in truth a reawakening of the old, nondualistic animism that has been dormant for so long. It is a reassertion of our indigenous soul, and of the felt solidarity with our earthly nature common to our indigenous, tribal ancestors (p.29).

In a rather magical moment, I suddenly realized that Goethe was telling me to refashion my creative process as an equitable dialogue with the landscape that intentionally honors the inherent wisdom and emanating stories of the land.

In this instance, the land (site) becomes co-creator, collaborator, and co-performer with equal billing. The theater of the natural landscape acts, at once, as 1) the stage where the dance unfolds; 2) the source of movement material, and 3) partners in the dance. The more I experimented with this nuanced approach the more I recognized the clarifying power that flowed from this active shift in perception and process. By intentionally giving voice to the landscape (or phenomenon) I was enabling myself (and my dancer-researcher team members) to authentically embody and express the stories of the land.

This shift marks a milestone in the development of my art and pedagogical practices—the evolution of my life’s work as an environmental dance artist, educator and scholar. Such transformation has been nothing short of magical and profound. It has dramatically changed the way I (and my dancer-researchers) engage the landscape/site/phenomenon that inspires the dance. By shifting our perspectives to acknowledge that because we choose to dance in and with the land, we soon recognize that we are also inherently of the land as well.

#### **Jewel Four—The Holistic Sciences and Goethe**

##### ***Journal Entry (Field Journal)—“Dialoguing with the Mountain” [4.1]***

*The morning air is crisp and fresh on this sunny day as we (my research team/dance company) team arrive at the Halfway House trailhead parking lot at Monadnock State Park. Today’s mission will be to seek to collect data in a nuanced way, through a creative process that models*

*Goethe's scientific process—after weeks of lengthy orientation, experimentation and honing the process for our own adapted use, we are ready to put it to the test, on-site for the first time. One of today's tasks will be to choose our individual "micro-sites" where I hope several things will happen: 1) dancer-researchers will find an optimal site to call "home", where each one of us, as individuals and as a team, will study, create, explore and collect data (in a variety of arts-based ways), that will become the collaborative material garnered with which we will create the research dance pieces; 2) dancer-researchers will spend time during each on-site rehearsal period, developing an intentional and deepened connection to that micro-site; and 3) dancer-researchers will establish an on-going "dialogue" with each specially-chosen micro-site and will experience it through movement studies and explorations, journaling and vicariously through individual dancer-researcher interpretations and expressions of each unique micro-site.*

*We gather at the trail head—as is customary, we ready ourselves for the 1.5 hour long ascent to the summit with a brief check-in: we go over the agenda for the day and I remind us all that as part of our "warm up" on the hike, to mentally review the five steps of our adapted Goethean process. A dragonfly, very large, and iridescent, lands on my hand, which I take to be a good omen, not only for the day but for the project, as well. My dissertation mascot! The hike not only warms our dancer bodies, but equally prepares our dancer-researcher minds for the work ahead of us on this sunshiny day. We acknowledge that body and mind are unified by necessity, in this endeavor. We proudly marvel that we espouse holistic principles that support the paradigm shift that gives this work its edge! I express gratitude to my team for their dedication to the project.*

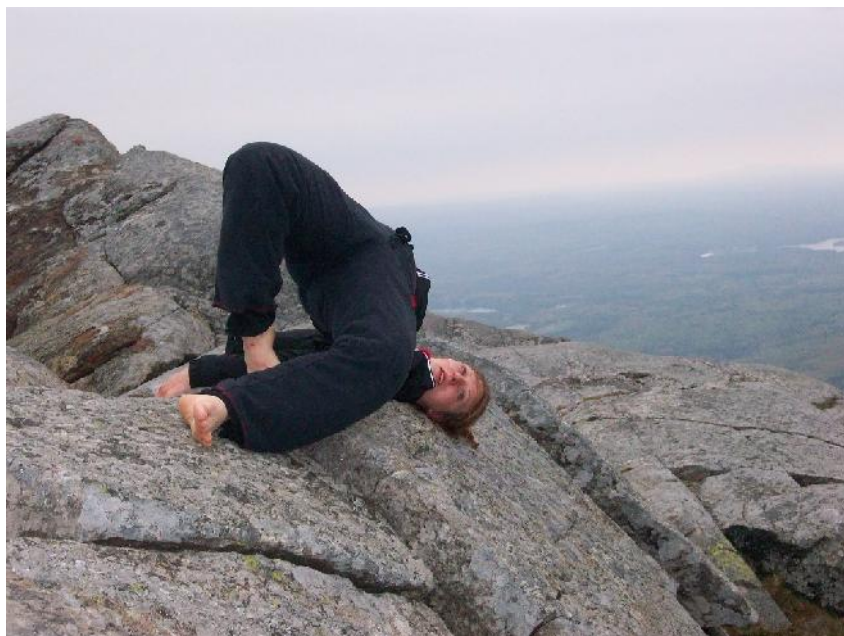
*With packs on our backs and ambitious plans in our minds we begin. Onward and upward...3165' to where our research and dance work will begin... As we hike along our route to the summit, we share excitement and anticipation in our intermittent conversations about putting the method finally to work—I acknowledge to the group, that in a big way, this is the formal beginning of what I intuitively know will be a long and magical research journey!*

*Upon reaching the summit, we are shrouded in a beautiful, shifting mist. No sign of any other humans here. Just the silhouettes of the research team preparing in their own individual ways for the long day ahead (we will put in at least three hours on the summit today, not including the hike up and return trip to the base—I am grateful for everyone's dedication to this project). We all share in the ritual of warming and stretching muscles that undoubtedly fatigue and tighten on the way up—we are cautious and we honor the body-mind instruments of our research.*

*We take a moment for water and a quick snack, grabbing journal and pen and begin the search for our individual "places" that will be the source of an endless flow of "data" for the ensuing weeks of data-gathering. I note that three dancer-researchers are already settled into and are quietly exploring their chosen spots—the micro-sites where each of us will "dialogue with the mountain, employing Goethe's process.*

*Once all five of us have finalized our choice of our work spot, we gather once again, for a mountaintop briefing. We discuss the 5-step process that will guide this research and our developing ability to dialogue with the mountain. First, we will introduce ourselves (and re-introduce, every mountain rehearsal thereafter) to our micro-sites in a “first-meeting” ritual, which we will create today. Our micro-sites will become the rich sources from which we will draw our raw data. We will then experience various dimensions of the phenomenon (site), following Goethe’s own protocol, including thorough studies of form (spatial features), the evolution of the phenomenon over time (temporal features and history), the gestural essence of the phenomenon (as though the phenomenon is ‘speaking’ to you about its “being-ness”); and finally, sensing a unity or “one-ness” with the phenomenon through reciprocal dialoguing.*

*Dancers soon move to their micro-sites and begin to work as I take my observation post on a jumble of rock halfway up the summit’s natural amphitheater where our audiences normally seat*



*Figure 17: Research team member Mary Madsen “dialoguing” with her “micro-site” (DEFDW©).*

*themselves during a performance. Here, each team member is clearly visible to me.*

*My attention is drawn to dancer-researcher #1, who is working centrally on the “main stage rock” directly before me. There are crevices and a deep cavernous split in the rock that she explores with her limbs. There is also a visible arrangement of the rock that suggests a cascading and I can sense that her movements are attempting to*

*capture and reflect this fluidity. She “speaks” to these rocks with one single improvised movement/gesture and I am amazed as the “dialogue” develops into an ever-evolving exchange. Rock speaks then dancer responds—there is an obvious separation of these two dynamic entities (rock and dancer) but as the process continues, the lines of separation seem to blur.*

*I observe a growing sense of unity and wholeness between the moving, expressive human body and the liveliness of the granite that holds this evolving human form. There is a sense of an emerging gesture, giving unspoken “meaning” to this dialogue and the dancer-researcher gives herself to the process—she is clearly listening to what the rock has to say and channels this*

message and expresses it outwardly through her movement study. It is magical and engaging to watch this process. The process continues to unfold in a similar manner as I observe dancer-researchers #2, #3, and #4, at their chosen micro-sites.

Dancer-researcher #2 works just to stage right of dancer-researcher #1, on a level of rock slightly elevated from her. She explores the angularity of her micro-site and moves to understand how balance will become a process of adaptation—she experiments with sudden bursts of interpretation, punctuated by

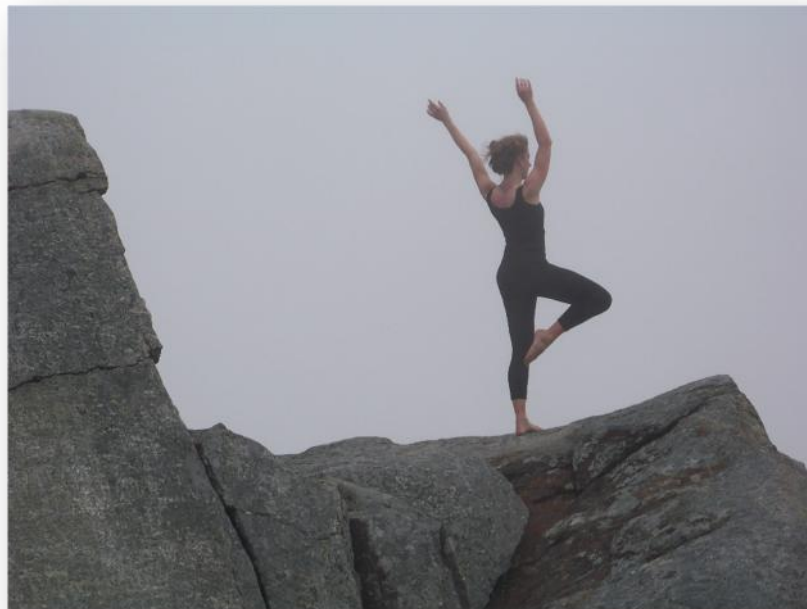


Figure 18: Research team member Amy MacQueen and her "micro-site" (Photo courtesy of P. Rein//DEFDW©).



Figure 19: A. MacQueen (Photo courtesy of P. Rein, DEFDW©).

stillness of angular form. I observe a general openness of dancer-to-site and she responds to the idiosyncratic demands of the site through an array of movements and still shapes that inspire and draw out more movement possibilities. I begin to discern the 5-step process and marvel as I see that process unfold in the dancer-researcher preliminary dance studies. As time passes I



*witness the visible growth of my team's confidence in using the guiding process as well as the development of a balanced dialogued give-and-take between dancer-researcher and rock.*

*Dancer-researcher #3 is working in an area toward stage right that backdrops the mainstage rock area. My eyes are drawn to a series of percussive movements that seem to accentuate the lines of the angular jumbles where she dialogues. In contrast, she conveys a fluid fleshiness of*



*Figure 20: Dance company and research team member Trayer Run-Kowzun (DEFDW©).*

*her being, the rock answers back with a timeless strength etched and worn in its glacial remnants. Watching this process, awakens a sense of time transcendence—a timeless sense of being, emerging from this dialogue between human and the granite bones of the mountain.*

*Dancer-researcher #4 is engrossed in her dialogue with the slanted, curving surface of a giant protrusion of granite in the foreground (stage left), near a summit pool. She lies prone against the rock with intentional stillness and I can almost feel her sinking into the rock. There is a palpable and deep connection of dancer-researcher to this micro-site and I can readily sense Goethe's unity between human form and rock. I am struck by my realization that there is an emotional layer to this developing work that I may not have considered previously—it is amazing (and a privilege) to watch this honest, authentic exchange...*



Figure 21: Research team member Carin Torp and her "micro-site" (DEFDW©).

*“To understand the whole of us and the world, we have to participate with the whole of us. Specifically, the bringing together of verbal and non-verbal forms of knowledge—rational and intuitive—is necessary.”*

~Francisco Varela

### **Dancing in a Self-organizing Universe**

The relationship of art-to-science is an intriguing side bar that we have explored within the larger focus of this research of the phenomenon of environmental dance. In fact, I propose that the closer we move toward the possibilities of a “holistic science” the more difficult it is to parse any difference at all, between the creative process of making art and the process of scientific inquiry. As we witness the signposts of the aforementioned paradigm shift we can begin to see the

emergence of a way of knowing and of being in this universe that celebrates unity, interconnection, relationship, and synergy. I share the same affinity toward the concepts of connection and interconnection as described by astrophysicist Eric Jantsch in *The Self-organizing Universe*:

Central to my argument is the thesis of connectedness. It cannot be grasped in a static way, but emerges from the self-organization dynamics at many levels of evolution. At each level, self-organization processes are poised on their “starting marks” to take over the random developments, if the proper conditions become established, and to accelerate or make possible in the first place the emergence of complex order. These starting conditions are perhaps relatively narrowly limited, as we suspect from our futile search for life in the solar system. But once they were given—in a particular phase of cosmic evolution, in which galaxies and stars came into being, or in the early phases of life on earth—these conditions become themselves subject to evolution (1987, p. 9).

Jantsch continues:

Evolution differentiates by means of a co-evolution of macroscopic and microscopic systems. That microscopic systems are just subsystems of the macroscopic ones, that the latter appear as “environment” of the former is a view which stems from a static understanding which tempts to formulate world order in dualistic terms. Life itself, in particular, creates the macroscopic conditions for its further evolution—or, viewed from the other side, the biosphere creates its own microscopic life. Micro- and macrocosms are both aspects of the same, unified and unifying evolution. Life appears no longer as a phenomenon unfolding in the universe—the universe itself becomes increasingly alive (p.9).

Metaphorically, we as environmental dance artists, interpret and express these same concepts in a living, dynamic, ever-evolving way. In the narrative account of the rehearsal at the summit of Mt. Monadnock, I observed a sense of this dynamism manifest as the gestalt of the dancer-rock dialogue that does not appear to be contrived in any way, but rather a seamless autopoietic (self-organizing) moment in the evolving life of dancer-researcher and rock, a living, dynamic, interactive system.

## **Unexpected Connections and Connectivity**

And as I continue to guide the reader through this complex web of ideas, Indra's Jewel Four illuminates the scientific aspects of environmental dance that reflect an unexpected connection to systems science, holism, quantum physics, Indigenous science, self-organization and autopoiesis (von Bertalanffy, 1975; Briggs & Peat, 1999; ; Bohm, 1981; Bohm, 1999; Bohm & Peat, 2007; Capra, F., 1999; Capra, F., 1982; Capra, F., 1996; Capra, 2007; Holland, 1998; Jantsch, 1980; Kauffman, S., 1995; Maturana & Varela, 1980; Meadows, 2008; Peat, 2005). Most importantly, Jewel Four highlights Goethean science as the exemplar of holistic science and offers a glimpse into the creative genius of Johann von Goethe, the artist-scientist, ahead of his time, in the development of his theory and practice (Seamon, D. and A. Zajonc (Eds.), 1998; Bortoft, H., 1996; D. Miller, (Ed.), 1995). It is Goethe's systematized five-step scientific process that I have adapted as both research method and model of the creative, artistic process of environmental dance as practice, performance and proposed pedagogy. Although a brief synopsis of that adapted process will be offered here, Chapter Three is dedicated to introducing the reader to Goethean science, and how the five-step protocol (as a phenomenology of nature) has been adapted to guide and inform every aspect of this research.

## **Goethean Background**

Johann Von Goethe's eclectic life straddled the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (1749-1832), and he lived his life as a true renaissance man. A prolific poet and writer, he was also a scientist with penchant for botany. He represents that rare combination of artist and scientist, a unique characteristic that would be considered nuanced, and ahead of its time, even in this contemporary era. In fact, this is precisely what drew me to his work—that he valued a holistic, multifaceted perspective. His life embodied the philosophy he developed—a “phenomenology of



nature”, a truly holistic science that challenges the singular viewpoint of the atomistic, reductionist worldview as its Cartesian counterpart. As I unearthed the treasures of his writing and the writings of the major Goethean scholars in order to fully understand his scientific method, I recognized my own worldview convictions reflected in those vintaged volumes, and felt an immediate connection to the way he perceived the world and engaged with nature. So inspired I attended a course in Goethean science with Goethean scholar Craig Holdredge at the Nature Institute in Ghent, NY during the formative stages of my doctoral research project. It was then, I decided that I would adopt and adapt the Goethean five-step process to become at once, my primary method of inquiry as well as the model I would follow to revamp my creative process for making environmental phenomenon-specific dances.

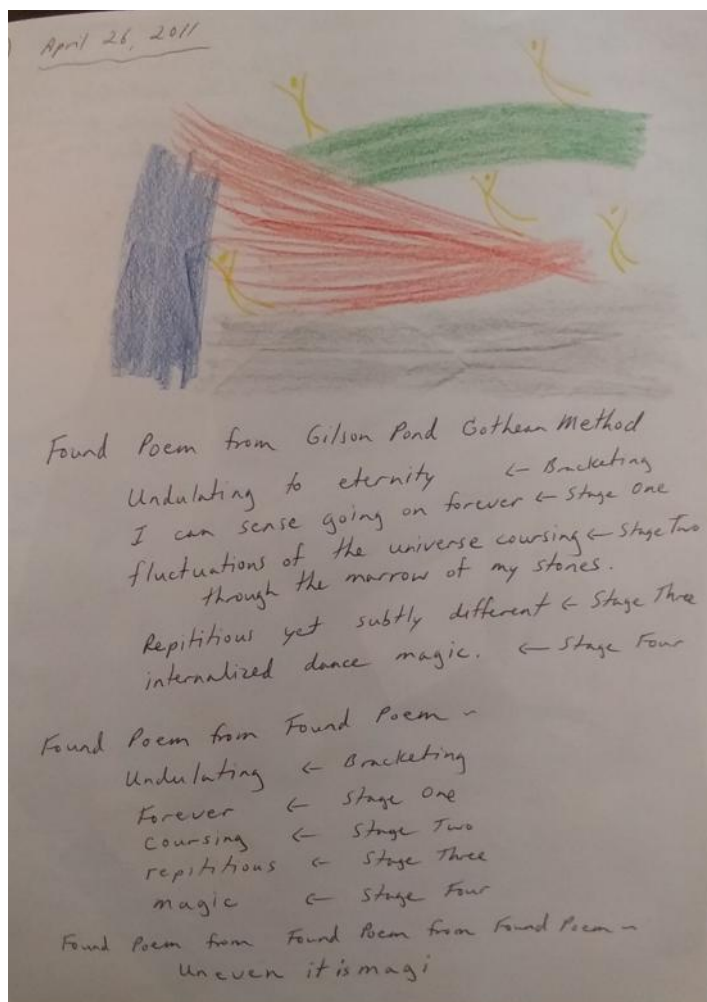
The five-step process (Bortoft, 1996) is as follows: The *Preparatory* stage begins the sequential protocol that takes the researcher-dancer on a multi-faceted journey of inquiry into the phenomenon of her focus. The goal is for the dancer-researcher in this first-meeting is to set aside anything previously known about the site/ phenomenon, to pay close attention to initial first impressions, as if meeting someone for the first time. *Exact Sense Perception* (stage one) engages one’s perception to see form in a static representation of the thing (phenomenon/site) observed—this happens through a detailed, intentional observation, seeking basic facts pertaining to the phenomenon, via the senses. This is a study of spatial detail in relationship to the area/space containing the phenomenon. This was Goethe’s *earth cognition*. *Exact Sensorial Fantasy* (stage two) asks the observer to purposely engage the imaginal sense in order to perceive the fluidity and flow of the phenomenon’s evolutionary process (its dynamic mutability) which animates and sets the phenomenon in motion; the goal is to be able to perceive the temporal unfolding, the animate life, the flowing history and the continuous unfolding of the thing observed. This stage is water

cognition. *Seeing in Beholding* (stage three) creates a break in the process thus far from a predominantly analytic breakdown of various components that comprise the phenomenon in question.

Now, the researcher-dancer is asked to set aside previous experience in order to let the phenomenon “speak” for itself, thus allowing its own expressed gesture and essence to emerge. By attempting to take a pause in the active process of perception, the dancer-researcher allows the phenomenon to express itself through the observer in an inspired dreamlike engagement which reminds me of a kind of channeling. This is the stage where the boundaries between dancer-researcher and phenomenon begin to visibly break down and reveals a harmony between dancer-researcher and phenomenon/site as captured in the journaled narrative. Goethe called this stage “air cognition”. *Being One with the Object* (stage four) requires that the dancer-researcher call upon intuition to reach beyond the “data” gleaned from the previous cumulative stages; we draw on our human ability to conceptualize to fill in the blanks, in a very holistic, organic process to flesh out a full profile of the phenomenon. This suggests a kind of intersubjective dialogue between the researcher-dancer and the phenomenon/site. This is Goethe’s “fire cognition”.

In the spirit of dissolving dualities (here, the duality of analysis and synthesis) by balanced equitability, Goethe’s process brilliantly addresses this goal: the *Preparatory* stage and the first two stages are analytic in approach and mission as they seek to isolate certain facets of knowing the phenomenon. Alternately, the last two stage of the process seek to synthesis observer with the observed; the knower with the known, the dancer-researcher with the phenomenon/site. Duality tensions are thus resolved with each and every engagement, with every intersubjective dialogue and an organic unity begins to emerge and continues to evolve over time. Goethe’s visionary process enables our environmental research to bridge art and science by bringing the two domains

into a synergistic alliance. There is an inherent, organic logic that connects the sparkling conceptual nuggets we, as researchers, have unwittingly mined through our experiences exploring the emerging universe of environmental dance. When I say “unwittingly”, I mean to clarify that our discoveries of such literary and intellectual considerations as noted above, only came after some inspirational trigger or hint that arose from creating, working and exploring environmental dance in the field. These did not drive the inquiry but rather, the dance experiences led us to feel our way into these worlds of disparate disciplines, delicately held together within Indra’s net. This is the very nature of grounded theory and phenomenological research—it is akin to going on a scavenger hunt



where there are a list of items to look ©).

for but with no clear path mapped out beforehand and innumerable ways to find them. You do not know ahead of time what you will find along the journey, but inevitably there are surprises, aha moments and transformative discoveries that ultimately lead to cycles of iterations of more connections and discoveries to be made.

## **A Shifting Paradigm**

Admittedly, our recognition of the boundaries and dictums of an appropriately supportive paradigm, lead us promptly to adopt a systems perspective as a way to further explore and understand the complex phenomenon of environmental dance. This has informed the creative/research process and has allowed for an expedited understanding of Goethe's scientific method as we employed it, as it is guided by the holistic paradigm—my team and I readily recognize that the human-nature engagement that we explore through Goethe's holistic phenomenology, is a complex system of inputs and feedback loops and environmental dance reveals itself as a metaphoric expression of the “system” that exists when the environmental dancer-researcher and environment establish the reciprocal bond of relationship.

## **Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being**

My research has developed alongside a complementary emergent worldview that inspires humans to value and develop a rich, personal relationship with the natural world that fosters appreciation for and understanding of the earth as the primary complex system; it inspires ways of living (sustainably) on the planet. This, of course, has been my quest for a paradigm of ideas that attempts to bring balance to a pre-existing Cartesian paradigm steeped in objectivist, atomistic, reductionist ways that has dominated Western thought and has shaped Western culture, a signature characteristic of the industrial revolution. It is also the source of our alienating, deleterious separation from nature, herself. This is a tension that has yet to be resolved, as Peats describes in *Blackfoot Physics*: “Indigenous science is a consistent way of being within the world; a way of binding people together and giving meaning to their lives; a technology for relating to the powers and spirits of the world. Moreover, Indigenous science implies a whole structure to knowledge and to ways of “coming to knowing” (2005, p. 46). Peat

proposes that this ideological dilemma is the by-product of what he regards as a collision of paradigms, a phenomenon that unfolding, as time passes and cultures continue to organically evolve: “In the West we have fragmented and specialized our knowledge into a variety of different compartments. For the People, however, knowledge forms a complete whole and includes those areas that we in the West call medicine, agriculture, history, geography, spirituality, law, economics—indeed, Indigenous science encompasses a whole culture and a whole way of life” (p. 47).

By examining this tension as a fundamental consideration of this inquiry, I began to understand that what I was seeking was a truly holistic science upon which to develop my artistic practice. Reflecting my own Native American heritage, the Indigenous perspective towards science aligns with many of the ways I view the human-nature relationship and is what guides my world view as well what seeks unity as a way to overcome the dualities of the dominant paradigm. *Native Science* describes these dualities through the lens of the indigenous world view:

The creative body and all that comprises it—mind, body, and spirit—are the creative, moving center of Native science. Although this may seem to be common sense, modern thinking abstracts the mind from the human body and the body of the world. This modern orientation, in turn, frequently disconnects Western science from the lived and experienced world of nature. The disassociation becomes most pronounced at the level of perception, because our perceptions orient us in the most elemental way to our surroundings. Receptivity to our surroundings combined with creativity characterizes our perception (Cajete., 2000, p.81).

And continuing to profile indigenous science as a holistic counterpart to Western science paradigm, Cajete qualifies defining aspects of Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous scientific protocol:

Like Western science, Indigenous science is sequential and builds on previous knowledge. But in Native traditions, guides or teachers—individuals that have gone that way before—are necessary. Building on prior learning and traditions is never a direct or linear path. Instead, Indigenous science pursues a rather meandering

path around things and over obstacles, a roundabout way. In the Western mind-set, getting from point A to B is a linear process, and in the Indigenous mind-set, arrival at B occurs through fields of relationships of relationships and establishment of a sense of meaning, a sense of territory, a sense of breadth of context. The psychologies of thinking and approach differ (p. 81).

It is just this idiosyncratic “meandering around things” and a general habit of nonlinear thinking that is the basis of my grounded theory/ phenomenological research on environmental dance.

### **A Systems View of the Universe**

To consider how environmental dance can inspire the rekindling of an “ecologically-sound” human/ nature relationship, we, as researchers must move closer to a definition of what environmental dance is. I have formulated this basic working and still evolving definition: Environmental dance is the expression of the reciprocal and fluid relationship of human [dancer] to nature [and nature to human] through the art of organized movement and motion in an abstract, often non-literal contemporary style, as it unfolds at once in time and space, in the theater of the natural environment. The concept of reciprocity (or exchange) that is explicitly claimed in my working definition above, directly refers to the idea of feedback loops which conceptually makes environmental dance compatible with any systems model and reveals its own systems thinking orientation. Fritjof Capra expresses the essence of how we have been able to begin to conceptualize an environmental dance “theory” from the by explaining the concept of systems thinking:

The ideas set forth by organismic biologists during the first half of the century helped to give birth to a new way of thinking—“systems thinking”—in terms of connectedness, relationships, context. According to the systems view, the essential properties of an organism, or living system, are properties of the whole, which none of the parts have. They arise from the interactions and relationships among the parts. These properties are destroyed when the system is dissected, either physically or theoretically, into isolated elements. Although we can discern

individual parts in any system, these parts are not isolated, and the nature of the whole is always different from the mere sum of its parts (Capra, 1996, p.29).

From the environmental dance perspective the creative process, itself, is essentially a systems thinking process. I attribute my strong systems theory leanings directly to my studies at the Center for Ecoliteracy, in Berkeley, California, under the direction of Fritz Capra. There I attended a seminar (“Art and Systems Science”) with Dr. Capra that presented a new holistic epistemology that I had previously only intuited would have a dramatic defining and transformational effect on the emergent genre of environmental dance. It now seems quite definite that environmental dance as practice, as performance and as a proposed pedagogy is a systems-oriented endeavor.

This systems analogy would also serve to identify the dance work (research and performances), the dancer(s), the audience and the performance site as nested, interconnected, inter-relational subsystems within the macrocosmic global system of the planet Earth. This leads one to consider that environmental dance is able to create both concrete and metaphorical renderings of earth system concepts that can be holistically-experienced and understood through its unique, active engagement of audiences, dancers and learners. Another characteristic of such engagement demonstrates a profound difference between traditional artistic dance as a performance medium and environmental dance that is worth noting: Traditional dance unfolds in a humanly-constructed “environment”—the conventional stage. In contrast, the “system” of environmental dance as embedded within the “systems” of nature, is real life, real time interplay with the natural environment, interpreted through a lens of nonlinear dynamics. It becomes an agent of connection, rather than an agent of separation from the real world.

As I observed my dance research team that day on site, as I describe above in the journaled narrative, I became aware of a sensed shift in my own perceptions of the unfolding rehearsal, research period, from watching two distinct and separate fields of phenomena (the dancer-

researcher juxtaposed to the rocky site where she worked). This is a subtle process, a discernible energetic, temporal and spatial shift: it seems as though time slows and the rocky site magnifies the presence of the dancer, her movements and her evolving spatial relationship to her surroundings. This is a critical point for me to consider because there have been artistic concerns in past performances that the giant jumbles and boulders that frame the dance, dwarf the human form, making her all but invisible. So, therefore, in the unity of dancer-researcher and site there is also a delicate balance where dancer-researcher and rocky site become equitable agents for one another.

### **A Bridge between Art and Science**

An obvious question arises when I suggest that environmental dance is complementary to a more traditional scientific inquiry into the environmental dance site and the human relationship to that site. That question is simply: what is the difference between art and science? The primary difference is that art is about subjective experience while science focuses on objective observation—this differentiation instantly reconstitutes the long-existing divide that separates the two equally important domains. While it is the task of art to interpret, express and to re-present experience in some nuanced way, science is a prescribed way of acquiring knowledge. I maintain that through the process of interpretation and expression we unearth a fuller, multi-dimensional knowledge of the focus of inquiry. Seemingly, this multi-dimensionality suggests a “something more” that approaches the idea of the gestalt, as described in Leonard Schlain’s *Art and Physics:*

*Parallel Visions in Space, Time, and Light:*

At the same time that quantum physicists began to wrestle with Bohr’s theory of complementarity, which is not classically scientific and seems to border on the spiritual, the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung promulgated his theory of synchronicity, the internal corollary in human experience of his external quantum idea. Like Bohr, Jung repudiated the conventional doctrine of causality. He proposed that all human



events interweave on a plane to which we are not consciously privy, so that in addition to prosaic cause and effect, human events are joined in a higher dimension by meaning. The principles of synchronicity and complementarity, bridging as they do the very separate domains of the psyche and the physical world, apply as well to the connection between art and physics.

Schlain, goes on to offer a term that succinctly captures my intuitive concept of a sensed

“something more”, a gestalt:

The German language encapsulates this idea in the word *zeitgeist*, which unfortunately has no single-word equivalent in English, but means “the spirit of the times.” When discoveries in unrelated fields begin to appear at the same time, as if they are connected, but the thread that connects them is clearly not causal, then commentators resort to proclaiming the presence of a *zeitgeist* (Schlain, 1993, p. 24).

By linking the emerging genre of environmental dance with a science (Goethe’s phenomenology of nature, which can be described as the holistic study of natural phenomenon), I am able to bridge the age-old perceived gap between the separated universes of art and science. In fact, I have come to think of Goethe’s scientific process as a science-based art form.

Environmental dance is presently a dynamically-evolving concept which, in my mind, holistically studies and seeks to unify two inter-related, interfacing yet distinct areas. One of these areas is artistic site-specific performance, an aesthetic event designed for a viewing public. The underlying philosophy that guides my work in this arena is one that seeks to reconnect the viewer intimately, symbolically, ritualistically and holistically with the natural site in which the environmental dance performance unfolds. Years of experience, artistic intuition and verbal audience feedback provide me with information and anecdotal evidence that this “bonding” is spontaneous, instantaneous and residual (if not permanent). The same effect holds true for the dancer/ performer as well. The act of environmental dance as well as the witnessing of it unfolding on site works to holistically reconnect dancers to the landscape with a deepened sense of place; the unity of dancer and site is made visible in the performance. The audience has very much the

same circumstance, vicariously through the experiencing the dance performance--the dynamic unfolding of the dialogue between dancer and landscape. Through engagement of the whole person, the physical, cognitive, affective and spiritual domains are unified in the endeavor to heal these severed earth-ties.

The continued exploration of these ideas through the journey of discovery afforded by this research project, has revealed adventurous, inspiring areas of interest for my research team and me, as I seek to find ways to understand the mechanisms of the human/ nature relationship specifically through the medium of environmental dance. I believe that this knowledge is essential and prerequisite to the task of educating (in many instances this is actually a process of re-educating, bringing back knowledge that has become relegated to the recesses of forgotten connection of humans-to the-more-than-human-world) for an informed and responsive global citizenry.

The effects of E.O. Wilson's biophilia (1984) and other such classic theories respectfully aside, I surmise that the locus of the human/ nature bonding event lies somewhere embedded within the relationship between subject and object (dancer/ audience and natural environment); it extends the previous discussion of resolving persistent tensions of duality. I perceive that it is at this dialectic juncture that a profound reconciliation of the subject/ object tension and separation occurs. Such reconciliation is simply the reintegration of human with nature (a reestablishment of a much needed equilibrium state) thus, blurring the lines of separation and duality. We are *holistically* bonded to nature (returning to E.O. Wilson's claim) and we cannot function and flourish as a species without a balanced relationship with her--to attempt to do so (as we are presently) is both perilous and futile. Seemingly, the undeniable yearning for such a bond exists within us in a dormant state just below the detectable surface of the human collective

unconscious—environmental dance performance purposefully seeks out this below-the-surface instinctive truth and draws it forth to be expressed through our art. I suggest that when the tensions of subject-object are resolved, the door opens to a powerful, integrative, holistic way of knowing.

Ecological exploration provides a foundational background of the specific features, the natural phenomena and “science” that characterizes the site and typically includes a survey of existing flora and fauna, ecosystems and distinctive biogeochemical features that define the site in physical terms. Taking my cue from David Orr (1994), I revel in the prospect of transforming concepts of the Laws of Thermodynamics and Basic Principle of Ecology, for example, into the metaphorical expressions of dance movement; danced notions of equilibrium and entropy might certainly add a rich, textural layer of context that immediately connects the dance piece to the site of its performance with a sense of authenticity and depth of meaning (Orr, p.14). With a similar approach, my students have “danced” the carbon cycle and the water cycle and have garnered a unique perspective and endless creative insights by “becoming” the phenomenon in question. Such a creative experience serves to immediately dissolve the “at-arms-length” attitude of a more objective, abstracted method. In this way, art suddenly becomes science and science conveys new knowledge: about human nature and the human-nature relationship, about cultural messages embedded within the dance that often convey a nuanced sense of place and belonging, about the geological and geographical history of the site where the environmental dance performance unfolds, and about a very different way to perceive the landscape and to experience the land.

The microcosmic nature of site-specific (environmental dance) interpretations of the natural environment readily reference a larger global perspective and rise to the occasion of universal expressions extrapolated at the macrocosmic level as well. This ever-present tension and interplay of the micro/ macro realms of reality is expressed in holistic terms:

The Gaian system includes the totality of life, from the tiniest squiggling bacteria miles deep in the ocean to the high-flying Sandhill cranes overtopping Mt. McKinley in Alaska. It also includes all that life touches and affects. The Gaian system thus extends above the cranes into the stratosphere, because ozone there derives from oxygen, and then from life. It extends into the sediments of the deep ocean, where benthic bacteria and other creatures living on the rain of debris from the ocean's surface affect the chemistry of the water. The Gaian system, then, constitutes an immense whole; furthermore, we are just beginning to understand its organizational properties (Volk, 2003, 4).

Because of the inherent nature of (environmental) dance as patterned human movement expression, unfolding at once in time and space, our inquiry leads us to consider that environmental dance is especially sensitive to the continuum of changing spatial and temporal scales that define the perceived realities of the physical environment. Microcosmic experience becomes the foundation for comprehending the complexities of the natural world at the macrocosmic level, which may ultimately help humans discern patterns (repeating motifs and archetypal models revealing similarities in form and function), and cycles of interconnectivity (as reflected in biogeochemical phenomena). This “dance” between scales and the elucidation of embedded patterns that together, suggest a fractal relativity also appears to be a case of Bohr's concept of complementarity.

There is a synergy between art and science that emanates from Goethe's method; fortuitously, I discovered the Goethean way of “doing science” and then employed it as research tool and model of the creative process in this environmental dance inquiry to establish a bridge between disparate disciplines and to intentionally infuse the research with the dimensionality of a holistic science. Therefore, my research embodies the:

Complementarity of art [environmental dance] and physics [Goethe's holistic science] and the ways these two fields intertwine...form a lattice upon which we all can climb a little higher to construct our view of reality. Understanding this connection should enhance our appreciation of the vitality of art and deepen our sense of awe before the ideas of modern physics. Art and physics, like wave and

particle, are an integrated duality: They are simply two different but complementary facets of a single description of the world. Integrating art and physics will kindle a more synthesized awareness that begins in wonder and ends with wisdom (Shlain, p.24).

By enjoining art and science in this research process, my research team and I suspect that we are experiencing a (new) *zeitgeist* as well.

### **Jewel Five--Patterns, Fractals, and Nature's Pattern Language**

#### ***Journal Entry (Field Journal—"Learning the "Language of Nature"") [5.1]***

*Today, I am orienting two of my dancer-researchers to the project—my mission is twofold: 1) to introduce them to the Goethean process that guides the research project and 2) to introduce what I call "the language of nature". This language will become the framework for the developing, emerging movement vocabulary that will enable the dancer-researcher to "dialogue" with natural phenomena. Through the use of this uniquely sourced language (from nature, herself), I surmise that we will be able to experience the natural landscape in a deeper, more authentic way, which will also transform the way we observe, experience, interpret and express her. Through this nuanced approach, we will be able to "dialogue" with nature (including and especially our dance site(s)) and co-create an authentic expression of that reciprocal dialogue. I carry with me, my basket of natural objects (phenomena) to the quiet indoor studio where we will be working on this cold, early-Winter day.*

*In the studio, I place my natural objects in an arc across the floor—there are acorns, starfish, shells, pinecones, branches and roots, bark from trees, stones, seeds, leaves, feathers and flowers. I place a candle, a small fan, a container of soil and a small, clear glass bottle of water nearby, on the floor, as well. There is a decidedly ceremonial, ritual-like feel to this arrangement. To complete my interactive display, I scatter well-worn and carefully chosen photos of scenes-in-nature around my eclectic assortment of nature's "things" that I habitually use in my workshops for children AND adults. I begin playing a CD of nature soundscapes and encourage my orientees to observe and experience what is before them. I am always excited to introduce the idea of "the language of nature" and as I lead my future dancer-researchers through a series of warm-up sequences that carefully explore the infinite kinds of movements, shapes and energies that we can draw from the expressive, interpretive body.*

*I differentiate between "ephemeral" (ever-changing, shifting and evolving phenomena) and the "static" (unchanging, "frozen") shapes of phenomena<sup>32</sup>. We discuss the vivid examples we*

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<sup>32</sup> "Ephemeral" and "static" are terms I have borrowed from the work of Rowena Pattee Kryder, Ph.D. See: Kryder, R. P. (2000). *Sophia's body: Seeing primal patterns in nature*. Crestone, CO: Golden Point Productions.

*observe in the natural world every day—the fluid movement of water in a stream to the once-visible shape of a cloud above us, evaporating and dissipating into thin air. We differentiate these from the static appearance of tree/ branch shapes, lines, points, circles, etc. We discuss how the idea that anything in nature is permanently static is only an illusion. There are scales of evolutionary, temporal change—some of these scales are so subtle that it is difficult for humans to discern. We are in agreement that the natural world is very much alive, dynamic and ever-transforming.*

*I lead my research-team's newest members through a series of movement explorations that allow them to discover first hand, that “the language of nature” is already fully embodied by each and every human being. Thus, the “language of nature” is universal communication. We have only to remember that and to begin to speak this beautiful language fluently with the body-mind.*

*I watch intently as the two dancer-researchers twist spines and spiral outward into the studio, stretch limbs, contract and expand, experience circling in a multitude of ways, rediscover the stability of a triangular base, experiment fearlessly with the synergistic aspects of “form” and “function” and finally, how this embodied language deeply and profoundly connects us to nature...*

### **Nature's Language of Repeating Patterns**

One of the very first discussions I had with my dancer-researcher team, at the onset of this research project focused on the seemingly metaphoric (if not somewhat esoteric) notion of “dialoguing” with nature. To be able to directly communicate with the more-than-human world does seem, at first glance, to lie outside the realm of rational science and everyday human experience. But, by taking a generous second look, we can begin to view this concept as the resurrection of the long-lost skill (a legacy from our indigenous ancestors) that we as humans, as embedded members of that world, must rediscover and hone, if we wish to nurture a deep and abiding connection to the natural world--to be able to read her signs and understand what she is telling us. It is in this vital, profound shift in consciousness that we begin to not only recognize but also reconnect with shared natural “laws” as well as a kind of (Goethean-like) “lawfulness” that help to give definition to the phenomenal world of which we are such an integral part. The

laws of which I speak, are the fractal reflections of timeless patterns we can discern through our contact with, observations of and existence within the natural world. Ubiquitously reoccurring patterns connect all phenomenal manifestations, at all scale levels. We begin to see these shared threads of commonality, the richly patterned tapestry that stitches together similar form and function in a unifying, systematized composition of echoing similarities. Similar patterns reappear and are manifested anew, within a broadest range of phenomena. These help us to discern unexpected similarities and surprising differences, which can materially manifest in bold or subtle ways.

The repeating patterns in nature I refer to, become the observable templates that generate and communicate the information we transfer from our lived experience in the material world (outer geography), that, in turn, become integrated through cognition, and draw out that which recognizes and resonates with the “nature” existing within us (inner geography). When we express this patterned “language” through words, the expression becomes a poetic translation of metaphors that transcend the material realm—in the context of environmental dance, this metaphoric expression becomes visible in its symbolic form as the environmental dancers’ movement vocabulary. One only has to watch the unfolding environmental dance performance to be reminded in an unexpected way, the image of the unfurling spiral of the springtime fern in the spiraling twists and turns of the dancer’s expressive body in action. Arms outreached and gesturing upward with leg extended instantly remind us of the branching system of tree limbs lifting toward the sun. In this manner, we, as environmental dancers recognize that we do speak the same language and there is meaning and wisdom held within those templates of form (pattern/shape) and function (action/movement) that we experience in our discoveries unearthed while working on site. Audience

members experience these repeating pattern gestures and recognize these as reflections of nature, coming to life as a new iterative expression of itself, in the unfolding dance performance.

### **Gestures and Essences**

All natural phenomena demonstrate their essences through the expression of gesture. As a part of nature, then, it seems that “language” in any form must organically spring from this original source as primeval gestural language. Through a phenomenological lens, it could even be said that language, or the “flesh of language” as David Abrams puts it (p.73), is a living phenomenon, a fractal reflection of the thing “speaking” (Abrams, 1996; Brown & Toadvine, 2003; Harding, 2006; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Volk, 1995;). Steven Harding explains the role of language in *Animate Earth* (Harding, 2006) that language is a key aspect of this work [holistic science aiming to unify fact and value] (p. 37). Harding further explains how language plays a critical role in the ways that we engage the natural world of which we are an integral part:

In searching for this language, we need to fearlessly adopt what James Hillman, the founder of Archetypal Psychology, has called “personifying”, which he defines as the “*spontaneous experiencing, envisioning and speaking of the configurations of existence as psychic presences*”. We need to allow ourselves to be open to the subjective agency at the heart of every ‘thing’ in the world so we can speak and act appropriately in their presence and on their behalf. We must keep alive and nurture a sense of ‘otherness’ of whatever phenomenon we might be considering, allowing a strange kind of intimacy to develop in which the urge to control is replaced by a quickening awe at the astonishing intelligence that lies at the heart of all things. (Harding, p. 37).

Further, Harding warns:

We must oppose the tendency of conventional science to de-personalize the world and hence to control it. We must oppose its desire to scrape away all subjectivity and to make us feel that science is value neutral—for if the world truly feels, then we cannot look at the world as outsiders—we are related to it and embedded in it, and the ethical dimension is there with us right from the start. This way of speaking recognizes that for our sensing, feeling and intuition the whole of nature is a vast encompassing *being*, whereas for our thinking it is also a complex,



interconnected *system*. Thus, holistic science attempts to develop a language which talks about the being or *life* of things—of their felt, existential quality, without alienating the rational mind (p. 37).

Of course, this is what Goethean science holds as its own mission. In order to truly ‘dialogue’ with and express (or to authentically convey communication as an agent of the natural world) we must operate within a field of evolving, dynamic aliveness rather than an inanimate, deadened stasis. By becoming a participating, embodying extension of that field we no longer dance between two worlds but rather we become the bridge that enjoins those traditional dualities and make the shift in perception and consciousness—this is what environmental dance does. By making these two vital shifts we become open conduits that can readily absorb, express and convey what nature is saying to us.

### **A Bridge between Culture and Nature**

In particular, what has emerged from this research project is that environmental dance is just such a vehicle for the expression of the language of nature, where human spoken language still lags behind: “Only if words are felt, bodily presences, like echoes or waterfalls, can we understand the power of the spoken language to influence, alter, and transform the perceptual world” (Abram, 1996, p.89). What spoken words cannot adequately express, the dancing human body viscerally and vicariously conveys: to the audience, to other dancer-performers, to the dancer herself and to the natural landscape where the dance both originates and is performed. David Abram describes the phenomenological process (a Merleau-Ponty’s derivative) that inspires a way of looking at “environmental dance” as an expressive, interpretive proxy for the natural phenomena that are the foci of our dances:

(1) The event of perception, experientially considered, is an inherently interactive, *participatory* event, a reciprocal interplay between the perceiver and the perceived. (2) Perceived things are encountered by the perceiving body as animate, living powers that actively draw us into relation. Our spontaneous, pre-

conceptual experiences yields no evidence for a dualistic division between animate and “inanimate” phenomena, only for relative distinctions between diverse forms of animate-ness. (3) The perceptual reciprocity between our sensing bodies and the animate, expressive landscape both engenders and supports our more conscious, linguistic reciprocity with others. The complex interchange we call “language” is rooted in the non-verbal exchange that is always already going on between our own flesh and the flesh of the world (Abram, p.89).

Abram concludes:

(4) Human languages, then, are informed not only by the structures of the human body, and the human community, but by the evocative shapes and patterns of the more-than-human terrain. Experientially considered, language is no more the special property of the human organism than it is an expression of the animate earth that enfolds us (p. 89).

I view these four (4) points as the prerequisites that qualify environmental dance as a method that enables humans to speak the language of nature. Further, if we were to consider the animate earth and all of her sub-phenomena as a hermeneutic text, we can imagine that the human body/environmental dancer is enabled by these qualifying characteristics to be able to ‘read’ nature as a text and then, interprets and expresses text to those who are not fluent in her language. I spoke earlier of the vicarious nature of environmental dance and I would like to suggest that is through the vicarious experience transferred from dancer to audience member (as well as the transfer of knowledge and meaning from dancer to dancer) that the audience member (and dancer) may also become fluent in this beautiful, holistic language.

The more we become fluent in the language of nature, the further we move away from a paradigm of dualities. We begin to see that human verbal language is limited in its ability to communicate authentically and accurately, the experiences we have in nature. We begin to sense a more primal way of communicating—through images and energies, and through those serendipitous, synergistic moments when the dancing body converges with an element of nature to create a feeling of something whole--something greater, clearer and more connected and in-

the-flow than words could ever convey. This is as true for the observer as it is for the experiencer. It is certainly the case of the environmental dancer-researcher who feels that she better understands her co-researcher's primary experiences on site, by watching her move through the research tasks of the day or dance sequences during site-specific rehearsals on Mt. Monadnock's rocky, windswept summit. To paraphrase Martha Graham, "the body does not lie".

### **Unity and Unifications: Overcoming Binary Tensions**

Environmental dance takes us out of our heads and enables us to sink down deep into the body where mind and body may become unified. This is an important primary discover we as dancer-researchers have made, early on in this complex, ever-evolving, grounded theory research project. The critical union of body and mind not only answers to the cause of resolving the confounding dualities that would otherwise, prevent the holistic worldview underlying this research, to take root, but also enables us to transcend the limitations of the spoken word and to elevate the ability of the body-mind to speak its own experiential truths in a non-verbal way. This is the holistic intelligence and elegance of the body-mind. And we are the embodied living proof that it is, in fact, possible and fruitful, to learn to dialogue with nature and all aspects of our interplaying human and more-than-human world.

This is not to say that my dancer-research team and I never utter another word again—we did not abandon the English language. To the contrary--journal writing (see Jewel Six) and lengthy de-briefing discussions were an important part of the research process. Talking to each other, either informally, or in formal de-briefings provided yet another way to re-present our research experiences and discoveries. Very much in keeping with our holistic paradigm, we found that this approach created a kind of synergistic balance between what the body-minds were experiencing and creating with the written and verbal accounts of those events. Through

movement we explored, observed, and moved with the mountain to hear what the mountain had to say to us; we learned through experience how to respond to nature as she spoke, how to retrieve the long-forgotten language that we began to recognize in patterns that appeared everywhere in every facet of the natural landscape where we worked and how to translate this profoundly rich language into speech and journaled accounts. As environmental dance researchers, we had learned how to traverse back and forth between the verbal human world and non-verbal world of the more-than-human phenomena around us and within us!

### **“Dialoguing” with Phenomenal Nature**

The idea of dialoguing with nature, or that natural phenomena can actually participate in a back-and-forth conversation with humans is usually met with raised eyebrows and doubt. Introducing my dance research team to the idea of conversing with the landscape was met with a gratifying spirit of adventure—several members of my team had performed a number of times on Mt. Monadnock and as a result had spent countless hours on her summit in all kinds of weather and conditions. They already knew her well and they looked forward to being able to forge a deeper relationship with her.

Already well-versed in the recognition of the archetypal patterns we find repeating themselves over and over again throughout the natural landscape and beyond, my team easily understood how Goethe’s process would become the portal to enter this mysterious, magical non-verbal world of dialoguing with nature. On our first excursion to the site at the summit of the mountain the introductory task was to simply sit and observe—to engage our senses and body radar in order to see beyond what we normally notice. This, as we found, is a skill that takes time and practice to master, but it began the arduous process of learning the language from nature herself—we did not impose or project our thoughts, biases or theories on to her. We

observed birds in flight, cracks in the granite shelf where we danced, vernal summit pools shimmering in the sunlight and the ever evolving movement of mist and clouds above and around us—everything spoke to us and revealed to us vital parts of the story of the landscape.

As researchers we became a part of that ever-changing mosaic:

One of the salient features of the Goethean approach is its striving to stay close to what is being studied. It values concreteness over abstraction. Through theories, models, and other mental constructs we place a human-made thought structure between ourselves and the world and become the primary context through which we see and assess it. So, for example, when we are dealing with life and ecology in the frame of object thinking, we think in terms of mechanisms...It is a different matter to ask something in a much more open-ended way: what do you have to teach me? This question can become the beginning of a dialogue in which we strive to learn what the phenomena have to tell us—a process that will no doubt involve giving up the frame of mind we may have grown fond of and working to develop new and fresh perspectives...It is a matter of practice—finding new ways of perceiving, imagining, and thinking (Hoffman, Holdrege & Dalton, 2005, p.3).

By taking the time to develop this holistic research practice, we, as a team, held space for the mountain to speak to us and in turn we learned how to answer her.

When we are immersed in nature, when we move through her landscapes with an underlying intention to really know her, and when the focus of our work as artists requires this deepened awareness as a living, dynamic, reciprocal connection to her we begin to discern her language. We must go beyond mere listening and observing however, and reach into the depths of our more primitive cellular selves to bring to the surface of our consciousness the memory of the shared forgotten language that resonates and echoes within us, connecting our primal, archetypal inner worlds with the outer geographies where we experience our lived daily interactions in and with the natural world. We begin to see a common thread of repeating patterns appearing at multiple scales throughout the material, phenomenal world. We begin to become sensitive detectors of a unifying theme of patterns that speaks to us in a common code of

expressions that unites seemingly disparate phenomena in a poetic dance of form and function that are echoes of this shared language.

### **An Emergent Feature and a Primary Mission**

The journey of becoming aware of and being able to readily identify these archetypal templates has become an integral emergent feature of this research. Nature's language of repeating patterns is a fundamental piece of the puzzle that may contribute to our ability to heal the jagged, gaping split between human and nature, as we begin re-cognize ourselves as reflections of nature's fields, forms and functions. There is something of ourselves to be found here, at this source--imprinted by and existing within every whirling hurricane, every unfurling fern, every sea shell and every nebula. And while making such connections not only begins to heal the split we have long-suffered, it also opens the door to metaphorical, poetic expressions of connection and commonalities, which can rightly be claimed as the purpose of art and the artists' work. In a very powerful way, environmental art can be seen as having a primary mission of rejoining humans with the natural world. And environmental dancers who master and speak nature's pattern language fluently, are the poets who translate the timeless yet ever-evolving phenomenological narratives of nature as reflections of our human selves. We begin to realize that the paradigmatic degrees of separation are artificial human constructs. In so many ways, we really are stardust.

Concerning the topic of repeating patterns we observe in nature (as both a phenomenal and metaphoric, symbolic language of the natural world), it turns out that there is a wide range of existing, scholarly literature—in terms of this research project, however, these sources of unifying ideas, theories, and discoveries did not roll out in the expected orderly, logical fashion. Nor do these sources remain solely the property of any one particular discipline. Rather, the

literature sprouts from even the most unlikely of places, and adds richness, diversity, and the validation afforded through academic triangulation, contributing toward the emerging portrait of environmental dance.

The bountifully diverse disciplinary areas I speak of include art, quantum physics, philosophy, spiritual studies, systems science, architecture, literature, biology, astronomy, and metaphysics (Alexander, 2002; Bachelard, 1994; Ball, 1999; Bohm, 1980; Bohm, 1998; Briggs & Peat, 1999; Cajete, 2000; Capra, 1996; Capra, 2007; Conforti, 1999; Edwards, 2006; Jantsch, 1980; Kauffman, 1995; Kryder, 1994; Kryder, 2000; Maturana, & Varela, 1980; Peat, 2002; Pickover, 1995; Seamon, & Zajonc, (Eds.), 1998; Schneider, 1995; Stevens, 1974; Thompson, 1992; Volk, 1995). The emergent discoveries and connections fostered by this research are the result of the reflections of these disciplines as they merge and move beautifully across Indra's net, in a unique unity of ideas—these elevate our understanding of this new genre of dance. In a true transdisciplinary endeavor, environmental dance enjoins the arts, sciences, and philosophies in a gestalt-like network that can only enhance our understanding of and connection to the natural world and universe, as well.

### **Universal Archetypes**

One major influence on the development of this research project is the work of visionary visual artist and scholar Rowena Pattee Kryder, Ph.D.<sup>33</sup> In her book *Sophia's Body: Seeing Primal Patterns in Nature*, she outlines a comprehensive series of twelve predominant repeating patterns that present consistently through nature. These twelve iconic patterns include: 1) the point, 2) the step, 3) the branch, 4) the spiral, 5) the radial, 6) the loop, 7) the column, 8) the

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<sup>33</sup> See **APPENDIX K**, Nature's Repeating Patterns (my photographic interpretation of Kryder's archetypal patterns).

wave, 9) the triangle, 10) the circle, 11) the grid, and 12) the laminar flow (2000). Kryder also identifies four (4) more primary categories of organizational templates that include 1) mineral (hexagon), 2) plant (cup), 3) animal—four-legged (square) and 4) human (pentagon) (Kryder, 2000). The author offers a defining, archetypal function as it manifests in nature, illustrated by a phenomenal example that exists in nature. Kryder explains:

...Twelve patterns and four templates are introduced to familiarize the reader with Sophia's Body as a language of form. This language is already known by everyone with eyes to see—for it permeates Nature and humans use it in art, invention, design, and culture-making on many levels. The language of Nature and Spirit (Sophia's Body) is illumined by qualities that have color, shape and movement. They also have sound but that is another story. The qualities of archetypal energies that shimmer in space, in realms beyond the space-time world we perceive. Yet those energies flow down through Nature where we have our embodiment. It is through our feelings, our empathy-intuition at-one with our bodies that we can know them. These archetypal energies manifest in twelve distinct forms (p.7)...

I extended this analysis a step further by adding an example of how these patterns spring organically from within the movement capabilities of the dancing human body—demonstrating, that through Kryder's criteria, humans are an integral part of the natural world, fully fluent in her language.

### **“Invisible Forces Made Visible”**

Michael S. Schneider, (1995) offers a holistic (almost Goethean) analysis of how nature's pattern language manifests (*A Beginner's Guide to Constructing the Universe: The Mathematical Archetypes of Nature, Art and Science*)—he illustrates his analysis, using the process of constructing a circle with a drawing compass as an almost ritualized act and reminds me of a sacred geometry course I once took: “The point is made, the center established. The compass stands upright on it. Now we open the compass. This seemingly trivial act is an important stage in the geometric metaphor of the cosmic creating process. It represents the first



archetypal principle of the Monad: equal expansion in all directions (p. 9). He continues the analysis:

In many myths, the universal creating process begins with an expansion from a divine center, like the very first Biblical command, “Let there be Light”. In Hindu mythology, the dimensionless Brahma speaks aloud the word *aham*, “I am,” a word made from the first, middle, and final letter of the Sanskrit alphabet, which represents the circle’s three parts; the center, the radius, and the circumference, and our own spiritual center, psychological reaches, and outer material form. The opening compass represents the first manifestation of God’s light and Brahma’s voice, illuminating Ripples expanding in a pond present an optical illusion. We assume that the water is moving outward but it’s not. What we see is a wave of *energy* from the impacting pebble racing outward through the water, equally in all directions. Watch a floating object as waves pass by. The object only bobs up and down while the wave traverses horizontally. Visible matter merely makes the energy pattern visible. In a small puddle, attraction among the water molecules holds the wave together. Large ocean waves are held together by gravity (p.10).

Like Kryder (and in a similar way as I have intuited in the field with my dance research team)

Schneider concludes that “Nature’s forms represent invisible forces made visible” (p. 11).

Furthermore, this is precisely what the dancing human body does within the context of environmental dance—it translates energy into form, often enhanced with a layer of metaphorical meaning.

I see the patterns as the fabric that comprise all natural phenomena, at any scale, and I have adopted Kryder’s defined patterns as the operative language of nature which, in turn, become the primary source of the environmental dance movement vocabulary. Early on, my dancer-researchers were introduced to these basic forms and functions, in the field from which they emanate—form referring to static, discernible and replicable shapes and functions referring to the plastic, evolving characteristics of non-static natural phenomena. In other words, I often distinguish between static pattern displays such as the visually-perceived straight line of a tree trunk, or the direct flight pattern of a dragonfly (straight lines do manifest frequently in nature);

alternately, I refer to the ephemeral, ever-transforming pattern displays, such as shifting, dissipating cloud formations or the reverberating concentric circles of the ripple created by a stone thrown into a pond. Further differentiation, refers to the locus of the unfolding replication of one of nature's ubiquitous patterns as human interpretation and re-expression of nature's gestures—I specify patterns that are re-expressed within the human body in contrast to those patterns that are generated by the human body in, on or around the external landscape.

The environmental dancer's moving, expressive body becomes the vessel that uniquely holds and re-interprets nature's own expressions. The dancing body channels those expressions

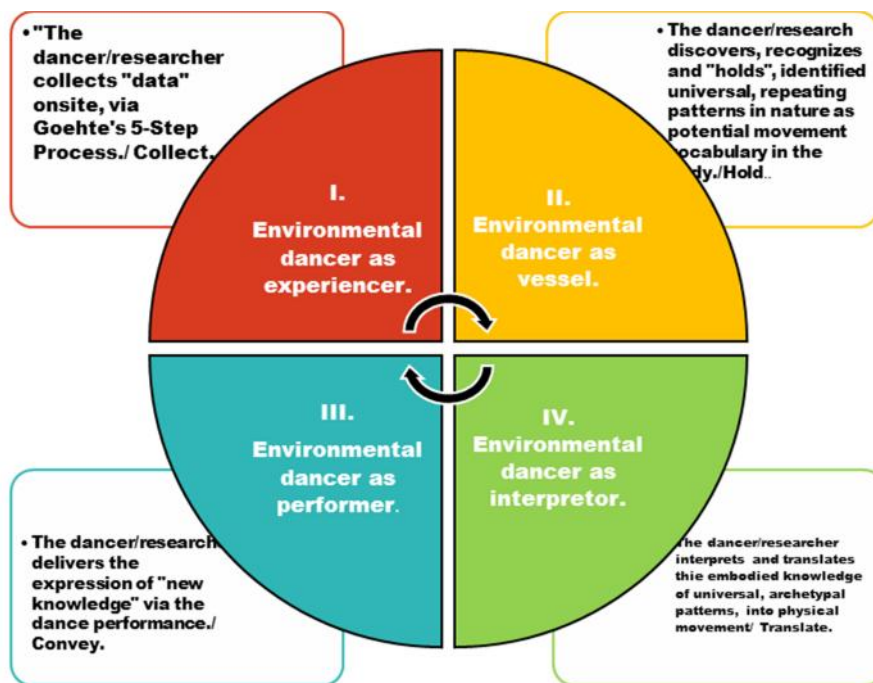


Figure 23: From site-specific research to site-specific performance--the creative environmental dance process of generating and conveying new knowledge (D. Emo ©).

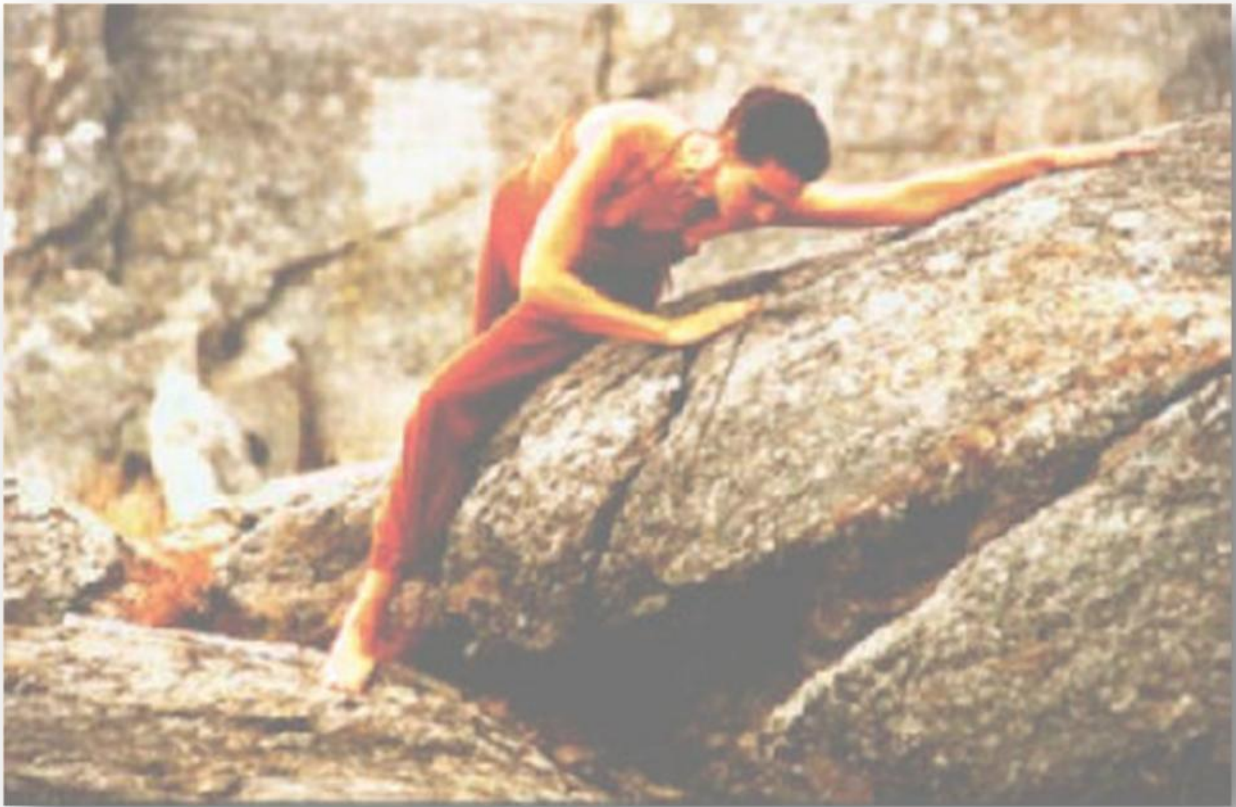
with a profound understanding and translations of these expressive archetypal forms and energies. These translated expressions manifest in the dancer's created movement that move from its original source of inspiration (the dynamic, expressive landscape) through the expressive vessel (of the dancing human body) outward to the receptive awareness of the observing, participating audience and co-performers.

Environmental dancers (and researchers) are on a quest to recognize the latent, forgotten yet none the less, embodied image-laden language of the landscape--the universal threads of images that stitch together the fabric of all natural phenomenon into a rich and dynamically-alive tapestry. It is not so much that my dancer-researchers and I discover these archetypal patterns I previously describe; it is more that we recognize them and single them out from a field of evolutionary (and paradigmatic) noise that keeps us from going home to these long-lost parts of humanity. Nature is our great archetypal reservoir—she has relentlessly been the loyal keeper of the (nested) language that connects all within the universe.

### **The Poetic Nature of Environmental Dance**

As I segue to the concept of poetics (since the environmental dancer is first and foremost, a poet who *poetically* conveys an expression of the natural environment through the dance embedded within the landscape), and thus, acknowledging the power of nature's language to organically convey a metaphorical layer of expression through the instrument of the dancer's expressive body, I use a passage from Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (1992) where he speaks metaphorically about the phenomenon of nests and their primitiveness: "With nests and, above all, shells, we find a whole series of images that I am going to try to characterize as primal

images; images that bring out the primitiveness in us” (p. 91).



*Figure 24: "Sprit Caller", performed by D. Eno, on Mt. Monadnock (Photo, DEFDW©).*

As environmental dancers we are nested within the landscape, mountain, world and universe (our embodied experiences anchored in the immediate here-and-now of the landscape but reaching outward to metaphorically connect to the timeless, expanding scales of universal material existence), so to me, Bachelard's nest metaphor is an apt one—we all know and recognize the magical, poetic, metaphorical power of a bird's nest:

And yet it is living nests that could introduce a phenomenology of the actual [universal] nest, of the nest found in natural surroundings, and which becomes for a moment the center—the term is no exaggeration—of an entire universe, the evidence of a cosmic situation. Gently I lift a branch. In the nest is a setting bird.

But it doesn't fly away, it only quivers a little. I tremble at having caused it to tremble. I am afraid that this setting bird will realize that I am a man, a being that has lost the confidence of birds. I remain motionless. Slowly the bird's fear and my own fear of causing fear are allayed—or so I imagine. I breathe easily again, and let go of the branch. I'll come back tomorrow, Today, I am happy, because some birds have built a nest in my garden (pp. 94- 95).

What Bachelard has done with his lyrical prose capturing the essence of a bird's nest, the environmental dancer-researcher does with her dancing, expressive body, embedded within the dynamic natural landscape—resulting in the poetic re-expression of a feature, facet or some other essential detail inherent to that living landscape which simultaneously serves as the stage where the dance is unfolding at once in the space-time of the natural landscape. The landscape performs with the environmental dancer and it is ephemeral and dynamically-expressive, in its own right.

Earth system scientist Tyler Volk (1995) links what he calls *metapatterns* (a pattern of patterns and also the title of his book) to metaphor as well. Volk states:

To me, a metapattern is a pattern so wide-flung that it appears through the spectrum of reality; in clouds, rivers, planets; in cells, organisms and ecosystems; in art, architecture, and politics. The third set, representing all of human creativity, is especially rich with what I perceive as metapatterns—as it should be. Images and insights that pull at my own thoughts are sure to have influenced those of others...I use the word metapatterns in the Batesonian spirit—as a pattern of patterns—and seek examples at the very broadest scale (pp. vii-ix).

Seemingly the application of nature's wisdom, comes from the human ability to recognize and recover this lost part of ourselves. As artists, we can only create our environmental dances from a place of such reclamation combined with an honoring deference to nature's own pervasive language as it occurs in all aspects of phenomenal life and at all scales—as artists and researchers we speak directly with nature as a way to forge a deep connection to this primal, perennial wisdom. And we learn to listen intently to what nature has to say. In turn, we convey new knowledge in the form of a new genre of dance—environmental dance. The site of the new

knowledge is the conjoined expressive human body-mind in the midst of the natural world in a poetic duet, re-interpreting the essence of that intimate, on-going dialogue we have with the landscape.

### **An Energetic Exchange between Dancer and Landscape**

Considering together the realm of metaphorical expression and the phenomenal realm of primordial patterns found throughout all of nature, I would like to refer to Michael Conforti's *Field, Form and Fate: Patterns in Mind, Nature & Psyche*. In his book, Conforti makes four (4) points that are deeply relevant to the subject of nature's repeating patterns in the context of discerning how a language of nature manifests and how being fluent in this language has strikingly become the domain of the environmental dancer. In particular, these areas of interest are 1) *Archetypal field theory* which, in a notably transdisciplinary way, combines the work of Carl Jung and F. David Peat; 2) Ervin Lazlo's *Vacuum plenum field*; 3) Jung's interest in religious ritual and the concept of *anamnesis* and finally, 4) The link between ritual and the need for a holistic, non-verbal language as a vehicle of both transmission and conveyance.

Conforti, a Jungian trained scholar, offers his definition of an archetypal field:

A field is an energetic component of an archetype, which exerts its influence over time and space. This influence is not bound by space and time constraints. Rather, we find that in contrast to fields in the outer world which are space-time dependent, such as gravitational and electromagnetic fields, archetypal fields are nonlocal, as evidenced, for instance, in telepathy, synchronicities, and the non-local transmission of information, etc. Essential to the concept of archetypal fields is the finding that they are dynamic, not static, and involve interrelationships (1999, pp.22-23).

If we apply this definition to nature's archetypal language, we can see that these repeating patterns pre-exist the conditions that allow them to emerge (a situation identified in Jungian terms as being 'a priori'). Further, these archetypes do not exist in a vacuum; instead they are

highly interactional and combine to create a web of complex manifestations and phenomena. Taken in the context of environmental dance as the force of transmission (conveying the information stored in the archetypal repeating patterns that exist in nature) we see that the environmental dance-researcher is embedded in a field of pattern, which she explores, observes and psychologically integrates within. The field exists externally, the transformation of phenomenal information takes place within the dancer-researcher psyche (inner geography) and then is re-expressed in the form of environmental dance, unfolding at once in the time-space continuum which is once again, a return to the realm of outer geography.

Holistic physicist F. David Peat adds to the theory:

I don't see an exact parallel between archetypal fields and electromagnetic [ones]. The latter are local, carry energy, and operate with mechanical forces. I think the former are fields of "form," non-local and may only carry what could perhaps be called "subtle energy". On the other hand we are also bot [referring to the work of Conforti and Peat] leaning towards a second sort of energy-carrying field that is localized around two people or a landscape [or both] (personal communication) (In Conforti, p.42).

What catches the eye in this short passage is the mentioning of subtle energy in the midst of the comparison of archetypal and electromagnetic fields. While Peats acknowledges there are definite differences between the two existing field types he also seems to be suggesting that there is room in the theory to consider a third kind of permeating field, that being a subtle energy field. As I understand, subtle energy fields are often associated with ritual and other metaphysical phenomena; indigenous healers, for example, work with subtle energy fields. Rowena Pattee Kryder offers a definition in *Sacred Ground to Sacred Space: Visionary Ecology, Perennial Wisdom, Environmental Ritual and Art*:

The various aspects of subtle energy are intuitively known and felt by dowzers and sensitives of various cultures, but they can be difficult to measure scientifically. Such energy is often regarded as a continuous field that permeates

bodies or objects. Other aspects of this energy, which can work magic, are transmitted and affected by consciousness. When invoked through ritual, aspects of this energy may also regenerate the body or the landscape (p. 3).

Kryder also identifies five (5) distinct categories of subtle categories: 1) “the divine realm”; 2) “the archetypal realm”; 3) “the space-time realm”; 4) “the inner realm”; and 5) the cultural realm (Kryder, p. 3). Environmental dance lives as a complex phenomenon within all five of these subtle energy realms. Given the information here, it is possible and plausible that the mediation of subtle energy in the context of environmental dance, is the joint effort of the dynamic landscape and the dancing, expressive body-mind of the environmental dancer. Such mediation is the actual energetic exchange that is the dialogue between the dancer-researcher engaging the rocky landscape of Monadnock’s summit.

### **An Emergent “Environmental Dance” Theory—Satori Loop©™**

One “theory” that has emerged from this research project is directly related to this intriguing transdisciplinary confluence of physics, psychology and metaphysics. It is what I call the “Satori Loop”©. In the Zen Buddhist tradition, the word *satori* roughly translates to “enlightenment”. As a certified Nature and Forest Therapy Guide<sup>34</sup>, I am trained to give guided meditative walks in the forest as a way to re-teach humans slow down and literally “stop to smell the roses (or forest)”. The purposefully-structured walks, complete with a culminating tea ceremony with “tea” made from wild-harvested, foraged plants, are designed to provide a new source of holistic health and deep communion with nature and the more-than-human-world. This is based on the Japanese practice of Shinrin Yoku (or “forest-bathing). I was drawn to this practice because it reminded so very much of the rich experiences in nature that environmental

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<sup>34</sup> The Association of Nature and Forest Therapy trains and certifies nature and forest therapy/shinrin yoku guides.



dance also provides the practitioner. The Buddhist philosophy of enlightenment, or “satori” aptly applies to both practices.

I speak throughout this research about the phenomenon of the dancer-researchers’ body-minds. This is a deliberately crafted term, designed to demonstrate and remind us that in the practice and art of environmental dance, there can be no separation of the mind and body. In fact, the mind is considered to be fully embodied and the body is cognition in action—the body-mind is considered a unified, holistic state of being, and this is foundational, in the training of the environmental dancer. Since the locus of environmental dance must be an embedded one—in the midst of the natural landscape—where there must also be an established on-going dialogue between dancer-researcher and the land itself, then the land-landscape-earth-nature scale-continuum is an essential feature of the Satori Loop©. The term loop is purposely selected to connote the iterative, hermeneutic process that takes place within the research site and within the environmental dance experience and/or performance as well—the environmental dancer-researcher reads the landscape of the mountain summit as if it were a sacred text. What culminates the Satori loop model is the infusion and inclusion of *spirit*.

Because I have intentionally abandoned the traditional body-mind-spirit trinity (as a remnant of the Cartesian worldview) in my Satori Loop-model, my aim is to suggest instead, that the spirit realm (or the “divine realm, in Kryder’s terminology) does not belong exclusively to humans—it belongs equitably, to both humans and nature. True spirit within the loop, can only be actualized by the subtle energy generated through the active dialogue between dancer-researcher and the land. Thus, human-engagement-with-nature in both the “environmental dance” and Shinrin Yoku/ forest-bathing circumstances is complete: Body-mind—Earth—Spirit. Further deepening engagements with the land come from the iterative nature of the practice.

Environmental dance and the Satori loop is fed by all five (5) fields of subtle energy (Kryder, 1994, p.3).

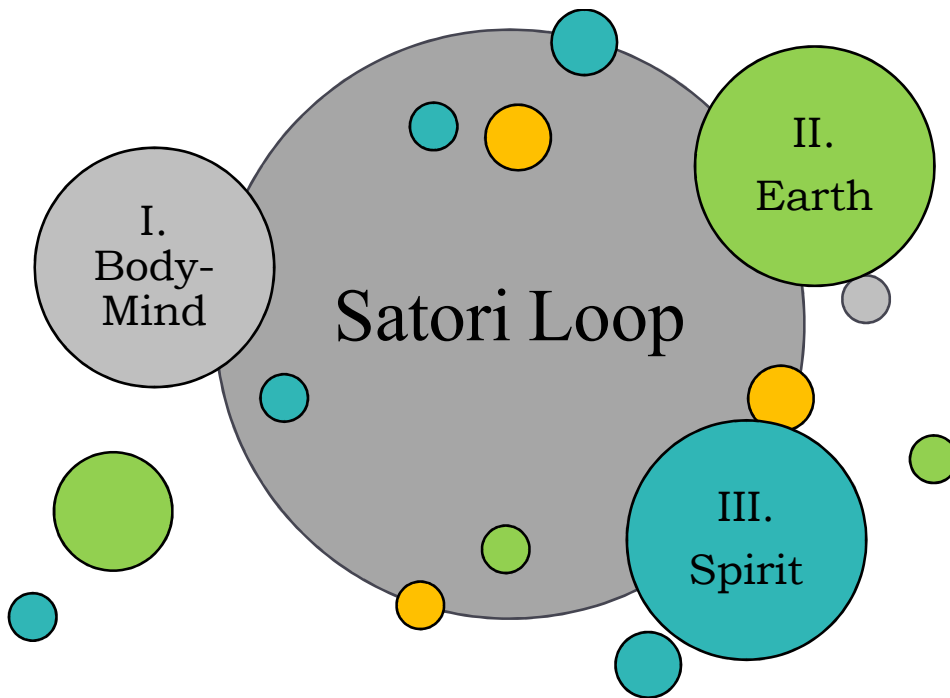


Figure 25: "Satori Loop" an emergent theory (D. Eno ©).

The next of Conforti's points I want to mention has to do with that aspect of my Satori Loop-model having to do with the Divine realm (or realm of Spirit). He writes:

"Anamnesis" is a liturgical term given to what happens during the Mass. The church believed that during Benediction, Consecration, and Transubstantiation, where bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ, we have the opportunity to enter into this eternal sacrifice. While we may tend to view the ceremony as a ritualistic re-enactment of an event from the past, the church believes that this event is ongoing and that, under special conditions, we gain access to this domain (Conforti, p.45).

Conforti offers another analogy:

Another way to understand this idea is to imagine that we have just walked onto the beach and are suddenly struck by the sound of the waves crashing, the smell of the sea air, the sight of the deep, blue water, and we achieve a genuine sense of wellbeing. While we may have just arrived at the beach, it has always been there, available for our apprehension. So *too* with anamnesis, the experience is always there. The individual or the collective may then find a way to enter this domain (Conforti, p.45).

Many times, while working on the mountain, either carrying out various research tasks or in performance at the summit, my dance research team and I have had many anamnesis-based experiences. These extraordinary moments register immediately and starkly within the field of consciousness. One time in particular during one of our signature dance pieces called *The Resting Place* (see journal entry, Jewel Seven). During the final section of this piece, dancers are situated throughout the mainstage dance rock, on the multi-levels of this granite boulder. On musical cue, all five performers emerge from the rock as arms arc open, overhead and frame the head as they open, quite like a flower blossom opening. At precisely at the crescendo of this movement (matched with a very strong musical cue), the sun emerges in full blossoming force from behind the clouds filling the performance space with immediate felt warmth and illumination. The experience was like nothing I have ever had before—the rest of the company affirmed a similar profound experience of “being in the flow” (Nachmanovitch, 1990). Gasps from the audience confirmed our experience even more. This is anamnesis.

This also has simpler applications to environmental dance experience. If we apply the concept of anamnesis to the environmental dancer working with the metaphor of spiraling, either in thought or in danced action, the experience is a real experience of nature’s ubiquitous spiral patterns, replayed by the environmental dancer. In other words, we are not merely mimicking the spiral we observe in the field—instead we are actually re-living that original spiral template.

A third point to take from Conforti (1999) has to do with how we (as environmental dancers) process archetypal information from the “language of nature”. We are introduced to Lazlo’s “Vacuum Plenum Field” theory which I interpret to mean the following: Using the spiral archetype one again, the vacuum plenum field claims that the spiral manifesting in nature (a fiddle head fern in the spring) can also manifest in another field like the human psyche-- metaphors like “spiraling thoughts” or, as in dance the spiraling movements and gestures that appear as prolific movement patterns in the movement vocabulary of environmental dance. I interpret this to mean that all fields can inform each other so that through experiencing or “living’ spiral-ness we get closer to its universal essence. Every encounter we have with the essence of spiral-ness therefore, contributes something new to that field as this is a fluid, ever-evolving and dynamic process of dialogue.

Finally, there are implications for the theories that Conforti (1999) has illustrated as “dimensions of confluence”, which I see as an encouraging move in the direction of transdisciplinary scholarship. He has illuminated a way in which I may directly link two parts of my environmental dance puzzle—these being first, the notion of an existing archetypal “language of nature and the second being, how the idea that environmental dance may be contextualized as ritual. When we begin to see environmental dance as a ritual of dialogue (and communication) between body-mind and Earth, invoking subtle energy fields, ritual becomes the process that allows the environmental dancer to draw out the hidden archetypes of the land. This is how my research team and I are able to speak to the land and to speak for the land and to be the conveyers of the Earth’s most profound perennial wisdom. This is how environmental dance gives voice to the Earth.

### Jewel Six—Art and the Role of Journaling

#### *Journal entry (Memoried Account—“Vision Quest on Monadnock”) [6.1]*

*I sit huddled in my sleeping bag with only my eyes exposed to the elements, my back against a sheltering ledge. An unrelenting wind from the northeast whips about Monadnock’s summit. A half-hidden full moon occasionally reveals herself, as she silhouettes the phantom clouds that dance like whirling dervishes around and above me. The wind continues to howl (or is this, the ominous cry of the ghost wolves that once claimed this place as their own?). Oddly, there is no real, detectable sense of passing time; this is a strange yet pleasurable sensation and somewhat trance-inducing. From my alpine vantage point, I am grateful for this peaceful reprieve from the linearity of life that exists somewhere else, below me. I am caught in the spatial and temporal ecstasy of Monadnock’s sublime timelessness. My thoughts dance with the wind.*



Figure 26: Full moon vision quest on Monadnock (Photo courtesy Larry Davis/ DEFDW©).

*Occasionally, the wind pauses long enough to enable me to venture out of my cocoon; I know from past experience here and from the wisdom of the mountain itself, that surprise wind gusts at 50 mph. can easily knock me off my feet. I purposely keep my center of gravity low. Seemingly,*

*the turbulence has passed and I stretch with renewed faith toward a starlit heaven. The clouds have vanished now, revealing the steady, but barely detectable rise of the full moon. It is surely Nature's lesson on the virtue of patience that enables me to fully indulge in this silent, ancient, celestial ritual. As the moon reaches its zenith, the summit landscape becomes illuminated in a dazzling opalescence; the granite-schist rock sparkles around me like diamonds and I ceremoniously walk the sacred space where a new dance piece will unfold in the future, and where the dances of the past still dwell. I note that the concept of "future" seems peculiarly at odds with this place—an ultimate authority on timeless stillness. Solitude. Peace. Other-worldliness. Divinity. Rapture.*

*Back in my sleeping bag, I sit for what seems like a passage of another lifetime. Thoughts of place, dance, time, space, circles, and cycles occupy my mind as I silently observe everything, nothing. Gratefully. The spiraling nature of my thoughts inevitably relinquish this "dreamtime" (footnote) state, returning me to the here and now. The peaceful stillness of this nocturnal mountain scape is pierced by my own sudden awareness that I am not alone. With a surge of adrenalin, my senses detect a quick movement on a rocky outcrop in front of me. I sit in frozen amazement as a lone coyote saunters up the ridge of the rock that provides the stage space for my dances here. One pass up and down this ridge (with a brief pause that nonchalantly acknowledges my presence) and he is gone. Did I really see that?*

### **A Deepened Understanding of Nature**

In as much as the previous section is dedicated toward the illumination of a universally-present 'language of nature'--one that over time, is revealed to us as the sublime ability of the land to 'speak' through the phenomenal patterns of the land/nature/universe to my research team and I, this section, reflecting Indra's Jewel Six, conveys *how* the "language of nature" is comprehended, re-presented and expressed through environmental dance. This is an iterative process--a reciprocating dialogue between environmental dancer/researcher and the dance site, that unfolds, time and again, as the dancer/researcher engages the land and the land, in turn, engages the dancer/researcher. This is how we, as environmental dancers employ nature's language as our own artistic, expressive movement vocabulary through which we are then able to *translate* the "language of nature" and convey it to the observing witness or audience.

The sixth Jewel makes connections to the art literature, and illuminates this corner of the literary universe where the arts (including dance, specifically environmental dance) are to be recognized as unique ways of knowing (Hieb, 2005; Sullivan, 2005; Ganim & Fox, 1999; Arnhiem, 1974; Bagley & Cancienne, 2002; Barta & Ne'eman, 1993; Capacchione, 2002; Clandinin, ed., 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Dewey, 1934; Herman, Jahn & Ryan, 2005; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Lee, 1994; London, 2003; Smith, Flowers & Larkin; 2009; McNiff, 1998; McNiff, 2003; Reisman, 1993; Tierney & Lincoln, eds., 1997; Todres, 2007). I also intend for this section to elevate such literature that spans a multiplicity of disciplines. And when these disciplines are encouraged to combine in various, unexpected or serendipitous ways, they also come to my aid in supporting a radical, emergent (transdisciplinary) paradigm of the arts-as-research-method and the holistic, synergistic relationship between narrative/ writing and dance with a mission to unify body and mind and earth.

As the reader will discover, Jewel Six is intentionally punctuated with several personal narrative journal entries—these storied accounts are meant to sparkle like stars that mark out a distinct constellation in the sky. This constellation reveals its own unique form that exists to not only reference but also to create space for what has become an integral part of this research process--an emergent practice of environmental dance-combined-with-art-journaling. The journal narratives also reflect their unique, multi-faceted points of view upon one another; the first [6.1] of the these above, describing a night of solitary vision-questing on Mt. Monadnock illustrates how the companionship of journaling with the actual experience not only crystalizes that experience (within the body-mind) but also allows a process of deepened exploration and validation and, thus, a richer understanding of that very personal experience, as it becomes a part

of us, as mortal humans experiencing life and the world. It provides us a way to re-live the experience, break it down, feel its sensations (“Did I really see that?”), textures, details--and then re-synthesize it once again, into the memory of the body-mind.

Another entry *[6.2]*, explores the intentional pairing of environmental dance site-work for research purposes with intermittent journaling (on-site and off-site) as a way to concretize the physical dance experience and thematic exploration inherent to the site-specific creative process. This particular narrative also provides an example of my own, on-site exploratory research experiences where I observe and recount in journaling, the research team members at work, alternating between specific and improvisational movement tasks within the site and the accompanying journaling about those experiences. We see how the purposeful engagement of the unified “body-mind” becomes a paradigmatic alternative, aiming to heal the Cartesian split through the act of creative dialogue between dancer and dynamic landscape. There is an intentional emphasis on the recurring thematic triad of “body-mind-earth” as it emerges as the defining, artistic mantra for the creating, researching, performing environmental dancer/researcher. In this section, we seek to understand *how* we ‘speak’ the language of nature and convey it through the art of environmental dance. A journal entry *[6.3]* capturing what-it-is-like to dance with the sunrise on Mt. Monadnock lends itself well to a brief discussion about environmental dance experiences, memory and the phenomena commonly referred to, by dance and movement practitioners as “muscle-memory”. The final journal entry *[6.4]* in the series, addresses the use of “visual narrative inquiry” and how, along with journaled written accounts and memoried experienced, we, as a research team have employed the use of still photographs (and videography) to document and re-present our environmental dance experiences on the mountain.



### **Taking Cues from the Natural World**

While the language that I speak of, is certainly metaphorical in one sense, I would like to point out that there is a phenomenal realm in which the exchange between dancer/researcher and site is rooted, as well. The dialogue becomes a distinct exchange of information, much like any verbal conversation among humans—patterns and meaning are “read” by the dancer/researcher’s sensory and somatic radar, become internalized, processed (in cognitive, sensorial, creative and expressive ways) and then, is put forth--back into the world, again, translated by the environmental dancer/researcher who speaks for the land, while, at the same time, allowing the land to speak through her. It is important to remember, that the dialoguing between the dancer/researcher and the landscape is enabled by the systematized protocol I have adapted (and have put to use) from Goethe’s holistic five-step scientific process (see Jewel Four). Spiraling wind currents might inspire a study on the phenomenon of cycling, condensing energy that makes the audience able to feel vicariously through the dancer’s movements and expressions, the certain energetic and metaphorical spiral-ness, as a phenomenal expression emanating from the landscape. In some more human way, the dancer relates a sense of spiral-ness that builds upon a phenomenal prototype and creates a kind of meta-physical gestalt of spiral-ness. This experience of the “performed” spiral, as I offer as an archetypal example, is then layered with personal and shared emotional, psychological, symbolic and perhaps even spiritual meaning, as we see, which adds a holistic richness as it shapes and molds this performance experience as a uniquely complex human one. Nature speaks, and environmental dance allows a way for her expressions to become visible, discernible and meaningful in some way, to the human observer. Humans can become a conduit of expression for the Earth.

Our sourcing of material for environmental dance is at once the stuff of our research and the stuff of our performance pieces. When we source artistic material from the landscape, we are clearly working in the realm of the outer geography. This consists of being able to connect in some deeply engaging, reciprocal way with the outer landscapes of our physical world—the physicality of the giant chunk of glacial rock we call our stage, the entirety of the summit landscape, the mountain biome, the Earth, and the Universe—we must not only consider but engage all scales for the rich, complex layers of meaning do not exist in the vacuum of a single scalar dimension. The “language of nature” transcends all scales of time and space. And while Jewel Five seeks to answer “how does environmental dance give voice to nature”, here, Jewel Six (focusing on the integral importance on journaling and other forms of artistic expression to mediate nonverbal experiences in nature) advances the previous aim by addressing how we, as environmental dancer/researchers, *speak* the language of nature and therefore, translate it and convey it outwardly back into the world, as the audience observes. This is the final part of our interpretive process.

Speaking the language of nature requires mastery of this nonverbal form of communication by the environmental dancer/researcher—she must become something of the alchemist who dances between two worlds! Bartel and Ne’eman (1993), make the similar connection between learning and non-verbal communication:

The non-verbal is the immediate way of communicating and discovering the many layers of individuals... Without words, reality and fantasy more readily intertwine, unfolding many layers of individual and cultural traits. We find the non-verbal to be a practical method that cuts across many barriers, stimulating the senses and leading to invigorating exchanges of physical communication, forming a body language that is beyond speech. Thus the prime source of learning is rooted in the body-felt experience (p.3).

Once research material is sourced from the site, the goal is to work with the material—to explore it and to decipher it and fully understand what it is. And finally, as part of the creative research process we recognize that there it is—a nugget mined from phenomenal (and imaginal) depths of a mountain landscape—or, some facet of the landscape that simply appears before our eyes in plain view.

### **Multiple Ways to Engage the Phenomena**

After we “dance” the phenomenon in question (typically through spontaneous movement improvisation (research) exercises guided by Goethe’s five (5) steps or some other pre-planned exploratory dance/movement task) we begin, in earnest, to explore the phenomenon and work with it in a multitude of other ways. We may sketch it, we may sit and observe it over time, we may photograph it, we may write poetry about it, but inevitably, we will always journal about it. Writing is an integral part of this research project. In numerous ways we, as researchers and environmental artists, seek to know all we can about the phenomenal landscape—each new way of discerning its life world in profound juxtaposition to our own, becomes a way to contribute toward a more holistic understanding of the land and our relationship to it—only then do we really begin to discern that we are an integral part of the landscape. And, we are, in essence, triangulating our new knowledge generated through research, simply by seeking to know the phenomenon (which necessarily includes our intimate relationship with it) in a multitude of ways.

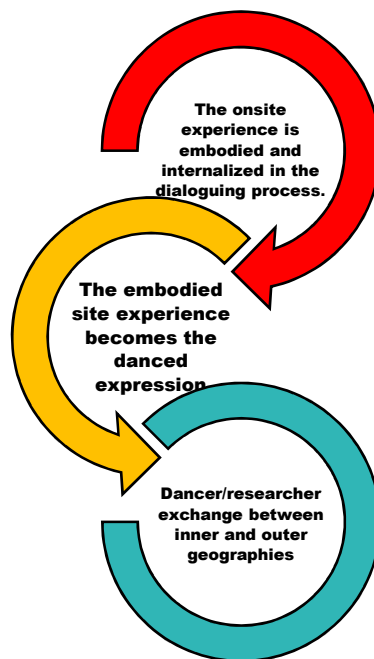
In the previous section, I also described the synergistic pairing of the dancer/researcher’s body and mind. In the discussion of the Satori Loop©, I explained that environmental dance

enjoins and reunifies the once separated workings of two separated entities—the human physical body and the often perceived-as-independent mind. In environmental dance, we must acknowledge and elevate the existence of the thinking body (the embodied mind) or the status quo Cartesian body/mind separation only lends itself to continuing to support a paradigm of competing dualities. It is a matter of choosing synergism over competition. In this research we seek to underwrite our work with a paradigmatic philosophy that heals the long-existing and often detrimental splits between not only body and mind but also, humans and nature; I also suggest that in indulging in dualities we also run the risk of alienating our inner geographies (landscapes of personal experience, dreams, fantasy, imagination, reflection, etc.) from the outer landscapes of the real and phenomenal material world that feeds and nourishes our own innermost landscapes.

### **Inner and Outer Geographies**

There is a certain synergistic dynamism, a reciprocal flow between the inner and outer worlds. For the purpose of this research project, we, as researchers must master the feat of easily moving between realms—in the outer world of our research we dance and dialogue and experience and create with nature, the landscape, the Earth. We find common ground with her; then, we go inward to evaluate, comprehend, reflect upon and integrate all that we have experienced and all that we have learned. We journal about our on-site experiences from an embodied point of view.

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*Figure 27: The “environmental dance” site-dialoguing process: The “inner and outer geographies”: a constant cycling of onsite experiences, journaled reflections, and improvisational movement explorations, resulting in the creation of the environmental (D.Eno ©).*

As our relationship to and familiarity with the site/ landscape grows over time, our experiences (and the new knowledge emanating from them) become a deeper, more richly-composed tapestry reflecting the on-going exchange between the inner and outer worlds of each dancer-researcher. The iterative, cyclical nature of the research project takes us on a spiraling

journey of dancing and writing, and of expanding dimensionally in both the depth and breadth of our understanding and creativity, where one unexpected experience may lead us down yet another new path of discovery, inspiration and revelation. And it is now apparent that environmental dance, when it is partnered and guided by the Goethean process becomes the portal that allows us swift and seamless passage back and forth, between the two worlds. Cancienne and Snowber (2003) suggest a similar characterization of this path of inquiry that purposely enjoins dance (body) with writing (mind):

As we speak of the interplay between writing and dance, it is important to remember that writing begins not only when we put pen to paper, or fingers to the keyboard, but also in the way we are consciously embodied—the way we breathe, think, and feel in our bodies. Writing is essentially attention. Part of the researcher’s responsibility within the inquiry process is to pay “attention to particulars” [authors quoting Eisner, E. (1998)]. (p.248).

The authors also stress the preeminent importance of the enjoining of body-mind:

Therefore, as researchers, we must notice the details of our lives and access the nooks and crannies of our experiences and perceptions. Attentiveness is not something we do only with the mind but can be an act of “bodily attending,” a way to be present to the physicality of the textures around us: sound, gesture, smell, sight—the vowels of the physical world (Snowber [Schroeder], 1997). Therefore, writing becomes not just a recording of details but a process by which we are awakened to the details of experience. In the same way, dancing becomes not just a recording of knowledge but a process by which we are awakened to new insights (p. 248).

It is not so much that dancers (specifically, my dancer/researcher team and I) must possess some advanced proficiency in writing—the act of journaling is more akin to dancing-on-paper and involves rather a free-flowing, stream-of-consciousness style of recounting the site experiences on the mountain. Sketches, diagrams, various forms of visual artistic representations, even ephemera (leaves, feathers, pebbles) saved from the day’s mountain experiences help to build and crystalize a multi-faceted expression and muscle-memoried (embodied) accounting of the

site work which necessarily focuses on the reciprocal engagement of dancer/researcher with site and site with the dancer/researcher. Cancienne and Snowber (2003) describe the kind of environmental dance-writing that I describe as part of our research protocol:

Even though we use writing as a method of reflection, one question that we ask is, How can we access a way of writing from the body, a way in which theory meets practice so that deep listening to life actually spills over from blood to ink? Helene Cixous (1993) said, “writing is not arriving; most of the time, it’s not arriving. One must go on foot with the body” (p. 65) [from *Three steps on the ladder of writing*]. Dance allows us to taste the grammar of the gut, the alphabet of the bones, the etymology of the pelvis. The process of dancing, choreographing, improvising, and reworking movement ultimately opens up a place to drop into the belly, allowing poetic and artistic knowing to sing, dance, and write out of our bodies. Writing from the body becomes an interaction between knowing and being, ontology and epistemology, and the ordinary and the extraordinary (p. 248).

Just as the dance/ movement study stands as a nuanced source of research data, so does each layer of journaled writing as it arises from those corresponding field experiences that we eventually store within, as embodied memories. And each new iteration, each new art-based representation of data (whether it be danced or written, or taking some other form of artistic expression) moves us closer to a more holistic understanding of environmental dance as a dialogue of the environmental dance/ researcher with the natural site.

### **The Importance of the Field Journal Practice**

My dance research team and I, over the course of this project, expanded the journaling practice a step further still, as we felt compelled to add other rich layers of artistic expressions to our fieldwork records. Infusing the journals with color, poetic renditions of experiences, “found” poetry, collage (two-dimensional), assemblage (three-dimensional), photographs and maps added multi-faceted dimension and life to the narrative journals—the emergent process welcomes a true

pastiche approach<sup>35</sup> where a variety of complimentary artistic genres, approaches and techniques, are brought together into an expressive whole. Peter London (2003) lays out an artistic philosophy imbued with the ideals of such wholeness, as one that acknowledges and honors the natural world, “Nature” and the land, itself as the original source of all creative endeavors. He suggests that the art-nature connection holds the key toward the emergence of a new, nature-based, nature-honoring worldview:

In order to accomplish so fundamental a task, a fresh language is necessary to perceive and name the world anew, for our prevailing language stems from a worldview that accepts the schism separating human nature from the rest of Nature. The artistic processes that shape art offer the power to create a worldview and a view of our Selves that are in accord with the necessary and inextricable symbiosis of humans and Nature. Nothing less than an effort of mind and body and spirit is required to assert a new worldview sufficiently credible to create a replete and durable sense of being in the world. Art is such an endeavor. Art is a holistic language that is uttered from the mind, body, and spirit. In this way, art is a perfect form of expression with which to imagine, investigate, propose, and engage in a new worldview (p. 2).

Art (and our evolving narrative art-journaling practice) taking its cue from environmental dance as a primary artistic research method, became, over time, our transdisciplinary “instruments of discovery” and the primary way we collect data while at the same time it is *emergent* data (Hieb, 2005, p.21). Through our pastiche-like approach we find a myriad of ways to connect to nature and begin to open us all to Nature’s infinite sources of wisdom.

As I read through the prologue of Clandinin’s and Connelly’s *Narrative Inquiry* (2000) I am heartened to see so many references made to John Dewey. I also find it heartening that the authors have chosen to address the long-existing tensions between paradigms, here specifically

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<sup>35</sup> My interpretation of “pastiche”—a multi-faceted way of re-presentation of data, that combines various forms of artistic expressions (like journaling, sketching, drawing, poetry-writing, found poetry; similar to the idea of collaging. See also: Margot Ely, *In-forming re-presentations* (p.586) (Clandinin, (Ed.) 2007).



identified as the ideological and epistemological differences between two parallel universes: that of the “grand narrative”<sup>36</sup> and the alternate universe offered through what is known in the academic world as narrative inquiry.

Threads of thought derived from the “grand narrative”, generally speaking, include formalism, positivism, linear thinking, Cartesian reductionism, analysis, quantitative generalizability, objectivist perspective and the collection of predominant dualities that include: the infamous mind/body split, human/ nature (or culture/nature); me/ other, etc., which act upon and influence our thinking and leads to such ends as, for example, as anthropocentric attitudes and behaviors with regard to the way humans interact with the natural world, a belief in “absolutes” as in “an absolute truth out there”; unquestioned faith that “technology will save us”, etc. I see the ideas that have fed the “grand narrative” as playing a role in a large part of the root cause of our present environmental calamities. Clandinin and Connelly offer us a way to negotiate with and navigate through the ideological gaps between worldviews. “Learning to think narratively at the boundaries between narrative and other forms of inquiry is, perhaps, the single most important feature of successful narrative thinking” (2000, p. 24). The authors are also sensitive to the need for a way to bridge epistemological differences, as well.

### **Questioning the “Grand Narrative”**

I am questioning the value of the continued reign of the “grand narrative” however. Throughout my doctoral studies and now, as a researcher, I realize what an important issue this really is—it permeates everything. What I am concerned about, is the imbalance we have before us, allowing the “grand narrative thinking” to take over as the great expense of other equally

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<sup>36</sup> By invoking the term “grand narrative”, I bring attention to the societal signs of a predominant ideology of Western culture that manifest in a myriad of ways, within that culture; the predominant paradigm.

worthy perspectives. Taken as a lesson from nature herself, we see the virtue of balance, a sense of autopoietic, self-regulation that keeps over-compensating forces in check—what we seemingly lack is ideological balance, and may I say that this is especially true with respect to academia—we look to unify these ways of knowing, as a transdisciplinary world where diverse ideas and ideologies are equitably recognized. Narrative Inquiry, aside from its own innovation as methodology, appears to be an effective step in that direction. Think about the word choices—“actual” as a grand narrative perspective in contrast to “possible”, taking on the narrative perspective. The difference is decidedly huge—there is a mighty chasm between what is actual and what is possible. One is limited and static the other is open to limitlessness (“the sky’s the limit”).

Such thinking reflected from the perspective of the grand narrative, I find to be in stark contrast to the ideology espoused by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and collectively by the contributing authors of *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry* (Denzin & Lincoln, (eds.), 2000). Here, in the “universe” of the narrative, I feel quite at home with its own collection of ideas that include: participation, synthesis, interpretation, qualitative, holism, dialogue, experience, lived experience, continuity, interaction, integration, process, adaptability, circular thinking, Hermeneutic circle, particularization, the local, uncertainty, ambiguity, and art. I love these ideological saplings of a nature-centered paradigm and they all are deeply rooted in the rich earth nourishing this research project.

### **“Ethereal Things”**

Once again, I am compelled to call on Dewey (1934). Historically, dancers and dance educators love Dewey. His ideas capture the essence of what dance does—this passage from “Ethereal Things” is prophetic:

Of much of our experience as it is actually lived under present economic and legal institutional conditions, it is only too true that these separations [dualities] hold. Only occasionally in the lives of many are the senses fraught with the sentiment that comes from deep realization of intrinsic meanings. We undergo sensations as mechanical stimuli or as irritated stimulations, without having a sense of the reality that is in them and behind them” in much of our experience our different senses do not unite to tell a common and enlarged story. We see without feeling; we hear, but only a second-hand report, second hand because it is not reinforced by vision. We touch but the contact remains tangential because it does not fuse with qualities of senses that go below the surface. We use the senses to arouse passion but not to fulfill the interest of insight, not because that interest is not potentially present in the exercise of sense but because we yield to conditions that force sense to remain an excitation on the surface. Prestige goes to those who use their minds without participation of the body and who act vicariously through control of the bodies and labor of others (p. 21).

Clandinin offers valuable and practical insight into what I think of as a Deweyan theory of experience, specifically her discussion around the experiential factors she identifies as *situation*, *continuity*, and *interaction* (p. 21). I envision this Deweyan concept as:

Situation + Time+ Humans = Experience

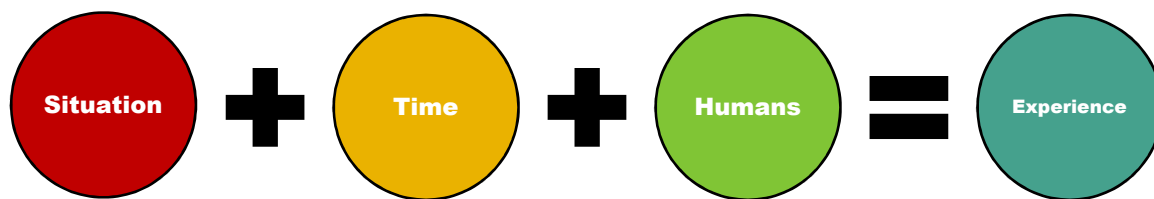


Figure 28: My conceptualization of Dewey's theory of experience (D.. Eno ©).

As I thought more about it, it occurred to me that these are the same set of factors that describe dance and hence, environmental dance, too. Another related idea:

Place + Time + Dancers & Audience = Dance Experience

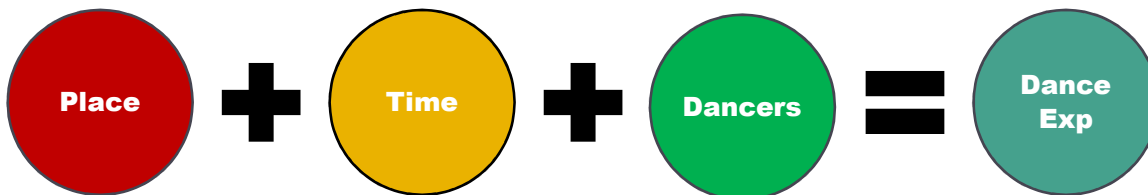


Figure 29: Conceptualizing "the dance experience" via Dewey's theory of experience (D.Eno ©).

And finally, a simple equation, identifying aspects of the environmental dance experience:

Natural Site + Temporal Unfolding of the Dance Performance = Site-specific Environmental Dance Experience



Figure 30: Conceptualizing "the environmental dance experience" via Dewey's theory of experience (D Eno ©).

My dancer-researchers and I approach environmental dance as a narrative phenomenon. What Clandinin describes as the defining, inherent qualities of narrative thinking and inquiry are exactly what underwrites the artistic approach that has evolved into environmental dance as embodied practice. I recall that Clandinin and Connelly pose that “narrative inquiry is a form of narrative experience”. Since dance, I believe, is a form of narrative experience, then we can surmise that environmental dance, in the context of this research project, is also narrative inquiry.

I have sometimes used these simple equations as a way to illustrate to the research team, the basis of this conclusion-- how this set of terms is able to create a metaphorical, three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. I can “see” this visually in my mind—I recognize that temporality, [human] interaction and place are dimensions (p. 50). Interactions (which I interpret as the human factor), involve both personal (I interpret as “micro”) and social (“macro”); continuity (which I interpret as the continuum of time) encompasses the past, present and future domains of temporality according to the authors and the authors’ concept of situation parallels my own conceptualization of place and dance site within the natural environment.

### **Narrative Inquiry and the “Four Directions”**

Clandinin and Connelly confirm the similarity of characteristic concepts of *narrative inquiry studies* that I see as basic to the environmental dance experience: Narrative inquiry studies “have temporal dimensions and address temporal matters; they focus on the personal and the social in a balance appropriate to the inquiry; and they occur in specific places or sequences of places” (p. 50). This is equally true in the case of site-specific environmental dance.

The authors' entire discussion about the "four (4) directions in any inquiry" (p.50) which the authors relate to Dewey's concept of interaction (the human factor), is clarifying to this research project. This line of thinking is particularly relevant to this research because these are the same variables of possibility that I typically consider in the creative process of making site-specific dance pieces and these are the same criteria that each one of us, as researchers, must consider as we work in the field. If one looks inward there is a focus "toward the internal condition" (p.50). Alternately, an outward focus moves one "toward the existential condition" (the environment, the natural environment, in our case). And the movement backward/ forward addresses issues of temporality which is the realm of the environmental dance piece/ performance's unfolding within the site (pp. 50-53). Interestingly, I find Clandinin's and Connelly's variables of possibility to be reminiscent of and compatible with Goethe's five (5) step method which serves as the model of our hybrid creative process/ research protocol.

As I consider the question that authors Clandinin and Connelly pose, "what do narrative inquirers do?" I find myself simultaneously musing about my own parallel circumstance—"what do environmental choreographers/ dance artists do"? Aside from the obvious—creating dances for an observing audience, situated in a specific "natural" locale—I believe there is a deeper body (embodied) of knowledge that emerges as an expressive, nonverbal way to relate one's own experiences and interactions with the world (natural environment) to communicate these experiences to others. Environmental dance as a way of knowing—is a way of knowing and expressing our own holistic experience as a living, breathing extension of nature, a moving sensing body, feeling, touching, being, at once in a specific time and place. It seems that on one hand, the roots of such thinking must surely be anchored deeply within the archaic memories of ancestors ritually celebrating this basic knowledge, a most authentic celebration or simply mapping out a

way of survival—the union of human and earth grounded in synergy and symbiosis (see Jewel Seven) regarding environmental dance-as-ritual). On the other, we seek to breathe new life and purpose into this ancient rite—to repurpose dance (as “environmental dance”) at an optimal point in time when humans are losing their inherited “earthliness”. Earthliness is a term I ascribe to those attributes and requirements that profoundly and authentically bind human to earth and earth to human as well as a deep, intuitive if not instinctual understanding of this.

### **The “Earthliness” of Environmental Dance**

Dance becomes our primary narrative vehicle through which we may experience and express our own version of earthliness. This is a primary event; while the focus of this research does not center on the implications of audience members, I wish to clarify that dance always implies the relationship of dancer and observing audience, hence, the audience becomes the secondary performer or experiencer, for experience is what the dancer and audience member garners from the performance. In this respect, it occurs to me that while the audience member may appear to sit and observe in a passive way, it may be the case that only a thin line separates the dancer from audience and the audience member “dances” vicariously on site with the dancers, themselves.

As I recall a memory (as a story to recount), I remember and I recreate that experience in a verbal form, secured in a “word document” on my computer: My restricted and focused finger movements press automatically against the black keys of my computer keyboard as I seek to find the right words to translate my environmental dance experience—the end result (and for the purposes of this journal entry) is what I attempt to describe and preserve in the narrative entries I use to illustrate the points I share in this section. I wonder: is it possible to write the dance in such a way that the reader dances vicariously with me, too? The goal, after all is to find an optimal,

expressive way to convey personal experience. And now, some new questions to consider: Can the essence of dance be captured in the body of a written narrative? Is the act of writing a narrative about dance experience a true recreation (reincarnation) of that experience? How does the written word compare to dance? Can one support and strengthen the other experience? Can dance convey what is later expressed in spoken and written words? And vice versa? What have I not been able to convey about my experience? Is there something about dance that eludes written description of it?

I note the peculiar (unintended, unconscious) emphasis on time and space in my re-telling of narrative entries. Dewey has much to say on the subject, as well, particularly how they factor in to the artistic, expressive, aesthetic experience:

There is another significant involution of time and movement in space. It is constituted not only by directional tendencies—up and down, for example—but by mutual approaches and retreatings. Near and far, close and distant, are qualities of pregnant, often tragic, import—that is, as they are experienced, not just stated by measurements in science. They signify loosening and tightening, expanding and contracting, separating and compacting, soaring and drooping, rising and falling; the dispersive, scattering, and the hovering and brooding, unsubstantial lightness and massive blow. Such actions and reaction are the very stuff out of which the objects and events we experience are made. They can be described in science because they are there reduced to relations that differ only mathematically, as science is concerned about the remote and identical or repeated things that are *conditions* of actual experience and not with experience in its own right. But in experience they are infinitely diversified and cannot be described, while in works of art they are expressed. For art is a selection of what is significant, with rejection by the very same impulse of what is irrelevant, and thereby the significant is compressed and intensified (Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 1934, p. 208).

This partially accounts for the tensions and discomforts I detect as part of the issue of ambiguity and uncertainty addressed by the authors, while it also aptly describes how environmental dance, like any other art form, functions while making multi-faceted use of temporality and space. As far



as ambiguity and uncertainty go, are these not the source of Dewey's "pregnant, often tragic, import" and the "stuff out of which...experience [is] made" (2000, p.208).

Dance is a pre-linguistic phenomenon—it allows for embodied expression in the truest sense. Written expression of one's own experiences can also be seen as embodied action—a way to capture the essence of experience. Both dancing and writing experiences share this in common. I am reminded, once again, of the Dewey's writing as it might apply to this. Since narrative inquiry is so closely aligned with Dewey's theory of experience, as authors Clandinin and Connelly point out, I look for these same features in dance/ environmental dance and find them: these common, shared points are identified as 1) situation (place/ site environment); 2) continuity (time) and 3) interaction dancer/ site/ audience. Environmental dance as experience captured is narrative inquiry by definition as I suggest, as it unfolds (interaction) at once, in time (continuity) and space (specific place). Implicit in this, is the Deweyan expectation of one experience leading to and informing another and another—such is seen as growth from the prior experience.

My research team and I are admittedly more at ease with the execution of the actual dance than we have been with writing about the experience. Personally, I am at greater peace with the primary experience (dance performance) than I am with the secondary experience, "experiencing the experience" as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) put it, of writing narratively about it (p.50). I feel more vulnerable (if not judgmental and self-conscious) as I attempt to put down in words that which I know so well and so affirmatively in dance, expressed at that "pre-linguistic" level (many a dancer has declared that "if they could say it, there would be no need to dance it"! ). To stay true to the dance experience, I realize that I must always put myself in a place of personal vulnerability—to attempt a dispassionate rendition of this experience is to fail in the mission of narrative inquiry altogether. Vulnerability aside, the consensus among my team

members is that on-site journaling is seemingly less fraught with the strife that comes with trying to produce writing that is adequate to the on-site experience—there is a feeling of spontaneity and a sense of being-in-the-flow while writing on the rocks, that overrides the typical concerns that accompany the dancer/researcher as she attempts to capture here experience in her own written words. It is observable!

***Journal entry (Field Journal—“A Rich and Observable Practice”) [6.2]***

*Today’s hike to the summit was a quintessential perfect mountain morning experience. It is an energizing day! The air was not as heavy as in previous circumstances—the sky is clear, the sun is rising above us winds have given way to a gentler breeze for today. The temperatures are in the low 70’s, and while it may reach into the 80’s today, it is just a heavenly day on the mountain!*

*As my research team and I unpack, snack and generally warm up (our summit rehearsal and research ritual that has become an unconscious activity upon our arrival at the summit) I begin to speak to the group, laying out the day’s tasks to be accomplished. Today we will be working in our “chosen” places, among the wide span of rocky landscape that makes up our summit performance stage—and now, our “research laboratory” site. In our initial day of orientation to the summit and research site, several weeks ago, we were tasked with seeking out “our places”, which act as individual and collective portals where each week, we would return to regularly “dialogue” with the mountain. This has developed into a beautiful and rich and observable practice! We actually look forward to these quality moments with the mountain. Today I will spend some time observing the dancer/researchers as they engage with the mountain by entering through the portals and into this magical, liminal space.*

*I love to watch this “dialogue process” over the span of time that reveals a deepening development of a novel method of gathering “data”, while getting to know our research collaborator—the mountain. With the cumulative passage of each visit to our research site(s), a deeper, more personally-engrossed engagement of dancer/researchers with each individual “place”. The dancer/researchers, themselves, divulge an emotional attachment to this ritual and to each one’s personal research spots, dotted along the rocky stage area. They reveal the quality of these intimate, animate “conversations” that always begins our weekly research visits here.*

*Today, I do not have to verbally cue anyone of us to move to our places amongst the summit jumbles and boulders, after our usual de-packing and stretching. Instead, this has become an automatic activity—everyone looks forward to getting to their spots for this one-to-one time with their special place of connection to the mountain.*

*As I observe, just as I normally do, this unique process—a dialogic process—alternates between moving, expressive, gestural bodies engaging the rocky, idiosyncratic surfaces of each dancers' mini research site with sporadic, unpredictable periods and moments of journal writing, mapping and/ or sketching in their journals, which they carry with them to the summit. I observe a range of journal approaches—a quick note taken to capture an unexpected “a-ha” moment; a more formal record kept to remember the sequence of newly-created movement scores; a storied account of an in-depth dialogic exchange between mountain and dancer/researcher, moving through the guidance of Goethe's 5-step process, no doubt. Some dancers bring along colored pencils and add expressive artistic sketches; sometimes, poetry is a better way to capture a mountain moment...*

*I have become accustomed to observing this intriguing, inspiring, and quite alternative research activity taking place before me—I sit on the rocks, some 30 feet away, and my vantage point allows me to observe dancer/researchers as individuals and to also look at them as a group of qualitative researchers! Both perspectives offer me a rewarding sense of accomplishment, order, purpose and inspiring creativity. I am proud of my research team! I have become so taken by the process as it unfolds on site. Today I see deeply engrossed periods of wring and seated stillness, punctuated by beautifully expressive, poetic bursts of movement of dancing bodies against the gray rocky surface of Monadnock. And I feel privileged to observe our research process unfold and manifest.*

Due to the extraordinary experiences of dancing in the natural environment, I know I often run the risk of being misunderstood. As Clandinin and Connelly put it, the intentional focus is on the personal. A further goal, perhaps, is to ameliorate the purely subjective experience and take it to an elevated state of intersubjectivity<sup>37</sup> instead, where observers of the dance and readers of the narrative rendition are allowed entry into the realm of personal experience and actually become an integral part of the experience as well. The door opens here—all are welcome!

The authors also talk about recreating narrative through memory relationships. My research team and I realize just how vital our memories are in the narrative inquiry process. My

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<sup>37</sup> My understanding of the term *intersubjectivity* is that it has to do with the engaged exchange between two or more conscious body-minds; furthermore, this intersubjective engagement can be applied to the engagement of the body-mind with dynamic natural phenomena. It is my premise that environmental dancers engage with natural phenomena in an intersubjective way, through the guidance of the Goethean Scientific Process.

own memory of the environmental dance performance experience of dancing a sunrise ‘performance’ at sunrise on Mt. Monadnock (and the memory of the experience that inspired the journal entry that in turn, inspired the poem that follows the journaled entry below) shows me how even from a “temporal, spatial and bodily distance” (p. 59), how I am able to tell/ re-tell the story starting “now”.

### “The Remaking of the Material”

Dewey also talks of “the remaking of the material” (1934, p.81) and his thinking reminds me of how Clandinin and Connelly described the nature of the narrative inquiry process—the re-expression of some prior experience—the experience (what I call primary experience) of the experience (secondary experience). A favorite Dewey passage eloquently expands this idea:

The juice expressed by the wine press is what it is because of a prior act, and it is something new and distinctive. It does not merely represent other things. Yet it has something in common with other objects and it is made to appeal to other persons than the one who produced it. A poem and picture present material passed through the alembic of personal experience. They have no precedents in existence or in universal being. But, nonetheless, their material came in from the public world and so has qualities in common with other experiences, while the product awakens in other persons new perceptions of the meanings of the common world. The oppositions of individual and universal, of subjective and objective, of freedom and order, in which philosophers have reveled, have no place in the work of art. Expression as personal act and objective result are organically connected with one another (1934, p. 82).

Perhaps the more we “remake” our stories, the more we “experience the experience”, the closer we bring the *personal* toward a place of convergence with the *universal*. Perhaps this is the beauty and strength of the narrative inquiry process. And perhaps this is how to move toward a state of intersubjectivity within the research process. With each new rendition, data becomes more viable, more potent?

Riessman, in *Narrative Analysis* (1993), reminds me of a powerful memory of dancing in a natural setting as a way to frame in familiar experiential terms, the thoughts the author is presenting. As she recounted an experience of walking the beach at dawn in Kerala, I played back in my mind, a similarly-contexted experience of dancing at sunrise on Mt. Monadnock:

***Journal entry (Memoried Account—“Dancing Sunrise on Monadnock”) [6.3]***

*We lumber, half asleep, up the White Dot Trail toward the summit in the dark, with only two rather useless flashlights to guide our way. Whoever said “it is darkest before dawn” is precisely right. I can’t see a thing and I note my own briefly strong but passing annoyance at this realization. The challenge to mind and muscle, to make our way to our pre-dawn destination was unexpected—hiking a rather vertical route at that hour strangely, calls upon the physical body to perform in out-of-the-ordinary ways—I now realize in hindsight. It is mind and body out of context all the way to the summit. It strikes me now that it is exactly this “out-of-context” feeling that helps to ingrain my own memory of it so deeply and thoroughly in all facets of my consciousness and being.*

*Interestingly, the body and mind assimilate and adapt in peculiar and amazing ways to working with the disadvantage of no sight—logs and fallen trees become “felt presences” long before they threaten to trip us up along the way. Instinctively, we learn to feel our way through the forest, up past tree line and along the boulder jumbles toward the summit. Our feet become more steady and sure with each blind step taken—onward and upward. We can feel the wind currents shift as we ascend. Senses awaken to a heightened level and the sleepy fog dissipates as we continue this interesting journey, placing renewed faith in our senses (sans sight, of course, pitiful little flashlights, aside, too!). The sky above begins to show faint and subtle signs of lightening.*

*...We are ready for our sunrise ceremony at the summit. No one but the mountain herself is our intended audience on this day. A danced ceremony for the mountain and the sun—I think about how that unfolded and how it felt to dance for a non-human audience...*

*We rest briefly, at a point near one of Henry David Thoreau’s campsites. Here, we drop our packs for a drink of water. An owl hoot in the not-so-distant background makes dance-companion jump and gasp. We laugh at our jittery reaction to a darkened but apparently lively and animate landscape. We feel as if we are being watched! An occasional isolated strain of birdsong floats on the air around us. The sleepy mountain begins to stretch and awaken as we bear witness to this affirming and inspiring event. I love this particular area of the mountain. In the faint light I can see the familiar silhouette of the campsite—its existence little known to the general public-- where I often frequent for inspiration and solitude. It feels like home here, as*

*we stand in silence. We look around and see the dazzling lights of the small towns that surround the mountain—we look up and see the remaining stars, still quite visible. We throw our packs back on and continue up the steep ledge, now very near the summit. It is a brisk morning on this first day of summer.*

*We arrive at the summit and an easterly glow is barely detectable but there is a quickening sense of a new day rushing toward us. We have to hurry—gulping some hot coffee and then into costumes (costumes Tray and I wore when we performed this dance a few months ago on Acadia National Park’s Cadillac Mountain at dawn) and onto the giant boulder which has become the familiar “main stage” of our annual Monadnock summit performance. The granite is uncomfortably cold to bare feet but soon this awareness is forgotten as we begin to move into the dance itself. I*

*marvel that this rock really does feel like “home” and Tray agrees with me. We both have danced here enough to “know” every crack and crevice, every slight or abrupt change in grade, every place where the slightest misstep could mean our immediate demise. Yet, we feel safe here...if not protected somehow. There*



Figure 31: Lived experience-- D. Eno “dancing sunrise” on Mt. Monadnock (DEFDW©).

*is no wind today. It is eerily calm and silent. I also note that my sense of the passage of time is a very different experience here—it has always been this way for me here*

*We take our places on the rock and ready ourselves to dance this duet for our unconventional audience. As the recorded chant begins, we begin to move through the dance sequence. I am less aware of myself dancing and am more aware of my surroundings and the interplay of such with the dance itself. The dance seems to give us as dancers, entry into an abstract realm where human-ness and mountain-ness converge—very interesting feeling—a different kind of perception—not the everyday variety that is most familiar. I have an intense awareness of this*

*unfolding sense of convergence and collaboration as I continue to dance with my partner along the top cliff of our main stage boulder. The sun begins to rise above the horizon...*

*As the sun rises in a commanding dance of her own, this act simultaneously becomes an integral part of the “performance”—it is a “felt” realization. It is nearly as if the sun, herself, fuels the dance, connecting us in a ritual of primordial celebration of the new day. The thought crosses my mind mid-dance: the mountain celebrates dawn each and every day. Here we do this once, a fleeting glimpse of a phenomenon that is a normal occurrence on this mountain top. If only we could do this every day (or at the very least, remember this each morning)—because we need to pay attention to this-- there is no way to put into the “right” words and accurate description of how this feels! This is worth remembering, over and over again... The yellow glow intensifies and suddenly bursts into a brilliant red-orange radiation of light and heat and pure life force that dismisses the lingering remnants of dawn-before-light. A new day—full of possibility and potential. It is not at all reminiscent of standing still and witnessing sunrise (that is spellbinding and awe-striking enough as it is, to be sure). But this...is other-worldly--something entirely different. I shall never forget this feeling...dancing with first light...*

### **The Power of the Embodied “Memoried Account”**

Riessman offers an effective way to frame such experience and what she suggests is equally applicable to my own experiential circumstance as captured above. She identifies what she calls the *levels of representation* that delineate the process of *shaping experience* into *research*—these steps include 1) attending, 2) telling, 3) transcribing, 4) analyzing and 5) reading. She sets up a way for me, as “researcher” to make meaning from memoried experiences and perceptions:

If we adopt the starting point of phenomenology and the lived world of immediate everyday experience [in my case, dawn at the summit], the world of this inhabited beach is “‘already there’ before reflection begins—as an inalienable presence” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/1989, p.vii). Walking at dawn, I encounter it at a prelinguistic realm of experience [and so did I]—images, plays of colors and lights, noises, and fleeting sensations—in the stream of consciousness. I am one with the world and make no distinction at this point between my bodily perceptions and the objects I am conscious of that comprise the beach. Like all social actors, I experience this world from the “natural attitude,” taking it for

granted, not thinking about and analyzing it [Husserl, 1939/ 1973; Schutz, 1932/ 1967] (Reissman, 1993, p.9),

Riessman's way of experiencing and perceiving (at the prelinguistic level) seems to be very similar to my own experience as it authentically unfolds at once in time and space, via the vehicle of environmental dance prior to any journaling, reflection and conscious attempt by me to "capture" (write down) this memory. This is precisely what makes journal writing such is a crucial, complementary activity to this environmental dance research and site work.

Once I start to reflect on my experience of that morning on Monadnock, I begin to *attend to* [this] *experience*, as Riessman might say. This memory is significant enough to inspire such reflection and remembering and reflecting on that day becomes a way to bring that experience back to life—not in reality but within the landscape of my mind. The experience lives and relives itself there unfolding time and time again in the memoried landscape that exists within—every time I think about that experience or reflect on it the experience is revived and replayed again. This is so, even though memory may slightly (or even greatly) alter original reality some—each memory reproduces a unique version of the original event, thus creating through further interpretation, revision, reflection-- a "truth" of its own. Seemingly, what does remain intact and unaltered as the residual authentic piece of the original experience is its essence which consistently inhabits and re-forms each rendition brought forth through conscious memory and reflection. A convergence of these collected essences provides a gestalt interpretation of the original experience.

Next, in her outlined narrative sequence is the *telling about* [the] *experience* through what Riessman call "re-presenting" (a term that I have readily adopted) the original experience in great and meticulous detail. Referring to my own particular experience of dancing at sunrise at



the summit of Mt. Monadnock, I have verbally recounted that vivid memory on a number of occasions (and randomly continue to do so). Riessman laments:

In the telling, there is an inevitable gap between the experience as I lived it and any communication about it. Caught in the “prison house of language,” in the words of Nietzsche...there is no way to break through to the ideas to which my words refer because language is “uncommunicative of anything other than itself (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/ 1989, p. 188)” (pp.10-11).

Seemingly, this suggests a paradox situation—that language allows the experience to become resurrected through words, but in this nuanced resurrection, inevitable change alters its original reality. Riessman maintains this notion: “... without words, the sounds, movements and images of the beach [mountain/ dance] experience cease to exist. Language makes them real...” (p. 11). Even still, language is limited, and meaning shifts each time the experience is re-presented. Each new iterative revisitation of the original experience reflects the original essence while organically taking on a life of its own. In so doing, it too, becomes filtered through *uncertainty*.

As a way to override the limitations of language that Riessman alerts qualitative researchers to be wary of, I regularly incorporate a creative writing technique I discovered (and have adapted for our own use) along the twists and turns of this research journey. It involves the creation of a “found poem”, an emergent re-presentation of data fashioned from narrative data texts. These original data texts, often lengthy and detailed, originate from field journal entries, research memos, memoried accounts or journaled reflections of the on-site research/ field experiences.

As I previously describe, the process of writing a “found poem” involves choosing words and/or phrases from the lengthier texts and restructuring them in an aesthetically-appealing arrangements designed to enhance, illuminate and elevate the meaning of the primary document.

While it may seem, at first glance, to be a process of reduction, it is actually a delightful way to unearth the gems embedded in narrative texts, which are carefully mined for its most quintessential meaning, imagery and gesture, then, collected and synthesized into something greater than the sum of its individual parts (a deeper, in-depth discussion of this technique is presented in Chapter III, Methods and Methodology). The following is found poem that aims to further the process of creative, artistic abstraction and to also, poetically capture the essence of the previous journaled account of dancing at sunrise on Monadnock's summit:

### **In the Dark**

*It is darkest before dawn.*

*Mind and muscle,*

*Hiking a rather vertical route—*

*Fallen trees become “felt presences”.*

*We learn to feel our way through the forest—*

*Wind currents shift as we ascend—*

*Sleepy fog dissipates.*

*The sky above, is lightening.*

*A danced ceremony for the mountain, the sun,*

*A darkened, lively and animate landscape.*

*An isolated strain of birdsong,*

*The sleepy mountain begins to stretch and awaken.*

*We bear witness,*

*In the faint light.*

*It feels like home.*

*An easterly glow—*  
*A quickening sense.*  
*It is eerily calm and silent.*  
*The passage of time...*  
*We begin to move through the dance—*  
*An abstract realm where human-ness and mountain-ness converge.*

*The sun begins to rise—*  
*A commanding dance of her own.*  
*The mountain celebrates dawn.*  
*This is worth remembering...Dancing with first light.*

~Dianne Eno© 2017

The third stage in Riessman's *Levels of Representation* is evident in the actual recording of the experience—she calls this process *transcribing* (p. 11). Of course, as I journal about my experience of dancing with the sunrise on the mountain that day, I am making an attempt to fix or “fixate” that memory of experience (using Ricoeur's terminology, in *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*) even though we must recognize this process to be limited in its ability to provide a true instant replay of the original experience. Riessman describes *transcribing* as a process that is “incomplete, partial and selective” (p. 11). We, as researchers, explicitly acknowledge, as part of the validation of our work, that the primary experience and the later, after-the-fact transcription of the experience in a written journaled account are two very different pieces of the research collage (pastiche). However, each facet of the *experience* contributes toward creating a rich, lively piece of the

experiential puzzle. I see this as adding even more *uncertainty* into the mix while paradoxically, adding further richness and another layer of interpretation and thus, another layer of data.

Through the process of *analyzing the experience* even more uncertainty becomes an integral part of the recounted, transcribed story now to be interpreted. From interpretation, meaning is mined from a collection of analytic actions that alter, transform and give new form to the end product—a “meta-story”, a “hybrid” of sorts (p. 13). Each story of one’s experience is even further transformed (interpreted) by the reader’s own interpretation as filtered through the reader’s own lived experiences. Thus, the entire *experience continuum* (from the original primary experience to the cycles of interpretive re-presentations provided through the process of remembering) is an ephemeral phenomenon rather than a static, never-changing frozen remnant of the original lived experience.

### **Symbiosis and Synergy**

I have found that pairing the danced site work experiences with narrative journal-writing to be both symbiotic and synergistic. In one instance (symbiosis) the environmental dancing and an emergent journal-writing practice are married as two disparate activities in close proximity to each other, while the other, (synergism) elevates this pairing to the level of a gestalt-producing research tour-de-force. I believe that the research findings and the new knowledge and meaning that has emerged from this unique hybrid of methods has only made the research stronger and more vivid, authentic and alive. It basks in its own strength and authenticity while allowing the reader to vicariously “feel” the very tactile and physical original experiences of the dancer/researcher. I have a very clear sense as to how this creative discovery and its application to this project has moved the researcher closer toward a more intimate way of knowing and experiencing the mountain and our roles as dancer/ researchers there.

It is not so much about generating “new knowledge” as it is about aiming to draw out *deeper* meaning and knowledge (this is quality over quantity)—it is intimately a personal process while at the same time it evolves to encapsulate the universality of the profound experience that can only come from knowing the mountain on such a deepened, personal level—I believe this has to do with the *vulnerability* factor mentioned earlier. I also see how each level of representation adds something new in this never-ending, always shifting and changing process of discovery and transformation—a gestalt of meaning that has emerged from the synergy of the dancing body and the writing, transcribing hand which, enables the dancer/ researcher to traverse the landscapes of the inner and outer geographies with nimble ease. One way of knowing opens the door of another way of knowing. Such knowledge is, in the spirit of Indra’s net, a true reflection of the other and is a transdisciplinary undertaking.

### **Embodiment and Metaphor--an Embodied Practice**

The idea of *embodiment* is at the root of this research focus—environmental dance emerges very clearly as an embodied practice. Much what defines environmental dance as a nuanced creative, expressive phenomenon (as a sub-discipline, we recall, of the greater universe of dance) seems to emanate from this primary characteristic. The notion of embodiment suggests that there is a lively, dynamic way that allows the environmental dancer/ researcher to access embodied metaphor (fueled by the pairing of site work experiences and journaling to further preserve give them life) as the lifeline connecting the realms of inner and outer geographies. Clandinin’s interest in Johnson’s and Lakoff’s metaphor theory (“put the body back in the mind”, as Johnson says) (1999) in particular, adventures into the world of *metaphor* and the human body’s way of retaining, integrating and recycling conceptual artefacts from experience—the metaphor becomes a tool for being able to embody internally, that which is experienced in

the outer geographies of personal experience. In a very integral way, the metaphor anchors us, at once, in time and space locating us and giving us a steady compass point of reference in a living reality that is in constant flux. Our experiences are taken in (inner geographies) as remembered images—these images, translated as metaphors, become a way to make sense of our world of experiences and to solidify the ephemeral and fleeting nature of experience.

Environmental dance “speaks” in (nature’s) metaphors and is able to do so because of the reunification of body and mind (body-mind) (see Satori Loop and the enjoined, synergistic body-mind) as a true, complex organ of embodiment and this is what enables a direct human line of communication (dialogue) with the natural world. Clandinin (2007) suggests that metaphor is a human construct intended to provide a strategy of organization through expression—it is as if, by capturing the here-then-gone experience in a memoried “it’s-like-ness” transformation to metaphoric expression, we manage to retain the experience—it becomes a permanent, indelible part of us. We internalize it within the realm of the inner geography. And finally, Nature’s repeating patterns (archetypes) are embodied metaphors, after all. Such is proof enough for me and my research team, that we are integral extensions of the natural world as opposed to a prevalent view that we are separate from it. These metaphors we manifest through bodily expression (dance) and in dance are crystalized through the union and unity of body and mind. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) promote the intriguing notion that the human body is one big system of nested systems after all which illuminates the notion of the mind as having high and inclusive status as an integral part of the working, human-body whole. Furthermore, the authors have contributed toward the bodies of literature that aim to debunk the historic body-mind split:

Living systems must categorize. Since we are neural beings [note that—we are neural beings!!], our categories we form are *part of our experience!* They are the structures that differentiate aspects of our experiences into discernible kinds. Categorization is thus not a purely intellectual matter, occurring after the fact of

experience. It is part of what our bodies and brains are constantly engaged in. We cannot, as some meditative traditions suggest, “get beyond” our categories and have a purely uncategorized and unconceptualized experience. Neural beings cannot do that (Lakoff and Johnson, p. 19).

We cannot deny how the brain must process the data received directly from experience. It is an undeniable collaboration, a duet between body and mind that merge together—experience is a body/mind event! The authors explain how their claim radically calls into question previously-held predominant, positivist view:

What is the view that the mind is disembodied? It is the view that the contents of the mind, the actual concepts, are not crucially shaped or given any significant inferential content of the body. It is the view that concepts are formal in nature and arise from the mind’s capacity to generate formal structure in such a way as to derive further, inferred, formal structures. Advocates of the disembodied mind will, of course, say that conceptual structure must have a neural *realization* in the brain, which just *happens* to reside in the body. But they deny that anything about the body is essential for characterizing what concepts are (p. 37).

Lakoff and Johnson continue with the alternate view in the evolution of the long-held assumption that the body and mind are independent structures:

The claim that the mind is embodied is, therefore, far more than the simpleminded claim that the body is needed if we are to think. Advocates of the disembodied-mind position agree with *that*. Our claim is, rather, that the very properties of concepts are created as a result of the way the brain and body are structured and the way they function in interpersonal relations and in the physical world (p. 37).

And finally, a theory of the embodied mind emerges:

The embodied mind hypothesis therefore radically undercuts the *perception/conception* distinction. In an embodied mind, it is conceivable that the same neural system engaged in *perception* (or in bodily movement) plays a central role in *conception*. That is, the very mechanism could be responsible for perception, movements, and object manipulation could be responsible for conceptualization and reasoning. Indeed, in recent neural modeling research, models of perceptual mechanisms and motor schemas can actually do *conceptual* work in language learning and in reasoning. This is a startling result. It flies in the face of time-honored philosophical theories of faculty psychology and their recent reincarnation in strong modularity theories of mind and language, each of which

insists on a separation of the mechanisms for perception and conception (pp. 37-38).

This telling passage is vital to the study of narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly make reference to Lakoff and Johnson's work on page one of their text, since their work "on metaphors seemed directly connected to [the authors'] experiential focus and link...to Dewey's work" (p. 3). This works to produce a sense of what Clandinin and Connelly call "narrative unity" that provides a frame "to think in a more detailed and informative way about the general construct in individual's lives. Continuity became...a narrative construction that opened up a floodgate of ideas and possibilities" (p. 3). An important goal of the narrative inquiry approach (as both "phenomena under study *and* method of study" (p. 4)) is to preserve the "holistic sense of an individual person and her experiential knowledge" (p.3). One of these possibilities is that one experience (as it is "embodied") shapes and forms the experiences that follow—these become nested, systematic and a permanent part of the individual's (inner, integral) reality—re-telling the story is an act of acknowledging and energizing this basic function/ mechanism. It also seems to me, that the very act of re-telling our stories strengthens this "system".

This system also includes how we perceive and conceptualize the external world [natural environment]—here, I am also compelled to refer to Lakoff and Johnson (1999) and the idea of brain-compatible (neural) learning, a foundational concept of their work--which if I am understanding this correctly, properly suggests, that the human body's wiring is a *system* of nerves, synapses and other physical circuitry that enjoins brain and body through mind. How we perceive and conceptualize may be happening through this same circuitry, according to theories discussed in the early sections of their text. The old way, the formalist way, of dissecting mind and body (and negating the real significance of the physical body in this complex systems



process) also necessarily creates a dichotomy between perception and conception. Here, as well, as reflected in narrative inquiry as holistic process, two splits are healed and unified.

I am again recalling and referring to the above memoried account of dancing sunrise on Mt. Monadnock. I now have a better understanding of how and why we internalize our experiences to such high degrees—the proof for me (I would hasten to say this might be a normal occurrence) is in my ability to recall this, and other experiences in such vivid detail that they actually become a visceral re-experience of the original event. Not only can I remember how this day “felt” but I am also certain that it was a transformational experience on a variety of levels, as well, that continues to shape and mold how I experience, and interact with the (natural) world.

### **The Important Role of Metaphors**

Of particular interest to me, referencing once again, Lakoff & Johnson (1999), has to do with metaphors and how we employ them as the language of narrative. I never really thought much about the use and function of metaphors as a way to story our experiences until now—metaphorical expression is a vital component in how we express, and order and generally make sense of our worlds of experience—it is certainly what we do as dancing environmental artists. Here are some additional points that inform the work my research team and I have undertaken in this project. While these are representative major points, this is a very simplified portrayal of some very detailed and amazing work:

- The way we conceptualize, reason about and visualize subjective experiences “comes from other domains of experience” (i.e. sensori-motor domains, which refers to the bodily experience). An example—conceptualization of my understanding of an idea

(subjective experience) in terms of grasping it as an object (sensori-motor experience) or the opposite, failing to understand something (idea “goes over my head”) (p. 45).

- Metaphor allows conventional mental imagery (from sensori-motor domains) to be used for domains of subjective experience; it occurs to me that metaphor can be “transferred” into a physical representation/ interpretation that, in its most rudimentary form (as communication), is *gesture* and in a more developed form can become environmental dance.
- Conceptual metaphor is a pervasive phenomenon in both thought and language (we think in metaphor—therefore we dance in metaphor!). The authors point out that it is “hard to think of a common subjective experience that is not conventionally conceptualized in terms of metaphor.
- The Integrated Theory of Primary Metaphor (a 4-part theory) that explains how metaphors arise, are expressed and why (p. 46)—
 

The theory consists of:

  - 1) Johnson’s Theory of Conflation—young children do not discern between subjective (non sensori-motor) experiences and judgments and sensori-motor experiences; these become conflated allowing associations to be naturally built up between the two--these become the permanent maps of conceptual metaphors that will be used throughout life;
  - 2) Grady’s Theory of Primary Metaphor—all complex metaphors are “molecular, made up of “atomic” metaphorical parts called primary metaphors. Each primary metaphor has a “minimal structure” and arises naturally, organically in everyday experience via *conflation*;

3) Narayanan's Neural Theory of Metaphor—Associations created during the conflation process are manifested neurally, which amounts to the formation of permanent neural connections across neural networks that define conceptual domains. These connections form the fleshy, anatomical basis of “source-to-target activations that constitute metaphorical entailments (pp. 46-47);

4) Fauconnier and Turner's Theory of Conceptual Blending—this may actually be the *mechanism* by which two or more primary metaphors can be brought together to form complex metaphors. Through “integration” this theory suggests that: we acquire a large system of primary metaphors automatically, unconsciously through everyday experience/ living; and because of the way neural connections are made in early childhood (conflation), we all collectively think in and express our experiences by using hundreds of primary metaphors (pp. 46-47).

➤ Characteristics and features of Primary Metaphors—

- 1) Primary metaphors are part of the *cognitive unconscious* (we acquire these automatically and unconsciously via the “normal” process of neural learning).
- 2) When the embodied experiences in the world are *universal*, then the corresponding primary metaphors are universally-acquired as well.
- 3) Universal conceptual metaphors are learned [socio-cultural feature].
- 4) Most important and pertinent to my work is the idea that not all conceptual metaphors are manifested in the words of a language: “Some are manifested in grammar, others in gesture, art and ritual” (p.57). These nonlinguistic (or prelinguistic) metaphors may be expressed through language and other symbolic means [like environmental dance].

- As Johnson and Lakoff put it: “the inevitability of primary metaphor”; “Metaphors as cross-domain conceptual mapping” (p.58).
- Primary metaphors “provide subjective experience with extremely rich, inferential structure, imagery and qualitative “feel”” (p. 59).

I would also like to include another art-specific article from the *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a Methodology* (Clandinin, 2007), entitled “Composing a Visual Narrative Inquiry” because it relates to (and has helped clarify) a feature of my own multi-faceted approaches of capturing data for this research project. This particular feature, as I have discovered, is also an integral part of my creative process when it comes to creating site-specific dance. Author Hedy Bach begins her discussion about the use of photography as narrative inquiry, with an apt definition of what it means to be a “visual narrative inquirer”—it is one that resonates for me personally, on a variety of levels, as I have suggested above and has been a useful research tool:

Being a visual narrative inquirer is not so much about what I *do*. For me, it is a way of “being” in my world: being--living a life, not just doing a life. Seeing is a way of being in relation with people, nature and self. Being a visual narrative inquirer involves an active process of photographing my life and is a natural way for me to hold an experience. As a visual learner with deep roots, I love the mystery [uncertainty, willfully embraced!!] of narrative inquiry—the mystery of simultaneously inquiring while living a life narratively, a being that engages fully with the senses of the body and the mind [unification of body and mind]. Being truly mindful has meant seeing my heart as “a living museum” [I love this!]...and in each of its galleries, there are both open and closed doors and doors that need to be opened to fully understand an experience (Bach, p. 281).

Like the author, I am undoubtedly, a *visual* narrative inquirer. As a site-specific environmental dance artist, I have had to (out of necessity for my art) develop and hone a hyper-sensitive set of observation skills that: 1) allow me to see my subject matter, the amoebic form of the dance-to-be, at closest range; 2) allow me to see my dance-to-be from multiple perspectives and 3) allow me to see the prospective dance “from afar”. This serves the greater purpose of multiple ways of

knowing that becomes a comprehensive source and resource from which the dance is crafted and is given a life of its own.

***Journal entry (Memoried Account—“Dancing Like a Mountain”) [6.4]***

*I recall the memory of creating a rather recent site-specific dance piece for the mountain, called simply “Dancing Like a Mountain”. This is a solo created for and danced by a longtime company member Trayer Run-Kowzun, a very strong and accomplished environmental dancer. I am recalling the part of my creative process which preceded the actual creation of movement sequences and motifs for this dance—a critical phase in the creative process of site-specific dance, I think. I recall a sunny day on the summit. On that afternoon, I took approximately 80 digital photographs covering the rather large area that would become the site of this dance’s*



Figure 32: T. Run-Kowzun in "Dancing like a Mountain" (DEFDW©).

*unfolding. Looking through the camera lens helped me to “particularize” even more the very landscape where the dancer would perform this dance. I realize now, that photo-taking is almost a metaphorical rendering of what happens when an audience witnesses a site-specific environmental dance performance at the summit of Mt. Monadnock (or any other natural site, for that matter)—the audience’s own focus is directed toward a limited*

*area where action unfolds. Of course, the greater context is there, providing for a wonderful contrast, but it is my goal as the choreographer to get the audience to “see” certain particular things at a micro level.*

*There is even a dance term (I remember this term from a “performance/ improvisation class I took in my undergraduate program—gosh, I haven’t thought about that class for years! It was one of my favorites; I can still remember the low lighting, the rustic interior and the piney smell of the hard wood floors combined (with rosin that helped us stay solid in our dancing) of the crew house at Smith where the class was held every Tuesday and Thursday night!! And how it overlooked the river, nice memories...)—“graining” which is the purposeful emphasis through physical movement and intention on some external feature of the performance space, by the dancer, him/ herself. This is accomplished through a focused energy on one particular area—the goal of the improv performer is to get the audience to acutely recognize and acknowledge this point of shared focus. A consensus between performer and audience is achieved when*

*“graining” has been successful. In a way, the camera is helping me to “grain” to specifics in the landscape that I either recognize already, as being significant to the dance piece, in some way, or that will soon become significant to the dance piece. The former is a pre-conceived connection of content to the landscape; the latter is a serendipitous or “discovered” relevant element that serves as a source of inspiration that will feed the dance form. I take pictures that support an already existing-image I hold in my mind’s eye of this new dance and I take pictures to capture the raw nuances of the site that will inspire new connections between my vision, the site and the dance...*

### **Visual Narratives**

I concur with the author of this article:

...“visual narrative inquiry allows another layer of meaning to narrative inquiry. Experience as a whole includes all that is experienced as well as the experience and the way he or she experiences. Experience differs from person to person; each undergoes and acts and reacts differently. Each has a different “angle of vision” that touches on a common world. This angle of vision is an important component of visual narrative inquiry. There are no static categories of understanding or static forms of perception—one perception leads to another (Bach, p. 282).

As both artist and researcher, it is my goal to experience my subject matter (the focus of my new dance-to-be) from as many different angles as possible. This has also proven to be the case as my dancer/researcher team and I proceeded through the research project. For the most part, I see this quest, whether as artists or as artist/researchers, as an open-ended, never-ending dialogic process.

For this reason, I rarely ever feel that any dance piece (or research question) is finished (or terminally answered), with that kind of finality that disallows the possibility for reflection, refinement and revision—of discovery more. The life of the dance continues as an evolutionary process this way; this is compatible with another condition of this art form—that every performance is a nuanced version, given new life in a different time and circumstance. I have discovered that photography becomes a helpful companion to the site-specific choreographer.

Bach describes her own process:

I begin with photographing my own storied life as a way of portraying the particularities of an autobiographical narrative point of view. In any story told, multiple selves speak, and these selves are temporal productions residing in both the present and a reconstructed past... To this extent, past, present, and future, as contained in stories, can be seen as productions or creations that may intersect and overlap in nonlinear organic ways. Just as living a life is unbounded, visual narrative inquiry is also open to possibilities and imaginings (p. 285).

I see the use of visual narrative inquiry as a direct route to experience what Clandinin and Connelly define as “three-dimensional landscape of narrative inquiry”. Inner, and outer worlds merge with the temporalities of past, present and future—all this made available and accessible to artist and researcher, alike, through the lens of a camera. Visual narrative inquiry allows me to articulate a tacit process that I have employed for years as a site-specific environmental dance artist—as a way to intimately get to know a particular site and to “hold the experience”, as the author puts it, is now taken a few steps further, in a perhaps more sophisticated application: what was once mainly a documentary process of “holding the experience” (as well as time and space—as a frozen moment of sorts) now becomes the spark that ignites a new dialogue between artist and landscape.

The photos allow me to see my experience anew, with fresh eyes; from this seeing, I begin the process of dialoguing with the landscape that I had previously photographed; from the dialoguing, I write a field text; from the field text (journal entry), I flesh out dance/ movement that is a reflection of this process of getting to know the site in a multiplicity of ways. The end result is a new approach toward creating site-specific environmental dance along with deep insights into understanding what environmental dance really is. This nuanced approach is reflected in a refined creative process that explicitly seeks to consciously engage with the site through narrative inquiry. Once again, this is an iterative cycle of moving within the phenomenal environment of the summit, which the dancer/researcher then embodies and transforms into the

written words of the journaled account. The pairing of dance with such research writing is a true reflection of the unity of the dancer/researchers' body-and-mind with the expressive, dynamic and living landscape.

### Jewel Seven--Ritual

#### *Journal Entry (Field Journal—"The Resting Place Revisited") [7.1]*

*We take our beginning places, stage left, on the "flat rock" section of the main stage area, the obvious focal natural rocky that organically down from the mountain. An audience of is seated jagged jumble of granite. On this afternoon, the intermittently behind a expected cloud we enter the space (from gargantuan*



*point of the amphitheater tiers its way summit of the anticipating several hundred throughout this accommodating early autumn sun peeks out from heavier-than cover. On cue, ceremoniously performance behind the boulder known*

Figure 33: "The Resting Place, Part I" danced by research team members at the summit of Mt. Monadnock, April 2011 (DEFDW©).

*as "main stage" rock) to accordion music that hints of a Parisian outdoor bistro, now in full view of the spectators, who now hush to silence, as we dance with the stylized movement and gestures that suggest "hiking". We are clad in hiking gear, complete with socks and boots. In silence we seat ourselves, one-by-one, in our lazy, lounging postures and positions on the expanse of flat granite, as if we had just arrived at the summit from our typical 1.5 hour hike to the summit for weekly site rehearsals—our route follows the White Arrow (Old Toll Road) trail and then branches off to a "short-cut" connector trail that connects with the White Dot trail that takes us to the summit. We create the iconic tableau of a randomly "resting" group of (5) intrepid environmental dancers, who, appear to be taking a moment to celebrate the breath-taking views of the distant vistas upon reaching the 3165' summit. We call this three-part dance*



*piece “The Resting Place”, our signature-piece, performed every year as our “ritual of return”. It tells the story of our being here—in a simple way (that evolves in some slight evolutionary way each and every year we perform it), it is a ceremony that honors our annual return to place and of reconnection to the mountain and the interconnected performance spaces there. And, where the mountain reconnects to the performers, as well, acting as the vessel that holds and supports this environmental dance performance each year. There is a sense of deep connection between performer and mountain as the Resting Place seeks to ritualistically re-establish the reciprocal bond dancer and mountain, making the body-mind-earth-and-spirit loop that we feel and sense, complete, once again.*

*Slowly, strains of a different rhythmical melody overtakes the playful bistro music and become barely audible and the sound builds as dancers begin to remove boots and socks (transforming themselves from hikers to barefoot environmental dancers in an instant). We begin to rise from our resting spots and we begin to come to life in a choreographed animation that captures the stretching, twisting, turning, spiraling movements that signify our way of transitioning from our hike to the site, to readying ourselves for several hours of rigorous and steady rehearsal!*

*In unison, we move through a series of building gestures that intentionally draw the audience in to our experience of dancing in and expressing this special landscape and to the vista beyond us, dancing on the horizon. Then, one-by-one, we dance our way along the rocks (much as we do, on our journey up the mountain trail) only to disappear behind the Main Stage rock once again. We beckon the audience with arm gestures to come along with us...*

*Behind the rock (“backstage”), a very quick costume change ensues from hiking garb into*



*Figure 34: “The Resting Place, Part II” danced by research team member T. Run-Kowzun at the summit of Mt. Monadnock, April 2011 (DEFDW©).*

*ephemeral sky blue and white costumes and transforms hiking dancers into the more-than-human natural elements—reflecting the nature above us—the blue sky and billowing white clouds. Now, an audible “rainstorm” builds within the music and on cue, five distinct thunder crashes, dancers explode onto stage once again, with percussive, jagged lightning-like movements and shapes, filling the main stage rock on multi-levels.*

*This is one of two magical moments for the performers, where there is a distinct feeling of breaking down the boundaries of dancer-and-mountain. From a dancer’s perspective, human-ness blurs and blends with this mountain landscape—the feeling is one of giddy elation, of being carried, energized and*

*powered by the mountain. It is much like the sensation of catching an ocean wave and the thrill of riding it fully into shore, giving in to its power, weightlessly and effortlessly, while, at the same time, feeling the energy of nature moving me through space and time. It is a feeling that forever plants itself in the muscle memory of the environmental dancer who dances on this mountain summit. I shall never forget it!*



Figure 35: "The Resting Place, Part III" danced by research team member A. MacQueen at the summit of Mt. Monadnock, April 2011 (DEFDW©).

*A second surge of performance magic occurs as Part III begins: After a series of heralding drumbeats that seem to gather energy in swirling patterns of a culminating quickening, an ethereal, lyrical melody takes over and lifts us as dancers, expanding our torsos, arms and focus like lotus blossoms opening in time-lapse photography sequences. Flowing, gestures of unison arm movement connects us with the sky above while the granite supporting us grounds us like rooted trees. We become the human conduits between heaven and earth. The dance movement begins to canon, and as our dancing arms open in an echoing set of sequences that soar above the head and release with a gentle opening to the sides of the body, the sun suddenly breaks through the clouds and shines down on us. This feeling of the sudden, unexpected sensation of warmth from the sun, the lyrical port-de-bras moments of warm movements in sync with the perfectly timed emergence of the sun, finally triumphing over the clouds is a performance moment that will be forever imprinted on mountain and environmental dancer on this day and forever preserve this bond of a ritual of return...*



Figure 36: "The Resting Place, Part III", danced by research team members C. Torp and D. Eno, at the summit of Mt. Monadnock, April 2011 (DEFDW©).

In my continuing efforts to describe the phenomenological attributes and parameters of site-specific “environmental dance”, my research journey has led my team and me to explore environmental dance as a way of dancing our connections to the Earth in public ceremony as a vehicle for either the development or the strengthening of the bond between human(s) and place; this leg of my literature-focused journey will offer heightened insight into this on-going venture with an interest in individual and socially-constructed meaning of ritualized action as environmental dance embedded within a specific natural site. Toward this goal, a study of both *form* and *function* (Alexander, 2002; James, 2007; Thompson 1942), of the ritual-as-model will aid in the framing of environmental dance phenomenon in this way.

### **“Dichotomies and Dialectics”: The Role of Ritual**

In a vast universe of diverse theoretical constellations, I have been drawn to the concepts of “dichotomies and dialectics” as an integral feature of one very limited fragment of the great

galaxy of ritual theory<sup>38</sup>. With a curious eye particularly alert to the idea of dialectic action, the emergent literature in this Jewel Seven of Indra's net moves us toward considering the transformational power of ritual. Similarly, this is reflected and captured in environmental dance as public performance and it is possible that the source of this power originates in the "dance" between specific dialectic tensions and their ultimate ritualized resolutions, via a synthesis of form and function. The primary focus here, is to highlight the work of contemporary theorist Catherine Bell, notably her work as it directly addresses the notion of dialectic action in ritual theory, which also acknowledges a lineage of diverse and ever-evolving myth-ritual thought. This is an intriguing discovery for me, as a framework distilled and formulated from a collective body of these prominent theories. This section looks at the role of such dichotomous tensions in rituals themselves that dynamically push and pull at each other in symbolic action seeking ceremonialized resolve and symbolic rebalancing.

I also consider the circumstance of a singular ritual phenomenon and this will provide necessary context and clarify distinguishing characteristics. I propose that only a "living" illustration (still practiced as a way to perpetuate the memory of its origin) optimally supports the notion of ritual-as-dialectic once theoretical points have been properly laid out. The idea of the *living ritual* supports my own view; this holistic, dialectic perspective necessarily characterizes ritual as a living and organic phenomenon which is further constituted and clarified by the following pattern of consistently identified hallmarks 1) how does ritual function; 2) why and what form might this action take; and 3) what is the (symbolic) meaning of the ritual act? And furthermore, how are these accomplished within a context of connecting humans to place?

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<sup>38</sup> See Catherine Bell, "Constructing Ritual" in: *Readings in Ritual Studies* (Ronald L. Grimes, (Ed.) (1996); (pp. 21-33).

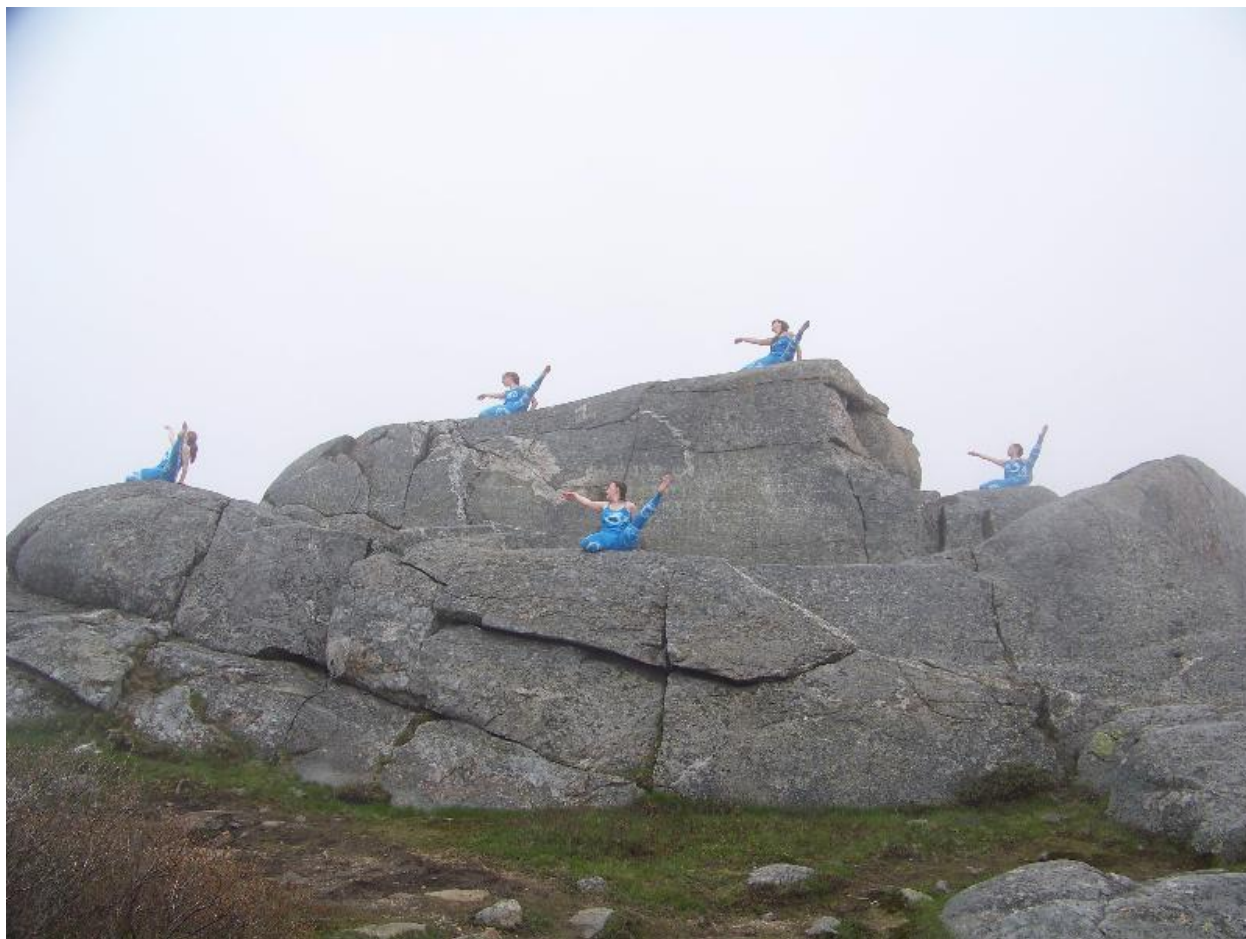


Figure 37: "The Resting Place, Part III" danced by research team members M. Madsen, A. MacQueen, C. Torp, D. Eno and T. Run-Kowzun at the summit of Mt. Monadnock, April 2011 (DEFDW©).

It is the intensified symbolic and lived relationship with the natural landscape (as a profoundly holistic way to embody place) that resonates in a similar way with environmental dance.

A signature dance piece, "*The Resting Place*" (from my dance company's repertory) fits snugly within this dialectic framework. I refer to this particular dance piece as a "living" exemplar borrowed from my lived experiences as an environmental dance artist and will examine this dance piece, seeking from within in the context of the living ritual model, the attributes that the work demonstrates.

As a result of the earlier, cyclical iterations of this research process, I can now utilize these illustrated theoretical and practical connections (data) to provide a constructive milieu for the purposes of contextualizing environmental dance as ritual of place. My intention is to show

patterns of similarity between the exemplar repertory dance piece (environmental dance)<sup>39</sup> with the criteria of form, function and symbolic meaning, offering a simple and clear analysis. It is presumed that this will act as a sort of template that will echo similar, recognizable features in such comparative instances. These provide necessary fine distinctions of environmental dance held within the context of dialectic intervention and synthetic re-balancing, as exemplified by interpretations of several selections from my own site-specific environmental dance repertory. In all references to my work, I attempt to maintain the utmost level of objectivity (See Goethe's "preliminary stage"), seeking to examine "environmental dance" as an object of deconstruction and synthesis. The mission of Jewel Seven is invested in the hope of being able to demystify it as ritual phenomenon, through the lens of ritual as dialectic by way of the simplest means possible, while simultaneously affording the greatest clarity and illumination.

### **An Historical Overview and Context**

The advent of myth ritual theory is an interesting tale of the naissance of a seemingly open-ended evolutionary journey with many an unpredictable twists and turns that will begin in antiquity and pause with the work of Catherine Bell (1997). It is by no means to be suggested that this process of theory-making and refinement is a finished one or that this saga of understanding our human selves through ritual behaviors, actions and ceremonies has come to some static, finalized conclusion. Instead, this section provides a side trip into some heavily traveled and charted territory. It provides a series of necessary snapshots of this vast and extraordinary landscape: a place where interdisciplinary conjecture and reasoning meet, collide and often break apart in various marriages and divorces of theoretical positionings that

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<sup>39</sup> See above field journal entry, providing a phenomenological ("lived experience") of performing "*The Resting Place*" at the summit of Mt. Monadnock, Jaffrey NH.



encompass a broad horizon where religious studies including religion phenomenology, folklore studies, sociology, including the social sciences and ethnographic approaches, psychology, anthropology and of late, performance studies continue to converge and diverge indicating quite poetically, the very nature of ritual, itself—one of lively dynamism, fluidity, change and adaptation (Bado-Fralick, (2005); Beck & Metrick, (1990); Bell, (1992; 1997); Casey, E. S. (1996); Copeland & Cohen (Eds.), (1983); Erdoes & Ortiz (Eds.), (1984); Feld & Basso, (1996); Grimes, (1992); Hanna, (1979); Kluckhohn,, (1942); Segal, (1998). As a way to systematically organize the expansive universe of myth-ritual discourse, I will borrow the categories of “four (4) main lines of thought” utilized by ritual scholar Catherine Bell (1997, p.3). These groupings of demarcation and identity are as follows, each with its own set of characters and players that have made prolific and distinctive contributions to the theory pool. It provides an historical overview.

First, were the doubting Thomas’s, the “issue raisers” as Bell calls them--those who were compelled to reconstitute and recycle popularly and previously held theoretical beliefs on the subject believing that pioneering theorists among themselves had somehow gotten it all wrong, or at the very least, were partially wrong in their assessments. Then entered the “myth and ritual schoolers” who largely pondered and debated over which came first--the “chicken”-myth or the “egg”-ritual; they also leaned heavily toward the notion that ritual was the precursor to religion and perhaps even culture itself. In a third category is the possibly most eccentric cross-section of those heady theorists seeking to generate theory pertaining to ritual, described best by Bell herself, as “a loose set of phenomenologists of religion who tended to emphasize myth.” (Bell, p. 3). Lastly, there were those of the psycho-analytic disciplines who created a variety of nuanced

theoretical applications based on an amalgam of every ritual-related thought and theory that preceded them.

I begin this evolutionary story, out of necessity with the nay-sayers, Friedrich Muller (1823-1900), Andrew Lang (1844-1912) and Edward B. Tyler, an anthropologist who proposed and countered various hypotheses of the times and generally managed to stir up any signs of settling into a single, solidifying theory. A commonly shared view of these theorists was that the myth originated as culturally-specific “poetic statements about nature” (and functioned as explanations of the unexplained mysteries of the universe). This view emerged to fulfill the cultural task only to be fully misunderstood and misinterpreted by ensuing generations (Bell, pp. 3-4). Other theorists in the company of Tyler thought that this assessment was too simplistic and was instead, reflective of an evolutionary quality in the response of ritual to adapt to changing societal circumstance and to shape shift symbolic meaning in a similar act of adaptation. Since there was never any real or enduring consensus among these theorists, it is a logical assumption that an emerging pattern of dissonance in theoretical thought would set the stage for a contemporary view of the myth-ritual arrangement as a dance of duality; seemingly parallel to this dichotomous pairing was the developing and predominant Western world view, a crystal clear reflection of Cartesian duality.

There are several myth-ritual theorists who offer variations on what I refer to as the “chicken-or-the-egg” theme that myth (thought or beliefs) naturally precedes or follows ritualized action and/ or are of more importance. William Robertson Smith (1846-1865) who pioneered a theory of ritual behaviorism proposed that ritual was an original precursor to organized religious practice. His view holds that myth comes after the ritual “behavior” with an emphasis of practice



over belief, ritual over myth—myth did not serve to explain the mysteries of the world but instead, elucidated and accounted for ritual behavior.

Again, I mention Edward Tyler (1871) who deserves some attention in this grouping as one who helped establish a strong sense of the multiplicity of ways that theorists approached an understanding of the myth-ritual relationship. While theorizing that myth comes first, Tyler also places supreme importance on the myth, which in his analysis, mimics the function of science—a way to explain a complex and mystifying universe. Additionally, I must mention anthropologist James Frazer, whose unique theory exemplifies something akin to the idea of dialectic—his interpretation of the changing circumstances and thus, what seems to be the shifting synergy between myth and ritual reveals a kind of mediating force:

While Frazer is best known for his tripartite division of culture into the stages of magic, religion, and science, the bulk of his tome is devoted to an intermediate stage between religion and science – a stage of magic and religion combined. In this in between stage is to be found myth-ritualism, for only here do myths and rituals work together. In the stage of sheer magic there are rituals – the routines involved in carrying out the directions – but no myths for there are no gods. In the stage of religion there are both myths and rituals, but they are barely connected. Myths describe the character and behavior of gods. Ritual seeks to curry divine favor. Rituals presuppose myths... (Segal, 1998, p. 3).

This passage inspires the very interesting idea that in Frazer's variation, myth-ritualism is perhaps derived from a dialectic between religion and science. Of further curiosity, is the related notion that only through the dialectic process may the mechanism which allows myth-ritual synergy to properly manifest, become activated. While diverse myth-ritual theories abound, it is remarkable what even the slightest variation can bring about in overall effect and final interpretation.

Two other myth-ritualists, Near East scholars Jane Harrison (1912) and S. H. Hooke (1921) contributed the idea that myth and ritual arise simultaneously--rituals served to control , uncontrollable, unpredictable nature (in a similar vein as Frazer). This theory variation was

proposed through the idea that ritual functions on a "Law of Similarity" which drew parallel connections and links between god and the land--when god(s) meet their demise then this circumstance is symbolically reflected in the condition of the land (i.e., infertile) and conversely, when the god(s) are brought back to life (often magically revived), so the land is made pure and fertile again (Segal, 1998, p.6);. This model draws upon the idea of the birth-death-rebirth archetype.

Hooke, in particular maintained that myth ("the thing said") and ritual ("the thing done") were conjoined in early cultures (Bell, 1990, p.5). Over time, the instructional "story" of the myth became separated from its associated, prescribed actions. Apparently, the development of myth-ritualist theory peaked with Harrison's and Hooke's work. As theory continued to evolve, specific applications of theory variations to civilizations of an ancient world marked the work of those who continued the work of Harrison and Hooke (Bell, 1990). Harrison's greatest contribution to the theory pool was the idea that relational myth-rituals could and often separated from each other, becoming independent entities with individualized meaning derived from an evolving context—she also maintained that the underlying, foundational myth often died out altogether (Segal, 1998, p.8).

A.M. Hocart and E.O. James applied customized, individually-formulated variations of theory to cultures around the world—seeking out universal patterns of commonality as did their predecessors. Anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski (1926) offered up his own version of myth-ritual theory (he was informed by Frazer: myth before ritual) to native peoples worldwide—seemingly, he claimed that that there are cultural idiosyncrasies that other theorists would not or did not acknowledge. Mircea Eliade (1959) applied a similar form of theory to the myths of all

cultures around the world; myth according to Eliade, was always an account of some facet of creation and served as the narrative preservation of a sacred history (Segal, 1998).

Bell identifies another group as the (German branch of) religion-focused phenomenologists. This group of theorists tended to 1) emphasize the importance of myth over ritual, 2) strongly oppose the “reductionism of Tyler, Robertson Smith, and some later sociological and anthropological approaches to religion” (1990, p.8) and to 3) dismiss the notion of an evolutionary framework to illuminate unique and defining characteristics of religions. Further they held that “unless one recognized the transhistorical sacred...a purely historical approach is reductionism” (1990, pp. 8-10).

The last of the four categories include the nuancers with a psycho-analytic bent. This eclectic group includes Sigmund Freud (1920's) who developed an entire approach to psychoanalysis “as an interpretive approach to buried levels of consciousness” (Bell, p. 12) based on Frazer's idea that primitive cultures developed religious belief and practices to rationalize otherwise unexplainable and confounding “psychological experiences having to do with dreams, nature, and the effectiveness of magic” (Bell, p. 13).

Working toward more contemporary notions and applications of myth-ritual theory, one must also include the work of Joseph Campbell in this category as well:

The writings of Joseph Campbell...have offered another curious amalgamation of the myth and ritual school, psychoanalysis (via the work of Carl Jung), and comparative mythological studies (primarily Eliade). Campbell's synthetic approach is obvious in the four functions he outlined for both myth and ritual: a metaphysical or mystical function that induces a sense of awe and reverence in human beings; a cosmological function that provides a coherent image of the cosmos; a sociological function that guides the individuals within a social community; and a psychological function that guides the individual's internal development (Bell, p.13).

What I find most fascinating is Campbell's conceptualization of the "monomyth" that he believed to be a universal thread in all psycho-social phenomena that permeates all cultures and is "was found everywhere and was key to unlocking everything" (p.13).

What clearly emerges from this theory overview is the suggestion that any attempt to ground analysis in generalities, in a vacuum, is futile. To attempt to do so is to ignore the necessity of context in each application of myth and ritual and each one's own idiosyncratic set of symbols. A sense of the passage and cyclical flow of time and the organic evolutions that result are complementary toward understanding structure. This is a holistic view on the myth-ritual arrangement. Anthropologist and social theorist Clyde Kluckhohn offers his own assessment:

The facts do not permit any universal generalizations as to ritual being the "cause" of myth or vice versa. Their relationship is rather that of intricate mutual interdependence, differently structured in different cultures and probably at different times in the same culture...the only uniformity which can be posited is that there is a strong tendency for some sort of interrelationship between myth and ceremony and that this interrelationship is dependent upon what appears, so far as present information goes, to be an invariant function of both myth and ritual: the gratification (most often in the negative form of anxiety reduction) of a large proportion of the individuals in a society (in Kluckhohn, 1942, pp.45-79).

It is this prevailing sense of complexity and unpredictability in the general behavior of the myth-ritual relationship that remains apparent as a common, unifying theme of what I have charted so far; one gets the sense of a rather mature area of inquiry still seeking to define itself through its methods of theory development. While it is relatively certain that myth-ritual theorists sought to employ a deconstructive process as the primary means of analysis, the necessary developmental twists and turns of myth-ritual theory chronologically mapped above, have worked over time to move the field systematically toward a synthetic, dialectic approach—again, aligning with a holistic understanding the unique interplay of myth and ritual.

Earlier theories were intent on the mystical and emotional aspects of myth and ritual--the psychological landscape of the individual; gradually, myth became a secondary consideration with a new focus on the illumination of ritual as a social phenomenon. Interest turned toward desiring to understand the ritual in terms of how it functioned as a social *action*. Identifying and grouping the functional-structuralists provide another way to categorize the evolution of myth- ritual theory:

The functional-structuralists explored what appeared to be the “social” work of ritual activities: the formation and maintenance of the social bonds that establish human community, the socialization of the individual through an unconscious appropriation of common values and common categories of knowledge and experience, the channeling and resolution of social conflict, and the periodic renewal or transformation of the social and conceptual structures underlying community life (Bell 1997, p. 59).

What functionalism provided was an *ahistorical emphasis* on the social purpose of ritual; notable functional-structuralists include a long list of recognized ethnographers and theorists--Bronislaw Malinowski and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, Emile Durkheim, (and myth-ritual theorist Jane Harrison, as well) (p. 28). Structuralism refers to *social structure* and to the view that ritual became a (somewhat limited) container for shared beliefs, mores, experiences and knowledge:

This perspective contrasts with the more comparative approach of the myth-ritualists....A functionalist interpretation of a social phenomenon made little if any appeal to history or to the ideas and practices borrowed from elsewhere; society was seen as a static, structured system of social relations. This view lent itself to two popular metaphors for social phenomena: the organic and the mechanical (Bell, 1997, p 28).

I attribute this perspective and the duality of the organic and mechanical that came out of it as the precursor of Catherine Bell’s own focus on what she identifies as the “dichotomies and dialectics” of ritual theory. It is this particular interpretation of the role of the ritual that adds new clarity in my own quest to understand how environmental dance might *function* as ritualized action). What immediately caught my eye with regard to Catherine Bell’s perspective on ritual

theory was the underlying premise that “*at the root of the idea of ritual is a longstanding Western split between thought and action in which ritual is associated with action rather than thought*” (Grimes, 1996, p. 21). She introduces this idea of distinguishing between thought and action as the first of two *structural patterns* (p.21). Immediately, I began to make a series of associations and connections with the basic concepts that have emerged through my exploration of the complex nature of myth-ritual theory(s). The first of these associations was the idea that if myth is analogous with thought, then it would logically follow that ritual is action. This seems to be an accurate assessment! Bell adds that “...beliefs, creeds, symbols, and myths emerge as forms of mental content or conceptual blueprints: they direct, inspire, or promote activity, but they, themselves are not activities. Ritual, like action, will act out, express, or perform these conceptual orientations (Grimes, 1996, p. 22).

Again, more clarity is added—concepts and ideas become thought in *form*; when these concepts are put into action, such action becomes *function*. Interestingly, in terms of the dialectic process, one is dependent on the other; without this unique interaction of thought/ action (seen here, as form/ function), there can be no integration; with no integration there is no meaning made and conveyed. A second *structural pattern* is identified: ritual is a kind of functional-structural mechanism through which it is possible to reintegrate the thought-action (belief-behavior) dichotomy (Grimes, p. 22). These patterns necessarily work together in order for integration to take place.

### **Catherine Bell’s Three Ritual Models**

Bell (1997) identifies three interactive models which become the foundation of her own interpretation of ritual—ritual that is rooted in a world of “dichotomies and dialectics” (Bell, p. 23). The first of these is the *Durkheim model* which espouses Durkheim’s notion that religion is

built on beliefs and accompanying rites (this model contextualizes the previous thought/action analysis in the specific religious terms). Second, the *Stanley Tambiah model* begins to clarify and solidify the idea of ritual as a mediating process where pairs of forces interact. Integral to this model is the notion that “ritual is provisionally distinguished as the synchronic, continuous, traditional or ontological in opposition to the diachronic, changing, historical, or social” (p.23). This critical step creates theoretical bridges between the static, ahistorical perspective of the functionalist-structuralists, the dynamic, evolutionary perspectives of the neo-functionalists (Rappaport, Harris, Huxley, and Lorenz), and the structuralists, (Radcliffe-Brown, Gregory Bateson, Evans-Prichard, Levi-Strauss, Geertz, Van Gennep, Gluckman and Turner) who in a variety of innovative and intriguing ways modified and elevated the original posture of the functional-structuralists. And third, the *Turner model* contributes the idea of the *anti-structure* in which “rite affords a creative ‘anti-structure’ that is distinguished from the rigid [static] maintenance of social orders, hierarchies, and traditional forms” (p.23). Here, another duality becomes apparent—structure and anti-structure, with the role of ritual, once again identified as a mediating force. I recognize this as yet another iteration of the now emerging theme of ritual as dialectic.

### **“Synthesizing Dichotomies” and the Satori Loop<sup>©™</sup>**

Bell maintains that each of these models readily accesses and makes good use of the two above-described structure patterns. First, ritual is illuminated as “a discreet object of analysis” made transparent through “dichotomies that are loosely analogous to thought and action” (p.23). Second, the ritual becomes the vehicle through which the dichotomies become synthesized. Thesis—antithesis—synthesis. A true dialectic process at work, aiming to at once, overcome pre-existing dualities and monistic reductionisms by transcending each in favor of the creation of some

optimal consensus point. I see the end product of this process as a gestalt of sorts, where the dialectic whole (reintegrated, reworked dichotomies) is greater than the sum of its thesis/antithesis (transcended) parts.

I see a clear connection to my focus on the necessary cancelling and re-writing the narrative of the body/mind split. Bell's similar idea of "synthesizing dichotomies" aptly applies to the notion of healing the long-existing alienation and separation of mind from body and manifests itself in a very similar way in the necessary first step of re-envisioning of the body and the mind as a unified whole—I identified this unity as the necessary first step in my proposed Satori Loop© (See Jewel Six). I can begin to see how "environmental dance" may act as that very same kind of vehicle for ritual healing, making it possible to conceptualize the environmental dancer-researcher's unit of experience as this embodied wholeness, the reunified body-mind.

Bell's thesis catches my attention: "the underlying dichotomy between thought and action continues to push for a loose systematization of several levels of homologized including the relations between the ritual observer and the ritual actor" (p.23). Seemingly, the dual concepts of diachrony and synchrony become the heuristic categories that fuel this multi-layered analysis of homologous pairings as I will demonstrate. Further, I am convinced that Bell's thesis holds a key to my own emerging thesis—that this holistic, dialectic perspective necessarily views ritual as a *living* and *organic* phenomenon and is interested in patterns of consistent hallmarks 1) how does ritual *function*; 2) why and what *form* might this action take and 3) what is the (*symbolic*) *meaning* of the ritual act. I can now see that my own interest is in the very same form-function dichotomy and its re-integrative resolve of dualities.



A prominent feature of this new approach moves even closer toward understanding ritual as a dialectic process via the interpretive lens of yet another field--semiotics. Bell convincingly links linguistic theory and ritual theory in a way that strengthens and clarifies the latter. By clarity and strength I refer to the nuanced interpretation of ritual to stand on its own, enhancing what linguistic theory falls slightly short of accomplishing—the actual resolution of the dichotomous relationship between synchrony and diachrony, a proposal set forth originally by linguistic theorist Ferdinand Saussure (Bell, 1997, p.23).

In foundational work that precedes Saussure, linguist Frederic Jameson identifies a “useful contrast” that essentially freezes *structures* in time (p. 3) Put another way, he suggests a dichotomy between the static natures of structure versus the dynamic evolution of living history. While Saussure’s work dwells exclusively on the ahistorical, structural aspects of linguistic study, he never the less ends up providing the blueprint of a most useful dialectic model. We now have a very clear understanding as to why a structuralist approach to ritual study is grossly inadequate. Such an approach is reductionist in a way that severely diminishes the very living and organic phenomenon I seek to know in this research inquiry, both in model (ritual) and in application (environmental dance).

According to Bell’s interpretation, three (3) distinct levels of analysis ensue in this process. First, there is a conscious choice to focus on the synchronic (language as structure) features of language (p. 23). A second level of analysis goes further still, in order to make the distinction between *langue* (the static structure of language, itself) and *parole* (the actual, active voice of the language, or more simply put, speech) even more pronounced. In a third and final level of analysis, Saussure set *langue* apart from *parole* as a whole system unto itself and found yet another (parallel) dichotomy—that of the syntagmatic aspects of language (structure units) with its associative

attributes (context, meaning) (Bell, p.23). In this full-circle journey back to the original synchronic/ diachronic dichotomy, I see a clear representation of a synthetic process (which necessarily follows a breakdown/ analysis in the prior two steps) and then, re-integration. I am convinced that this semiotic model not only elucidates ritual as dialectic but paves the way for understanding “environmental dance” as a true ritual of place in precisely the same way. Dance (specifically “environmental dance”) after all, is a language.

### **A Dialectic Pathway—Environmental Dance as Ritual**

In a way that parallels the diachrony-synchrony tension made visible by Saussure’s linguistics, Bell points out that ritual exhibits a theoretical discourse and illuminates a similar distinction between belief (myth) and action (ritual). Ritual becomes the locus: the place where a differentiation between conceptual and behavioral components (Bell’s second of two described structural patterns) clearly exists. To explain this curious ability of ritual:

Differentiated from belief in the first structural pattern, ritual becomes a point at which to distinguish thought and action [tensions, dichotomies]. Yet at this second stage ritual is seen as synthetic, as the very mechanism or medium through which thought and action are integrated [through dialectic process]. The elaboration or ritual as mechanism for the fusion of opposing categories simultaneously serves both to differentiate and unite a set of terms. That is, the second structural pattern in ritual theory, in which ritual mediates thought and action, posits a dialectical relation between an unmediated dichotomy. Ritual emerges as the means for a provisional synthesis of some form of the original opposition (Grimes, p. 24).

In sum, ritual becomes a mechanism, a vehicle through which opposing features are negotiated and made whole through a process that hints strongly of intersubjective communication.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps

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<sup>40</sup> In the circumstance of “environmental dance” I envision that these “oppositions” are human- nature as reflected symbolically through dancer- site. Environmental dance becomes the vehicle for the symbolic transformation of the human/ nature relationship through active dialogue of dancer with site via the discourse of dance. Audience members experience this symbolic dialogue and reunification with place vicariously through the environmental dance performance; audience members are also an integral part of the “dialogue”.

this obvious reference to *communication* is a reflection of the (partial) support given by Saussure's theory of linguistics, in spite of the fact that such falls short of the re-integration feature that is demonstrated to exist in a ritual application. Ritual is then, a synthesizing force (opposing reductionism). Here, ritual begins to emerge as a possible social template through which the nature of "environmental dance" may also be evaluated and perhaps, better defined.

This dialectic path from ritual model (concept!) to "environmental dance" (behavior!) continues. In as much as Saussure's theory remained ahistorical, reductionist and non-dialectical as shown by the apparent inability of this theory to resolve the dichotomies of the major opposing forces he identifies, ritual is seen as a possible new point of departure into a new world of dialectic resolution, a way to identify and negotiate between conceptual and behavioral dualities. Bell points out that Durkheim realized this potential for a dialectic negotiation between the realms of individual (psychology) and culture (social) (Bell, p. 24.). It is in the potential resolution of this kind of oppositional tension that the significance of psych-social interplay is distinguished as an integral defining feature of ritual. In furthering this idea, theorist Nancy Munn identifies Durkheim's model of social (ritual) symbolism (as analyzed by Bell), as the switch point between the external moral constraints and groupings of socio-political order, and the internal feelings and imaginative concepts of the individual actor".<sup>41</sup>

Munn's idea reflects precisely what I believe to be the case in the environmental dance performance experience—that a dialectic circumstance exists between the two opposing realms: that of the individual (subjective) realm and the greater socio-cultural (objective, universal) realm. In my own experience of creating site-specific "environmental dance" as public performance, I

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<sup>41</sup> Bell quotes Nancy Munn from "Symbolism in a Ritual Context" in: *Handbook of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, J. Honigmann, (Ed.), (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1973), p. 583.

have suggested that the same kind of negotiation takes place resulting in an intersubjective<sup>42</sup> state that I believe is the necessary component for building heightened levels of environmental awareness (and literacy) that may ultimately lead to eco-centered behavior transformations which in turn, may inspire a collective environmental ethic. Mary Wigman, modern dance pioneer (and mentor of my own mentor Bessie Schoenberg) adds to this conversation:

The primary concern of the creative dancer should be that his audience not think of the dance objectively, or look at it from an aloof or intellectual point of view,—in other words, separate itself from the very life of the dancer’s experiences;—the audience should allow the dance to affect it emotionally and without reserve. It should allow the rhythm, the music, the very movement of the dancer’s body to stimulate the same feeling and emotional mood within itself, as this mood and emotional condition has stimulated the dancer. It is only then that the audience will feel a strong emotional kinship with the dancer and will live through the vital experiences behind the dance-creation (Copeland & Cohen,, 1983, p. 306).

I would add that, in the “environmental dance” performance, there is one other realm that is vicariously experienced—that of the observers’ connection to the natural site, itself.

Bell also draws on the work of Marshall Sahlins (*Culture and Practical Reason*, 1976) to solidify the notion of ritual as dialectic. Sahlins also emphasizes the synthetic power of ritual—ritual as a tool of reintegration. His contribution suggests a useful analogous relationship between two dualities: what constituted the dialectic relationship between *thought* and *action* is also accurately reflected in the opposition of the self with society. Ritual-as-dialectic allows ritual, itself to become a model capable of generating a level(s) of cultural analysis—it is through this kind of analysis that I believe it is possible to account environmental dance as a new genre. Additionally, this model becomes instructive as to *how* environmental dance may act as an aesthetic, symbol-

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<sup>42</sup> I believe this to be a uniquely powerful tripartite relationship—a dialogic exchange between dancer and site, audience and site and dancer and audience which manifests the dialectic between humans and the natural world.

laden innovation—a way to overcome the dualities and dichotomies of Western culture that have and continue to confound the human/ nature relationship.

Now inspired by Bell to “think dialectically” I can bridge Sahlin’s theory concepts with concepts transferrable to my own brand of “environmental dance”. I can see clearly that the mind-body separation (the quintessential dichotomy of Cartesian ideology and Western culture) is a mere replication of Sahlin’s thought-action duality. Ritual and hence, “environmental dance” as it follows the model (ritual-as-dialectic) argument as presented by Bell, becomes the “force” necessary for the union of mind (belief) and body (action) (See my previous explication of the emergent “environmental dance” model of the *Satori Loop*©). I believe that this reunification is the critical first prerequisite toward healing the human-nature split as well. There appears to be a nested order of dichotomies, each one behaving as a fractal of some greater, all-encompassing whole. The end result hints at a unifying theme and an intentional paradigmatic shift from a focus on parts (reductionism) to envisioning an integrated whole. This mediating affect in dance happens in the metaphoric dimension of symbolism:

In considering how the kinetic symbolism of dance works, the principles of contrast, or opposition, and mediation merit attention. Cognitive anthropologists, French structuralists, and other scholars of symbolic behavior have found binary opposition to be a common way of conceptualizing...dance may be a “mediating” device, connecting the apparently unconnected and bridging gaps in “causality” as we seek identities and activities to concretize the inchoate...perfect and imperfect, powerful and powerless. It may be the desire to accommodate the idea of the singular which tempts humans to mediate the contradictory forces they perceive (Hanna, 1979, pp. 104-5).

What I believe makes “environmental dance” the champion of this cause is the defining difference between traditionally-staged dance and site-specific environmental dance. Traditional concert dance is created in isolation (usually) from its source of inspiration. In the site-specific circumstance, “environmental dance” dance set intentionally in a performance space embedded



*Figure 38: "The Goethean Suite" danced by research team members, shown here, M. Madsen, and A. MacQueen in performance at the summit of Mt. Monadnock, April 2011. As a research piece unfolding in real time (and as a "structured improvisation"), dancer-researchers are actively "dialoguing" with the site and gathering data through the spontaneous unfolding of the dance. (DEFDW©).*

in nature (which is also the source of its inspiration, in some way or another). The context of the dance is inherently visible and a part of the unfolding of the dance in the site, as a co-collaborator. In the traditional black box, the dance unfolds in an "artificial" and man-made environment and is largely controlled (sets, lights are all constructed and operated by human hands).

In the natural environment, the performers find themselves in constant dynamic dialogue with the site that the dance piece reflects. Dancing body-minds in the natural space that becomes the "place" where the environmental dance performance unfolds are typically (but not always)

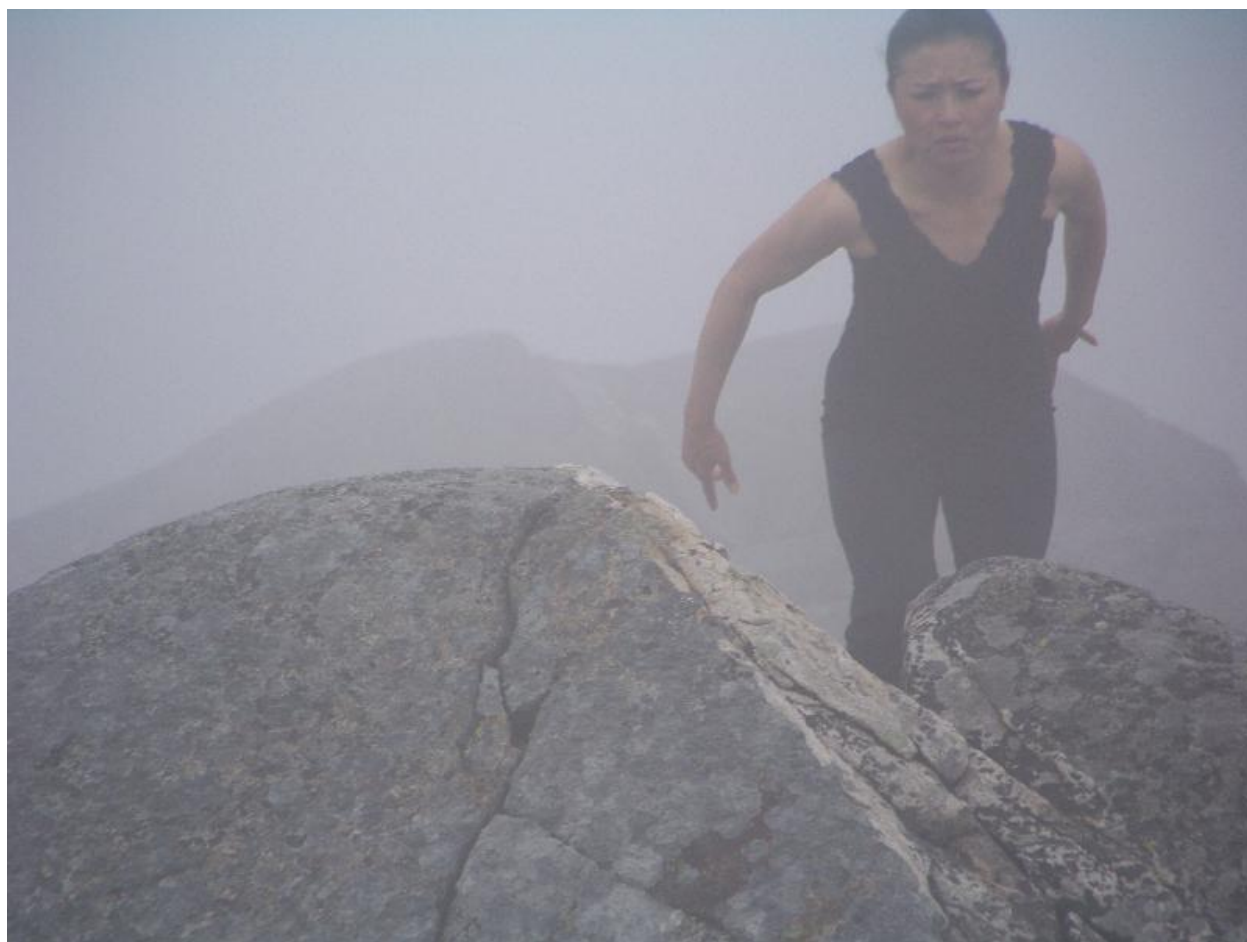
dancing about some specific and/ or universal (symbolic) aspect of that particular site--the dialectic between human and natural space is dependent on this specific context which transform mere space into felt or experienced place. There is always a sense of reciprocal dialogue (a dialectic) between dancer and place (and vicariously between audience and place, as well):

There is much more to be said about the role of the body in place, especially about how places actively solicit bodily motions. At the very least, we can agree that the living-moving body is essential to the process of emplacement: *lived bodies belong to places* and help to constitute them. Even if such bodies may be displaced in certain respects, they are never placeless; they are never *only* at discrete positions in world time or space, though they may *also* be at such positions. By the same token, however, *places belong to lived bodies* and depend on them. If it is true that the “body is our general medium for having a world” (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 146), it ensues that the body is the material condition of possibility for the place-world while being itself a member of that same world. It is basic to place and part of place...Bodies and places are connatural terms. They interanimate each other (Casey in Feld & Basso, (Eds.), 1996, p.24).

As a final component in Bell’s analysis of ritual theory, she concludes by drawing from the work of ethnographer Clifford Geertz (Grimes, p. 25). Essential to his contribution, is the focus on the explanation of meaning in all socio-cultural phenomenon, thus abandoning the objectified, reductionist approach adopted by most Western theorists and researchers. He identifies another dichotomy—the opposition of *ethos* with *worldview*. He distinguishes *ethos* as the realm of a culture’s shared and defining beliefs, attitudes and traditions—a collective way that a culture understands themselves in the context of their world. *Worldview* is the universalized and comprehensive concept of the world as they know it.

I immediately recognize the point that Bell is able to make: that Geertz connects *ethos* to *worldview* in an analogous pattern which reads: *ritual-action-ethos* in opposition to *belief-thought-worldview*. Geertz also “presents *ethos* and *worldview* as synthesized, fused, or stored in symbols that are arranged in various systems, patterns, or control mechanisms such as ritual, art, religion,

language, and myth” (Bell in Grimes, 1999, p. 25). Here, Geertz is directly addressing my own inquiry about symbolic meaning of the ritual act as he identifies “symbolic systems” that are in actuality, models of a desired reality. If art is such a system, then it follows that environmental dance functions in this way, too.



*Figure 39: The active "dialogue" between environmental dancer and the site is intersubjective, in nature. Environmental dance acts as a dialectic mediation between dancer and landscape, resulting in a negotiated unity; Research team member T. Run-Kowzun, in performance at the summit of Mt. Monadnock, April 2011 (DEFDW©).*

The patterns demonstrated by ritual-as-dialectic are found to exist similarly in the context of environmental dance performance. Each instance calls on the unique power of the dialectic to produce the intersubjective moment, which encourages and sets the stage for unity and consensus, ethos to ethics! Thus, ritual (and environmental dance) becomes the mechanism “for the resolution



of basic oppositions” as Bell points out. She also points out that “the implications, therefore, of differentiating a subject and object on the basis of thought and action are rather striking...circular logic [is] built up by these homologies [reconciled dichotomies] and the theory of ritual that emerges.”(p. 29). Through the employment of the ritual-as-dialectic model I can trace the path that environmental dance takes via this process of mediating existing dualities: “Environmental dance” leads to intersubjective discourse between site, audience and dancers, and dancer-researchers, which leads to heightened environmental awareness and the development of a sense of place, which, in turn leads to a unified (micro) “culture”; which leads to an ethos which I believe can inspire a universal environmental ethic.

I have long suspected that my own work as an “environmental dance” artist shares many similar attributes to what we might generalize as contemporary ritual aimed at developing or strengthening the bond between human and natural “place”. This extensive research process had offered me the opportunity to test some of my underlying suspicions and suppositions by framing “environmental dance” through the unique lens of ritual-as dialectic. As the result, I believe I have made several defining discoveries.

I offer a brief analysis of examples of my work that support the idea that: 1) environmental dance functions as a way to connect humans to natural places, through aesthetic primary experiences. It is a mediating force between humans and site, between culture and nature with the end result aimed toward the resolution of all related tensions; 2) environmental dance is the form that this method of connection and mediation takes and this form is symbolic, interpretive movement, set in a purposeful arrangement that considers and purposefully manipulates concept, content, form, and design elements in a direct and dynamic dialogue with the performance site; Environmental dance is the “language” that allows humans to dialogue and holistically engage

with nature. It is only through active, intentional, and primary engagement such as that afforded by environmental dance that one can develop a bond to place; and 3) environmental dance consistently aims to produce an ambiance of unity--a unifying sense of a reciprocal relationship symbolically demonstrated through the dancer- site relationship; symbolic meaning of this ritual act serves as a metaphorical social template that hopefully makes it easier for audience observers, dancers and students alike, to forge deep and meaningful bonds with all aspects of the natural world.

When my company and I dance in the raw elements of the mountain summit we become living symbols, pointing to a better way to live with and on the planet. Our shared artistic vision is made manifest in this union of dancer and dance site, of the dialectic dance between the moving human body and animate earth. This is emergent “environmental dance”.

One other particularly interesting emergent piece of literature, I coincidentally discovered is *Coming to the Edge of the Circle: A Wiccan Initiation Circle*. It is written by Nikki Bado-Fralick, a scholar of religious studies and a practicing Wiccan. She writes with a dialectic consciousness and conscience and her wisdom and insights provided an extraordinary parallel to Catherine Bell’s intriguing obsession with the transformative powers of the dialectic. Bado-Fralick’s wisdom resonates with uncanny relevance in the following passage about dichotomous thinking:

...dichotomous thinking is problematic in itself. Dichotomies are sets of binary absolutes that function logically as “on/off” switches. No interplay or dynamic shifting tension is implied between the binary pairs. Why is this an important point? A metaphor of light and dark, inspired by the pre-Socratic philosophers gets at the difference between a dynamic polarity and a dichotomous absolute. In dichotomous thinking, light and dark function as absolutes, very much like the on/off light switch we’re familiar with in our homes. In absolute darkness, we are blind. In absolute light, we are also blind. If sight is the point, neither absolute darkness nor absolute light gives us what we want. It is only through the dynamic

interplay of light and dark—the shifting of lights and shadow—that sight exists. Furthermore, we are able to see differently according to the degree in which the lights and shadows play with one another. This shifting play of light and dark, the dynamic tension between and movement of lights and shadows, produces the wondrous multitudes of sights and perspectives possible in the human experience (2005, p. 6).

The world is in fact, a mysterious and wonderful collection of binary oppositions! The ultimate goal, whether in scholarship, the arts or in understanding and helping to heal the fractures in the human-nature relationship, must be a shift toward synthesis and unity through intersubjective means.

In the several decades I have been creating site-specific environmental dance performances at the summit of Mt. Monadnock in Jaffrey New Hampshire, there is one piece from the summit repertory that is annually requested by returning audience members and that I have described in the illustrative field journal entry at the beginning of this section. For years, I found this to be a curiosity but to this day, we include this dance piece in our annual program of site-inspired works. The dance piece is aptly called *The Resting Place*. Created for the rocky summit in 1985, it has “carried” nearly a hundred different dancing bodies through the transformative experience of the environmental dance performance. Each year this three-part piece is performed by five dancers, who begin a symbolic hiking journey clad in ordinary hiking clothing including boots. A recognizable and concrete image.

In this instance the dancers represent the “hiking human”, out for a day of trail, sun and summit as the dance allows the performers to reenact symbolically and esthetically the experience of traversing the rugged terrain of the mountain. At the end of Part I, five dancers gather together on a rock where they rest and linger to take in the in-the-moment revelations of the lived experience through all senses while they remove their boots. This is a sensual ritual of sorts enjoyed by most

hikers but here it is also a symbolic gesture: bare feet against the rocks signify that the “hiker/mountain” relationship is shifting and changing.

This is a dance of transformation as hikers little by little become less “human” (culture) and more mountain and the natural elements (nature). Note the dichotomous pairing of human-culture and mountain/elements-nature. As the dance continues into Part II, dancers dance briefly in complete unison and then trail off one-by-one as they disappear behind a great boulder that acts as the main stage.

In Part III, something miraculous occurs: dancers are no longer human; they have become the mountain, the thunder, the elements of nature herself. One at a time, dancing bodies emerge in sky blue and white costumes (no signs of traditional hiking garb) and blend with the sky above as they dance their “thunder entrances” at very places about the main stage rock (musical accompaniment now consists of rolling claps of thunder, a separate one announcing the entrance of each dancer). Part III is a dance of unity and synthesis (very Goethean in philosophy, and reminiscent of Goethe’s stage four that calls for the synthetic union between human/ environmental dancer-researcher) and natural phenomenon) as the human form melds into the contours of the natural landscape with the eventual fading of five dancing bodies into the background.

Metaphorically, this piece elegantly illustrates the very principles Catherine Bell identifies in her step-by-step analysis of ritual as dialectic. As I reflect on this now, as I am writing, I am amazed at the additional insights this re-framing of my work through this new perspective has afforded the research efforts of my research team and me. Now I can claim that my own evolving body of work I call “environmental dance” fits well within the framework of ritual-as-dialectic.

Through the employment of the ritual-as-dialectic model I can trace the path that environmental dance takes via this process of mediating existing dualities: Environmental dance

leads to intersubjective “discourse” between site, audience and dancers, which leads to heightened *environmental awareness* and the development of a sense of place, which, in turn leads to a unified “ecocentric culture”; which leads to an ethos which I believe can inspire a universal environmental ethic.

Levels of Analysis/ Patterns of Similarity/ “Dichotomies and Dialectics”:

A Synopsis

diachrony	Bell/ Saussure’s linguistic theory	synchrony
speech	“	language
“parole”	“	“langue”
dance	Eno	language
environmental dance		environmental discourse
etic	Bado-Fralick	emic
artist	Eno	academic
practitioner	Bado-Fralick	scholar
action	Bell	thought
praxis	Bado-Fralick	theory
insider	Bado-Fralick	outsider
subjective	Bell, Bado-Fralick, Eno	objective
temporal	Bell / Saussure’s linguistic theory	spatial
ethos	Bell, Geertz	world view
ethics	Geertz, Eno	ontology

Here, I include some additional, recognizable dialectics that I associate with the specific experience of environmental dance” (with implicit and explicit connections to the above list of dialectics)

specific--universal

local--global

particular--general

place--space

human--natural world

culture--nature

anthropocentrism--ecocentrism

individual--social

holism--reductionism

indigenous worldview (earth-centered) --Western cultural worldview (techno-centered)

environmental dancer/ audience/ student--site

environmental dancer—audience

*The Resting Place* mediates through Catherine Bell’s two structural patterns. My original conceptualization (thought) of this dance piece initiated a design structure (form) which later comes to life as the action of the dance. Through the dance performance (ceremonialized and symbolic), the dance becomes a force that reintegrates the original belief-behavior dichotomy, creating a powerful gestalt of all elements involved in the creative process of the site-specific environmental dance piece.

The transformational power of the dialectic process has been evidenced to me through the insights provided by Bell’s approach. Repeatedly, tensions emerge in one part of the “ritual”

form-function mechanism, which are ultimately mediated by very same dichotomous separation that allows them to become visible elements of the intended ritual action. In most every instance, the desired end result is transformation, resolution or mediation. I see these as three different grades of change. Along with a mapping of various theories supporting this approach, a sample analysis of the exemplar of *The Resting Place* shows us similar tendencies. Therefore, my growing hunch that environmental dance holds great potential as an agent of change (change here, refers specifically to environmental, ethical and social awareness, attitudinal and behavioral change) has been affirmed through this inquiry.

Once again, I acknowledge Bell (1997) as the primary source of many new and emergent theoretical discoveries. These discoveries have served to expand my own knowledge base about environmental dance as ritual of place. Bell speaks directly of *how* performance is ritual:

Hence, the ritual-like nature of performative activities to lie in the multifaceted sensory experience, in the framing that creates a sense of condensed totality, and in the ability to shape people's experience and cognitive ordering of the world. In brief, performances seem ritual-like because they explicitly model the world [or the "world" reality we wish for, in balance and harmony with the natural world]. They do not attempt to reflect the real world accurately but to reduce and simplify it so as to create more or less coherent systems of categories that can be projected onto the full spectrum of human experience (p.161).

Bell goes on to offer the notion that *ritual* provides a way for humans to order a chaotic world and thus provide a context of understanding through synthesis:

When successfully projected over the chaos of human experience, these categories can render that experience coherently meaningful and are validated in that process...While such modeling events may invoke conflicting or incoherent categories, the processual structure as they unfold in time may still achieve a rough resolution of such conflicts. In this way, many public events claim an implicit power to transform: when experienced and embodied in orchestrated events, the categories or attitudes [destructive relationship of humans with the natural world, in the case of environmental dance] that appear to be in conflict can be resolved and synthesize (p. 161).

Interestingly these discoveries have also allowed my research team and I to explore the mysterious world of how “theory” works in direct dialectic challenge to my chosen *grounded theory* approach for this research—for a precursory “theory” does not drive my research. However, my newly acquired comprehension of theoretical modeling will no doubt add the desired deeper level of sophistication to my future research endeavors, as I have allowed such theory to organically emerge throughout the research process itself. Following the inspiring lead of Nikki Bado-Fralick and Catherine Bell alike, I pledge never to dwell in either absolute realms of total darkness or light, but instead will dance in those dialectically illuminated places in between.

### **Jewel Eight--Transdisciplinarity**

#### ***Journal Entry (Field Journal—“Cloud Dancing, Part One”) [8.1]***

*Today, my dancer-researcher team and I are exploring a way to radically let go of controlling the process of sourcing and generating new movement in the context of dialoguing with the mountain phenomena within the summit landscape. This will literally involve a bold new approach from generally engaging this environment, toward actively seeking to stretch our imaginations, to open up to a different way of perceiving nature and to allow a true and equitable collaboration with the natural phenomena, in this instance, the clouds above us—to willingly attend to and take our cues from the more-than-human world. Since we are already nurturing a strong sense of place here--a sense of belonging, familiarity and dialogue with our individual micro-sites that serve as both source and stage for the unfolding of our collaborative expressions here, the team is now ready to take the process a step further—as a guide for improvisation performance. My premise concerning this and our task for the day is this—to learn to let go (not easy for the dance artist/choreographer), and to become the empty vessel that will fill with the stuff of a give-and-and take dialogue and ultimately, where the lines of environmental dancer and natural phenomena blur and fill with the richness of the integrated “other”—and where we allow space for the single phenomenon as the focus of our creative attention, itself, to take the lead and to guide the direction and emergence of our movement study (aka “data”). Unwittingly at that moment, we were “dancing” a paradigm shift!*





*Figure 40: Ethereal clouds at the summit (Photo courtesy of L. Davis/DEFDW©).*

### **A Transdisciplinary Approach**

I would never have guessed that my process for composing the formidable “Chapter Two” of my doctoral dissertation (a.k.a. as the literature review) would provide such an awe-inspiring jaunt around my personal corner of the universe as it has. As the ritual of completion for this memoir, “Jewel Eight” aims to weave the strands of environmental dance, academia, an enduring child-like deep love for the natural world and a radical new vision for how to holistically embody and understand that world--into one, lovely, scintillating braid, I feel a quickening sense of change emerging; a call for radical change in the name of seeking to underwrite ventures of inquiry with the overarching ideals of wholeness; and a satisfying sense of aesthetic and poetic order emanating from the chaos that all the mundane intricacies of human life as it is lived day by day, up close

with all its endless challenges, roadblocks, twists, turns and victories, have somehow magically collapsed and dissolved into this very moment, as I write this.

Now, I recall one of the many remarkable on-site work sessions where my team and I, on this one particular day, danced with the clouds at the summit of Mt. Monadnock, I am compelled to take a moment to address this odd sensation that is now upon me as my body-mind “remembers” the “what’s-it-likeness” of that experience, for it feels absolutely vital and inspiring to this moment in vague ways I do not yet fully grasp. If I were to dare guess what the relevance of this subtle transformational nudge and the unmistakably vivid déjà vu afforded by the muscle memory of cloud-dancing that day may be, I would say that I am beginning to see the reflections of my life’s work in the greater context of belonging to the universal whole—and the way I have approached writing “Chapter II” as a memoir infused with a decidedly transdisciplinary philosophy toward life, work and academics has, undoubtedly allowed this nuanced convergence of my own knowing and being to come forth. Alphonso Montuori describes transdisciplinarity as:

...a fundamentally different way of approaching and organizing knowledge. It does not start with isolated atoms of information, which can serve as the individual bricks that make up an edifice of knowledge. In a transdisciplinary approach knowledge is seen as a vast web of relationships that are interconnected and form a larger ecology of ideas...transdisciplinary inquiry can be thought of as having four main dimensions...These are: 1) inquiry-based rather than discipline-based; 2) integrating rather than eliminating the inquirer from the inquiry; 3) meta-paradigmatic rather than intra-paradigmatic; and 4) applying systems and complex thought rather than reductive/ disjunctive thinking (Montuori, 2013, pp 45-46).

I am experiencing what I have come to call the “residual imprint” of that research exercise on the mountain captured in the journal entry above, rooted not only in the reunification of the body and mind of the dancer/ researcher but also dependent upon the secret ingredient I have added to this research, of a realm I call the “integrated other”, which accomplishes exactly what Montuori identifies as part of the transdisciplinary mission—to integrate the inquirer with the inquiry. This,

of course, is the very dimension that is revealed to us, when our attitudes as artists and researchers deliberately shift toward a spirit of equitably, inclusivity and a radical holism that welcomes input into this highly charged experience by the phenomena (clouds) themselves. The metaphorical model of Indra's Net mirrors the transdisciplinarity and it is what brings this research a reimagined sense of overarching vitality and aliveness.

Such a shift in perspective is transformational and I believe it changes how the body-mind registers, "remembers" and otherwise, processes the event, or any other event, for that matter, that may transact in our lives. What I have taken from the universal matrix in the form of lived experiences and what I have reciprocally feeding back in one gestural form or another to the universe ("knowledge"?) is now being reflected back to me, once again—and I recognize it and its power to transform thinking. My "environmental dance" research experiences are undoubtedly helping me integrate real life stuff, as well and show me intriguing instances where the lines between "life" and "life's work" readily blur, becoming a true gestalt of enlightened understanding. In this context, knowledge and the specific knowledge my research team and I are generating, becomes a living energy that brings about fundamental changes in the way we experience and know our world.

I have made the dramatic shift from framing my life from a segmented dual identity of: 1) human being; and 2) dance artist to the more holistically-accurate concept of a "dancing human", due largely to my discovery (and the intentional inhabitation) of the integrating space I refer to as the "integrated other". By employing this concept I no longer have to suffer the toil of changing many hats; I am forever human and I am always that dancer—I am integrated and whole. Such a shift feels empowering and authentic. It is radically inclusive.

### **Indra's Net and the Complexity of Multiple Realities**

What I am recognizing is, that along with that subtle transformative shift in the way I (and my dance/ research team) attend to the multi-faceted realities of perception, vision, action, and core values and beliefs, I am also experiencing a sense of integration of all aspects of myself, my creative work, and my life, at multiple scales and dimensions. As I continue to reflect on this project, it seems possible to me that this is the manifestation of Indra's Net as a fractal, reflective metaphor. Our lives become the complex fractal reflections that communicate and reverberate everything we say, think or do and every experience we have as well as every single life we cross paths with, along the matrix as they are reflected back to us, across this vast web of interconnectivity.

It is impossible to separate out the “dancer” from the “human” in the transdisciplinary way that is equally difficult to split apart the inquiry from the inquirer. Further, I believe there is a distinct connection between having this kind of transformative moment of realization to the alchemical energy of transdisciplinarity that drives such shifts in perspective, and that, ultimately allows us to perceive our experiences through a complex interactive matrix of different hierarchal levels (Max-Neef; 2005, pp.5-16). Taken a step further, we experience a shift in our ontologies that opens us up to the intriguing possibilities of “multiple realities” (McGregor, 2015, p. 12). My research team and I have experienced the power of these shifts as an integral part of our unfolding, emerging research work on the mountain.

In the above journal account introducing this section, I mention “the richness of the integrated other”. This reference is made in the course of discussing the very new kind of collaborative creative process that organically happens when environmental dance is approached as a transdisciplinary endeavor. It is an approach that is based on a kind of extreme holism. The

journal entry recounts a day on Mt. Monadnock where my research team and I tasked ourselves with the mission of officially relinquishing the former way in which I (and we) created environmental site-specific dance—in a very non-transdisciplinary way. In the process of creating movement material (which I also refer to as a process of “sourcing material”) we would normally decide on a particular feature or focus, inherent to the landscape/site. We would then layer ourselves and our intentionally created movement sequences in carefully-orchestrated choreography (as opposed to improvisational tasks used to organically generate movement), upon the landscape in ways we deemed to be meaningful and in service of illuminating the thematic material to be brought out in the dance piece as it unfolds on site. While this is certainly a legitimate creative process for any site-specific artist (and one that I had ascribed to myself for years of creating dances on the mountain summit), I knew I could take the process to a deeper, holistic place. In defining that field I identify as “the integrated other”, my researchers and I look to the totality of the interactive factors of the mountain landscape to bring the phenomenon of focus into a place of maximum clarity—seemingly, this approach encourages the development of a profound intimacy with the landscape that creates a dialogue between dancer and the land, spoken in the archetypal language of nature. (See Jewel #5)

As part of the methodological protocol for this grounded theory (emergent) research that builds upon the use of a distinct “language of nature” as the environmental dance artist’s tool for collaborating with the land, my team and I allowed the Goethean scientific process (GSM) to provide the guidance of “phenomenal mapping” (see more on this term below and in Chapter Four) for engaging the phenomenon and deeply understanding the interaction (this time, the fluffy, ever-shifting cloudscape above us). As our new approach to the creative process of making environmental dance, it inspired a monumental shift in our experience of the clouds, of ourselves

and of the highly energized space in-between. As I stepped out of the improvisational movement study from time to time to observe the unfolding process, I could very clearly see the difference of how the dancer/researchers engaged the phenomenon and most amazingly; I witnessed a sense of the phenomenon (the clouds) engaging the dancers as well. I described it as such: “There was a palpable magnetism that enjoined human body and ephemeral clouds as a joint meta-expression of mutual engagement and “dialogue””. The result was a unified sense of oneness (interestingly, the last stage of the Goethean scientific method that I have adapted as creative process, calls for us “to become one with” the phenomenon) where the physical boundaries between two distinct phenomena (dancers and clouds) blurred into an integrated whole, mediated by the “integrated other”, the ever-changing landscape of the mountain itself! I recall the details of our experience of becoming one with the clouds:

***Journal Entry (Field Journal—“Cloud Dancing, Part Two”) [8.2]***

*I have concluded that we have become typically earthbound in our focus and so, to challenge this trend, we will focus on the ethereal realm of the clouds above us! Today, we are fortunate to have an abundance of white, puffy cumulonimbus clouds to dance with and to guide and inspire us.*

*I ask my team to lie supine, supported by the rocky surface of the mountain. Then, we must become still and then keen in our observations of the clouds above us, watching the beautiful, ephemeral evolution of the clouds, as they expand and eventually dissipate, while sensing what is happening within the space that separates us from (or connects us to) this phenomenon. The goal is to fully embody the clouds and to integrate this “cloud-ness” into our own beings—and then, to express this dialogue through movement sequences by taking our cues to move from the cloudscape and how we will move and evolve over the expanse of their evolutionary time.*

*I step out momentarily to witness this improvisational dance with the clouds and I am struck by how differently my team is moving; each one has relinquished their training and the authentic source of this movement is clear—it is coming from above! Depending on wind and sun variations and fluctuations, our movements are either slowed or hastened. There is a very magical and magnetic connection between body-mind and cloud-evolution that I am alternately observing and experiencing. I am moving, but the sensations and rhythms, and shapes and phrasings are not just*

*my own. There is a frequent feeling of floating through space after a while (in spite of the hard granite beneath me). We are the clouds!*

*Consensus is that we collectively experienced a freeing sensation, in this new process that allows us to be led by the clouds themselves. There is a sudden “aha” moment where we realize that we are not in control of this study at all. And that it is precisely this sense of freedom that makes the study feel so magical and other-worldly and fun. In equitable dialogue we co-create with the clouds, knowing that we each share the power of this dance as it manifests here on the summit. One other shared thought—we are “channeling” the clouds and our bodies as they move in nuanced ways across the rocky surface of this mountaintop, are fluently speaking the language of nature—the patterned movements of clouds are already an existing movement vocabulary within us, and in the wild abandon of forgetting everything we all had learned in years of formal dance training we are creating, expressing and communicating as environmental dance artists, just the same. Just as the clouds move across the mountain landscape casting a dynamic shadow tableau upon the bare, windy summit, our dialogue with the clouds leaves its own ‘energetic imprint’ upon the rocky mountain surface as well!*



Figure 41: Research team members, C. Torp, A. MacQueen and D. Eno perform "Cloud Study", structured improvisational dialogue with the clouds, at the summit of Mt. Monadnock, April 2011 (DEFDW©).

## Seminal Transdisciplinary Literature

My doctoral journey has been an enduring one—perhaps longer than most while shorter than some. However, in many ways that has been an unpredictable yet fortuitous feature of my particular grounded theory (GT) research. Good things do come to those who not only wait but build developments to emerge as they have.

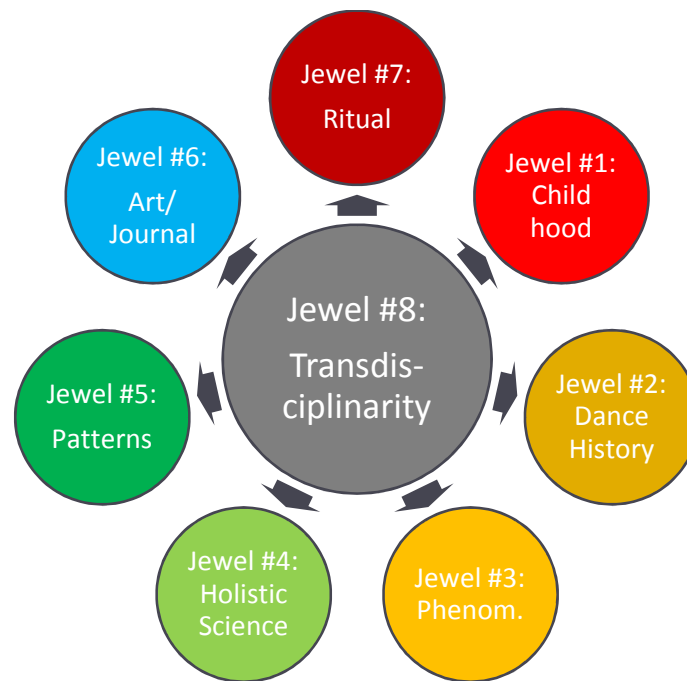


Figure 42: Visual conceptualization of Indra's Net as an organizing metaphor for the emergent, transdisciplinary literature review (DEFDW©).

One of those late-blooming emergent discoveries is, for certain, the notion (and application) of transdisciplinarity, a concept harvested from the garden of complexity, and a wondrously interconnected universe, which I begin to introduce above (Hadorn, Hoffman-Riem, et. al., 2008); Max-Neef, (2005); McGregor, (2015): Marshall; (2014); Montuori (2013); Nicolescu, (2010); Kahn., (2010); Meadows.,(2008); Capra, (2007); Maturana, & Varela (1980); Jantsch., (1980); Bowers, (1995), (1993); Smith, (1999); Orr, (1992); Four Arrows/ Jacobs, (2008); Wilson, (2008); Nicolescu., (Ed.), (2008). Admittedly, I would have to say that by



drawing attention to a the contemporary resurgence of *transdisciplinarity* is one of those slippery, if not controversial conceptual slopes, still in need of some kind of unifying consensus in a research world that favors a rather polar opposite set of protocols and corresponding values. Physicist, author and founder of the Center for Ecoliteracy (Berkeley, California), Fritjof Capra historically assesses and provides a heartening current status of this dominating perspective:

The paradigm that is now receding has dominated our cultural for several hundred years, during which it has shaped our modern Western society and has significantly influenced the rest of the world. This paradigm consists of a number of entrenched ideas and values, among them the view of the universe as a mechanical system composed of elementary building blocks, the view of the human body as a machine, the view of life in society as a competitive struggle for existence, the belief in unlimited material progress to be altered through economic and technological growth, and—last, but not least—the belief that society in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male is one that follows a basic law of nature. All of these assumptions have been fatefully challenged by recent events. And, indeed, a radical revision of them is now in progress (Capra, (1996) p. 6).

Needless to say, my work, my team's shared vision of a better more equitable world and our transdisciplinary environmental dance research is fully dedicated to this radical shift that is now in progress, according to Fritjof Capra. As we work as researching environmental dance artists we dive deep into the vital areas that offer our work the greatest combination of vision, support and validation--a gestalt-like philosophical foundation that relationally draws together independently rich bodies of knowledge that include ecology, feminism, Indigenous knowledge, systems science, dance history, constructivism, composition, the creative process, the language of nature, myth and ritual or Goethean science as well as the phenomenologies of dance and nature—show us how they can mesh together in profoundly imaginative and alchemical ways. This surely brings to light, the power of the Indra's Net as an organizing metaphorical structure to not only present but also to elevate the current resurgence of transdisciplinarity at the very moment we may be witnessing a weakening of the grip of the dominant paradigm as recounted to us.

Max-Neef (2005) also asserts that there is a weakening in the efficacy of the increasingly-specialized traditional sciences to communication knowledge to one another. This becomes the convincing basis of a primary argument in favor of this holistic “scientific” approach:

The growing rupture in communication is, to a great extent, the product of the exacerbation of rational thought, which manifests itself through the predominance of reductionism and of a binary and linear logic that, among other shortcomings, separate the observer from the observed. From quantum physics we have learned that the presence of the observer can be reduced to a minimum, but can never be eliminated. We require access to new types of logic that allow for disciplinary cross-fertilization and for the recognition of the validity of the *contraria sunt complementa* proposed by Niels Bohr (Max-Neef, p. 10).

Like the discussion about dichotomous tensions, in the previous Jewel Six, Max-Neef identifies our “bi-polar perception”:

A bipolar perception, a dynamic tension between opposites. A yin and yang, as suggested by Taoism, in which the yin is analogous to relational thought and the yang to rational thought. In other words, a logic capable of harmonizing reason with intuition and feeling, as Goethe would like it. In this last sense, one must honestly recognize that innovations in all fields, whether in the sciences or in the arts, often rely on intuition in order to reach a solution for the problems of their concern (p. 10).

A true holistic approach implies at minimum, a complete and thorough intersubjective engagement between such binary agents in the generation of thought, of knowledge making and of ways of being as a harmonizing force built into its inherent complexity. Environmental dance meets this threshold with ease.

### **Nicolescuian Transdisciplinarity and Three Axioms**

Three guiding axiomatic principles define Nicolescu’s methodology of transdisciplinarity, I offer brief descriptions of each tenet below, and I also draw out points of common ground where the axioms offer contextual enlightenment and new perspectives regarding many of the emergent features of environmental dance as performance and eco-

pedagogy. The points of commonality are mentioned below and each have played an important role in informing and shaping the parameters of this research.

Max-Neef tells us that we must be able to discriminate between two distinctly different manifestations of transdisciplinarity—*weak* and *strong*. First, we must consider that transdisciplinarity, no matter whether in its *weak* or *strong* forms has to do with *four (4) levels of reality*: (1) empirical—what exists; (2) pragmatic—what we, as humans, are capable of; (3) normative—what humans want to do, as in being aligned with social norms and cultural dictates; and (4) values—ethical and moral considerations as in what humans ought to do. What differentiates a weak (Max-Neef believes that this is what is the current trend) version from strong is the persistence of rational thought, linear logic and a reductionist perspective (old paradigm thinking) in *weak transdisciplinarity* and the influencing emergence/presence of relational thought, quantum (circular, iterative) logic and holism in *strong transdisciplinarity*. Both types of transdisciplinarity transcend disciplinary, interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary all of which exist within the non-holistic realm of knowing and being.

To slightly complicate matters there are two distinct lineage strains of transdisciplinarity. Historically, this is not a fresh new concept but rather an ideological throwback from the early seventies which “...has only just recently gained momentum and grudging acceptance as a necessary paradigmatic, methodological and intellectual innovation (McGregor, 2015, p.10). For radically qualitative, arts-based research like the project described in this memoir/literature review, it is a welcomed addition to add to the growing repertoire of qualitative innovations in research methodologies. In distinguishing the two major schools of transdisciplinarity, there is:

...the approach championed by Basarab Nicolescu (and philosopher Edgar Morin); hence the moniker *Nicolescuian transdisciplinarity*. They view transdisciplinarity as a *new methodology* to create knowledge with attendant axioms for what counts as reality, logic and knowledge...The other camp (frequently referred to as Swiss,

Zurich or German school) emerged from an *International Transdisciplinarity Conference* held in Zurich in 2000...(McGregor, p.11).

For the purposes of this research (which asserts that environmental dance is an emergent practice steeped in complexity) my team and I prescribe to Nicolescuian transdisciplinarity, as does Manfred Max-Neef, in his description above. Its three guiding axioms include: 1) Levels of reality; 2) The logic of the included middle and; 3) Complexity.

As a direct challenge to the Western dominant worldview based in a positivistic, empirical view of reality and a single phenomenal entity that is objectively “out there”, Nicolescu promotes a radically different view of reality:

Nicolescuian transdisciplinarity evokes a profoundly different notion of reality, one that better accommodates the complexity, diversity and contradictions in perspectives in the world. Rather than just one reality, transdisciplinarity holds that there are multiple levels of realities, with interaction and movement amongst them, mediated by what Nicolescu (2001) call the Hidden Third (McGregor, p.12).

In order to overcome Cartesian reductionism and Newtonian dualities of separation the transdisciplinary conception of reality proposed by Nicolescu is broken down into ten interacting categories placed in a hierarchal schema arranged at three levels. This is Axiom #1:

Level one is the eternal world of humans, where *consciousness* and *perspectives* flow—the TD [transdisciplinary] –Subject (comprising four Realities: political, social, historical, and individual). Level two is the external world of humans where *information* flows—the TD-Object (comprising of three Realities: environmental, economic, and cosmic/planetary). Interaction and movement amongst the previous two levels are mediated by the Hidden Third level. Peoples’ experiences, intuitions, interpretations, descriptions, representations, images and formulas meet on this third level. As well, three additional Realities exist in this intuitive zone of non-resistance to others’ ideas, this mediated interface: culture and art, religions, and spiritualities (McGregor, p.15).

While there have been a number of exciting emergent discoveries made along the way of this research journey, I would have to elevate the discovery of this schema as one of the most validating to my own research. My particular interest in the rich exchange that happens between

the inner geographies of the human (subject) and the outer geographic realm (object) of nature, the natural world, the landscape, the “land”, the Earth, Gaia, the universe and all that exists beyond at some greater scale. Such an exchange between “worlds” happens by way of a third (mediating/ negotiating) agent with I have consistently identified as the “Integrated Other” in my own emergent, intuitive schema. In much the same way Nicolescu lays out his theoretical framework of multiple existing realities and levels, I have intuited a similar cooperative interaction.

What Nicolescu calls the “hidden third”, I have interpreted to be the dynamic space between the inner and outer geographies of our dynamic life worlds—this depiction of reality is one that is constantly in flux (McGregor, 2015). And it is this *space in between*, where all the transformative magic and mischief happens. This is the “meeting place” where all negotiation and mediation transactions take place. What results is some sort of sensed and lived change—a transformation of energy, of thought, of knowing and of being—once this transaction happens, we are changed forever, even only in some minute way. This is evolution. We are wired for change; for complexity and yes, for chaos. This is the stardust from which we are made. This kind of alchemical change is also permanent and cumulative, as we gain layers of transformative experience through our interactions with the outer geographies of our lived worlds. Life is good. And it is fascinating. May we always aspire to realize the authentic strength of our healing transformational moments.

Axiom #2 is what Nicolescu refers to as “the logic of the included middle”. Swirling in the circular logic of quantum physics, this transdisciplinary law that is paradoxically (at least to me) steeped in sublime simplicity and seemingly contradictory complexities. Max Van-Neef offers a clarifying synopsis:

The logic of the included middle is not a metaphor. It is, in fact, a logic of transdisciplinarity and complexity, since it allows, through an iterative process, to cross different areas of knowledge in a coherent manner, and generating a new simplicity (or *simplicity*), as proposed by Nicolescu). It does not exclude the logic of the excluded middle, it just limits its boundaries and range of influence. Both logics are complementary (Max-Neef, p. 13).

It is helpful to imagine this as a *process* that is always evolving through time. This is not a static event; instead, I envision this axiomatic action, a kind of quantum lawfulness, as a kind of kaleidoscopic movement toward a momentary resolution of some sort. Intuitively, it feels like an agent of balance, in the way that Max-Neef frames it—the universe is always seeking a momentary flash of balance. Where there is balance there is stability—where there is stability, there is strength and structure, no matter how fleeting a structure it may be. Stability is a ubiquitous force throughout the universe and it serves noble function toward a greater good of the self-organizing “whole”. I believe it to be the glue that holds things together just long enough for meaningful, purposeful evolution to take place.

These are principles that emerge in the reflective thoughts of an “environmental dancer”, at a presumed quantum scale of awareness. Sometimes they come as “aha moments” that directly shake up my perceptions and sometimes they are the faint, ghostly hints of some major insight looming in the ephemeral fog ahead. The “logic of the included middle” feels like an integral part of creation and therefore, of creativity and the creative process. I can sense it as a vital part of my process. I embrace it—inclusion is good. Max-Neef adds:

The action of the logic of the included middle upon different levels of reality, induces an open structure of unity of levels of reality. Such open structure has extraordinary epistemological consequences, since it implies the impossibility of constructing a complete theory closed upon itself. What we get instead, is a permanent potentiality for the *evolution of knowledge* (p.13).

The function of the “included middle” is to create the unity of the levels of reality:

The logic of the included middle allows to describe the coherence between levels of reality, through an iterative process of the following typed: 1) A pair of contradictory elements (A and non-A) situated in a given level of reality, is unified by a state “T”, situated in a contiguous level of reality; 2) In turn, the state “T” is linked to a new pair of contradictories (A’ and non-A’) located in its own level; 3) The contradictory pair (A’ and non-A’) is, in turn, unified by a state “T”, situated in a new neighboring level which shelters the triad (A’, non-A’ and “T”). The iterative process continues indefinitely until all levels of reality have been exhausted, assuming that they are exhaustible. (p. 13).

I am aware that I recognize this process, a familiar pattern in the above description of the iterative process that allows new knowledge to emerge—that process is grounded theory. This provides unexpected insights into how grounded theory operates as a transdisciplinary process, unifying two “contradictory elements” (dance and systems science, for example), in the context of my research, two commonly separate disciplines that, interactively unify in a kind of synthesis/distillation process to produce new knowledge! And finally:

We can now say that the unity of the levels of reality constitutes the *Object of Transdisciplinarity*, and the unity of the levels of perception constitutes the *Subject of Transdisciplinarity*. A flux of *consciousness* that runs coherently across the different levels of perception, must correspond to the flux of *information* that runs coherently across the different levels of reality. Both fluxes are in a relation of isomorphism, “Knowledge is neither interior nor exterior; it is at the same time interior and exterior. The study of the Universe and the study of human beings sustain each other” [Nicolescu, 1999] (Max-Neef, p. 14).

I now recognize the *Satori-Loop* as an isomorphic reflection of Basarab Nicolescu’s own transdisciplinary vision.

Axiom #3, also known and “Universal Interdependence” acknowledges that the universe is an ever-evolving, ephemeral symphony of complexity of every conceivable variety and potentially varieties of complexity that we cannot imagine. It is important to point out that this is the essence of Indra’s Net. Here, Max-Neef provides us with a warning that the universe and all

that exists within the universe cannot be understood by the methods of the predominant reductionist worldview and that we need a systems-oriented way to engage with and understand the world:

Beyond the verification of the existence of different levels of reality, the last century has witnessed the appearance of complexity, of chaos, and of non-linear processes in many areas of science. Systemic visions have brought about the demise of the assumptions that nature can be described, analyzed and controlled in simple terms that correlate with a traditional linear logic. All of these new concepts have revolutionized many ambits of the basic sciences. However, no significant break-through is to be found when it comes to disciplines related to social action, economics and politics. Paradoxically, the concept of a uni-dimensional reality, oriented by a logic of linear simplicity, seems as strongly grounded as ever, precisely at a time when we are trying to adapt ourselves to a world undergoing increasingly accelerated change. It seems evident that such an incoherence is to a great extent responsible for many of the crises affecting us today (Max-Neef, p.14).

The central feature of complexity must emphasize an important focus toward a much needed systems-oriented worldview. Instead of separation, isolation and what Max-Neef calls a “uni-dimensional reality” (p.14) we can transform the ways we know and exist in the world by applying and adapting these guiding principles to our life’s work. In many ways, this is what I have aimed to accomplish with this project. We can re-orient ourselves to the complex nature of life:

However, once we understand and integrate in our way of seeing the world, the different levels of reality and its associated logic of the included middle, both the vision and the way in which we proceed become clearer. The bottom principle is not to separate the opposing poles from the many di-polar relations that characterize the behavior of Nature and of social life. Such a separation, normal in rational thinking and its correspondent linear thinking, is actually artificial, since neither nature nor the human society does function in terms of mono-polar relations. Our insistence in artificially and ingeniously simplifying our knowledge about Nature and human relations, is the force behind the increasing dysfunction we are provoking in the systemic interrelations of both eco-systems and the social fabric (p. 14).



Of particular interest to me, as the next phase of my work with environmental dance will be to create a transdisciplinary curriculum that will have as part of its mission, the vision of creative environmentally-focused learning (K-12/ and a master's program) that utilizes all of these radically transformational principles to transform each students' relationship with the natural world. First, however, we must continue to promote the agenda of holistic learning and a system of multiple realities that reflect back this holistic paradigm. The research undertaken by my research team and I is dedicated to that mission:

Disciplinary science isolated disciplines from each other and isolates them from their environments. The breaking up of knowledge into separate disciplines “prevents [knowledge] from linking and contextualizing” (Morin 2006, p.14). To offset this effect, he [Edgar Morin, philosopher and colleague of Nicolescu] urges us to “recognize the inseparability of the separable” (p.16). That is, even though disciplines *can* be separated, if we hope to address the complex problems of the world, they will have to be re-conceived as inseparable (McGregor, p.18).

. I can envision many new, rich learning modalities (emerging from continued and heightened scholarly engagement in critical ontologies and critical pedagogies) that can become innovative classroom tools of transformative learning when disciplines are enjoined as true transdisciplinary gestalts for teaching and learning best practices. We are poised at the threshold of such educational innovation as we seek to move past the existing educational status quo.

### **Paradigmatic Polarity and the “Integrated Other”**

As much as these are differentiating characteristics, I also interpret these as the familiar polarities between two very distinct epistemological/ ontological universes. Do we continue ongoing debate between these two factions or do we begin to think in terms of the endless possibilities afforded by the holistic mission of integrating subject and object by way of the intention inclusivity of the spaces in between. My own research mission is driven by the latter scenario with the hope that it will move toward a potential acceptance of a radically holistic

inquiry protocol in academic research setting, where I position myself in the misty frontier land of that movement. Seemingly, what will make transdisciplinarity strong, is the necessary commitment to adopt this new way in order to challenge the positivist, Cartesian-inspired version of the realities (and the predominant worldview) that largely stems from this orientation toward reality. Perhaps true (strong) transdisciplinarity offers a viable way to bridge the long-existing chasm between dual (and often dueling) worldviews and orientations toward the nature of reality by bringing forth the possibility of a new dialogue that arrives at some sort of intersubjective consensus—then it seems likely that diverse, creative partnerships can collaborate in a newly-formed unity toward common goals and missions. This will require a vision of reality that embraces holism, interconnection, diversity, complexity, integration and synthesis on all levels while honoring the traditional approaches upon which new ways of being and knowing are to be successfully launched.

As a researcher highlighting this approach in my own project I knew my success in making the case that “environmental dance” is best understood as a transdisciplinary phenomenon would require a prerequisite commitment toward re-envisioning this new kind of dance as an integrated synthesis among all of the established levels of reality, depicted in Max-Neef’s conceptualization of a hierarchy of realities. Max-Neef provides his readers with an illustrative graph that shows the interconnections and nuanced relationships that are possible among these multiple levels of reality. In fact, it works much in the same way that metaphorical Indra’s Net works!

Both share in common a demonstrated circumstance based in complexity and wholeness. As I reflect upon the parts of my environmental dance inquiry puzzle I begin to see a pattern of defining structures emerge that are interconnected. Transdisciplinary inquiry reflects a holistic epistemology and ontology which in turn, offers an accurate fit for exploring environmental dance

as both pedagogy and performance which in turn is not only examined effectively by an adapted Goethean method but is also is reorganized as a multi-faceted phenomenology that explores the relationship of the environmental dancer/ researcher with the dynamic landscape, mediated by the space in between or the “integrated other”.<sup>43</sup>

What keeps bubbling to the surface of my research is the very appropriate need to expose, and cross-pollinate opposing (or previously separated) ideas and ways of being and knowing with other ideologies and strategies that seemingly have no common ground. The spirit of such is taking great joy in willfully comparing apples and oranges (thought by some to be illogical and a fool’s folly) and finding something amazing and of unpredictable value to come from that effort! Such action answers an urge to look beyond what appears to be the limit of applicable existing knowledge, having a blind faith in eventual emergence of that body of invisible knowledge, just beyond the disciplinary horizon (via the “integrated other”), while accepting that this new source of knowledge can only be unearthed in less conventional ways than we are accustomed to. It also calls us to embrace chaos and complexity and to indulge in a never-ending process of multi-scaled evolution.

The idea of unconventionality is also very compatible to the idea of grounded theory—it is a research strategy that operates with monumental faith in the elusive “unknowns” that are allowed to emerge in their own organic timing, often from unsuspected sources and places of origin. In a predominant belief system that views this to be a kind of detrimental conflict of interest and to be a true territorial threat within the discipline wars fought for various reasons in universities

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<sup>43</sup> “Integrated other” is my own term, which attempts to identify and name that often-nebulous grey area that exists between to isolated binary situations. It is the area that suddenly comes into a play for inclusion in the holistic paradigm and is not unlike Nicolescu’s concept of “included middle”. I also use my term when referring to the space that enjoins the realms of inner and outer geographies

worldwide, I have come to view the phenomenal intersection of such discipline disparities in a very different way altogether. And that radicalized point of view brings us back again, to the topic of *transdisciplinarity*.

### **Transdisciplinary Research, GT and Autopoiesis**

One of the very first issues to arise for me and my dance/research team was how to best address our research work in this exploration of environmental dance-as-phenomenon. Can we justifiably proceed by treating environmental dance as simply one of many other dance forms and expect to properly flesh out, describe and express the nuances of what it is like to dance and create dance for wild natural sites such as the blustery summit of a mountain in southwestern New Hampshire? Would it do justice to my doctoral research project to isolate out my brand of environmental dance and study it without giving it the rich context of a long tradition of dance genres, creative choreographic processes and training lineages that is not only responsible for bringing me to the world of dance but also shows a cultural connection of various dance forms throughout human existence? The answer to both questions is a resounding “no”—the only way to fully explore the phenomenon of environmental dance is to look at it as one of the infinite multi-faceted gems suspended within the systemic web of Indra’s net, vibrating with the reflective forces of the universe. And this is where the “integrated other” can be found—in the shimmering spaces in between that hold the potential for becoming the enlightening pathways that make possible, the unification of all experiences and bodies of knowledge, in a myriad of infinite combinations.

A corollary to this claim, is that complex phenomena (such as environmental dance) are best explored, delimited and thus, better understood through multiple lenses that help to reflect very different yet, in nuanced ways to be discovered, additional defining aspects of the phenomenon. As a young child, I, like many little girls my age attended weekly ballet classes; this

experience was in direct contrast to the consummate tomboy I was, at all other times. Two seemingly conflicting features of one phenomenon (me), somehow organically combined and lead that little girl who loved her ballet classes and her wild nature playground to spontaneously begin dancing on that monumental boulder in her backyard woods. The sparkling gem that reflects that tomboyish spirit and love of the natural world and all other very earthy ways of being in the more-than-human-world, in turn, reflects into and absorbs the sparkling essence of the creative, ritualistic urge to dance in celebration of and to express a deep connection to nature. This is Indra's net, in its beautiful and illuminating microcosmic manifestation. The serendipitous union of these two very different aspects of me as a child opened up the universe to me as an artist and as a scholar.

The nuanced combination of the earthy tomboy who loves to dance on rocks can be better understood (if not perhaps appreciated) when context is added to this process of analysis. I certainly understand my motives for my intentionally-staged dance productions on that giant boulder for the creatures of the forest and I recall those moments and feel that creative, multi-sensory experience as if it happened only yesterday. Those motives were just as grounded in my passion for dance as in my love for my childhood woods and those experiences are forever imprinted into my body-mind consciousness. Now, I wonder if I ever would have been researching environmental dance today if those two very disparate childhood experiences had not been serendipitously conjoined through the creative play.

In my own experiences with environmental dance (as an emerging sub-discipline of dance that is purposefully based on radical transdisciplinarity), I have come to see my basic (and growing) discontent with contemporary dance culture as a parallel reflection of my uneasiness with a perceived imbalance of epistemological orientations. This imbalance is attributable to the

widely accepted predominant Western view of the world and of reality,--in this sense, worldview replicates itself in the way art expresses its correlating cultural mores and beliefs. I see the potential in environmental dance as a true transdisciplinary offshoot that can perhaps re-envision contemporary concert dance (which, both derives from and perpetuates symbolically, the Cartesian dualities themselves, as in mind/body separation, etc.) as a way to heal the human nature split and as a new way to experience the natural world and our integral relationships with it. I see my own brand of environmental dance's grander purpose as a balancing/ countering agent in the form of an embodied practice that is based in holism instead of isolation and separation.

In this context, environmental dance is acting in a very transdisciplinary way, transcending the various forms of Western dance by going beyond a status quo dance world (influenced by and reflective of Western worldview) with a vision entirely based on a synthetic, integrative effort to enjoin the inner world with outer reality, the microcosmic with the macrocosmic, while acting as a kind of dialectic between the subjective and objective realms by embracing the notion of the Nicoliescu's concept of the "included middle" (as well, my own idea of an "integrated other"). The idea is that we are not seeking to discard and dismiss prior dance "knowledge" but instead the mission of environmental dance as transdisciplinary dance is to build upon tradition and explore new frontiers of dance.

Another corollary emerging from this research project (as it has in its own self-organizing way gradually become rooted and intertwined in the transdisciplinary revival I believe is now upon us) is that we must forge ahead with a new way to view knowledge generation (and generally, the way we engage with and attempt to know the phenomenal world around us). In doing so, we accept that we must also make the grand epistemological/ ontological leap from the insulated microcosmic experience to an informing macrocosmic collection of past human lived experience.

In doing so, we begin to craft a system of knowledge generation that self-organizes and actually becomes a greater, more multi-faceted and more potent version than the mere accumulation of its parts.

At present, I suggest that the way in which we conventionally set out to gather knowledge has become to grow archaic, myopic and lacking in enriching context; thus, we are short-selling ourselves, seemingly maintaining the paradigmatic status quo. Instead of enabling these new sources and methods of holistic, synthetic knowledge-generating processes, the refracting power of all of Indra's infinite gems, for the most part, still remains the remote wilderness outposts of nuanced knowledge, wisdom and experiences that when unified in unique, new contextual partnerships, could revolutionize how we gather and generate new knowledge, ultimately reshaping the way we perceive the worlds we live in. While acknowledging that experiences are the source of all human knowing—we truly do live and learn. But, in the absence of a transdisciplinary mindset, that kind of knowledge generation from experience can only go so far.

In the seminal essay *Autopoiesis: The Organization of the Living*, authors Maturana and Varela provide historical context that reveal the deep roots that allow reductionist perspectives to continue to prevail:

We are the inheritors of categorized knowledge; therefore we inherit also a world view that consists of parts strung together, rather than of wholes regarded through different sets of filters. Historically, synthesis seems to have been too much for the human mind—where practical affairs were concerned. The descent of the synthetic method from Plato to Augustine took men's perception into literature, art and mysticism. The modern world of science and technology is bred from Aristotle and Aquinas by analysis. The categorization that took hold of medieval scholasticism has really lasted it out. We may see with hindsight that the historical revolts against the scholastics did not shake free from the shackles of reductionism (*Autopoiesis and Cognition: the Realization of the Living*, p. 63).

As we live our lives by the societal dictates of predominant Western culture that supports a reductionist paradigm, our personal experiences are filtered through those cultural norms and provide us with learning that ultimately fall into standard recognizable categories of generated knowledge. In our learning institutions these categories of similar experience and the knowledge that is generated from them are the disciplines: the arts and the sciences, philosophies, theories and practices, and all that humans endeavor to do are contained within the compartments of disciplines. The need for a renaissance of the “synthetic method”<sup>44</sup> is real—I can imagine how my own research project would have suffered had I not looked beyond such limitations. Maturana and Varela add:

The revolt of the rationalists—Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz—began from the principle of “methodological doubt”. But they became lost in mechanism, dualism, more and more categorization; and they ended in denying relation altogether. But relation is the stuff of system. Relation is the essence of synthesis. The revolt of the empiricists—Locke, Berkeley, Hume—began from the nature of understanding about the environment. But analysis was still the method, and categorization still the practice tool of advance. In the bizarre outcome, whereby it was the empiricists who denied the very existence of the empirical world, relation survived—but only through the concept of mental association between mental events. The system “out there”, which we call nature, had been annihilated in the process (p. 63).

As Varela describes above and as a reflection of our existing binary ways of knowing and being in the world, a discipline-oriented system of managing knowledge powerfully maintains its own territorial boundaries.

In a related vein, my foray into critical ontology and emergent concepts derived from Maturana and Varela, has produced another intriguing concept. That concept is enactivism, which

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<sup>44</sup> “Synthetic method”—my term suggesting that a more holistic approach (in general and specific circumstances) would benefit the world, as life on the planet Earth continues to evolve. This idea also suggests that an accompanying paradigm shift is a natural progression in that process of evolution.



posits that cognition arises out of direct interaction and engagement of the human (subject) with the environment (object) that the human subject is embedded within. As environmental dance researchers, my team and I derive inspiration and create our “art” through the creative process (Goethe’s scientific method) that is dependent upon active engagement with the environment—the rocky summit landscape that is both research site and performance stage. The mechanics of Santiago Enactivism (the theoretical framework created by Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela) provide a way to deepen our understanding of our creative, collaborative “dialogues” with the mountain site where we create, explore, dialogue, collaborate and dance:

According to the Enactivists perception and cognition also operate in contradiction to Cartesiaism, as they construct a reality as opposed to reflecting an external one already in existence. The interactive or circular organization of the nervous system described by Maturana is similar to the hermeneutic circle as it employs a conversation between diverse parts of a system to construct meaning. Autopoiesis as the process of self-production is the way living things operate. Self-construction emerges out of a set of relationships between simple parts. In the hermeneutic circle the relationships between parts “self-construct” previously unimagined meanings. Thus, in an ontological context meaning emerges not from the thing-in-itself but from its relationships to an infinite number of other things. In this complexity we understand from another angle that there is no final meaning of anything: meanings are always evolving in light of new relationships, new horizons. Thus, in a critical ontology our power as meaning makers and producers of new selfhoods is enhanced. Cognition is the process in which living systems organize the world around them into meaning. (Kincheloe, pp.19-20).

As this research has progressed over time, each one of a growing number of theories that have organically emerged from this inquiry have proven to provide powerful new insights into environmental dance as site of enactivistically-framed (and contextualized) perception and cognition, Each new theoretical model and it contributing discoveries not only reveal compatibilities and common ground to one another but all enjoin together to elevate the fundamental understanding of what environmental dance is and what it does. Collectively, these

discovery have added a richness of depth and breadth (transdisciplinarity ensures deep and broad explorations) to this inquiry process.

### **Goethe and Transdisciplinarity**

In much scientific inquiry we still see evidence of Western science to perpetuate a persistent, distinct separation of subject and object. But I wonder what happens when those disciplinary systems reach a saturation level where very little innovative, new information and knowledge is produced? What happens when there is a vague feeling that we may be myopic and incomplete by maintaining our disciplinary loyalties at the expense of exploring new terrain? What happens when the disciplinary wells begin to run dry? And what happens when a growing intuition inspires a new curiosity in the scholarly inquirer, that there may be a vast new universe of knowledge to be tapped into, within those very frontiers of spaces that separate and isolate subject from object?

Early in the research, my team and I were inspired to dive deeply into that spatial gap between the human subject and the phenomenal object as we became more and more familiar with Goethe's scientific method. As I describe in *Jewel Four*, Goethe's holistic science protocol (also known as a phenomenology of nature), I fully adapted this 5-step analytic/synthetic process as the creative process my dancer-researcher team and I have consistently employed throughout the entire research project. As we began to acclimate ourselves as researchers to Goethe's guiding 5-steps on site, I observed a steadily growing shift in how dancer and landscape (and the landscape phenomena) of the summit area engaged one another. As our research methods continued to evolve it became ordinary practice to think of and treat the landscape and all of its collective features as collaborative, dialogic entities—"beings" with a delicate yet discernible presence and defining ontological features.

While the scope of this research does not explore the radical philosophical, epistemological and ontological collision course created by considering that the more-than-human-world, the phenomena of the natural environment may possess the necessary requirements that would enable us to “dialogue” and “collaborate” with mountains, and trees and birds, admittedly that is exactly what we have been able to do. The scope of the research does not intentionally enter this intriguing debate (an under-addressed philosophical problem especially when we begin to explore and normalize the transdisciplinary agenda) as to whether (or not) the natural entities we are engaging at the summit are alive in all senses of the word, we do acknowledge we are called to enter through this door of possibility—first through the transformative shift in perspective encourage through the lens of metaphor they most certainly do exude a presence that can and does engage us as we engage them. Goethe’s method opens that door for us:

Working imaginatively, inspiratively and intuitively, it becomes possible to experience a landscape creatively in the same way Goethe grasped the creative processes at work in particular organisms. The picture emerges of a landscape as a self-creating wholeness, coming into being in the way a plant comes into being, each element an expression of the wholeness of its living form (Hoffman, N., Holdrege & Dalton, 2007, p 75).

This is a reflection of Goethe’s *Exact sensorial fantasy* (stage two) which we used on site and in off-site reflection and discussions, to purposely engage the imaginal sense in order to perceive the fluidity and flow of the phenomenon’s evolutionary process (its dynamic mutability) which animates and sets the phenomenon in motion; the goal is to be able to perceive the temporal unfolding, the animate life, the flowing history and the continuous unfolding of the thing observed and experienced. This stage is water cognition and it is the realm where we can perceive the dynamic life of the phenomenon before us. I have come to think of this very critical shifting point in perspective and perception as a phenomenological ontology. Through the passage of the temporal dimension we are acknowledging a true sense of “being”:

What this amounts to is a revolution in ecological understanding. The wholeness of the landscape comes to presence in any particular animal or plant entity [embedded dancer-researcher included] just as it does in the total geographical context of the landscape. The wholeness, in other words, is “written” in the morphological language of every aspect of the landscape, and this is so because the wholeness, the archetypal landscape, is the source of the parts, because it has “imparted” itself as a form of the landscape (Hoffman, Holdrege & Dalton, p. 75).

When we begin to enter in to an equitable “dialogue” with the mountain landscape and all of its interconnected webs of features, fields and processes, as a complex system, it is harder still to deny a sense of (ontological) being. The authors continue:

In fact, the idea that landscapes have a living organization—that is, an organization of organ-like structures—had already been put forward by thinkers who had a connection with Goethe’s way of science. Alexander von Humboldt considered every part of the Earth to be a reflection of the harmonious unity *Welorganismus*, of the cosmos as a living whole...This irreducible “essential character” we might also call the “wholeness of the landscape”, its living formative essence (p.77).

By considering for example, the “living spirit of the mountain”, or the “gentle whispers of the wind” we move closer toward a deeply intimate relationship with the natural features (“beings’ for certain, at least to us, because they reveal to us over time, characteristic, defining personalities that delineate an observable and experiential essence).

As a radical approach, this new Goethean-inspired attitude, at first, felt strange and foreign and perhaps even mystical. Gradually, over time, however, this new application became the very approach that allowed us to take the leap from a more traditional binary relationship with the site (a product of the predominant Cartesian paradigm) to a decidedly transdisciplinary attitude of equitable collaboration with the land/dance site. The shift has transformed our entire approach and environmental dance artists as it moved our hearts, minds and bodies toward a deeper understanding of our phenomenal interactions with the land--that we, as land and humans, are truly overlapping, interacting, synergizing and autopoietic fields of energy and material physicalities. It

has even changed the language we use to describe where we dance—where we once performed on-site within the landscape of the mountain summit we now acknowledge that we are dancing with and within the “land” itself, suggesting a deeper intimacy of relationship.

Furthermore, we have progressed through the course of this research with the underlying assumption that environmental dance is particularly compatible with Goethe’s philosophy and holistic. The research has consistently validated our basic assumption (garnered through hours of research done in cooperation with the land) that environmental dance is a Goethean science-driven art form that is capable of building upon and transcending the former way I approached my work as an “environmental dance” artist and choreographer (See Chapter VI), allowing my team and I to also transcend multiple scales. What this means is that when viewed in this way, “environmental dance” as the focus of this research, becomes an agent for the expressions of multiple realities—an epistemological, ontological gestalt gleaned from the collective brilliance of each one of Indra’s reflecting jewels discussed in this memoir, through a meaningful connection to a wide array of compatible other ways of knowing.

### **Indigeneity, the “Satori Loop” and Critical Ontology**

Our approach to this research is also rooted in the systems of indigenous ways of knowing and being of and with the land, as integral parts of a whole. This intentional shift in perspective that reflects back these threads of other ways of knowing and being has brought forth the very essence environmental dance as a transdisciplinary venture. In *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*, Gregory Cajete explains these roots:

The dynamic, holistic nature of creativity and its reflections in Native science are celebrated in a culture’s emergence stories. The guiding stories of the “First World” mirror processes of chaos, creative participation, and the metaphoric mind and bring a deep intuitive understanding of the creative process inherent in nature and in human beings. Native myths embody metaphors of natural creativity, imagination, and deep spiritual relationships in a people’s long journey of

evolution. Native myths chart the development of human beings in relationships to the places in which they have lived. These myths are simultaneously evolutionary, ecological, spiritual, psychological, and creative (p. 13).

Indigenous worldview is also a transdisciplinary way to experience, understand, perceive and express human connection to the world. In doing transdisciplinary research (or any research, for that matter) it is essential that every aspect of the work is aligned with the inherent worldview that best supports it. Indigenous scholar Shawn Wilson (2008) explains this paradigmatic-related dilemma:

An Indigenous research paradigm is made up of an Indigenous ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology. These beliefs influence the tools we as researchers use in finding out more about the cosmos. Like myself, other indigenous scholars have in the past tried to use the dominant research paradigms. We have tried to adapt dominant research system research tools by including our perspective into their views. We have tried to include our cultures, traditional protocols and practices into the research process through adapting and adopting suitable methods. The problem with that is that we can never really remove the tools from their underlying beliefs. Since these beliefs are not always compatible with our own, we will always have problems in trying to adapt dominant system tools to our use (Wilson, p. 13).

Furthermore, since my work focuses on transforming how humans engage with nature, the Indigenous worldview serves my ontological, epistemological, and axiological needs well as the parameters of environmental dance has emerged. Of interest, is the Indigenous conception of what Cajete calls “body sense” which corresponds to my concept of the “body-mind” (the gateway between inner and outer geographies):

The body, as the source of thinking, sensing, acting and being, and as the basis of relationship, is a central consideration of Native science. This is why the metaphor of the body is used so often by tribes to describe themselves, as well as their communities, social organization and important relationships in the world. Tribal use of the metaphor describes not just the physical body, but the mind-body (equivalent of my Satori-linked “body-mind”) that experiences and participates in the world. Indeed humans and the natural world interpenetrate one another at many levels, including the air we breathe, the carbon dioxide we contribute to the food

we transform, and the chemical energy we transmute at every moment of our lives from birth to death. In the words of Abram (1996:47), “the body is a creative, shape-shifting entity” (Cajete, p.25).

The body-mind is the site of phenomenological connections between human and the land. Native science continues to connect and inform my environmental dance concept of the body-mind, as both source and site of creative, cognitive, physical, and spiritual transformation:

The creative body and all that it comprises it—mind, body and spirit—are the creative, moving center of Native science. Although this may seem to be common sense, modern thinking abstracts the mind from the body and the body from the world. This modern orientation, in turn, frequently disconnects Western science from the lived and experience world of nature. The disassociation becomes most pronounced at the level of perception, because our perceptions orient us in the most elemental way to our surroundings. Receptivity to our surroundings combined with creativity characterize our perception (Cajete, p.26).

Environmental dance, a transdisciplinary endeavor is clearly aligned with the indigenous worldview, informed by its corresponding epistemology, ontology and axiology and inspired by its generations-old Earth wisdom that forever integrates body-mind and Nature with spirit.

This (indigenous) way of thinking about and being with the land is an integral characteristic of the “Satori Loop” schema (an original construction/schema I introduced and discussed in Jewel #6) that I have conceptualized as a way to map our holistically-oriented ontological connections with the natural world. The Satori Loop© is a metaphorical journey that may allow us to move through a healing threshold toward wholeness and spirit through the following ordered process: 1) first order shift--human body and mind are re-integrated where they are normally seen as separate entities; 2) second order shift--body-mind integration then, enables human integration with the land/ natural phenomena, following a true holistic model that creates a looped system of input/output “communication” between the inner and outer geographies—this is how ways of knowing and knowledge are generated—experience integrated with new knowledge, in turn,

inspires a particular way of being in the world; 3) third order shift--only through this ordered integrational sequence can we sense and connect with the landscape at the spirit (genus loci) level—which again, is a looped system of spirit-based exchanges.

I propose that each iteration (journey through input/output feedback loop) deepens the connection of human to the land. Through the framework of the Satori Loop, we move through stages of holistic integration that seek to heal long-existing binary splits which then enable us to engage the land in a way that in turn, allows us to experience its authentic wholeness, its spirit and in a very real sense, its' being. This is very much aligned with an indigenous world view and as an environmental dance practitioner, the ideals, values and original teachings of Native American indigeneity have always served as an informing ontological model for me as a teaching artist, in part, a reflection of my own indigenous ancestry. But because the Indigenous way I describe above is deeply polarized with traditional Western worldview and ideologies, my worldview and as a result, environmental dance, can fit most appropriately into a critical ontological category that seeks, instead, a defining paradigm of wholeness and embodiment, especially within the context of the human relationship with the natural world. Through the intentional engagement of the “integrated other”, identified as the connecting spaces that must be included in order to establish wholeness and that are found to exist between bounded yet interconnected phenomena, an authentic sense of such wholeness then, becomes reality. The Satori Loop© also suggests that through this ontologically transformational process, we, our selves are profoundly changed in the ways we perceive the land, how we engage with the land, how we learn from the land, and finally, how we embody the land.

Just as I hold the underlying belief that the human relationship to the land (and to the whole of nature and the Earth) is a sacred thing, so I also believe is the expression of that



interconnectedness, through environmental dance. This allows for another transdisciplinary connection to be made: the indigenous worldview not only makes a relevant connection with critical ontology but also, with my conception of the Satori Loop and by reaching back to the reflections of the previous Jewel Seven with the perspective of environmental dance as a way to create a ritual of human connection to the land. As a shaping force directly affecting my development as an artist as well as the development of my unique artistic vision for environmental dance, there is a strong connection of my artistic identity (critical ontology) that I believe, has given my creative work its distinction from other bodies of similar work:

The ceremony of art touches the deepest realms of the psyche and the sacred dimensions of the creative process. The sacred level of art not only transforms something into art, but also transforms the artist at the very core of his or her being. This way of doing and relating to art makes the process and context of art-making infinitely more important than the product. In terms of Indigenous American “art”, this transforming sacred quality of creation is inherent in varying degrees from the purely utilitarian artifact to the shamanistic talisman...The innate “nature centeredness” of indigenous art forms represent and “educated soulfulness” that unfolds through the creative process of the artist onto the medium (Cajete, pp. 46-7).

This is an important distinction to illuminate here, since the process of creating “environmental dance” sets the defining parameters for an environmental dance pedagogy (See Chapter VI), as it emerges from this research. Environmental dance supports a critical ontology through a developing philosophy that helps to bridge the existing chasm between subject (human) and object (land/nature, natural environment) and finds integrative power through an integration of the spaces in between as a sacred act of transformation of relationship.

Of course, the ideals associated with critical ontology also offer strong support toward transdisciplinarity, as well:

Teachers with critical ontological vision help students connect to the civic web of the political domain, the biotic web of the natural world, the social web of human

life, and the epistemological web of knowledge production. In this manner, we all move to the realm of critical ontology where new ways of being and new ways of being *connected* reshape all people (Kincheloe, 2006).

We can see the interconnecting threads of relational (if not synergistic) thought. These threads (that make the vital connections and knowledge exchanges between the jewels of Indra's vast web) show how environmental dance is informed by critical ontology, radical forms of constructivism, feminism, indigenous studies, Native science, quantum physics, poetry & poetics, autopoiesis and systems science, chaos theory, complexity theory, the phenomenologies (that include all philosophical schools as well as the nuanced schools of dance phenomenology and nature phenomenology, Goethean science, language and semiotics and the patterned "language of nature" that I describe). While these are the emergent connections discovered through the course of this research project, it is acknowledged that if we continue this inquiry there may be an infinite number of other informing connections and exchanges to be made.

Since the indigenous way I describe above is deeply polarized with traditional Western (colonializing) worldview and ideologies, my work as a teaching environmental dance artist and as a result, this research, can only fit most appropriately into a critical ontological category that seeks a defining paradigm of wholeness and embodiment. In my research experiences with my team, this appears to be especially true within the context of the human relationship with the natural world. In this context, I invoke indigeneity as the way toward right and just and wise relationship with the planet. Indigenous scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith explores the term "indigenous":

Indigenous peoples" is a relatively recent term which emerged in the 1970's (as did transdisciplinarity) out of the struggles primarily of the American Indian Movement (AIM), and the Canadian Indian Brotherhood. It is a term that internationalizes the experiences, the issues and the struggles of some of the world's colonized peoples. The final "s" in "indigenous peoples" has been argued for quite vigorously by indigenous activists because of the right of peoples to self-determination... Thus the world's indigenous populations belong to a network of peoples. They share

experiences as peoples who have been subjected to the colonization of their lands and cultures, and the denial of their sovereignty, by a colonizing society that has come to dominate and determine the shape and quality of their lives...” (Smith, 1999, p.7).

In a way, just as the First Peoples of the world represent the oppressed “other” (who are excluded and exiled from the dominant realities of the Modern Western worldview), so it goes with the Western dissociative and destructive attitude and action toward the planet itself.

Through the intentional engagement of what I call the “integrated other”, is identified, in one general sense, as the connecting spaces that must be included in order to establish wholeness, inclusivity, planetary healing at every scale. Prior to transformative change through some deliberately conscious shift, we continue to have the distinct and dysfunctional separation of Western privilege from the discarded and discounted other whether we are referring to the Indigenous human or the Earth, herself. The oppressed can be found existing in those metaphorical “spaces in between”—in the context of the natural world, that other I acknowledge and that my research team and I seek to embrace through the symbolic ritual of the environmental dance performance, may be found in the undetected landscapes between bounded yet organically interconnected phenomena that comprise the natural world around us. “Environmental dance” becomes the vehicle of change helping to bring forth a spirit of wholeness that becomes reality, inspired by and borne out of artistic vision.

The Satori Loop© (a roadmap of sorts, of one pathway toward such inclusivity and wholeness) attempts to philosophically assist through inspired consciousness, the ontologically transformational process through which we, our selves can be profoundly changed. Such change occurs in the ways we perceive the land, how we engage with the land, how we learn from the land, and finally, how we embody the land. From this single instance of the transformed human/nature relationship, we may be able to transfer this new knowledge and wisdom to aid in the

rewriting of a multitude of other relational patterns that have been transmitted through the dominant paradigm that weaves its enduring presence through the story of this research.

Of greatest importance to me, as a transdisciplinary environmental dance artist, is that our work, whether it is through the unfolding of an environmental dance performance on the summit, or asserting the necessity to reform how we engage the object of other, we can exert a nuanced transformation through the vehicles of our multi-faceted work as artists, as educators, as scholars and as researchers. Such transformative inroads include: 1) artistic expression through the demonstrable presence of a radicalized way to engage the environment as an equitable, collaborative force in the creative process 2) a corresponding epistemological, ontological and axiological paradigm that allows a transfer of new knowledge, tacit wisdom and shifted ideologies into an environmental dance eco-pedagogy of transformation (in the final chapter of this research I will outline what that eco-pedagogy will look like); 3) the language we use with intentionality, that become the expressive, communicative vehicle of metaphorical and symbolic reference and threads of knowledge, both the verbal language we use in vocal and written communications and the language of nature we communicate through the dancing body-mind, and finally; 4) the promotion of Nicolescuian transdisciplinarity and Goethean science as exemplar tours de force, serving as viable templates of societal, environmental and personal transformative change.

These manifestations may inspire vital shifts in perception and perspective, in the arts and in the sciences. This is the on-going process of evolution of our ways of knowing and being. I am now remembering the beautifully, ever-shifting, subtly dynamic cloudscape above me that day during a summit research session. It occurs to me, in this moment of writing that everything I

know, think, feel or do within the permeable realms of my inner and outer geographies (that “corner of my universe” I acknowledge with gratitude, at the beginning of this section) has emerged from, has shifted toward and has been profoundly transformed by the wisdom of a mountain and the human desire to dance with her.

***Unity (A Found Poem)***

*Birdsong and flight pattern,*

*Dance between two worlds.*

*How grounded are we in our art?*

*I take my place on the rocks.*

*I feel the cool granite beneath my feet.*

*To give voice to this language through the dance,*

*I fall to the rocks.*

*Unity.*

*And communion.*

*My own thoughts ebb and flow as I dance.*

*To wonder and contemplate magical thoughts of a higher order.*

*The angelic spirit of this magical place,*

*Sacred birdsong, sacred forest...sacred steps.*

*I shall return to this place again.*

*Body and mind, unified*

*To dialogue with the mountain.*

*There is a sense of an emerging gesture;*

*A palpable, deep connection—*

*The language of nature.*

*The ritual of return,*

*Twisting, turning and spiraling,*

*Our humanness blurs and blends with mountain.*

*Cloud above us, evaporating and dissipating—*

*The natural world is very much alive.*

*To speak this beautiful language.*

*Full moon,*

*The wind continues to howl.*

*I ceremoniously walk the sacred space,*

*The spiraling nature of my thoughts—*

*I am not alone.*

*Open up to a different way of perceiving nature,*

*To learn to let go—*

*Focus on the ephemeral realm of the clouds above,*

*Within the space that separates us.*

~Dianne Eno© 2017

## Chapter III

### Goethean Science as an Adapted Method for “Environmental Dance” Research

*“Experience becomes flesh.” ~Aric Sigman*

#### Introduction to the Goethean Scientific Method

This chapter focuses on the unique application of the Goethean Scientific Method (GSM)<sup>45</sup> for its potential as first, a viable research method and second, as a pedagogical tool in the emerging environmental dance-as-pedagogy endeavor. Since GSM, is itself, a highly systematized form of phenomenological practice, I have recently come to appreciate it for the ways it is aligned with and relevant to many of the aspects of environmental dance and the constructivist-inspired pedagogy presented here. In general terms, phenomenology as practice and method aims to bring us in closest proximity to the phenomenon that is the focus of our inquiry--“the thing itself”<sup>46</sup>; environmental dance seeks to create, in a similar way—in a very Goethean kind of way<sup>47</sup>, which I will describe in detail--a new approach toward developing a sense of unity with the phenomena of

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<sup>45</sup> GSM is a five-stage process (to be elaborated upon in following sections of this paper) toward active, holistic engagement with natural phenomena; David Seamon characterizes the Goethean way of science as “doing phenomenology” so, in some respects, environmental dance entails as part of its processes and activities, a doing of phenomenology (see: Seamon, D. (2005). “Goethe’s Way of Science as a Phenomenology of Nature”. *Janus Head*, 8(1), p. 87).

<sup>46</sup> Paraphrasing the well-known Husserlian statement and phenomenology slogan “back to the thing themselves”: see Welton, (1999). (Ed.), *The Essential Husserl: Basic Writings in Transcendental Phenomenology*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

<sup>47</sup> I am making an initial connection between Husserl’s basic philosophical premise and phenomenological stance and Goethe’s holistic science which is often called the “phenomenology of nature”. I suggest that a phenomenological orientation is foundational to environmental dance and is evident in the creative process of making site-specific environmental dance works. I begin to make the case that Goethe’s own “phenomenology of nature” as reflected in the Goethean scientific method (GSM) provides an effective framework for environmental dance pedagogy.

the natural world through direct, creative and imaginative experiences in nature. In the special circumstances compulsory to environmental dance, I offer that it is precisely the phenomena of the natural landscape that provide such context and that it is this context which allows an opportunity for the most complete exploration of what it is like to embody the landscape. In this way, nature is not an abstracted, at-arms-length concept but rather, a real, tangible, collaborative force within the environmental dance experience, itself.

Since we cannot construct meaning in a vacuum, I believe that the promising pairing of GSM with environmental dance can set the stage for exciting learning. But how might we characterize such learning? As a result of this kind of highly contextualized experience (where equal weight is given to both dancer/learner and the natural site for the construction of meaning and knowledge) we may be able to claim that dancer/learners construct meaning from their direct engagement with the natural environment through creative and imaginative action. Thus, we may begin to fashion a vision of a new kind of relationship with the natural world, holistically and symbolically manifested through *environmental* dance. We begin to blaze a new pathway of learning.

We make our way along this new pathway marked by clear signposts: the practice of “dance”<sup>48</sup> is altered in order to become *environmental dance* through the purposeful act of contextualization. This *transforms* a more traditional, Western dance art form into something new. This *context* is the complex array of phenomena that comprise the natural environment where environmental dance is both created and performed—without the establishment of this critical and defining milieu, there can be no environmental dance, there can only be the arbitrary and novel

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<sup>48</sup> “Dance” refers to my own experiences and practice with what may be categorized as Western tradition dance art which includes classical training in Ballet, and Modern dance and later, more specialized training in improvisation dance, jazz dance, folk dance, Native American dance and dance pedagogy. (See also Chapter Two/ Jewel Two).



placement of conventional dance art superficially against the natural landscape as stage. In stark contrast, authentic environmental dance experiences, where the context of nature is illuminated as an essential feature, make it possible to embody and thus, integrate the landscape, physically, cognitively, psychologically, spiritually, metaphorically and ecologically. The landscape becomes a part of us just as environmental dance presupposes we are a part of nature.

Because of the directly felt sensation of integration and wholeness I suspect that the dancer/learner may experience a shift in perception during this process of learning *how* to embody, that may, in turn, alter the way the dancer/learner sees and engages with the natural world in future similar encounters. This shift enables the dancer/learner to experience the environment and his/her embedded place within it, from an integrative, synthetic and holistic perspective that is also common to the creative process called art-making. It may also direct our thinking toward an alternative epistemology and in turn, encourage a very different way of knowing the (natural) world. Finally, as the result of this shift in perspective, we may also experience a profound sense of unity with nature (the general, universal realm) and a deepened sense of place (a more particularized, place-based realm) as a result.

Each new environmental dance experience offers the dancer/learner a new iteration or cycle of learning, going through each of the deepening, cumulative phases outlined above. One could envision these cycles as part of an inward-focused spiral, moving the dancer/learner always toward a deeper experience and sensation of integration with the natural world as appropriated by the specific dance site where the learning experience(s) take place; each new experience or learning cycle calls upon the previous environmental dance experience as a readable text to be interpreted and internalized and built upon. This hermeneutic-like process supports the previously established notion that environmental dance is predisposed to a phenomenological orientation and is

philosophically compatible with GSM, as well. Seemingly a phenomenological framework is ideally suited for an inquiry such as this one where two phenomena—the dancing human body and the living, dynamic landscape are unified within the site as the environmental dance unfolds.

These points of convergence—context, embodiment, integration, unity and place (through which environmental dance establishes common ground with phenomenological practices that emphasize intersubjective engagement over objective encounters) become the links that also bring together Goethean science and environmental dance into the synergistic relationship that inspires this chapter. Goethe’s science is commonly known as “as a phenomenology of nature” (Seamon and Zajonc, 1998); I suggest that GSM provides an optimal method allowing the environmental dancer/ learner’s first creative encounter with the natural world that is at once, both the source of inspiration for and the site of all cumulative environmental dance-related activities--the initial beginning place of the hermeneutic cycle that characterizes this holistic, iterative learning. Goethe’s approach may offer extraordinary and nuanced insights into this artistic, experiential way in which to engage the senses in and guide the creative process of making environmental site-specific dances (in both the performance and educational contexts) as a way to holistically integrate and internalize the landscape where dancing and learning together, unfold (Allen & Hoekstra, 1992). My own journaled accounts will be used to further illustrate these points—these become the living record of my “conversations” with Mt. Monadnock and they appear as narratives interspersed throughout the discussion on the Goethean scientific method (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; McNiff, 1998; Sullivan, 2005).

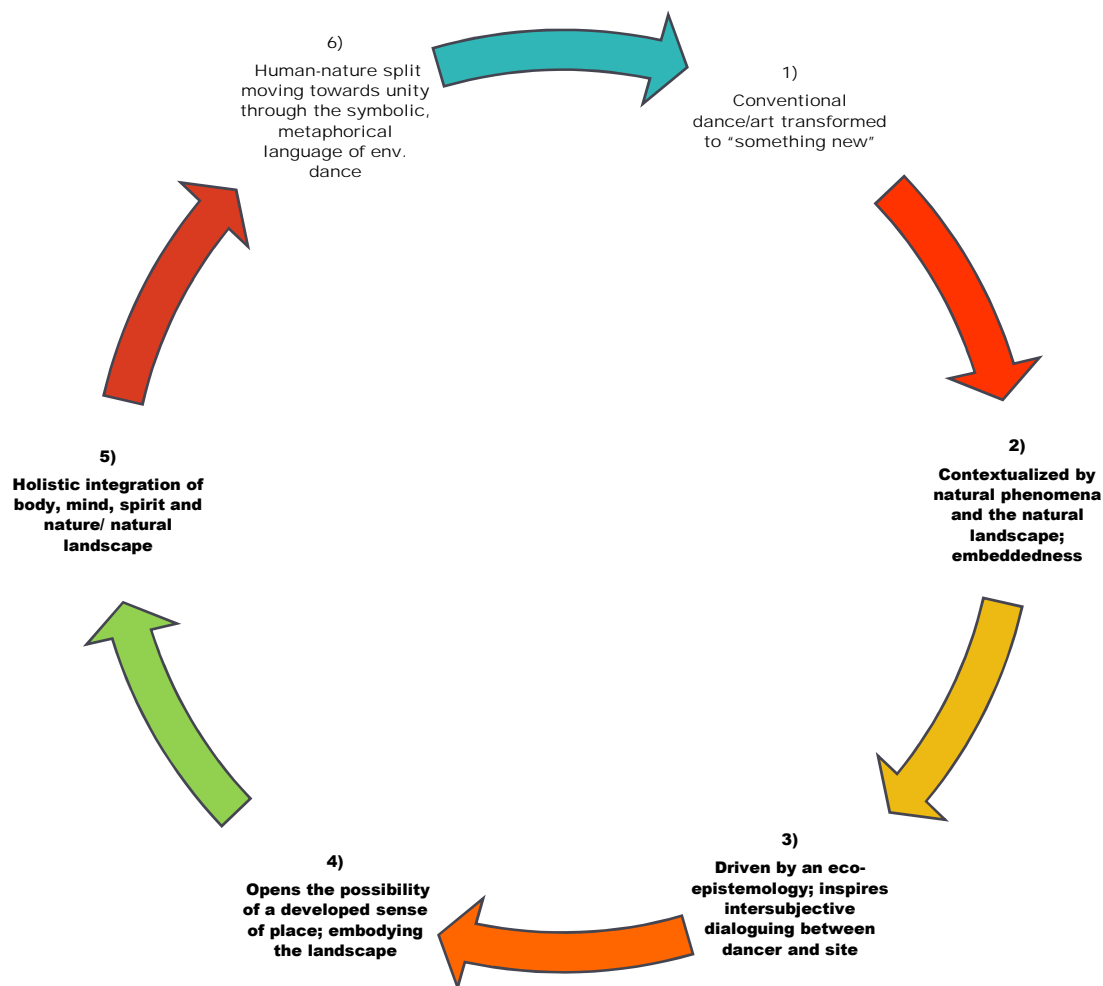


Figure 43: Environmental dance as a hermeneutic spiral of learning. Each iteration adds to cumulative learning and to the development of a deepened sense of place (DEFDW©).

Following each journal entry is a more in-depth explication of aspects of the environment dance experience including 1) the creative process of making environmental dances and their public performances and 2) potential pedagogical applications. These brief analyses seek to show how GSM may directly guide and/or enhance experience and learning.

This chapter proceeds from the initial task of highlighting specific areas of compatibility and common ground between the Goethean scientific method and environmental dance to show how meaning may be constructed through the course of experiences and activities connected with this emerging pedagogy. It also addresses the epistemological basis of such learning as it seeks to establish a strong theoretical and practical link between Goethean science and environmental dance; the basis of such a pursuit reflects back Goethe's deeply held belief "that through art human beings could reveal the secrets of nature that lie concealed from our sense perception and our everyday consciousness" (Steiner, 1988; Trostli, 1998, p.281). Originating out of the spirit of this shared belief, many of the developing approaches and techniques associated with this new way to engage environmental learners in first-person, intimate contact with the "animate earth"<sup>49</sup> are directly derived from the parallel experiences of creating and performing environmental dance for a viewing audience (site-specific environmental dance). An important goal of the environmental dance learning experience is allowing for and nurturing the space for each dancer/learner to develop an embodied affinity with the natural world through a unique route of constructing meaning and an intimate, symbolic and expressive bonding with place (Cameron, 2005; Casey, 1996; Sobel, 2004; Tuan, 1974 & 1977). In this instance, a sense of place is not an achieved product, as much as it is a deeply-rooted part of the process of environmental dance learning. Process-over-product is an inherent value of environmental dance as holistic, experiential learning and the construction of meaning is therefore viewed as an on-going process as well, as supported, in part by the hermeneutic model previously introduced.

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<sup>49</sup> I have borrowed Steven Harding's term, derived from the Gaian perspective, which I believe most accurately characterizes the planet upon which we live; I also use it here as a generalized rendering of the microscopic locale or *place* where environmental dance experiences unfold; see: Harding, S. 2006. *Animate Earth: Science, Intuition and Gaia*. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing Company.

Since I believe that environmental dance in all its forms is first and foremost a phenomenologically-based<sup>50</sup> art form and activity with an inherent capacity to make transparent the lived experience of what it is like to dance in, about, with and for the natural environment, such a framework sufficiently and appropriately serves this discussion about the further development of environmental dance as a way of (ecologically) being and knowing the places that make up the vast landscapes of the natural world of which we, as humans, are an integral part (Brown & Toadvine, 2003, p. xii). A vital part of this experiential learning process focuses on the engagement with the natural world based on an active and well-developed *ecological sensory perception*, a faculty that is possessed by each one of us; therefore high status is extended in this instance, to the descriptive analysis of phenomenological approaches that are dependent upon the senses of an active, moving and aware body embedded within the site—such is compatible, conducive and complimentary to all features and goals of a developing pedagogy of dance-in-the-natural environment. It is through such a similar holistic framing and synthetic description of the vital aspects human/ nature interaction (which are integral to the environmental dance learning experience) this transparency of experience to actually become the “visible”.

The concept of ecological (sensory) perception (ESP) is foundational to environmental dance and its specific epistemological underpinnings. In this special case delineated by the word

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<sup>50</sup> “Phenomenologically-based” suggests an underlying, foundational philosophy that seeks to 1) bring the environmental dancer within intimate proximity to the natural phenomenon that inspires danced interpretation and expression as opposed to an isolating at-arms-length approach of engaging with the natural world; 2) allow the environmental dancer to enter a reciprocal “dialogue” with all natural phenomena at the landscape scale; 3) dissolve the false separation between human and nature (as reflected in the age-old subject/object dichotomy) thus allowing the holistic re-integration of humans as a vital part of the natural world and 4) open pathways toward *feeling*, *imagination* and *expression* as primary ways to engage the natural world as opposed to a value-free fact-and-logic approach that reinforces a sense of separation from nature.

ecological, the perceiver is assumed to be an embedded, interactive part of the environment (or phenomenon) being perceived. Additionally, the word sensory has been added to suggest that we as perceivers can “see” with faculties of perception, other than the sense of sight, and this may especially be the case with environmental dance. Along with a myriad of senses that go well beyond the limits of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch, we can also “see”, “feel”, “hear”, “touch” the natural phenomena around us with intuitive and emotional extra-sensory faculties that are enlivened and engaged through direct interaction with the natural environment<sup>51</sup>. When translated into the expressive, interpretive and symbolic language of environmental dance, it is the ecological perception of the unfolding human-nature relationship that becomes the communicated message. I reference Gibson’s notion of perception-in-action to further emphasize that there is a *reciprocity* between the physical movement of the perceiver and the thing perceived (Gibson, 1966, p. 57): we move in the environment because we perceive and we perceive because we move within the environment (Gibson, 1966). If movement is, in this sense, a prerequisite to ecological perception then environmental dance becomes an ideal vehicle through which humans can learn to perceive ecologically. It seems likely that honing this as a “learned” skill will draw us closer to the natural world in a way that is both healthy and whole.

The basic ecological orientation evident here in Gibson’s theory of ecological perception and emerging again through the holistic, art-based perceptual experiences that characterize environmental dance (as an alternative to the idea of Cartesian separation and isolation), is what I call the *eco-epistemology* of environmental dance. It echoes the recognizable and common theme

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<sup>51</sup> See **APPENDIX F** for a comprehensive list of “the natural senses and sensitivities” from: *Reconnecting with Nature: Finding Wellness through Restoring Your Bond with the Earth*, by Michael J. Cohen (2007).

of moving, dancing humans-as-interconnected-parts-of-the-dynamic-and animate-environmental-whole. I purposely include Gibson's work to illustrate that Goethean science, like environmental dance, is ecological perception in action and is based on an eco-epistemological perspective.

### **Key definitions and contexts**

Essential to this continued discussion is the clarification of several key terms and the unique contexts of learning afforded through the environmental dance experience. The first of these terms is an ever-fluid and evolving definition of *environmental dance*. Most broadly described, environmental dance may be understood as the expression of the reciprocal and fluid relationship of human (dancer/ audience participant) to nature and nature to human, through the art of organized movement, motion and stillness that seeks to embody the landscape in an abstract, often non-literal contemporary style; the performance of environmental dance unfolds at once in time and space, in the theater of the natural landscape (see also, Chapter II/ Jewel Two). For the purpose of this essay, I hope to extend this description in order to reveal the more radicalized nature of this emerging discipline; that it is also a teachable way that humans may be able to directly experience *what it is like* to embody the landscape through the expressive, descriptive, interpretive, and imaginative faculties of the moving body. In both cases, the collective senses and sensibilities are called upon to close the gap of separation and alienation of human from nature that is so prevalent in the existing reality of the human/ nature relationship. Between the first definition and the second description the art of environmental dance is transformed into a *pedagogy of place*. It is my intent that a phenomenological framing of environmental dance will render a continuing refinement and revision of these definitions as the work continues to develop.

*Pedagogy of place*, much like place-based education, may be described as the opportunities for learning that arise when environmental dancers and learners engage holistically

in the site where environmental dance experiences unfold; an assumed natural by-product of such learning is a deeply personal sense of connection to place (Sobel, 2004). *Holistic* means that body, mind, feelings and the spiritual dimensions of the human who is actively experiencing environmental dance are wholly integrated with and within the landscape in which they are dancing (Gardner, 2006; Steiner, 1998). There is no artificial separation, no reduction of phenomena into atomistic parts, just a seamless integration and unification of all these facets of human and place. Each site, with all its historical, cultural and ecological idiosyncrasies offers a potential of endless possibilities and contexts for rich, imaginative and meaningful learning. Each environmental dancer is viewed as a self-organizing system within the greater system of the universe where each part is dependent upon the universal whole (Capra, 1996; Sahtouris, 2000). Such learning is very much in keeping with (if not dependent upon) Goethe's scientific method of inquiry as a complementary alternative to a contrasting positivist/ objectivist form of inquiry. By engaging the environmental learner at the landscape/ place scale, learning is transformed into a reciprocal dialog between environmental dance learner and the environment (Brook, 1998; Cameron, 2005; Coloquhoun, 1997; Root, 2005). Such learning experience is therefore, a perceptual ecology, where there is unity between human senses, cognition, spirit, feeling and an animate nature (Abrams, 1998; Brown & Toadvine, 2003; Merleau-Ponty, 1945). Environmental dance is well suited candidate for phenomenological description (Fraleigh, 1987; Sheets, 1966).

There are no generalized concepts guiding the learning as it happens here; instead place becomes mentor and creative collaborator and the human body, through its danced expression, gives it a voice. It is possible that learning is constructed through this unique and intimately close exchange. It is an active reciprocity, as identified by Gibson above that bonds environmental



dancer(s) with place and place with dancer(s) (Abrams, 1998; Bachelard, 1958; Gibson, 1966; Merleau-Ponty, 1945).

Environmental dancers do not merely dance *about* some abstracted, arbitrary concept or attribute of a rocky, mountain summit landscape, for example. Instead, environmental dancers *become* the rocky, mountain landscape (or some other phenomenal feature) that they directly experience and *describe* through bodily movement punctuated with stillness (Peroff, 2003, p.264). The becoming is only made possible through an intimate closeness that comes out of a Goethean kind of engagement based on the belief of an already-existing fundamental unity between humans and nature (Wahl, p. 65). The bodily physical expression of such is proof of the environmental dancer's ability to embody the phenomenon in question, as a holon<sup>52</sup> (microcosm) or hologram (Bortoft, 1996, p.4) of some greater whole that designates a sense of boundaries and echoes the *genius loci*<sup>53</sup> of the site.

Another broadly used term that requires the boundary of definition is constructivism (see also Chapter Two/ Jewel One). In this case, I use the term to refer to the theory of knowledge that provides a direct link to the teaching and learning theories that I have referenced as a basis for the developing pedagogy of environmental dance that I describe here. From an epistemology that stands in stark contrast to behaviorist/ positivist/ objectivist traditions (and is compatible

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<sup>52</sup> Chris Storey links the idea of *holon* as an integral feature of Goethe's *holistic* approach; emphasis is on the Gestalt of what he calls "the authentic whole" where there can be no independent, isolated parts of that whole that can stand alone. This differentiates the Goethean perspective from the Cartesian reductionism that is a prevalent way of viewing the world, where parts are considered to be independent, separate entities unto themselves. The main difference is that Goethean observation always takes into account the context and over-riding reference to the whole. See: Storey, C. 1998. "All is Leaf: Goethe's Intuitive Intellect and Environmental Philosophy". *Trumpeter* (Vol. 15, No. 1, 1998, pp. 1-5).

<sup>53</sup> A "sense of place" or the spirit of the place/ site where the environmental dance activities unfold.

with Goethe's own phenomenologically-based philosophy), Fosnot (2005, p.ix) describes a constructivist approach to teaching and learning "that gives learners the opportunity for concrete, contextually meaningful experience through which they can search for patterns; raise questions; and model, interpret, and defend their strategies and ideas...this model is seen as a mini-society, a community of learners engaged in activity, discourse, interpretation, justification and reflection."

It is from this rich mixture of learning-in-action that environmental dance learners socially (and ecologically) construct their own meaning of their experiences as a holistic collaboration with facilitator, fellow learners and the natural environment (Dewey, 1934 & 1958; Fosnot, 2005; Steiner, 1998; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). I suggest that the depth of meaning making is highly dependent upon the quality of the experiences had by environmental dance learners within the natural environment. I believe that Goethe's approach to active engagement and observation holds the key to the highest possible quality of this experience and is, in fact, a constructivist-based process.<sup>54</sup>

Reflecting back on the idea of ecological perception and the fact that perception requires an active, moving, sensing body (the body is the site of perception and the locus of interaction between human and environment) according to Gibson, I find myself questioning whether the terms *constructivism* and *social constructivism* are adequate to describe the kind of learning

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<sup>54</sup> I have discovered that Goethe's *phenomenology of nature* mirrors my own approach to experiencing the natural environment in an artistic context; here, the natural environment designates the *place* which is the site of performance and facilitated environmental dance learning. There is a similarity between both the philosophical basis (i.e. underlying ideas of holism, unity, reciprocity, dialog, intuition, imagination, wonder and ethics, to name a few) and the way of engaging a natural site. Such informs and guides the inspiration to create (which I interpret to be that which the landscape wishes to convey through environmental dance), the creative process (which becomes a direct dialog/ collaboration with the site) and finally, the physical expression of the dance (symbolic unity of human (dancer/ subject) and nature (site/object)). Separation and dichotomous tensions are resolved in both instances of Goethe's approach and environmental dance.

afforded through environmental dance. Since I have made the case that environmental dance is an expressive perceptual ecology-in-motion and that it, like Goethean science and Gibson's concept of ecological perception is steeped in an eco-epistemology, it seems prudent to suggest that perhaps another category of constructivism may come to light here, as a way to include an ecological perspective. Perhaps by conceiving of an *eco-social constructivism* we are sufficiently able to give equal weight to both human and earthly interests. This also may offer a more complete and whole picture of how environmental dance learning comes through an active, intersubjective dialog between moving humans and the ever-changing environment that acknowledges the ever-fluid circumstance and interplay between each one's historical evolution, cultural circumstances and ecology.

*“To understand the whole of us and the world, we have to participate with the whole of us.  
~Albert Einstein*

*Specifically, the bringing together of verbal and non-verbal forms of knowledge—rational and intuitive—is necessary.” ~Francisco Varela*

### **Goethe's Holism—Dancing the Universe Back Together Again**

I began this journey of discovery, with an initial interest in finding a way to frame environmental dance as a symbolic mode to engage with nature *holistically*, with Goethean science as my guiding model. I soon recognized that in order to transform the way humans engage the natural world, humans must be willing to renounce the reductionist, detached-objectivist ways and become adept at seeing things within the greater context of the whole. As I have discovered early on, this way of looking at nature is very Goethean (Bortoft, 1996, p. 21).

Environmental dance is based on the primary assumption that humans are an integral part of the whole of nature; the very notion of the *Gestalt*<sup>55</sup> is a more accurate way of describing this underlying tenet—the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Goethe’s perspective holds that the inherent *wholeness* of phenomena is expressed in its parts—the Goethean approach allows us to “see” from the point of view of the phenomenon, itself. His legacy leaves us with two outstanding examples of such holistic science.

First there is Goethe’s contribution to physics—his direct study of “the primal phenomenon of color”, formally documented in his treatise *The Theory of Color* (1810) which interestingly was “dedicated to aesthetics, or what Goethe calls the “Sensory-Moral Effects (*sinnlich-sittliche Wirkungen*) of Colors” (Seamon & Zajonc, 1998, p.61). Because of its direct-contact-with-the-phenomenon approach Goethe’s color study poses (to this day) a viable challenge to the Newtonian mechanistic model that abstracts and reduces the color phenomena to mathematical equation and an unseeable reality of particles and waves and colors as pre-existing conditions emanating and contained within light.

In contrast, Goethe’s science relied on first-hand contact with the phenomenon, which, in this case, was the naked eye as the “organ of perception” (p.61). The distinct colors of the spectrum emerge as a “dance” between light and dark, how the human eye operates, the quality and intensity of lightness and darkness factors and the way humans perceive such phenomena. According to Newton, colors objectively pre-exist; Goethe’s colors emerge through the active engagement of the perceiver—colors are constructed.

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<sup>55</sup> A school of psychology founded by Max Wertheimer (20<sup>th</sup> century) which rejected the atomistic perspectives of other psychological schools of thought. I also use the concept of the gestalt to characterize the human role within a larger nature.

His second notable contribution is his famous *Metamorphosis of Plants* which is based on what Goethe called the “formative principle of the archetypal plant”, the “ur-phenomenon” (Seamon & Zajonc, p. 62). Essentially, Goethe observed similar patterns of “transformation” between different types of plants that allowed him to envision a constant unfolding of morphological structure. This led to an understanding of a blueprint that was common to all plants—this suggests a unity among plants but it also acknowledges and illuminates diversity of form (p. 62).

By so fully adopting Goethe’s assumptions of wholeness, I recognize that I am also obliged to explicitly challenge a longstanding anthropocentric ontology (the human *being* in nature and the human relationship to the natural world). To assume that humans are a part of nature, or to take on the perspective of the phenomenon itself, immediately positions nature over human in a complete reversal of existing power roles and positions of privilege. Such thinking is thereby revealed as my own bias (and passion) and is the basis of the deep ecological philosophy that inspires my creative work, informs intellectual work and defines my own relationship to nature. (Naess & Rothenberg, 1989)<sup>56</sup>. My work boldly challenges a long-established and powerful worldview. Yet the goal should always be complementariness and balance in opposing views. This is the wisdom of Tao, of yin and yang.

Another challenge is that the human mind and consciousness is not readily attuned to perceiving *wholeness*. Instead, humans have grown accustomed to breaking things down for the sole purpose of analyzing the part without much concern for the whole. Because of this, the

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<sup>56</sup> Reference to the *Deep Ecology Movement* (circa 1970’s—present) founded by environmental philosophers Arne Naess and George Sessions. See Naess, A & D. Rothenberg. (1990). *Ecology, community and lifestyle*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Goethean “way of seeing”<sup>57</sup> is not an easy method to learn and at first encounter, the logic is confounding. One requires both patience and persistence to see with Goethean eyes:

Ecological thinking...requires a kind of vision across boundaries. The epidermis of the skin is ecologically like a pond surface or a forest soil, not a shell so much as delicate interpenetration. It reveals the self-ennobled and extended...as part of the landscape and the ecosystem, because the beauty and complexity of nature are continuous with ourselves...we must affirm that the world is a being, a part of our own body (Shepard in Seed, Macy, Fleming & Naess, 1988, p.9).<sup>58</sup>

*Seeing* with Goethean eyes opens us to “a kind of vision across boundaries” (Bortoft, 1996, p.12).

When we are *open* in this way we begin to perceive wholeness in nature. Goethean scholar Henri Bortoft explains how “authentic” wholeness emerges from its parts:

This process tells us something fundamental about the whole in a way which shows us the significance of the parts. If the whole becomes present within its parts, then a part is a place for the “presensing” of the whole. If a part is to be a place in which the whole can be present, it cannot be “any old thing”. Rather, a part is special and not accidental, since it must be such as to let the whole come into presence. This specialty of the part is particularly important because it shows us the way to the whole. It clearly indicates that the way to the whole is into and through the parts. The whole is nowhere to be encountered except in the midst of the parts. It is not to be encountered by stepping back to take an overview, for it is not over and above the parts, as if it were some superior, all-encompassing entity. The whole is to be encountered by stepping right into the parts. This is how we enter into the nesting of the whole, and thus move into the whole as we pass through the parts (1996, p. 12).

Goethe’s way of seeing also differentiates between an *intensive wholeness* and an *extensive wholeness* (Bortoft, p. 21). Such becomes the next consideration as I venture into the realm of

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<sup>57</sup> “Way of seeing” is similar to a way of perceiving that is “seeing” with all senses.

<sup>58</sup> Paul Shepard, “Ecology and Man” in his *Subversive Science* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1969) as quoted in Seed, Macy, Fleming & Naess. 1988. *Thinking Like a Mountain: Toward a Council of all Beings*. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers.

new forms of consciousness. These contrasting approaches of engaging with natural phenomena reveal an existing duality of epistemologies. Again, what is sought is a useful unity of such polarities.

*Intensive wholeness* is reflected in Goethe's approach that allows the phenomenon to reveal itself directly to the observer's senses and sensibilities.<sup>59</sup> The field of experience in this instance is a sensing of wholeness that is contained from within the phenomenon (as explained above as a parts-to-whole synthesis). Such an approach requires an epistemology that supports a holistic, synthetic orientation toward the phenomenon. Conventional, mechanical science is steeped in a perspective based on a contrasting epistemology of reductive analytic methods and sees the part as the primary analytic unit against a background of some generalized, unobservable whole "other" that is not seeable" through abstracted, analytical eyes. This approach is referred to as *extensive wholeness*, which unlike Goethe's approach can only derive an abstracted sense of wholeness from outside of the phenomenon or as Bortoft puts it, "the counterfeit approach to wholeness—i.e., going away from the part to get an overview..."(p.25).

I believe that once we become aware of the possibility of alternative forms of consciousness that we might well employ in our encounters with the natural world, we can become "literate" in the two modes (reductionist/analytical mode and holistic/synthetic mode) and may then call on these options by choice to suit our immediate needs. What is more, we may begin to see that they are complementary to one another. In terms of education reform, competency in Goethe's consciousness of wholeness may provide a missing link:

Typically, modern education is grounded in the intellectual faculty, whose analytical capacity alone is developed, mostly through verbal reasoning...science

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<sup>59</sup> *Intensive wholeness* as a way to experience natural phenomena is made possible by the deliberate approach outlined as Goethe's scientific method. This systematized approach to intensive wholeness is described in detail in Part II of this essay.

students are often not interested in observing phenomena of nature; if asked to do so, they become easily bored. Their observations often bear little resemblance to the phenomenon itself. These students are much happier with textbook descriptions and explanations, a fact readily understandable once one recognizes that most educational experience unfolds in terms of one mode of consciousness—the verbal, rational mode (Bortoft, p. 24).

Environmental dance promotes the possibility of a pedagogy (see appendix) that may inspire the shift in consciousness needed in order to bring balance to our existing predominant Western way of knowing and experiencing the natural world. “When consciousness is thus restructured into an organ of holistic perception the mind functions intuitively instead of intellectually” (p. 67). What Goethe practiced is the kind of intentional consciousness shift that allows the ecological perception of wholeness-in-the-parts to take over and it is my goal to make such practice a defining feature in both my art (performances) and teaching (pedagogy) practices.

I propose that environmental dance pedagogy may hold much potential as the site for the teaching and learning of the holistic consciousness approach described above. Environmental dance may also act as an arts-based catalyst that may expand our field of consciousness directly through embodied experiential learning in the natural environment. In doing so, the micro experience (part) of expressing the essence of local phenomena through the phenomenon of dancing human body<sup>60</sup> allows direct and relational access to the extended macro dimension (whole). This brings much needed context to the extended idea of a global environment and may help to counter the overabundance of arbitrary and confounding generalities and abstractions when it comes to addressing such expansive topics as global environmental change. The idea is to make learning as experiential and as real as possible.

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<sup>60</sup> A feature of the “phenomenon of the dancing human body” is that it replicates Goethe’s way of seeing; the expressive body becomes the animated version of the wholeness perceived in the natural landscape where the dance unfolds. The body is the “organ of perception” (connecting to the “inner geography”) while at the same time is the “instrument of expression” (connecting once again to the “outer geography”).



These ideas are all very relevant to environmental dance as site-specific performance which readily inspires an environmental dance pedagogy that is, at its core, place-based learning (Sobel, 2004). With a starting point of environmental dance experiential learning grounded in a micro/part/ place-based understanding of the immediate “world”, it then becomes possible to move into an expanded orientation that includes the macro/ whole/universe. From this perspective global environmentally-focused education is perhaps most effective when it begins to explore issues at the *place* scale; Goethe’s holism and its obvious applicability to education becomes a worthy and supporting rationale.

### **The Timeliness of Goethe’s “Way of Science”**

When one peruses the literature examining the intriguing system of methods developed and used by the 18<sup>th</sup> century artist/scientist and visionary Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), one will undoubtedly encounter the phrase “Goethe’s way of science” (Bortoft, 1996; Holdrege, 2005; Seamon, 2005; Seamon & Zajonc, 1998; Steiner, 1988; Storey, 1998; Wahl, 2005). Implicit in this signature phrase is the notion that the Goethean approach is not mainstream science, that it is an alternative form of inquiry. Some may view Goethe’s legacy as a mere relic, a quirky artifact long-dismissed as a somewhat irrelevant part of the history and evolution of science. Yet, not only does this body of work deserve a second consideration as a complement to existing scientific approaches, its resurrection may be what is needed at precisely this point in time (Wahl, 2005, p.58).

It is highly probable that Goethe’s unique perspective and insight that emanated from and continued to inform and refine his work, is largely due to his artistic mind. Many, like myself, admire him as a humanist, as a scientist and as an artist and for being very much ahead of his time; his legacy is a body of work that demonstrated decades ago the very unity of art and science. Such

unity brings about a much needed diversity of ideas, the promise of a fuller understanding of our humanity and being-in-the-world as well as the complementary bridging of the great and ever-problematic epistemological divide—environmental dance as pedagogy shares the desire to instill the ideal of such unity through arts-based teaching methods. Wahl refers to Goethe’s approach as “an artist’s way of science” he elaborates:

The artist’s gaze continuously shifts between the details of the phenomenon and their impression of the whole. Artists tend to intuitively understand the intimate relationship between the part and the whole; to feel the interconnection that unites all detailed diversity into a dynamically transforming whole. Through exploring their participatory relationship with the world, artists are able to express this dynamic and interconnected process in their artistic gestures, portraying the creative essence of Nature momentarily in their own creative expression (p.61).

Goethe’s way of science has led me to discover a deepened sense of my creative self as an environmental artist, as a collaborator within the unity of an infinitely creative universe.<sup>61</sup>

Underlying Goethe’s way of science is an epistemology I identify as an eco-epistemology. I have pointed out that this challenges a traditional mechanistic science philosophy where its corresponding methods are rooted in the activities of hypothesis testing, theory generating and an at-arms-length objectivism that purposely seeks to separate human (subject) from nature (object). Since environmental dance is based in Goethe’s alternative worldview which, in turn, is based on concepts of holism and ecological consciousness it is easy to link both to the deep ecological principles that follow the model of an eco-centered human/ earth relationship (Clayton & Opatow, 2003, Taylor, 1988 Thomashow,1996;). If we wish to reverse the damage caused by adhering to and adopting only a mechanistic and anthropocentric worldview, either, intentionally or by default and ignorance, then Goethe’s way of science may have much to offer the world as a mainstream

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<sup>61</sup> See **APPENDIX G:** Goethean Scientific Method and the Environmental Dance Creative Process.

feature of education reform that works toward epistemic balance. This may be especially true for environmental education as it is today (Bowers, 1993 & 2001; Orr, 1992; Van Matre, 1990).

But in the true spirit of balance (as exemplified by the ecological phenomenon known as *homeostasis*) we can sometimes opt for synthesis over analysis, holism over reductionism, and intersubjectivity as the useful unity of subject and object. In doing so, we recalibrate our awareness to keep in check the unfortunate consequence of narrow thinking and all-to-often incomplete action. Like Goethe's way of science, environmental dance is a subversive venture that challenges the status quo that traditional practices of science have established and promulgated over decades. We have within our powers the ability to avoid the dangerous double bind effect.<sup>62</sup> We have the ability to bring forth a more balanced perspective and view of the world by the purposeful inclusion of new ways of knowing that come to us through the arts and through Goethean science.

*"Intelligence organizes the world by organizing itself." ~Piaget*

### **The Goethean Scientific Method/ Phenomenology of Nature**

I attribute my timely discovery of Goethe's way of science and the systematized practical application of this alternative way of inquiry known as the "Goethean scientific method" (GSM) to my own intensive foray into the world of phenomenology (as both a philosophy and research method of interest)—seemingly, a necessary rite of passage for a phenomenology neophyte

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<sup>62</sup> The "double bind" is a reference to science made by Einstein, here paraphrased as "using the same mindset to solve a problem that created it" (science in the context of being both cause and [alleged] cure of existing environmental crises). From Bowers, C.A. (2001). "How Language Limits Our Understanding of Environmental Education" in *Environmental Education Research* (Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 142). See also: Storey, C. (1998). "All is Leaf: Goethe's Intuitive Intellect and Environmental Philosophy".

attracted to the idea of phenomenological research of environmental dance (Willis, 2004). While never really touted as a “phenomenologist” (until only recently by Goethean scholars) a case can be made, nevertheless, that Goethe was among the first to formalize the practice of phenomenological research and observation. The GSM is an example par excellence of the *phenomenology of nature* in action (Seamon, 2005).

Goethe’s systemized method consists of five (5) ordered steps in a process designed to bring the observer in close, intimate proximity with the natural phenomena of the lifeworld (Brook, 1998; Colquhoun; 1997; Storey, 1998; Wahl, 2005). These steps include: 1) The Preparatory Stage; 2) Stage One: “Exact Sense Perception”; 3) Stage Two: “Exact Sensorial Fantasy”; 4) Stage Three: “Seeing in Beholding”; and 5) Stage Four: “Being One with the Object”. The process, as it is practiced through cumulative stages of “getting to know” (dialoguing with) the phenomenon in question, allows one to “experience the gradual shift from the subject-object-separation epistemology to a conscious-process-participation epistemology [that is suggested] to be the fundamental difference between mechanistic science and Goethean science” (Wahl, p. 68). This is of great consequence and relevance to environmental dance as performance and pedagogy since one of its main goals is to symbolically reinstate the human body as an integral, embedded extension of the natural landscape through expressive movement that unfolds at once in time and space *within* the natural site.

By symbolically banishing the persistent façade of human/ nature separation a necessary ecological awareness is achieved that may lead to the reconsideration and discarding of other related dualities that include but are not limited to body/ mind, culture/nature, local/ global, holism/reductionism, analysis/ synthesis, space/ place, particular/ general, and indigenous worldview (earth-centered)/ Western worldview (techno-centered). Symbolically, through

environmental dance our awareness is heightened and drawn to the realities of how we have come to perceive, devalue and engage with the world in which we live. These habits of behavior are, in turn, reflected back to us through the ill state of the planet. Goethe’s scientific method teaches us to look closely—to *see* things anew with the advantage of multi-perspectives.

### **The Preparatory Stage**

The GSM process begins with what is known as “the Preparatory Stage”.<sup>63</sup> In this stage, one prepares to encounter the phenomenon for the first time by first, setting aside personal subjectivity in the form of any preconceptions, judgments, beliefs or expectations that might taint the authenticity of the initial “meeting”. Wahl describes this introductory step as “acknowledging our own personal involvement in how we usually meet the world, [and] that we all habitually employ a set of basic assumptions and concepts” (p. 62). This step is akin to Husserl’s notion of *bracketing* (Welton, 1999, pp.63-65), and is designed to allow the thing (phenomenon) to speak for itself. In the GSM, bracketing helps to ensure that the observer is noting the first impressions of the observed, experienced phenomenon. I will refer to this preliminary stage as “bracketing” from this point on.

### ***Journal Entry (Field Journal—“Beginning in a NYC Dance Studio”) [Preparatory Stage]***

*My environmental dance company spends many weeks in a NYC studio, painstakingly learning the dances that will ultimately be performed at the end of each summer, in anticipation of that first day when rehearsals are moved “on site”. In this particular case, the site is the rocky, often windy summit of Mt. Monadnock. That first day on site is a critical one for all involved in the*

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<sup>63</sup> There are various interpretations of Goethe’s stages of the GSM, that even with slight variations seem to be in general consensus with each other. It seems that the GSM has been largely preserved through time. My own knowledge of the GSM is derived primarily through the work of Goethean scholar Margaret Colquhoun and the authors cited above (see: Colquhoun, M. “An Exploration in to the use of Goethean Science as a Methodology for Land Assessment: The Pishwanton Project.” *Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environments*, Vol. 63 (1997), pp.145-157.). I have also studied “Goethean Science” at the Nature Institute in Gent, NY. See: [www.natureinstitute.org](http://www.natureinstitute.org).

*production—dancers must first get to “know” the summit. Part of this engagement ritual is my brief discussion with each dancer explaining the critical importance of “bracketing” everything they think they know about dance, in general, and specifically what they think they may know about dancing on mountain summits. I believe that this allows them to authentically engage with the landscape, to open that initial dialog with the rocks, the sun, the passing clouds, the wind, the soaring hawks and ravens. They are taking in what the mountain is “saying” to them through their senses—the textures of the rocks “read” like texts as their bodies experience endless variations of sensual and physical encounters with the rocky, earthy terrain; the wind becomes both melody and rhythm; they learn to trust the mountain—we have never had a serious injury and I attribute this remarkable record to this deeply engrained trust of place.*

*Dancing bodies are absorbed into the totality of the space and time in which we find ourselves on the summit and we experience an extraordinary sense of freedom there. If there was no such initial bracketing, the dancers would naturally revert to their “trained dancer comfort zones”—what they know best—which is to simply treat the site as customary stage surface, a utilitarian feature of the production rather than as a co-collaborator. Movement would be a rote replication of what is produced in the rehearsal studio, now forced upon the rocks in a space where dance must happen in spite of the “unnatural circumstances” thrust upon them to overcome. Instead, they are more than the interesting novelty of a dancer-dancing-in-an-unlikely-place; there is a visible transformation where the embodiment (think *Spell of the Sensuous*)<sup>64</sup> of landscape by dancer becomes an observable phenomenon—my eyes are especially drawn to the magic created when the bared human foot marries with granite in a grand gesture of the reciprocal performance of the dance...<sup>65</sup>*

### **Analysis: Applications to Environmental Dance as Performance and Pedagogy**

This narrative illustrates the parallel circumstance that exists between the process of acclimating dancers to the environmental dance site and Goethe’s initial stage of bracketing. In both instances, *bracketing* allows for the reality of phenomena to reveal themselves in an organic and authentic way. By bracketing we open ourselves to the possibilities that lie in experiences yet to come to fruition; by carrying the heavy burden of preconceptions, judgments and other

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<sup>64</sup> Abram, *The spell of the sensuous*. New York: Random House, Inc. 1996.

<sup>65</sup> I am incorporating excerpts of my dialogues-with-place, taken from my artist journal as an application of narrative and arts-based methods—a way to analyze the GSM in the specific context of my experiences in environmental dance. Note the contrast of this “journal” writing style to the “academic” style of the paper—I also include journal writing as an integral feature of the environmental dance experience and use John Lee’s *Writing from the Body* to inform this practice.

intellectual preoccupations with us into the experience, we will lose vital parts of that experience by limiting the range of possibilities. While the GSM is for the most part an observation technique—a way to engage the natural world—the above narrative also shows that it is possible to “see” with the whole body—through our senses and sensibilities (this reiterates an earlier point made in the brief discussion of ecological perception). Thus, when we use the term “bracketing” in reference to the environmental dance experience we are necessarily extending the application of this term to include all forms of bodily, sensations and instances of “seeing”.

Environmental dance as pedagogy is emerging directly out of the knowledge garnered from the performance experiences of staged site-specific environmental dance. From these experiences comes a deep sense of:

- 1) What it is like to dance *environmentally*—both as a primary, personal experience and as an observed, “sensed” phenomenon of actively seeing other dancers dance on site;
- 2) How humans can holistically “dance” in natural places and gain valuable “knowledge” from such experiences—bracketing seems to open dancers to the engagement of the whole self—body, mind, spirit, psyche with nature;
- 3) How this might shape and even alter the personal experience of the being-in-nature through the development of a profoundly nuanced ecological (perceptual) awareness;
- 4) How environmental dance symbolically captures and expresses the essence of the natural landscape through human embodiment of it (we become acutely aware that our bodies and beings are extensions of the greater whole of the universe); and
- 5) How the “danced” human interaction with site becomes a form of communication—a language that conveys a sense of new knowing and being through the metaphorical and symbolic expression of the dance itself (dance becomes a mediator and unifier of dancer and nature).

These are each the transformational attributes that are the foundation of environmental dance and that are transferrable from its performance origins to the developing environmental dance pedagogy; from this rich source of inspiration and ideas originating directly through first hand experiences of environmental dance as performance we draw upon these nuanced ways to experience a wholeness with nature.

From this we may begin to design the content of the learning that ultimately will take form as the systematized exercises and experiences the developing environmental dance pedagogy (see *Place-based Exercises*, for examples of such design)<sup>66</sup>. The idea of bracketing is especially important here, for it would be very easy to retrofit traditional dance class formats and exercises for outdoor experiences, to draw on familiar teaching practices. Instead the environmental dance educator must infuse the design of learning activities with the spirit of seeing the world (and thus, dancing it) anew.

How might the Goethean version of bracketing become a useful activity in environmental dance pedagogy? The single most teachable moment is that initial first environmental dance encounter with the natural site. Beginner dancers (young and old alike) are often fearful of being out in open, natural spaces, easily distracted and/ or overly self-conscious. Bracketing may serve as a highly effective way to introduce the environmental dance learner safely and gently to the natural environment in which they will be seeing, co-creating and dancing. Since I have been doing (intuitively) a version of this kind of holistic introduction with company members as part of the performance process, this would be the next likely application. Even professional dancers can be fearful, self-conscious and distracted as they suddenly find themselves on an expansive, windy

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<sup>66</sup> See *Sense of Place Exercises "Bridging Inner and Outer Geographies"* **APPENDIX E**.



summit far away from the known environment of the studio and this kind of directed, willful letting go of presuppositions provides a starting point of confidence, community and focus.

Environmental dancer(s) must learn to see and take in the landscape with their bodies (input); the expression of the embodied landscape (output) completes a system loop that works to integrate the inner and outer geographies of the dancers (bodies as conduits) of feedback (voice of the landscape) received optimally through the bracketed openness of the environmental dancer(s). In this sense, bracketing is necessary in order that this system may function optimally, and can actually be seen as a function of self-organization which in this case allows the dancing body to perceive and move harmoniously with the ever-changing circumstances that unfold in the natural environment.

Take for example, the environmental dancer who is striving to find a balance point between the kinesthetic dynamics of his/her own moving body, where subtle or even dramatic movements within the skeletal system of muscle, tendon and bone, are set against the fluctuating forces of a strong wind. Balance is sought through the delicate, reciprocal dialog of the moving body with the dynamic wind and can only be achieved when a harmonious consensus between body and wind occurs. If the environmental dancer does not *bracket* past knowledge about a dance/balance issues and begin to open his/herself toward a more collaborative effort with the natural site and influencing phenomenon such as the wind, then the dancer (now a “closed and isolated” system) is merely forcing her dance arbitrarily (and without context) upon the site. As artistic director, it is often my job to point out these perilous circumstances where a dancer may try to unwittingly force her will upon the site—through encouraging this shift in perception and ensuing action, I believe we have been able to avoid serious injury to dancers during all of our nearly twenty-five years of dancing on the summit of Mt. Monadnock.

If we were to look at the lesson of *balance* in a more traditional dance class, we would see this as more of a bio-mechanical problem which could be solved by the willed internal force of the dancer through the sheer strength, muscular control and athleticism that comes through repetitive and isolated training. This brand of balance can be seen as a static state of being, controlled in large part by the dancer. In this instance, there is an underlying sense of autonomy—the dancer alone, is in control of his/her body and wills it to perform. Conventional dance art training is steeped in such thinking.

Interestingly, this brings us back to the question of epistemological orientation. It is easy to trace the lineage of epistemological thought of more traditional, classical forms of dance art (such as ballet and modern dance) in this way: if the body is perceived as an autonomous unit, separate—separate from mind, separate from nature, then we can begin to see that the underlying philosophies of classical forms of dance reflect and echo the long-established Cartesian attributes of dichotomous tensions, reductionism, separation, isolation (as perhaps the circumstance that allows autonomy) reductionism, and objectivism (body as object). Contrastingly, environmental dance purposely seeks to resolve Cartesian splits (body/ mind, human/ nature, object/ subject), illuminates holism, unity, diversity and intersubjectivity in the service of its own eco-epistemology. Along with the basic notion that humans are integral extensions of the natural world, environmental dancers discover that their dancing bodies symbolically express the idea that humans are also living (micro) systems nested within the grander (macro) system of the universe. Metaphorical renditions of concepts such as balance, translate nicely across various scales in the natural world and help us to be able to *see* and *experience* self-organization and autopoiesis<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> A term coined by Francisco Varela, meaning self-organizing. In: Maturana, H.M. & Varela, F. 1980. *Autopoiesis and Cognition*. Holland, Boston, London: D. Reidel Publishing Co.

through our bodies and through the phenomena of the natural world and universe beyond. In this sense, the use of Goethean “bracketing” sets up a first-engagement with the natural landscape for environmental dancer/learners in a way that transcends the limits of our own temporal-spatial understandings by setting aside what we already know in order to let in the extraordinary and to experience the world from an integrated place of participation.

**Stage One: *Exact Sense Perception* (Perception)**

Goethe described the First Stage as *Exact Sense Perception* (Brook, 1998, p.53). In this early part of the GSM process, Goethe wants us to take a step back from the experience of the initial encounter with and impression(s) of the phenomenon. The goal is to gather data and facts with the ordinary senses (sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste); such detailed observation is as close as the GSM brings us to the objectivity of conventional science. This stage encapsulates the kind of objective observation that Goethe dubbed “zarte empirie”, a *delicate empiricism* which approaches the idea of objectivity as a kind of *universal subjectivity* (Brook, 1998; Wahl, 2005, p.62). This may perhaps be a precursor toward what I envision intersubjectivity to be.

***Journal Entry (Field Journal—“A Quest for Inspiration”) [Stage One]***

*Looking closely and intently is the job of the artist. In the initiation of the process of creating an environmental dance piece, I habitually make an intentional pilgrimage to the site that has for one reason or another caught my eye, has gifted me with a sense of inspiration and provides both context and stage for the new dance-to-be. There, I will sit, sometimes for hours, in silent consultation with the muse; I observe with my eyes, skin, feet, ears—all my God-given senses are alert and on duty. The goal is to patiently see the idea for my dance reveal itself through the landscape, as the landscape.*

*There is always a feeling of being lost to this mission—time stands still with static shapes that make up place and my impressions of space expand and contract with the sometimes subtle and sometimes dramatic shifts in my observing attention. I am drawn to the solidity of filled space and to the visible stark and static emptiness of the voids that surround the shaped and the formed. I leave myself somewhere else; I am reminded now of Emerson’s “invisible eyeball”—I only want to “see” the dance-in-the-thing. So I sit; I wait (yes, sometimes for hours) and I try to see with the limitless sight of the universe, calling forth the elements to organize as a visible alchemy before*

*me. This is not some imagined, ephemeral vision, this is form and formation—the shape of a rock, the flight pattern of a hawk, the spiraling funnel of a dust devil responding to summit wind patterns—the very “thing itself”.*

*I always recognize such form—once it is “discovered” it will not dissolve away like a mirage. It becomes an image permanently imprinted on my brain—of some delicate or pronounced feature of place—here, the dance will take place when finished. I am concerned with the size of the space. How wide is the expanse of boulders? How deep is that crevice? How does the human body fit into the opening of that jumble of rocks? How many “dancer steps” is it from any given point A to point B? How do tiny human forms blend with the sculptural silhouettes of the behemoth granite chunks? What are the contrasting textures and sounds of the immediate area? I close my eyes and I can see these things play back in my head like flashcards. The more I recall these still forms and frozen patterns the better I get to know this place...But before the dance can ever begin to become, there must be this connection to a concrete form which will give it shape with which to fulfill its promise to the space.*

### **Analysis: Applications to Environmental Dance as Performance and Pedagogy**

The above journaled account of how I begin my creative process of making environmental dances illustrates the way that Goethe calls upon the senses to draw forth knowledge, information and data about the phenomenon. For him, “exact sense perception” provided the most pure way for the phenomenon “to speak its own truth”, to reveal itself truthfully to the observer. It also seems to be a logical starting place, a point of departure for further inquiry of added dimension. In my own experience, this stage readily addresses the spatial, static qualities of form—a photographic map of the focus of attention. I would also add, from an artistic point of view, this static representation of shape and form is the source from which I initially design ideas for the dance piece-to-be. Intuitively, I suggest that such an organic order would best support the engagement of spatial considerations prior to temporal issues. Now, as I think about it, shape most always precedes a sense of motion and movement in the choreographic process.

What pedagogical potential does this hold for the student of environmental dance? First, this process can be orchestrated as an exercise in how-to-see. It is very much in keeping with the Goethean approach that one should train the self and the eye to see with both patience and rigor

(Brook, 1998). In the initial engagement with the site where environmental dance learning activities will take place, it is important that each learner use the direct senses as the way to engage. In doing so, there is an activation of an ecological awareness that will serve to underwrite the experience in its entirety. Perception, while grained toward a specific static feature of the site (as phenomenon) and/or collections of phenomena that comprise the site, also acknowledges a sense of an inclusive whole of nature (which may correlate to the universal subjective sense mentioned above).

Environmental dancers must become expert seers not just with eyes but with the whole body working in unison to constantly provide useable “data” about the landscape with which they are actively dialoguing. It is a crucial skill to be able to discern form and shape quickly and accurately—this allows dancers and learners to respond to the landscape particulars with split-second agility. In a way the sensitivity to form and shape also allows for a metaphorical expression of the landscape in the ways that the human form juxtaposes with and within the landscape where the dance unfolds. This becomes a visible feature from the point of view of the observing audience. Without keen observation skills applied in this very manner, environmental dancers would not be capable of conveying a sense of human integration with nature. It would seem that being able to teach humans how to really see from an embedded perspective from *within* the natural world could be a valuable endeavor—in this sense, ecological perception becomes a teachable skill.

*Exact Sense Perception* is also applicable to the training of the environmental dance learner to be able to detect pattern with the whole field of phenomena. Part of the standard environmental dance learning protocol is to acquaint learners with “nature’s repeating patterns”, to trace their origins and replication throughout nature by actively seeking to observe these as

they exist within the immediate landscape.<sup>68</sup> Dancer/learners are facilitated through exercises in which they are able to discover such patterning as it originates, first in nature (Goethe refers to the original template of such patterning as “úr phenomén”).

Offered here as one example, a spiraling shell reveals the same pattern template that is witnessed in the unfurling of a springtime fern. Then, through movement explorations, the dancer/learner experiences the same patterning first hand, in the movements of her own spine. Dancer/learners also discern between two types of patterning phenomena: *ephemeral* (those phenomena like clouds and water whose forms are perceived as constantly shifting and evolving)—ephemeral phenomena are aligned with Goethe’s idea of historical evolution and reflect the temporal realm; and *static* (those phenomena, like rock formations, that we perceive to be constant, non-changing form)—these static phenomena refer us back to Goethe’s idea of *exact sense perception* and provide us with an empirical sense of static and timeless shape and form in relationship to the spatial realm.

From such intense, multimodal engagement with patterning occurring in natural phenomena, the environmental dancer journals, draws and creates bodily movement and shapes that mimic the patterns—this becomes a “speakable” language of nature that is expressed through

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<sup>68</sup> This is a reference to my work in teaching “nature’s (observable) repeating patterns” (i.e. point, step, column, branch, radial, loop, circle/ sphere, wave, spiral, laminar flow/chaos, grid, triangle, are what I refer to as the “language of nature” (See Kryder, RP. 2000. *Sophia’s body: Seeing primal patterns in nature*. Crestone, Colorado: Golden Point Productions). I have incorporated these twelve basic patterns, identified in Dr. Kryder’s work, in the foundational learning experiences that I have designed and facilitate environmental dance students through, as a way to “teach” students how to embody the landscape by learning to “speak” (with their physical bodies) the “language of nature”. Students must first “experience” these archetypal patterns by observing them in nature. The creative process of making site-specific dances is dependent on a fluency of this language by the environmental dancer. This fluency also encourages the reciprocal exchange between environmental dancer and site, a dialog that re-animates the site while at the same time illuminating a deep sense of place.

the dancing body. Through this expression, within the intriguing context of Goethe's idea of the universal subjective, it seems plausible that this, too, is where learners can begin to feel themselves as a part of a greater whole, a way to overcome pervasive feelings of isolation from nature.

**Stage Two: *Exact Sensorial Fantasy (Imagination)***

Goethe's Second Stage is called *Exact Sensorial Fantasy* (Wahl, p.63); Henri Bortoft alters this a bit and refers to an "exact sensorial imagination" (p. 62). Here, the realm of the individual imagination becomes the gateway through which to enter the world of an "alternative epistemology" which enables us with a new, holistic way of "perceiving form, process and participation...of phenomena in their dynamic temporal dimension" (p. 63.). Here, the phenomenon comes to life (Brook, p. 55) giving the engager the sense of movement and fluid dynamicism through which it exists within an ever-shifting, evolving time-space continuum. This stage addresses the temporal response of the phenomenon—looking at the phenomenon through the lens of time allows a sense of its own history and evolution to emerge. Imagination in this instance activates and animates the static structure previously explored.

***Journal Entry (Memoried Account—"A Mountain Quest") [Stage Two]***

*I recall my own vision quest at the summit of Mt. Monadnock on September 11, 2002—exactly one year after 9/11. I remember exactly my two reasons for sequestering myself at the blustery summit for a 28-hour period early that fall. First I wanted to reflect on what had transpired—to contemplate and maybe just formally grieve for a world that was obviously falling to pieces. But the second reason was for the sole purpose of experiencing the mountain as it moved through time for a dance piece I was working on. Typically, my time on the summit is so task-oriented that I find it hard to get a sense of time passing there at all. More often than not, I recall the usual sensation of time-standing-still, a surreal kind of timelessness that seems to overtake me once I get above the tree line. I was seeking to know the mountain by its own movement through temporal flow, ticked out second by second—by millennia. I was there to quiet myself in solitude on the peak in order to feel the passage of time as it worked its magic across me and the ever-changing landscape...*

*I remember that it was a full moon on that night in September. As I arrived just before sunset my eyes were drawn to the brilliantly scarlet sphere sinking towards the horizon. Turning to the east,*

*a huge yellow orb rose in response to the counterbalance of the setting sun...I remembering feeling time move within this mesmerizing dance between two celestial gods. The mountain and I both were in concert with them.*

*As I sat in my solitary spot that night, what I normally perceived to exist in statuesque stillness (I now see this as an illusion), came to life before my eyes. I know that in my own stillness and patience, I was opened to seeing movement and the subtleties of time intertwined as one. Such movement, as I have come to see, is a proxy for the passing of time. Without movement, time stands still and life ceases to be...*

### **Analysis: Applications to Environmental Dance as Performance and Pedagogy**

I think that it is only good pedagogical practice to bring something of one's own life experience into the teaching of others. Goethe's *Exact Sensorial Fantasy* inspires me to replicate "teachable moments" where environmental dancer/learners are given the opportunity to experience a sense of wonder and awe as I did that night on the mountain summit. By engaging the imagination in a way that animates the natural world around us, environmental dance learners perceive history as a living phenomenon and a dynamic and holistic movement of time in which we are participants. Such experiences can only reinforce our human sense of belonging to (or as extensions or proxy agents of) the natural world. By its own sense of temporality, environmental dance experiences constantly remind us metaphorically of the fragility and fleeting quality of life that unifies all, as in the fleeting moments where the dance exists and unfolds in time and space.

One of the first things a new member of the dance company must learn is that unlike a black box stage or indoor proscenium theater, the rocks upon which we dance are an animate and dynamic feature of the landscape. They must learn to attune to a new level of consciousness that allows this reality to permeate them through the soles of their feet. I begin the process of dancer orientation (I also do this myself as a way to re-acclimate to mountain landscape after a period of absence during the severest winter months) with an exercise called *The Barefoot Tour* (Exercise



#3)<sup>69</sup>. During this exercise dancers are led on a walking tour of the expansive area near that summit where the annual performance takes place.

As we “travel” together across the diverse features of the site we gradually begin to experience the *life and living* qualities of this ever-changing, evolving space. We begin to become sensitive to the forces at play here: the wind, the dancing movement of cotton grass, sand and dust blowing across the rocks, birds in flight above us, clouds and water moving to rhythms of the erratic alpine air currents. We begin to sense the rhythms of waning day and approaching night—shadows change, light intensity shifts and the sun moves across the sky. We begin to feel how such subtle movements give life to the mountain and move us as well. The perception of this energy source becomes an essential tool of the environmental dance trade. This *energy* is what inspires and fuels our dances here. It is what makes us know we (much like the cotton grass and the clouds that morph across the sky) are part of the mountain and it, a part of us.

Another exercise is designed to open the consciousness toward the idea that the mountain is a co-creative, collaborative force in our endeavor to create and perform environmental dance there. Exercise #5, *Reciprocity: Touch and Be Touched Principle* seeks to put the dancing, living landscape on equal footing with the dancing human body. As dancers create spontaneous movements inspired by the ever-changing give-and-take dynamics and tensions that connect dancer to summit and summit to dancer, the “exchange” becomes more and more like a conversation with Monadnock. This exercise teaches us to listen and to respond—through this intimate form of nonverbal communication we transcend the more mundane and limited ways of experiencing the mountain. Through an active, reciprocal dialog with the collective phenomena

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<sup>69</sup> See **APPENDIX E: *Sense of Place Exercises*** for a more detailed description of this and other exercises referenced here.

that comprise the mountain summit, we become at once, deeply rooted in place while going-with-the-flow of Monadnock's organic evolution.

In the adaptation of these exercises for younger children, the emphasis is on the imaginative engagement of child with site. These exercises, while initially designed for the alpine landscape at the summit of Monadnock, can accommodate any natural site in the service of exploring the sensing of organic wholeness through the passing of time. Dance studies become age-appropriate studies of evolution—how the body changes as it dances in a kaleidoscopic, ever-changing environment.

One such adaptation of this exercise I have often used focuses on the water cycle and exemplifies Goethe's *Exact Sensorial Fantasy* as it engages the imagination to transcend the limits of our everyday way of perceiving. As an introduction to this exploration we begin with a short discussion that aims to illuminate the idea that humans are all a part of nature (as opposed to be apart from nature); given this basic premise, it makes sense for the younger dancer/learners to begin to think of themselves in terms of being systems (physical, biological selves); as nested smaller systems within greater natural systems. With this in mind, we can see ourselves as integrally connected to the water cycle, which, just as it sounds—cycles water throughout these systems. This allows us to develop new and imaginatively rich perspective on the influence of water in our bodies and how this, too, profoundly connects us to the larger organic processes that create the basis for life on planet Earth.

We dance on the rocks in the sun; through the physical exertion of our bodies, our bodies become heated and in an attempt to maintain homeostasis (by not allowing the body to overheat) we begin to perspire, which just as water in a pond or stream begins to evaporate from the heat of the sun. By keeping our bodies hydrated with water, we prevent a physical condition that

resemblance the scorched, dry, parched condition of the earth’s surface during a drought. In this way heat stroke is to the human body what a drought is to the Earth—both are a life-threatening condition due to the lack of necessary hydration!

As a further extension of the exercise, I give students the task of observing various sources of water on the mountain and on the summit; I then have them draw a diagram of the water cycle in their field journals that includes themselves as “nested systems” within the larger system we call Mt. Monadnock; have them journal about the idea of “nested systems within systems” and how this supports the notion that we are integral parts of nature—not apart from nature; have students collectively create a short “environmental dance” study to be “performed” as a ceremony of giving thanks for the cool, clean water that refreshes us on the summit while helping the body self-regulate a healthy body temperature.

### **Stage Three: “Seeing in Beholding” (Inspiration)**

Goethe’s Stage Three is *Seeing in Beholding*. The goal in this stage of the process is to quell active perception and open oneself in order to “receive” from the phenomena. Although there is an aura of some magical force built into this stage—it is more a matter of willed perspective and a subtle shift of consciousness that gives voice to the phenomenon. As Isis Brook describes, this entails allowing:

...the thing to express itself through the observer. We attempt to step outside of what has gone on before and make space for the thing to be articulate in its own way. The previous stages are supposed to form the ground from which one enters this third mode of perception. The detailed information is somehow transcended, but just as *exact sensorial fantasy* requires *exact sense perception* to anchor its dream-like activity, *seeing in beholding* needs the content and the preparation of the other two stages if the researcher is to articulate the thing. Goethe terms the changes that are necessary to our everyday consciousness as the development of ‘new organs of perception’. An analogous process would be exercising to develop the muscles necessary to dance and the dancing itself (p. 56).

I describe my own understanding of this stage as losing oneself in the phenomenon. This stage begins to approach the idea of embodiment.

***Journal Entry (Memoried Account—“Magical Mountain Moonlight”) [Stage Three]***

*...as the yellow moon continued to rise above me a kind of illuminated, sparkling darkness descended on the summit. From somewhere in the wooded forest below me, I could hear the faint shrill of a night hawk. Without thinking, without really being conscious about it, I stood and walked toward the area of flat granite where I had performed on so many occasions. In this eerie glow, I remember that I spontaneously began to dance. I continued to do so for a length of time unknown to me—it could have been five minutes; it could have been over an hour. I had lost all connections to my own senses and sensibilities. The mountain, the rocks, the wind, the stars and the moon had taken over and had taken control. It was as if I were possessed...I felt the presence of the genius loci.*

**Analysis: Applications to Environmental Dance as Performance and Pedagogy**

There is something very magical built into this third stage. I believe that as a potential teaching strategy *Seeing in Beholding* offers a unique and effective way to draw out a sense of wonder, awe, and magic in the creative activities of the environmental dance learning experience. It awakens the imagination and calls it forth to help make meaning of the world around us. These are some of the cherished teaching goals of environmental dance as pedagogy.

The ultimate aim of this stage of Goethe’s process as I understand it is to extract the gestural or the archetypal essence of the phenomenon. Accordingly, when active, ordinary perception is set aside, out-of-the-ordinary responses kick in. Seemingly this is similar to the idea of “flow”, when one becomes so engrossed in the activity at hand that one loses an ordinary sense of self. It is at the moment when the engager has “new eyes” and is able to see as never before. With extraordinary vision the essential gesture of the phenomenon emerges and becomes visible to us.

This gestural essence is what Goethe called the *ur phenomenon*.<sup>70</sup> The discovery and comprehension of this archetypal feature moves us toward a form of universal, holistic understanding of the phenomenon—knowledge through consensus but through a lens that looks curiously at the phenomenon with childlike wonder and awe.

As a continuation of the environmental dancer orientation process, I seek ways to allow my dancers to experience firsthand the extraordinariness that organically accompanies the work of creating and performing dance on a mountain top. As we mature into adults, we often lose the ability to sense wonder and magic in the world around us. Exercise #5, *Rock-rolling* from the *Sense of Place Exercises* is dedicated to the renaissance of both of these sensibilities as an essential “skill” of the environmental dance artist. Since our performances purposefully seek to rekindle the audience’s own sense of wonder and awe within the natural environment, the environmental dance performer must be able to express her own feelings of this from the most authentic source.

In the *Rock-rolling* exercise, dancers find a comfortable place to lie on the rocky summit stage area. Slowly, with full-body contact, dancers begin to roll across the uneven, unpredictable surfaces of the summit. Bodies-minds are instructed to allow the rocks to guide and call forth the movement—the will of the dancer is humbly and willingly set aside for the moment. Unexpected discoveries are made as one allows herself to be pulled and pushed, shaped and stretched by the external forces of rock and gravity. Unique perspectives are to be had from seeing the world instantaneously upside down! Dancers are taught to go beyond what was once the perceived limit of what a dancer can do on a mountain top. New movement ideas spring forth from the imagination set free from prior restraints. We discover, in a very new way, *how* to dance on the rocks. And it is the mountain that is instructing us as it becomes a co-collaborator in this creative process.

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<sup>70</sup> “Ur phanomen”, meaning primal or archetypal phenomenon.

New answers spontaneously arise (seemingly out of thin air) to old problems. There is a sense of a powerful other being (the mountain) as it permeates our flesh, our thoughts and our being. By allowing the mountain to take over in this way, our minds are suddenly free to imagine in ways not previously experienced. We are open to new insights and new knowledge by allowing the body-mind to passively merge with and be molded by the mountain.

As part of the pedagogy that is being developed as a direct descendent of my dancers' experiences as artists on the mountain, the nurturing of the human imagination as a vital part of the creative process is an essential goal of this teaching approach. Exercises such as *Rock-rolling* are adapted as safe and unexpected ways for children to holistically flex the imagination muscles. The underlying premise of this exercise is that by participating in radically unexpected activities in rather unexpected places (such as a rocky mountain summit), the child "rolls" right out of the world of the *expected* and *known* and into the extraordinary world of magic, fantasy and awe.

I am especially interested in the idea of such exercises as a way to relieve a child's fear of being in the out-of-doors. Seemingly by engaging the imagination in such a radical way, the child is temporarily distracted from the sources of his/her own pre-existing anxieties and fears. By learning how to give in and go with the flow, perhaps the child learns to trust once again.

#### **Stage Four: *Being One with the Object* (Intuition)**

In this fourth and final stage of the Goethean scientific method, *Being One with the Object*, one can sense the cumulative nature of the journey through the ordered process of the previous stages. There is a quickening sense of union between human (subject) and site/phenomenon (object). Brook adds:

What becomes possible at this stage of perception is, in the inorganic realm, the appreciation of laws and, in the organic realm, the appreciation of type. For Goethe type is more than a descriptive plan shared by plants or animals and thus requires more than an exploration of the outer form and its constituent parts. Being one with

the object allows an appreciation of the content or meaning of the form as well as the form itself (p. 57).

Unique to this stage is the incorporation of *intuition* as a tool for this further, extended understanding of the phenomenon. It is as if the observer inserts him/herself into the phenomenon and understands its unique form and function in its own terms, as perceived by the observer. My own interpretation of this stage is that this is the locus of *embodiment*, when in environmental dance learning experiences I speak about the idea of embodiment of some aspect of the natural world.

***Journal Entry (Memoried Account—“A More-than-Human Moment”) [Stage Four]***

*As I stand facing the audience on this beautiful sunny performance day, I ceremoniously settle myself into the beginning position of this dance piece—the position that my muscle-memory recalls with a reflex of immediate ease. I am aware that members of the dance company are doing the same—we sense each other and the mountain with a deep, communicating connection that will open the door to a new world for the next few minutes, into a dancescape where we will bring this dance alive, on this rock, on this day. This is always a breath-taking moment for me—the profound sensation that I am about to become something greater than myself, beyond the mere human who just a few seconds ago, walked onto this magical stage with five (5) other human beings—all sharing this overwhelming feeling. It is a true “threshold moment”.*

*A little while ago, we were casually preparing for this moment, “backstage” (behind this great rock we call the “mainstage rock”), where a large stand of mountain cranberry and a very tall granite wall serves as our “green room”. We customarily prepare ourselves in the shelter of this private place of costumes and make-up and quieting pre-performance conversation, camaraderie, meditation and well-wishes. We are now called to “places” by our stage manager and we move as a unified whole, with a single mission, goal and mindset—we move with precision into the space where the dance will unfold before the audience seated on the terraced boulders that cascade from the summit. I am fully self-aware, as I am also aware of how beautiful this sunny day is. I acknowledge my co-dancers and feel that transition filling me with the essences of this mountain scape.*

*As I allow myself to physically and mentally connect with the rock in this quintessential moment of stillness, I gather myself (or perhaps I am really re-constituting myself) in this brief moment of hushed quiet. This is what I imagine to be an otherworldly sensation—pure stillness.*

*Timelessness...*

*Yet, my dancers and I are crossing that threshold with a sense of immediacy and anticipation (as we have done so many times before)—where we are no longer just human. As we pass through this moment, we become a part of this place, this mountain, and this rocky stage, and know full-well, that once we have performed this mountain ritual once again, we will never be quite the same...*

### **Analysis: Applications to Environmental Dance as Performance and Pedagogy**

As an environmental performing dance artist and educator, it is my deepest desire to give my dancers, audiences and students the opportunity to experience the profound connection that I myself experience with Monadnock. It isn't enough to write or talk about what this is like. Analogies miss the mark. Only firsthand experience allows the human to feel the mountain within them. This is *embodiment* and embodiment is the goal of Goethe's *Being One with the Object* (phenomenon).

We cannot have delusions about the human ability to teach something as subtle and exquisite as this. Rather, as educators we can optimally set the stage for this to occur. We can nurture the ideal circumstances that allow the individual to make the courageous and creative leap that only comes from following that intuitive guiding voice from within. Embodiment is intangible, it is fluid and ethereal—it cannot be captured and analyzed or quantified. Yet, when it happens to us, we are immediately flooded with its recognition of itself within us—like a reunion with a long lost friend. It feels comfortable and friendly, familiar. For me, it is the ultimate homecoming.

I can share this knowledge because I have on at least a handful of occasions, experienced such a sense of oneness. One of these experiences came during the most recent performance on Monadnock—it was on a crisp and sunny early November day. As my dance company and I progressed through an improvisational performance that focused on each of Goethe's stages as a



new way to source movement ideas for the creation of new dance works, I became enthralled with one particular area within the expansive performance space we call our stage.

In this particular space there was a small standing pool of water, frozen solid. I remember thinking of the contrast between the coldness of the ice on my bare feet and the direct sensation of the warming sun coming from above. I began to become aware of myself as an in-between mediator of these two polarizing elemental forces—when I would focus on the sun, I would become distracted by the ice. Alternately, when I intentionally focused attention on the frozen pool, I could feel the pull of the sun lift my visual and bodily focus upward toward it and away from the pool. The tension between these two phenomena grew as a theme as the improvisation progressed—eventually I became very aware that mine was becoming a dance of fire and ice!

I had the distinct sensation of these elemental forces filling me until I could feel inside of me, the same externally experienced tensions that I had initially experienced in the dance's earliest stages. Suddenly, I became overwhelmed with a sudden rush of deep understanding—I was experiencing the water cycle! A simple lesson but none the less earth-shattering in this very aesthetic unexpected form of delivery! I could see this (phenomenon) with such clarity, as the sun drew water from the ice. This allowed me to connect with a sense of wholeness and organic lawfulness that I might otherwise would have surely missed. The experience was not an academic one—it was profoundly touching and beautiful. I had never felt so much a part of the Mountain as I did on that day during that simple improvisation dance. The realization that I was deeply connected and a part of the cycle of living, dynamic processes there has had a transformative effect on me personally.

Given the right circumstances where a holistic, first-person engagement of human with natural phenomenon takes place, I believe there is also the opportunity for an empathetic

relationship to develop as a result; this is reflective of Goethe's "delicate empiricism" that allows humans to see and thus experience and feel from the embodied point of view of the phenomenon (Wahl, 2005).

Yet, I am at a loss for how to capture this moment in order to replicate it for others. But I hope that this kind of expanded awareness is where this work leads those who come to the mountain to watch or participate in the performance. Intuitively, I know that Goethe's *oneness* is the sense of unity I had experienced. This is powerful, it is personal. The best I can hope to do is to open the door for others to converse with mountain as I did that day and with nature in this transformational way.

### **Summary**

This chapter has introduced the Goethean scientific method for its potential as a viable theoretical/ philosophical model and practical teaching strategy for the emerging pedagogy of environmental dance. I have focused on several areas of shared compatibility and complementariness: 1) an underlying phenomenological approach that seeks a holistic engagement with the phenomenon of the natural world; 2) an epistemology that offers a constructivist/ interpretivist approach as an alternative to the positivist/ objectivist paradigm; 3) I propose that both Goethean science protocol and environmental dance present unique ways of knowing and generating meaning-making in a complementary way that seeks to bridge the divide between the arts and sciences; and 4) both are creative, artistic ventures in their own rights emphasizing the importance of actively engaging *perception, imagination, inspiration* and *intuition* as well as the *senses* as pathways toward a more complete understanding of our embodied place within the natural world, perhaps ultimately inspiring the consideration of a universal eco-centered environmental ethic.

One explicit goal is to illuminate the Goethean scientific method as a step-by-step practical plan that can be used to suggest numerous rich applications of innovation and methodology to the existing practices and learning activities as an environmental dance pedagogy continues to develop. This is an area for further research as the next step towards the creation of a formal environmental dance curriculum. Noting places of similarities and points of convergence in this comparative exploration can only strengthen the argument for the implementation of this systematized way of engaging holistically with the natural landscape as an integral feature of the environmental dance learning experience. I believe that the innovative pairing of art and science may also be studied as a viable model for other environmental educational endeavors as well, especially as a potential catalyst for reform.

Perhaps the most important contribution that this inquiry may have to offer the greater field of environmental studies is that it begins to reveal what is missing, what is most often lacking in mainstream environmental thinking and education practice. For too long, we have sought to engage the natural world as a foreign “other”, in a piecemeal, distanced and measured fashion that seemingly serves only to widen the chasm between human and nature. What is missing is the value-laden, emotional and full-bodied human participation as a co-creator in a synthesis that makes possible the reciprocal exchange with the *places* that we must wholly embrace and embody. What is perhaps most needed is a systematized approach to intentionally facilitate the development of ecological perception in all humans so that we may begin to see the world in the holistic way that Goethe intuitively recognized as a paramount way of *knowing* and *being* nature. Perhaps we begin to move in this new direction, in part, by providing the opportunity for our children to know what it is like to dance on a windswept mountain summit.

## Chapter IV

### Methodologies and Methods

#### A Grounded Theory/ Phenomenological Methodology

The purpose of this multi-faceted, arts-based inquiry is to explore deeply, through an examination of our specific experiences as dance artists and researchers, the generalized phenomenal attributes of “environmental dance”; and to seek an optimal and underlying conceptual framework, by which to understand how this nuanced kind of dance engages the dance artist. Furthermore, such understandings may provide insights into how a teachable pedagogy may arise from this research—as an arts-based way to engage humans with the natural world, aimed to transform that engagement—which is the realm of future applications of this inquiry. Such a two-pronged examination would necessarily serve to define the characteristics and boundaries of an emergent genre of dance that, as a creative process that produces dance works that uniquely unfolds, at once in time and space in the “theater” of the natural environment.

The particularized version of this genre of dance—“environmental dance”—has originated over the span of twenty-five years, coming to life annually at the summit of Mt. Monadnock in Jaffrey, New Hampshire; during this span of time, this remarkable venue has showcased my environmental dance company of dancers (who now serve as my research team), performing from a repertory of over thirty (30) original dance works, inspired by the mountain and the intimate relationships that the dancers and I have nurtured over the years. The mountain has a longstanding history as a much-celebrated magnet to artists and writers; similarly, our performances have drawn thousands of hikers and dance enthusiasts from across the country and

from the around the world, to the summit and to witness this curious phenomenon of dance performance on a rocky mountain summit.

### **The Quest for Emergent Theory**

A given assumption of this research acknowledges that as the originator of this particular brand of environmental dance, which I have “made indigenous” to this particular national monument and environmental icon, and a beacon attracting a daunting number of hikers, I am deeply ensconced into the place and process itself, and to products of dance that I have quite intentionally manifested upon the mountaintop. While this famous mountaintop is the site of origination for my particular brand of environmental dance, the approach, its developing methods and various applications (such as a teachable form--workshops, residences, and future plans for the development of a K-12 teachable curriculum) is fully transferrable to any natural site and groups of participants. The development of this kind of dance has been an adventure of many trials and errors, of intuitive and creative spontaneity, grand experiments, steep learning curves, and creative knee-jerk reactions—all purposely concentrated in one of my most favorite places on Earth. Therefore, I could hardly call myself an objective observer regarding what it is, that makes environmental dance “tick”. I could hardly call myself qualified in my biased position as an originator of environmental dance, to be able to accurately discern environmental dance from the other myriad of worthy dance forms that have so shaped and have artistically formed my dancers and I.

Yet, this is the grand mission of this inquiry—to discern the unnoticed fine points, the nuances and the underlying drivers of a kind of dance that so profoundly brings dancer and the natural environment into such a close proximity and juxtaposition. Where there was once a mere curiosity for the richer implications of such a kind of artistic endeavor, there is now a body of

new knowledge reflecting the deep understanding and clarity of purpose that describes, interprets and expresses the power of this dance-and-nature partnership. Admittedly, I have always intuitively felt that there was a raw power underlying our summit dances just as they are simultaneously experienced by both dancer and onlooker (a kind of naive art-for-art's-sake appreciation)—a something, as yet unnamed, that could potentially open the door to a new way of engaging the natural landscape and phenomena that surround us; Something new and perhaps magically-transforming, in the way that it creates a shift (no matter how seemingly subtle) in the consciousness that collectively leaves the summit after the performance, if only to return to mundane realm of everyday existence.

What if these musings are true? What if by defining the domain of environmental dance and by attempting to understand deeply the “what’s-it-likeness” of being the environmental dancer that expresses the human connection to the land through the ritual of the dance, embedded in that very landscape that inspires and supports both dancer and dance, we are able to transform how humans actively engage with the land? What if the mountain is teaching us, as environmental dance artists can be fashioned into a systematized set of teachings that can be learned in an educational setting? The strength of this research project and its methodological design is that it has encouraged us to follow the cues from the above free-range imaginings—without binding the research at the onset, it is allowed to organically emerge and reveal to us as dancers, creatives, educators, and researchers a limitless vision for both theory and practice. With one aspect of the research drawing from the other, we get an inspiring sense of potential at the onset of the research project.

Thus, the vision quest for a *theory*, as the process I describe and its companion *practice* makes it an easy task in selecting the most appropriate methodological foundation for the

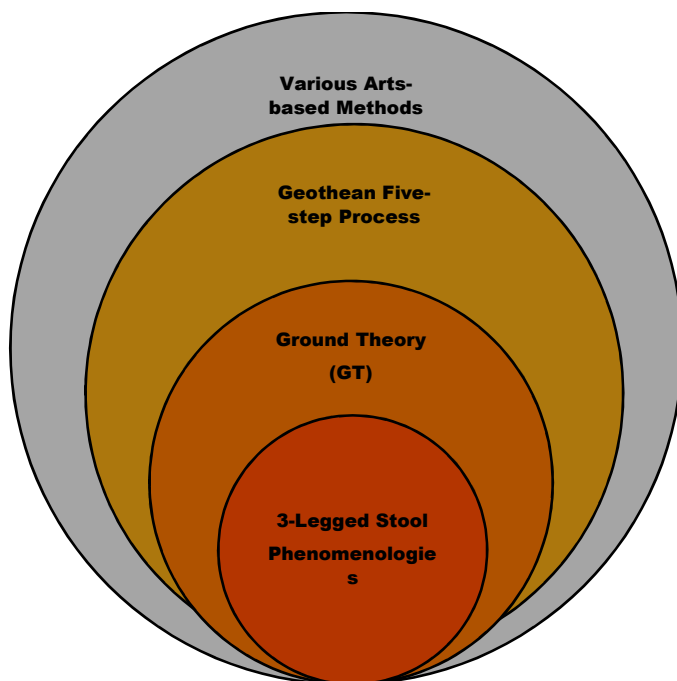
research. Interestingly, what I have found as I considered how a focus on the pairing of *theory and practice* might orchestrate this project, I could map it as thus: As researchers, my dance company/research team and I begin with the existing “practice” (of creating dances for annual performance atop Monadnock); what would necessarily need to happen (in my mind) was to let go of this preconceived impression of what environmental dance may be to me and my dancers and to be free to look at it with what Goethe called “fresh eyes”; to do so, we would, as researchers, have to embrace the spirit of transformation, bracketing the limiting impressions of how we distinguished what environmental dance was—we would be much like a butterflies, surrendering ourselves to the inevitable chrysalis stage that promised a true transformation--that would end one phenomenal reality while promising a new reality to emerge—this leap of faith would necessarily serve as our starting point (Seamon and Zajonc, 1998).

In search of a guiding, overall framework, I determined that this needed to be something new and original--imbued with the kind of freedom that would initiate the organic, re-discovery of what “environmental dance” (as a complex phenomenon) really was, in the context of the prior work that had evolved on Monadnock. What would/could our chrysalis of potentials ultimately produce? The initial part of a two-pronged inquiry would begin with a focused study of *practice*. Phenomenology would be the guiding philosophy-turned-methodology enabling a deep dive into the “lived experience” of the practice of being an environmental dancer (on Mt. Monadnock). Max Van Manen explains how phenomenology functions to elucidate the experiences of the environmental dancer as they unfold:

Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences. Phenomenology asks, “What is this or that kind of experience like?” It differs from almost every other science in that it attempts to gain insightful descriptions of the way we experience the world pre-reflectively, without taxonomizing, classifying, or abstracting it. So phenomenology does not offer us the possibility of effective theory with which we can now explain and/or

control the world, but rather it offers us the possibility of plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with the world (Van Manen, 1990, p.9).

Van Manen confirms phenomenology as an optimal methodology for this study, as it allows the research to focus on and illuminate the structure of the environmental dance as lived practice,



*Figure 44: A dual-methodology of phenomenology and grounded theory (GT) as a foundation supporting a creative process which models Goethe's five (5) step process; these effectively support a collection of arts-based methods to create a synergy of methodologies and methods (D. Eno©).*

setting up a baseline scaffolding of understanding—it is from this rich, descriptive understanding of environmental dance-as-practice that emergent theory may be drawn:

This project is both new and old. It is new in the sense that modern thinking and scholarship is so caught up in theoretical and technological thought that the program of a phenomenological human science may strike an individual as a breakthrough and a liberation. It is old in the sense that, over the ages, human beings have invented artistic, philosophic, communal, mimetic and poetic languages that have sought to (re) unite them with the ground of their lived experience (Van Manen, 1990, p.9).



This research, then, immediately roots itself into the fertile poetic language of the dance experiences that unfold for the dancer/researcher. From personal reflections on those experiences we begin to be able to parse the unfolding, here-and-now dynamics of each dancer/researcher's experiences in the field-- into specific, distinguishable characteristics that when taken together in an extrapolated, refined and synthesized way, begin to suggest the contours of a universalized picture of a new genre of dance.

Thus, the environmental dance “caterpillar” of the previous gestational twenty-five years of dancing on the summit would serve as an apt starting point to build from! It is interesting to note, that within the existing lexicon of academia, the pairing is traditionally *theory-and-practice*; here, it is necessarily the opposite—we move from beginning with an examination of the practice to an *emergent* defining theory. From the specific to the abstract and generalized; from micro thinking to macro thinking. Environmental dance: evolving from a Monadnock birth, perhaps destined for a much larger stage—the universe!

### **A Three-legged Stool**

As previously stated, I have organized this research under the methodological auspices of phenomenology and grounded theory. Both are optimally suited to the task of phenomenological description in the service of obtaining the most complete, holistic and synthetic account of the two interconnected and interacting phenomena that are the focus of this dissertation research. These relational phenomena are the natural environment (and the complexity of phenomena that comprise it) and the environmental dancer/ researcher.

Also in keeping with this obvious compatibility with the grounded theory (GT) methodology, is that the application of phenomenology, as my team and I utilize it, must be both descriptive and interpretive. Very much like grounded theory, we seek to compose detailed

descriptions of our own on-site work, either as descriptions of our “lived experiences” as environmental dancer/researchers or as interpretive expressions that result from the research tasks that unfold on the mountain summit:

In terms of devising a data collection method IPA [interpretive phenomenological analysis] is best suited to one which will invite participants to offer a rich, detailed, first-person account of their experiences. In-depth interviews and diaries may be the best means of accessing such accounts. These facilitate the elicitation of stories, thoughts and feelings about the target phenomenon. They are also consonant with an intimate focus on one person’s experience and therefore are optimal for most IPA studies. They are not the only way to collect data of course and under certain circumstances other approaches such as focus groups or participant (where the activity being observed includes discussion of experience) may work (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 56).

Both are unique approaches to capturing that phenomenal “what-it-like-ness” of the environmental dance experience and both are emergent forms of data where one synergistically informs, illuminates and enriches the other.

The way in which my research team and I employed phenomenology is what I refer to as the “three-legged stool”. The idea here, is that through the synergistic, and balancing effects of three (3) primary strands of phenomenological research practice, we actually built in a triangulation of methods that aims to provide both validity and reliability in the methodology. This research employed 1) first-person phenomenology (following a heuristic research philosophy and protocol—focusing on my personal experiences as heuristic research)<sup>71</sup>; 2) existential phenomenology—focusing on the idiosyncratic and collective experiences of my dance company members, and 3) hermeneutic (or interpretive) phenomenology which references

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<sup>71</sup> See: Moustakas, C. 1990. *Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology and Applications*. Newbury Park, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications (The International Professional Publishers).

the above IPA protocol and was used to interpret the relevant experiences of others and to treat movement studies and research dance works themselves, as “readable” texts (Seamon, 2000).

As I stated above, I have included a heuristic approach as a necessary extension to the phenomenological methodology, which allows me the vantage point of my own self-study as a baseline exploration of my own lived experience as an environmental dancer and researcher. This shares some obvious similarities to auto-ethnography—self-reflection toward and focus on one’s own personal experiences. While my triad of phenomenologies adequately address the “lived experiences” of the dancer/researcher team, I have utilized the research protocol outlined by Clark Moustakas to address my own developmental experiences as an environmental dance artist, educator and researcher. He explains how this self-focused version of phenomenology is able to give voice to my particular experiences as well:

From the beginning and throughout an investigation, heuristic research involves self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery; the research question and the methodology flow from an inner awareness, meaning and inspiration. When I consider an issue, problem, or question, I enter into it fully. I focus on it with unwavering attention and interest. I search introspectively, meditatively, and reflectively into its nature and meaning. My primary task is to recognize whatever exists in my consciousness as a fundamental awareness, to receive and accept it, and then to dwell on its nature and possible meanings. With full and unqualified interest, I am determined to extend my understanding and knowledge of an experience. I begin the heuristic investigation with my own self-awareness and explicate that awareness with reference to a question or problem until an essential insight is achieved, one that will throw a beginning light onto a critical human experience (Moustakas, 1990, p.11).

Throughout this research, there is an ever-present dialogue between my heuristic environmental dance experience and the phenomenological exploration of the environmental dance “lived experiences” of the dancer/research team who work with me. This slightly adjusted, slightly nuanced personal perspective does not alienate me from the group—instead it seamlessly allows

the environmental discourse to flow from me to the team and back to me, in continuous feedback loops that allows the research process to progress in an optimal and triangulating way.

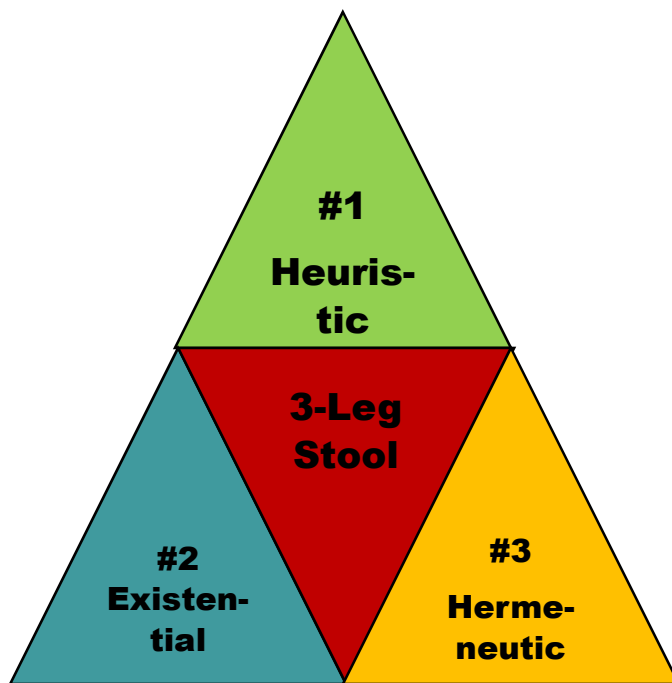


Figure 45: The "three-legged stool"; an intentional combination of 1) first-person phenomenology, 2) existential phenomenology and 3) hermeneutic phenomenology creates create validity and reliability into the research study (D. Eno©).

Furthermore, it is through the juxtaposition of the personal with the experiences of others that I have unearthed aspects of an environmental dance universal. As researchers, we may look at one isolated experience (here, my own heuristically-framed experience), only to discover a true multi-faceted nature of a phenomenon by weighing that individual instance of reality against other realities.

To this end, I have adapted the academic practice called “dialectic journaling” where my field journal became a place to 1) first, record field observations and 2) to immediately begin to process those field observation notes (through intentional critical thinking) and transform them into nuggets of new knowledge. It became an instantaneous way of thinking about what I was thinking as research tasks unfolded on site. If time permitted, I was able to accomplish much of

this dialectical analysis (See Chapter II, Jewel Seven—Ritual) during the site work period; otherwise, I would make a marginal note in my journal, and would later use the prompt to generate a written reflection. This is comparable to the grounded theory practice of *memoing*—in essence I was recording my observations and then simultaneously creating a “memo” regarding my critical thinking process on the subject. This process allowed me to scrutinize my environmental dance field experiences with those of my dancers:

This process of making the familiar unfamiliar (and making the unfamiliar familiar) involves treading a fine line between taking an attitude toward the situation that aims to “uncover” or “unmask” hidden forces at work in the situation (that attitude of the outsider who claims special insight into the setting) and illuminating and clarifying interconnections and tensions between elements of a setting in terms that participants themselves regard as authentic... The criterion of authenticity involves a dialectic sometimes described in terms of “the melting of horizons” (Gadamer, 1975)—seeing things intersubjectively, from one’s own point of view and from the point of view of others...” (Kemmis & Taggart, in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, pp. 575-576).

Utilizing this dialectic approach also allowed me to critically assess my own personal experiences as research entities on their own merit. This approach to organizing my field journaling allowed me to 1) constantly compare and contrast (comparable to GT’s constant comparative analysis) my experience with those of the team members; 2) begin the analysis process immediately and concurrently with “data collection” and 3) to organizing voluminous amounts of field data and to optimize the use of that data.

### **Designed to Allow Theory to Emerge**

We now come to the second necessity of this research design: to find the optimal corresponding methodological underpinnings to allow an environmental dance *theory* to emerge. Therefore, by adopting a grounded theory approach (with which I have taken some poetic license in adapting and tweaking here in order to meet some unique demands of this generally arts-based

research, as briefly described below), we have the methodological foundation for this study of environmental dance. The intentional pairing of phenomenology (the “lived experience” of the environmental dance/researcher, a.k.a., *practice*) with grounded theory (the emergent conceptual framework that underlies and guides the practice).

I have collected together an array of grounded theory approaches that are derived from various leading GT theorists and their particular brands of GT. These choices illustrate the flexibility of this methodology and how even the novice researcher (members of my research team) may draw from a wide array of GT tools in order to best serve the needs of any given inquiry. The methodologies and particular research methods I outline in this chapter, are the ones I believe that optimally serve the mission of this research.

Aligning with my underlying worldview that acknowledges a universe made of multiple realities, I have adopted the Constructivist Grounded Theory approach (Charmaz in Denzin & Lincoln, (eds.), 2000, p 510). I have purposely chosen to be guided by this school of theory because it embraces the study of primary, first-person knowledge and illuminates the “relativism of multiple social realities, recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims toward interpretive understanding of subjects’ meanings” (Charmaz, p. 510; Guba & Lincoln, 1994, Schwandt, 1994). Further, Charmaz explains that “a constructivist approach to grounded theory reaffirms studying people in their natural settings and redirects qualitative research away from positivism (p. 510). Charmaz makes three points that have inspired and have informed my own customized version of the grounded theory protocol: “(a) grounded theory strategies need not be rigid or prescriptive; (b) a focus on meaning while using grounded theory *further*s, rather than limits, interpretive understandings; and (c) we can adopt grounded theory strategies without embracing positivists leanings of earlier proponents of

grounded theory [Glazer, Strauss, Corbin, as GT pioneers]” (p. 510). Charmaz even suggests that grounded theory methods can be employed as “flexible, heuristic strategies” as opposed to the more systematized “formulaic procedures” (p. 510).

I have adapted the grounded theory (GT) coding protocol as follows:

- I began the “coding” process at the onset of the research project, since as Charmaz puts it, “Coding starts the chain of theory development. Codes that account for our data take form together as nascent theory that, in turn, explains these data and directs further data gathering” (p.511). This supports the traditional GT view that “all is data” and as such, I treated every part of the research process as a potential source of rich, thick data.
- *Open Coding*--A first iteration of coding followed the Glaserian strategy of *open coding* (Glaser, 1978), in which I mined the data (journal entries, observations, discussions, movement tasks, etc.) for its conceptual components, looking for a basic foundation of environmental dance ideas and patterns. I say “line-by-line” coding here but I must clarify that I have taken the liberty to view dance movement as text, and in doing so, I can treat such movement sequences as living, breathing and dynamic “journal entries”. At this initial level of abstraction, the goal is to break down data into its smallest units of analysis (the unfolding action, or the writing/reading of journal entries, transcripts, etc.) in order to eventually build back up into a universal synthesis. Finally, this is where the emergent theory is generated. Here, I began the inductive process of taking the *specifics* of our research experiences while always being mindful of the researchers’ mantra “what is going on?”
- Through the process of *constant comparative analysis* I continued to hone the data codes and began the process of combining like concepts and ideas under umbrella headings—

this honing or sifting process is traditionally known as *selective coding*. I used this to compress the prolific amounts of general, first-round codes into descriptive, interpretive concepts that began the process of delimiting the scope of the research process. We began to put boundaries around the (universal) concept of environmental dance. In the field, we often had discussions that would focus on delimiting environmental dance on a spectrum of what we knew (through our shared and individual experiences) it was and what it wasn't. Those discerning conversations served as another layer of thick, rich description.

- The GT process of *memoing*, which I describe above, fell under the auspices of our field journaling practice. Field journal entries not only captured the essence of the day's site work, but also became the place to play with and develop conceptual ideas. Our journals became the place to store those invaluable "aha moments" and the insights they inevitably gifted to the research process. Memos allowed us to creatively muse about our mixed (arts-based, radically qualitative) methods and to find and immortalize those nuggets of discovery where seemingly unrelated, if not disparate concepts, notions, brainstorm, etc., came together in meaningful, nuanced relationship. This is where transdisciplinary connections began to appear in the research process!
- The use of *theoretical sampling* marked the shift in our research process from what I call the inductive phase (where the focus was more on specific, micro experiences) toward the deductive phase (where we began searching for environmental dance "universals", macro experiences, in earnest). This manifested in a number of ways in the field—by on-the-spot "let's try this out" spontaneity, by specific tasks that I designed to follow and work on a specific idea or concept or by suggestions and hunches of the team members.



Journalled accounts of these later-in-the-research-process often produced a further refinement of ideas, as yet another iteration in the GT protocol we utilized—these refinements were comparable to traditional GT *theoretical codes*.

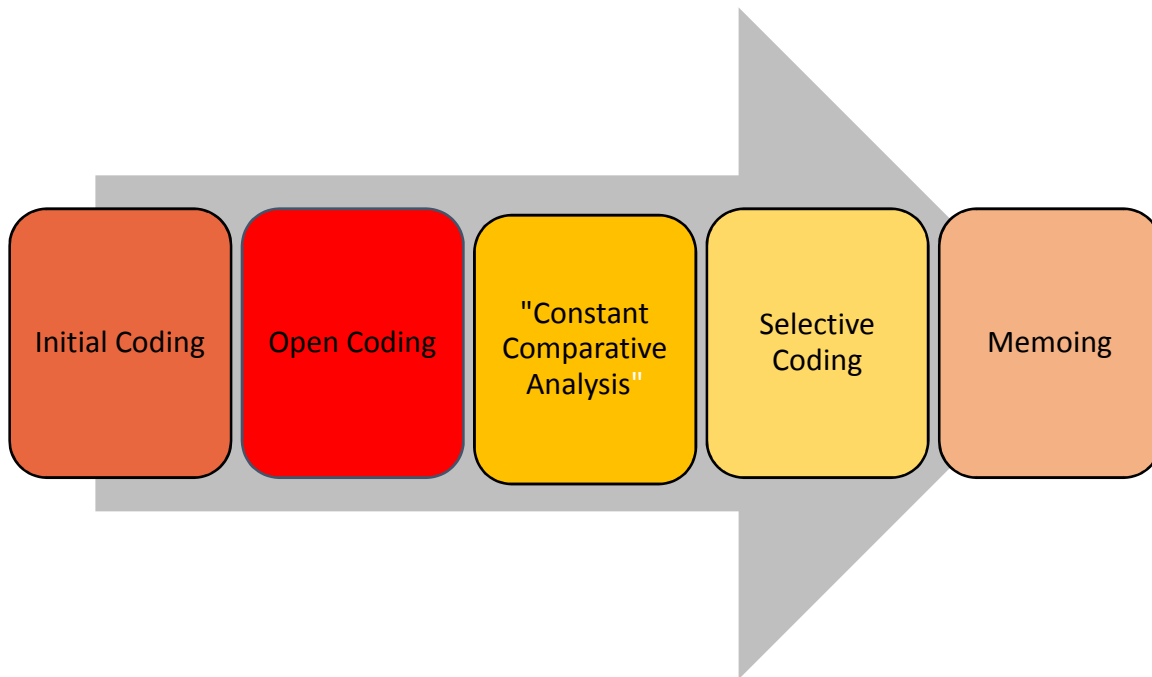


Figure 46: The stages of data-collection--an iterative, cumulative process (D.Eno©).

- It is paramount that the reader of this research be constantly aware that during the course of this discussion about grounded theory coding and that while we have generated “written codes” primarily from our written forms of data, we also have an added dimension that is a direct reflection of our arts-based methods. This is best explained as the metaphorical coding process that happens when team members observe and interpret each other’s movement studies, for example. In this way, I have adapted GT to serve us best as artists, by explicitly stating that dance, and movement is a text, or a narrative that

may be “read”, “interpreted” and “analyzed” (synthesized). Thus, dance is purposely elevated in this research as a bona fide way of knowing, sharing equal status with all other forms of “data” and stands alone, without any further “translation”, manipulation or interpretation needed.

In keeping with the two interacting and cross-referencing methodological domains of this research project, a number of methods have been selected that operate in a similar interactional, synergistic way in order to enable my research team and I to draw out the data necessary to answer the collective mission of this research, as specified in the research questions that follow. This synergistic collection of methods include field observation, the atypical (GT) literature review and a variety of arts-based methods that I describe in full detail in a subsequent section below. I refer to this collage of methods, as a “pastiche”, which acknowledges the cross-referencing characteristics I emphasize.

### **Pastiche**

There are several threads that interweave this story. The structure of the project and corresponding methodologies and methods were fashioned together in a way that was based on the assumption that the topic of “environmental dance” (quotations are intended to remind the reader that the focus of this particular doctoral research is on my own particular *brand* of environmental dance) is nuanced and diverse; and as such it was also assumed in the planning stages of this project that the data collected would ultimately be generated through such an eclectic *pastiche* (or collage) of data sources and methods. These would ultimately allow the dancers to contribute their own interpretations and creative expressions toward the generation of a gestalt of new knowledge—a universal of knowledge and meaning derived from exploring the

rich and multidimensional “lived experiences” of each member of the dance research team working in tandem with the mountain landscape.

The pastiche approach has proven to be ideal for this research project as it allows the organic emergence of a multi-faceted, nonlinear description of the complex phenomenon of “environmental dance”. It calls for the expression of a single focus (here, environmental dance) through a variety of artistic and narrative modes. It illuminates a common-ground between the reflective journal entry with the physical narratives of the dancing human body; when mind and body are enjoined, as they purposely are in this research project, a gestalt expression arises as a meta-narrative that celebrates and elevates one of the main missions of this research—to heal the body-mind split. Thus, dance is treated as an equitable, synergistic partner to the written representations and expressions of the research. In this circumstance, danced narrative shares the same attributes that the written narrative accomplishes.

According to Laurel Richardson in “Writing: a Method of Inquiry” (Denzin, N. and Y. Lincoln, *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, pp. 923-948), these attributes allow us to view writing and dance simultaneously as:

- Synergistic ways of knowing
- Ways of finding out more about yourself and your topic
- Methods of discovery and analysis
- Alternative research practices
- Dual research practices that purposely investigate “how we construct the world, ourselves and other” (p.924), through a process of how we “word the world” (p.924).
- Anti-passive voices that embraces the dynamic nature of the complex phenomenon (dancer and site).

- Anti-mechanistic, non-fixed models
- Holistic approaches, seeking to examine multi-facets of the same idea, notion, thought, etc.
- Processes of discovery

To these holistic narratives, we add further layers of artistic expressions that result in the desired rich descriptions of the environmental dance experience that we have sought to capture and better understand. Clandinin (2007) delineates the attributes of the pastiche that makes it an optimal way to study environmental dance under the joint auspices of a grounded theory and phenomenological methodology:

Pastiche is the production of textual experiments that seek to challenge linear, simplistic descriptions of meaning exactly because the nature of narrative research is antithetical to such linearity. Pastiche may be composed of various chunks of data, analytical insights, layouts, multiple genres—art, musical notation, drama, poetry, photographs, layered stories, diaries, parodies, picture strips, multi-voice accounts, collage, in various configurations built to provide a meaningful whole. What is more, these “wholes” always communicate more than the pieces of which they are composed (Clandinin, 2007, pp. 586-7).

Thus, the gestalt-like nature of the pastiche/collage approach has provided the study with substantial rigor and it has strengthened this radically qualitative research with high standard validity and reliability, a goal made possible through this highly comprehensive, multi-faceted research technique.

One other valuable point Richardson makes regarding writing-as-a-method-of-inquiry, has to do with *metaphor* as a literary device in the writing up of the research: She says “the essence of metaphor is experiencing and understanding one thing in terms of another” (p. 925). As a reflection of Richardson’s metaphor, I suggest that the *pastiche* approach I have employed provides a similar function while establishing a paralleling philosophical connection to the idea

of *transdisciplinarity*: Richardson’s conception of metaphor helps to build in a sense of complementariness at multiple scales; from the expressive device exhibited by writing and dance, alike (metaphor) to an over-arching collection of cross-referencing forms of re-presentation (pastiche) to a radical new paradigm of support (transdisciplinarity) that seeks to enjoin separate, isolated disciplines of knowledge into yet another expression of holistic complementariness.



Figure 47: This transdisciplinary "environmental dance" research reflects a "pastiche" (collage of arts-based experiences and methods), strengthened by the diverse dance/art backgrounds of the research team (D. Eno©).

### “Found” Poetry

I want to highlight another arts-based (ABR) method that I have put to good use in the analysis/synthesis phase of this research project. This ABR, which has really been a workhorse in the arduous process of interpreting and synthesizing prolific amounts of data, is a technique known as the “found poem”. As a radical genre, it was made known by its most famous poet-practitioner Annie Dillard. There also exists the Found Poetry Review, an online journal and blog dedicated to this school of poetry, which offers a clarifying description: “Put another way,

found poetry is the literary version of a collage. Poets select a source text or texts — anything from traditional texts like books, magazines and newspapers to more nontraditional sources like product packaging, junk mail or court transcripts — then excerpt words and phrases from the text(s) to create a new piece.” As a bona fide art form with an established following, Found Poetry is making its way into academics, and has been reconstituted as an ABR which I was delighted to discover and apply to my own research.

Therefore, I have chosen found poetry as my primary form of interpretive analysis/synthesis (breaking down data to build back up into a gestalt of new meaning) and representation of essential findings of the written forms of data that have emerged from the research. These data include journaled accounts, field notes, dancer-researcher interview transcripts, and the text of literature review/memoir. At first glance the process of constructing meaning in this poetic way may seem reductionist but in reality, creating found poetry is anything but a diminishing action.

The constructing of found poetry is a creative process that takes a larger, fully written text (I offer the interview transcription as an example) and pulls out chosen words and phrases in their original order and reconstitutes then in the form of a poem. Choice in what words and phrases make the cut are intuitively-made, as a creative process of synthesis (similar to the construction of a visual collage, see below) that aims to draw to the foreground and to elevate the essential meanings and “truths” that organically emerge. While the removal of superfluous words may appear to be a breaking-down of the transcript, in reality, it is only possible to garner essences by allowing that which is intuited to be superfluous to fall away. What is left is the essential meaning we, as researchers, have striven to attain. While found poetry is often likened to collaging techniques, I see parallels between the found poetry approach I have chosen to

employ and dance-as-interpretive method: as innovative, irreducible tools of abstraction, as processes of synthesis, and as ways to get at universal essences. Here, new meaning emerges from wholeness.

### **Borrowing from Expressive Arts Therapy: Collage as Analysis and Synthesis**

In a similar way, I have also referenced my use of the expressive art technique known as *collage* as a method of analytic/synthesis (breaking down data to build back up into a gestalt of new meaning). I see a common context-making mission in the notion of: 1) pastiche, 2) interpretive movement improvisation (think of a *danced collage*), 3) found poetry and 4) collage technique. I differentiate collage technique as an interpretive, synthesizing visual assemblage re-created from images intuitively extracted from magazines, books, photographs and other printed sources. These techniques not only provide a deeply contextualizing way to analyze-and-synthesize (the break down/build up process) and act as a way to present the essential findings integral to this study, when taken together create a more holistic, multi-faceted picture of environmental dance. Very much like dance and in the spirit of transdisciplinarity, this triad of arts-based methods produce irreducible research products.

The use of visual ABR methods is also becoming increasingly a mainstream trend:

Representation has received the most attention. Textual representation, even in its more postmodern, narrative forms, has been criticized for the inherent power structures it propagates, and for the ways it can appropriate the voices and stories of participants (Denzin, 1997). Simultaneously, there has been a realization that cognition and representation are inextricably linked (Eisner, 1997), and that different forms of representation can alter perceptibly one's understanding of phenomena. The convergence of these research conversations has resulted in increasing forays into alternative forms of qualitative writing and presentations (Ellis & Bochner, 1996) pushing the boundaries of what traditionally has been acceptable in our research communities (Davis, Butler-Kisber; 1999).

Furthermore, I suggest that this study of the phenomenon of environmental dance requires just this kind of arts-based approach. In order to understand its essences and in order to produce a holistic description, these kinds of innovative techniques are precisely what is needed to draw out, illuminated and re-present this new knowledge and meaning-making generated by this research:

It is no longer unusual to find sessions, even at the most mainstream research conferences, in which results are presented in performances and other arts-based forms. The "how and what" discussion is gaining momentum and, not surprisingly, parameters are being advanced for what constitutes arts-based research. These include the creation of a virtual reality; the existence of ambiguity; the use of expressive, contextualized, and vernacular language; the promotion of empathy; the personal signature of the writer; and the presence of aesthetic form (Eisner & Barone, 1997, p. 73-80). Arts-based research draws together artist-educators looking for ways to document and research their work, and qualitative researchers experimenting with alternative representational forms (Butler-Kisber, 1998). There are diverging opinions about how much of an "artist" one must be to use alternative forms of representation. The worry is that sloppy forms of arts-based research may serve to undermine the methodological successes that qualitative researchers have achieved to date. This concern perhaps foreshadows the tone and emphasis that will feature strongly in future qualitative discussions (Davis, Butler-Kisber; 1999).

The use of this collection of approaches, which includes visual collage, has allowed my research team and me to choose a best-practice process for understanding and re-presenting the complex phenomenon of environmental dance (human dance interfacing with and within the natural environment). These tools proved to be most complimentary to and most conducive to synthesizing and presenting the essential findings. A secondary achievement has been to be able to pursue a way to doing research that is not only appropriate to the focus and unique needs of this research but to also join a movement of innovative new ways of presenting radically-qualitative data, and to contribute to their academic development and to visibly bring them to the



foreground. The final presentation of these research artifacts and re-presentation will be in the form of a public gallery sharing (as a supplementary “defense” event).

### **A Nuanced Approach to the Dissertation**

*Too much linear thinking and “thinking inside the box” create an academic coffin of lethal security, respectability, and tenure. Yet trying to think outside of the box also means having to disassociate oneself from the comforting approval of the foundations of one’s theories by respected predecessors and colleagues; maybe even having to disprove some of them. It may also require disassociating oneself from the even more comforting possibility of recognition and acclaim by those who had hoped to see you as an ally for their own causes.*

~from *The Authentic Dissertation: Alternative Ways of Knowing, Research, and Representation* (p.247)

*One general area where dance has considerable but largely untapped potential to contribute to our understanding is in regards to the public-private dialectic. Dance as a discipline merges the public and private, or inner and outer worlds if we are to adopt the discourse of dance education, because the dancer’s body is always moving within the environment. Therefore, as these cutting-edge research practices are used and refined, it is likely that we will see more scholarship (outside of dance education) that explores this relationship. In addition, despite the abstract “nonscience” nature of art (or perhaps as a response to it) some of the dance-based methods proposed by social science researchers are among the most systematic offered in the burgeoning field of arts-based research practices.*

~from *Method Meets Art: Arts-based Research Practice*

This dissertation purposely seeks to stretch the boundaries of traditional academic expectation when it comes to the more conventional formatting of this culminating document. This special consideration also plays a vital part in the determination of what the methodological structure must be and what methods serve the overall unique needs of this non-traditional, radical research and accompanying dissertation format. I am deeply inspired and guided by the two extraordinary (if not revolutionary) sources quoted above. In *The Authentic Dissertation* authored by Four Arrows (Don Trent Jacobs) is declared a “road map for students want to make their dissertation more than a series of hoop-jumping machinations that cause them to lose the vitality

and meaningfulness in their research” (Jacobs, 2008, *introduction*). Because I am exploring the phenomenon of environmental dance (as the unique aesthetic interface between dancing artist and the dynamic natural environment) there is an obvious need for a “delivery system”, a way of transmitting new knowledge, that honors the qualitative, creative, artistic, interpretive and expressive nature of the performing art form known as dance, from which my own work is originating. I seek to preserve the integrity and innovation which dance-as-a-way-of-knowing brings to academic research. In doing so, I am proactively ensuring its efficacy and credibility as well.

### **Validity through Authenticity**

It is certain that something valuable would be lost (how does one reduce dance to words and preserve its original integrity?) in trying to fit environmental dance as a way of knowing into a traditional dissertation mold. The implicit claim here is that (environmental) dance can speak most effectively for itself. *The Authentic Dissertation* supports this claim: “the goal of this book is not to replace the historical values of academic research in the Western tradition, but to challenge [as does my proposed eco-epistemology] some of these values and offer alternative ideas that stem from different, sometimes opposing, values (Jacobs, 2008). Martha Graham once said, “the body does not lie”. She was also known to have said: “I fear walking the tightrope. I am afraid to venture into the unknown. Creating something new is like going into outer space. Either you find a planet. Or you won't find a planet. Or you'll completely disappear”. Therefore, my most authentic mode of communicating new knowledge and a scholarly contribution to the world is through the expressive, dancing body. I have acknowledged the “risks” and have willingly embraced them, with the support of my intrepid research team, by stepping outside the box in order to move on in search of “my planet”, with respect for tradition and with hope and faith in innovation.

### **Traditional Dissertation as Supplemental Written Re-presentation**

In order to justify the necessary freedom to properly represent my dissertation research as a *danced* final defense I have also been tasked with producing a conventionally-written format (written dissertation) as a supplemental, supporting document. This serves to “prove” (triangulate) the efficacy of environmental dance to hold its own academically, and it will serve as a guide to those who may be new to the idea that the arts are a viable way to generate data and represent new knowledge. It may also help to illuminate the educational value and wisdom that multiple ways of knowing can offer the sphere of teaching and learning. The idea is simple: the more holistically we can experience some facet of the world the better our chances of more fully and comprehensively understanding it. This is one of the major tenets that inspires my work as a teaching artist and scholar.

### **Review of Written Dissertation Chapters**

A review of the six (6) dissertation chapters are as follows:

- Chapter I: Introduction to the Research Project
- Chapter II: Dancing Indra’s Net: An Emergent Web of Literature and a Personal Journey through an Ecology of Ideas and Experiences
- Chapter III: Goethean Scientific Method—Expanded exploration of the “Five (5) Step Process” as research method, creative process and teaching strategy.
- Chapter IV: Methodologies and Methods
- Chapter V: Findings: Essential Findings and Syntheses
- Chapter VI: Concluding Remarks and Future Research

A brief discussion and outline proposing an emergent environmental dance eco-pedagogy is presented as a supplemental appendix section in the written dissertation.

Highlighted “areas of interest” examined in the written dissertation include:

- Childhood experiences; education; development of child-nature relationship.
- Dance histories and the lineages of the various dance forms and genres.
- Phenomenologies; perceptions; inner and outer geographies.
- Holistic sciences, systems thinking, paradigm shifts/worldviews and Goethe’s holistic science as the nexus of these three areas.
- Repeating patterns in nature, pattern languages.
- The arts as research methods; journaling; synergy between dance and writing.
- Ritual.
- Transdisciplinary; critical ontology.

These “areas of interest” represent emergent, transdisciplinary literature. They manifest in Chapter Two as “seed questions” which, coincidentally closely correspond to and cross-reference the eight (8) nested research questions. Taken together, I suggest that they create a multi-faceted framework with which I have used to describe and define the emergent practice of “environmental dance”.

As outlined below, five (5) “emerging” dance pieces will be analyzed and synthesized in five (5) descriptive essays that address and re-present in some (emergent) way how they have been informed by this study’s above noted areas of interest as well as each one’s related research findings. These essays illustrate the creative, emergent processes that underlie the creation of each dance piece as they, at once emanate from and merge with the research findings (which I see as an inductive-deductive, iterative cycling process); these essays narratively capture five (5) unique creative journeys that comprise a multi-faceted exploration into the “lived

experience” of the environmental dance artist/researcher with the emergent findings that contribute to the building of a “theory” of environmental dance. The process for composing the essays includes an iterative distillation and analysis/synthesis process (that mirrors the creative process of making of the dances) of journal entries, experiential explorations, rehearsals, performances, interviews and company de-briefings (see methods discussion below). The essays also reflect elements of the (above outlined) emergent areas of interest; and these help to add a richness in the description of each creative process. Further, the essays contribute both idiosyncratic and shared essential insights/ potentialities in this study’s goal to unearth a deep understanding of environmental dance as “phenomenon” and as emergent discipline, art form, pedagogy and practice. The essays also include excerpted personal journal narratives, poetry and photography as further “illustration”. Finally, these essays serve as the textual “guides”, supplementing the danced dissertation research pieces.

### **The Danced Dissertation—“Mountain Dance”**

The final presentation featured a full evening presentation of my *research findings* that took the form of fully developed, collaborative, dance pieces that became a visual, experiential equivalent of attending a summit performance on Mt. Monadnock. In essence, my team and I were tasked with bringing the mountain to the traditional stage for the audience, through an actual, live unfolding of the environmental dance performance, enhanced with a backdrop of video footage of mountain summit performances and scenery. The performance drew upon a full and rich year of site work (and research) of my dance company *Dianne Eno /Fusion Danceworks*, re-represented and formatted as a multi-media dance “dissertation” at the Colonial Theater in Keene, NH. Following the performance my dance research team and I offered an informal public dialogue between artists and audience, in a way that is similar to a more conventional dissertation defense.

An art and photography gallery was also presented in the theater foyer, as a way to share the multiple forms of art employed in this arts-based research project. I tentatively plan to present and additional “gallery” retrospective of this entire research project in September, 2018.

The “danced dissertation” program was comprised of original, emergent dance works (dance as data, and dance as new knowledge) as outlined above, each one relating to, referencing (in one way or in multiple ways) and ultimately informing each of the eight (8) nested research questions outlined previously. The dances were interspersed with segments of photography, spoken narrative/ text/ poetry and video (additional forms of “data” and “new knowledge”). The length of the program was approximately one hour and a half to two hours in duration.

Photographs of the original field work, performance on Mt. Monadnock and the traditionally-stage multi-media performance at the Colonial theater illustrate each of the discussion essays as presented in the electronic version of the dissertation document. Video clips were utilized in team debriefs, as a vital component of the creative process. My research team and I have attempted to share the essence of the creative process that was an integral part of the research project. The following is a synopsis of the five (5) dance works representing the accompanying research essays (see Chapter Five— Essential Findings):

- Dance #1: “Goethean Suite”: a five-part exploration and expression of Goethe’s five-step *scientific process* which has become an integral part of my *creative process*, the primary way my dancers learn to engage with the natural landscape/ site and as a developing new pedagogical tool. Unknown to most is that Goethe’s method was adopted by Henry David Thoreau and was most likely his own model of engagement with Monadnock circa the mid 1800’s.

- Dance #2: “Monadnock Angel”: a solo (danced by me); based on Abbott Thayer’s painting *Monadnock Angel*; this is a collaboration between me, a vocalist and musical composer—together we will use a hermeneutic-phenomenological approach to derive “data” from a viewing of the original painting and by hiking Thayer’s favorite Pumpelly Trail on Monadnock; the dance piece and its accompaniment will be created out of these data.
- Dance #3: “Word Dance”: served to weave together the performance pieces into a cohesive whole, by danced interpretation of one researcher’s re-presented field journal entries. A live, vocal narration of the journal text served as accompaniment to these dance segues; text was derived from one dancer/researcher’s journal entries (the same dancer/researcher performed the sequences) which I synthesized into found poetry. The finished poetry was vocally-presented by the concert narrator.
- Dance #4: “Cloud Study”: a performance improvisation that demonstrates the ability of the environmental dancer to “dialogue” through movement with natural phenomena, here, the clouds that danced above us during our days of field work at the summit of Mt. Monadnock. This performance piece was allowed to manifest and evolve in real time in order to share the authenticity of this process with the viewing audience.
- Dance #5: “Ayllu”: explicated the idea of environmental site-specific dance as a form of autopoietic “language”, in this context as “dialogue”, communicative exchange, and “conversation” between dancer and site; the title of this dance piece is “Ayllu” a concept from indigenous Andean culture (Peru) that means kinship between humans and other humans as well as a kinship between humans and “animals, plants, streams, rocks, and spirits [genius loci] of a particular, geographical place” (Kincheloe, 2006, p.18).

While these dance “products” (dance pieces) stand alone as bona fide, inter-related sources of data and comprise a full-length evening program/ performance, these also become the expressed and re-presented new knowledge that emerges from this study (Hervey, 2000, p.40). It is also important to remember that the multi-modal ways in which dance has been purposefully employed in this research project is but one of several arts-based methods I have put to use. The underlying purpose and supposition of this multiple arts-based method approach is to attain the highest level of validity possible while seeking to show how similar themes may be mined from a variety of artistic explorations of a single phenomenal focus—here, the environmental dance site and the natural elements that interface with the environmental dance artists. The idea is that the researcher will be successful in attaining desired validity if there is a perceived convergence of thematic patterns that consistently emerge through the varied arts-based methods (journaling, photographic essays, poetry, dance, etc.). In other words, the assumption has been that different methods (the “pastiche”) would produce supportive, if not identical meaning and derivative, relational descriptions and interpretations.

Another feature of the danced dissertation is that the final dissertation defense/ performance re-interprets “collected data sets” through a process of iterations which, with each cycle of analysis-synthesis spirals deeper into the essential meanings that are sought through this research. In this way “data” and “findings” are further filtered through the various components that comprise the creative process of making the dances as well as the final theatrical performance (lights, costumes, dance pieces accompanying graphics, photography, video and text) that converge into a singular synthesis.



## A Series of Nested Research Questions

This inquiry is organized to explore and address the nested series of eight (8) research questions that are prominently featured throughout this dissertation. The significance of the organizational/conceptual structure of *nestedness* is to embed a sense of an underlying ecocentric worldview (in contrast to the predominant *anthropocentric worldview* of western culture), as the necessary perspective that aligns all aspects of this study with a paradigm of synthesis, self-organization (autopoiesis), networks, systems and holism. It also infers a sense of interdependence of relationship and unity:

Quantum theory thus reveals a basic oneness of the universe. It shows that we cannot decompose the world into independently existing smallest units. As we penetrate into matter, nature does not show us any isolated "building blocks," but rather appears as a complicated web of relations between the various parts of the whole. These relations always include the observer in an essential way. The human observer constitutes the final link in the chain of observational processes, and the properties of any atomic object can be understood only in terms of the object's interaction with the observer. (Capra, 1975 p.52).

I have intentionally built in constant reflection regarding the fractal nature of the holist's perspective on the universe. Such a unifying literary device aligns the research questions with the methodologies, the methods, and the literature review as well. In addition, there is an intentional emphasis on pairing the microcosmic with the macrocosmic, which reveals a rooted connection of the specific to the general, in terms of scale and context—one is a miraculous reflection of the other. I believe that by grounding this written documentary of this environmental dance research project, the reader can get a good sense of this interconnected (transdisciplinary) sense of reality. Each research question emanates from the preceding question, in an intended relational context. This is not to be mistaken as a kind of hierarchal ordering which privileges one question and one area of focus over another—to the contrary, it

shows that without the inclusion of one question in this intended series, something is lost in pursuit of the wholeness and complexity that is environmental dance. “Systems thinking is “contextual,” which is the opposite of analytical thinking. Analysis means taking something apart in order to understand it; systems thinking means putting it into the context of a larger whole” (Capra, 2014, p. 34).

The following are the nested set of relational, contextual research questions that drive this research:

- Question #1—“What is the lived experience of the environmental dancer/researcher? What is the personal development and “dance journey” of the dancer/researcher (from childhood)?”
- Question #2—“What are the historical dance roots (lineages) of environmental dance (as practice, performance and pedagogy)? How does the dancer/researcher thread of development reflect the historical development of dance and environmental dance? How does one define environmental dance?”
- Question #3—“What is it like to dance (engage) with the natural site?”
- Question #4—“How does a systems science paradigm inform this research? How is the Goethean Scientific (5-step) Method adapted as an effective environmental dance research method?”
- Question #5—“What is the significance (and the process) of “bridging inner and outer geographies to the practice of environmental dance?”
- Question #6—“What is the significance (and the process) of “site channeling” (giving an expressive voice to the landscape/site) to environmental dance inquiry?”

- Question #7—“How does environmental dance reflect ritual action? How does environmental dance act as a catalyst for the transformation of the human/nature relationship?”
- Question #8—“How does environmental dance inspire and promote a critical ontology? How is environmental dance a transdisciplinary practice? What would an environmental dance (K-12) eco-pedagogy look like?”

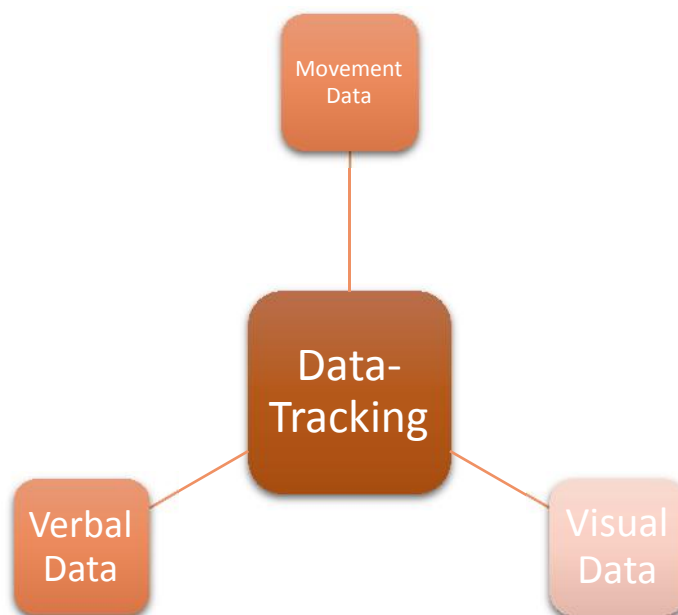
### **Aligning with Emergent Literature and “Seed Questions”**

Early in the research process, it became very evident that there would be a synergistic, cross-referencing relationship between the site work (also known as fieldwork—see explication of research sites, below) and the emergent literature. A day collecting data on site, would inspire field notes and the very productive and informing grounded theory practice of memoing (writing down items of interest, aha moments, moments within the research period that I wanted to reflect on later, etc.), which in turn, would lead to further reflection and data-collecting, long after my team and I had left the mountain summit. Very often, such writing and reflection would produce a literature lead and I would follow up with more memoing. This back-and-forth referencing dialogue between our research activities on site and the reflexive writing practice that always followed, lead to the formulation of the interconnected web of literature, representing seemingly separate disciplinary areas. This collection of academic literature, which accumulated over the course of the research project, ultimately became the literature review, as an “ecology of ideas”.

The web of ideas (reflected back to me through the literature) was organized under the auspices of the metaphor of Indra’s net, intentionally seeking to unify them into a nuanced whole, each one, reflecting some aspect of the data that was emerging in the field work. Initially, this took a leap of faith which, in time, lead to a readable pattern of cause (field work) and effect

(reflection and connection to ideas and “areas of interest”) that lead to specific literature; this became a standard practice, over time and throughout the entire project. The literature served not only as another rich, complex source of data, but also served to validate for my research team and I what was emerging on site and in the studio.

A stylistic feature of this non-traditional literature review, is that it intentionally wove in another discipline-unifying thread—which was the juxtaposition of my own unfolding development as a dancer, choreographer, teaching artist, student and researcher. The review



*Figure 48: The practice of "data-tacking" helped the team understand how various forms of data informed and validated other forms and created a network of inter-related experiences and expression, with each form of data appearing as fractals of others (D. Eno©).*

provided another vital function of the grounded theory methodology known as “constant comparative analysis”. Essentially, this aspect of the research process manifested as a reflective, back-and-forth dialectic of two distinct threads of evolution—my personal history and the somehow-related, emergent discipline of literature which, would either support or challenge aspects of my own personal journey. This process and the writing of the review produced

prolific amounts of valuable data. In grounded theory, the literature review is typically considered another source of data. A habit of “data-tracking” enabled us, as researchers to track the convergences and developing interconnectivity with movement data, visual data and verbal (written) data.

During this data-collecting process which included the writing of Chapter Two, the disciplines of emergent literature began to align with the above-specified “areas of interest” highlighted above. Here are the “seed questions” that express the essences of each disciplinary “area of interest”, as they directly correspond, reflect and cross-reference each in the series of nested research questions:

- Seed question #1—“Who am I (are we) as a child (as children) of nature?”
- Seed question #2—“How did I (we) get here?”
- Seed question #3—“How do I (we) as an environmental dance artist “speak” (dialogue) with nature?”
- Seed question #4—“How do we experience and express human-nature unity and wholeness?”
- Seed question #5—“How does environmental dance “give voice” to nature?”
- Seed question #6—“How do we as environmental dances/researchers embody and express the landscape?”
- Seed question #7—“How does environmental dance transform the human-nature relationship?”
- Seed question #8—“How does environmental dance as practice, performance and pedagogy, embody a paradigm, epistemology and ontology of holism?”

I view the seed questions as the poetic counterparts to the corresponding nested research questions and they were devised and implemented as a literary device to present the essence of the research questions in a style more in keeping with the voice of the memoir. Alternately, the research questions function to present an ordered, relational approach to the research and to parse out what data and findings specifically relate to:

- 1) grounded theory (questions #4, #5, #6, #7);
- 2) phenomenology (questions #1, #2, #3, #5, #6); and
- 3) both methodologies (#5, #6, #8).

Taken together as a holistic way to unify two “voices” (artist and social scientist), they symbolize the bridging of the arts with science and the potential for a synergistic co-existence, which is an underlying mission of this research.

### **Literature—an Emergent Theoretical Web**

Because this research called upon a grounded theory methodology, in part, as a way to fully grasp and understand the emergent qualities of the particular brand of environmental dance that is the focus of this study, it was also necessary that I follow a different protocol when it came to the considerations of the traditional literature review<sup>72</sup>. To include a preconceived literature review in this circumstance would be to externally force a theoretical framework on the phenomena in question. In doing so, I would negate the idea of an emerging environmental dance theory originating out of the research data.

For this important reason, grounded theory protocol explicitly requires that the researcher set aside the preliminary, foundational literature review (this requirement aligns with my need to

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<sup>72</sup> See: Glaser, BG. 1992. *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis: Emergence versus Forcing*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

set aside my own preconceptions about environmental dance in order to see it anew, which I see as a kind of bracketing). Seemingly, this serves to preserve the integrity of the approach as well as the integrity of the data. The danger of the traditional literature review is that it may have tainted the research process and may have actually exerted some influence on how the data was collected, coded and analyzed.

In this case, the literature was treated as data and was drawn in as an equal player in the research process<sup>73</sup>. Just as theory emerges as a ground-up development of understanding of the phenomenon/a which is/ are the focus of the inquiry, the supporting literature also emerges and establishes itself as a clear framework aligned with and in the service of optimally supporting the data. Discussion of supporting literature became part of the writing stage of the research process. I have found that the inclusion of an emergent theoretical web in lieu of the pre-established conventional literature review, has brought many gems of conceptual considerations to the surface and has served as critical guideposts in assembling and order and logic to the plethora of date-inspired findings in this study.

The theoretical web draws from a variety of disciplines which may provide ideological proxies that align with the nuanced research discoveries that will help to illuminate and richly describe the characteristics and qualities of the nascent discipline of environmental dance. Furthermore, this research draws from multiple and seemingly unrelated disciplines that will reflect the holistic nature of the research itself. I acknowledge once again, that one of the primary missions of this project is to unify the disparate universes of art with science, where the notion of

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<sup>73</sup> “Research process” in this instance, is an ordered, systematized approach that includes several iterations of: data collecting—note-taking—coding—memoing—sorting—and writing. See also: Glaser, BG. 1992. *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis: Emergence versus Forcing*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

transdisciplinarity (Nicolescu, 2002) becomes an appropriate framework for accomplishing this goal in a theoretical way.

Therefore, I expected that my emergent theoretical web would undoubtedly draw from an eclectic collection of sources, and disciplines—and it did! These once-separated universes of knowledge, unified by the metaphor of Indra’s net included: systems theory, dance history, dance phenomenology, art, narrative and journaling, the creative process, constructivist theory, Goethean science, mimesis, linguistics and metaphor, somatics, critical pedagogy, eco-humanities, eco-pedagogy, human development, critical ontology and eco-psychology. The theoretical web is presented in Chapter Two.

### **The Research Team**

A team of six (6) environmental dancers was recruited to carry out this research. They include:

- 1) Three (3) current/veteran core performing members of my environmental dance company known as *Dianne Eno/Fusion Danceworks*;
- 2) A former member of my dance company;
- 3) Newly-recruited member(s);
- 4) Myself, as the company artistic director/lead researcher; and finally;
- 5) The mountain landscape itself. I highlight each of the research team members and their diverse backgrounds and specific contributions to this research in Chapter V.

It is necessary that I make the distinction here, between “research team” and “participant”. I maintain that the roles my dancer/researchers have taken on in the service of this research project are different from those of a traditional participant. There is a paradigmatic subtlety here that is not so apparent, but is, nevertheless, important to illuminate. First and foremost this study is driven



by the principles of wholeness, which are unifying, self-referential, self-organizing and non-hierarchical. There is also an underlying assumption that all parts of the whole (here, referring to the research team) are equitable players (to the extent that this is pragmatically possible). Therefore, instead of viewing my co-researchers as participants in a focused project that I might lead (in the privileged role, higher, as in a constructed hierarchy of power), I envisioned my team, long before the recruitment took place and before we began researching on the summit of Monadnock, as a group of knowledgeable, professional collaborators who each brought something unique to the project. While I took responsibility for the pre-research design of the project and its final analysis process and write-up, we all contributed equally in a myriad of functions that transformed a dance company into a responsible, and productive research team.

Because of this expressed explicit need to relinquish a more traditional research hierarchy (defining the relationship and power structure between researcher and participants) at the onset, there was no prior IRB protocol deemed necessary. While this may at first glance seem counter-intuitive (and perhaps radically non-traditional), this structural choice serves to strengthen and concretize the paradigmatically-driven philosophy and the operating function of the team in a way that optimally serves the unique requirements and demands of the research and its associated activities. In allaying any concerns for privacy and/or safety issues, I point out that my research team are also active members of my professional performing company of dance artists who all have the typical expectation of any professional performing artist—that they will be seen publicly, they will be photographed, videoed and even quoted in various news media. While no official implied consent waivers were required, each team member was required to sign a dance company release form (an equivalent of a waiver).

### **The Research Site(s)**

The primary location of the research was at the summit of Mt. Monadnock (E. 3165'), located in Jaffrey, NH. It is important to note that the mountain summit provided a dual function to the research—it was, at once, physical site where the dance research activities unfolded in real time and the mountain was also a co-collaborator in the creative process of generating data through the dialogue between human dancer and landscape. Data-gathering activities and tasks required numerous days of fieldwork at the summit over a period of seven (7) months. A typical day of site work on the mountain included a 1.5 hour hike to the summit, a 4-5 hour period of conducting various focused activities and data-collecting tasks and a 1.5 hour hike down from the summit. Typically, site work took place on weekend days (depending on weather conditions), with preliminary, preparatory studio work took place in NYC and/or NH during the week leading up to the onsite work. Locations of studio work included: Mary Anthony Dance Studio in NYC, Wesleyan University (dance department); Allsport in Poughkeepsie, NY and Antioch University New England in Keene, NH.

Research-related performance sites included: Antioch University New England (a danced dissertation proposal presentation), the summit of Mt. Monadnock, Jaffrey, NH and the Colonial Theater in Keene, NH.

### **Multi-modal Qualitative Methods**

The research draws upon multi-modal qualitative methods. Each of these, aside from the Goethean Scientific Method (GSM) as the creative process model and the prolific employment of on-site observation, is an arts-based endeavor and unifies the methods as such. These methods include:

- Environmental site-specific dance—the primary source of data was the actual danced movements of dancers in a myriad of research situations. These situations may be individual improvisational exercises, simple warm ups, guided imagery sessions, rehearsals (studio and site) or the performances and informal public sharings that all are an integral part of the year’s planned research work. These will be recorded (made permanent record) as videos, photographs and journaled accounts, reviewed, and reflected upon.
- I was guided by a model of artistic inquiry formulated by choreographer/ dance artist Bill T. Jones in the creation of his dance work called *Still/Here*. The process emphasized gathering movement data from dancer/ participants while working with the dancers in a workshop setting. I will follow a protocol that is guided by his approach as outlined in Lenore Wadsworth Hervey’s *Artistic Inquiry in Dance Movement Therapy: Creative Alternatives for Research* (Hervey, 2002, pp. 95-109). My process included:
  - 1) Using dance company rehearsal time as creative, collaborative workshops oriented toward solving the “creative problem” (this a distinct and direct relationship to the research questions and to on-site experiences;
  - 2) Introduction of the particular creative task (see “research questions” and “areas of interest”);
  - 3) Company “warm-up” which sometimes included guided imagery exercises (adapted from *Place-based Exercises*; see appendices);
  - 4) Group dynamics exercises (improvisational movement exercises);
  - 5) Dancer/ co-researchers created original movement studies in response to the creative task; and

6) The company worked together in an on-going hermeneutic-like process of creating, refining, creating, refining, etc. toward a collective goal of completing each of the dance works described in detail below.

7) Journaling, poetry writing was utilized to “distill” and “re-synthesized” movement material—this provides deeper insight and engagement with the movement material and directly aided the creative process of shaping the final research dance pieces.

- Narrative inquiry—a major source of data in this research was derived not only through danced movement expression itself but will also come from written, journaled accounts of these experiences. The research team and I were constantly reflecting on our work in this way. Cap Ethnography<sup>74</sup> was also to be employed as a way to rework journaled data and to transform this into a representational art form, often as poetry. The “found poem”<sup>75</sup> technique was also be used as a way to record and reflect upon environmental dance experiences as recorded and documented in journal entries. This technique was also elevated in the research process, as a primary way to re-present data and findings; “found poems” will therefore provide a prominent voice in Chapter V.

I have included here, an example of the *Found Poem Technique* that I created in response to the first journal entry that appears on page one of this proposal. I am intrigued with this arts-based technique, in its unique ability to reduce written text, while

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<sup>74</sup> “Writing: A Method of Inquiry” by Laurel Richardson, in Denzin & Lincoln, (Eds). (2000). *Handbook of Qualitative Research (Second edition)*. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, Inc.

<sup>75</sup> See: *Found Poems* at [www.Ezine.com](http://www.Ezine.com). “Poetics” by Linda J. Austin (“Found Poetry”); also Hansen, T. “Letting Language Do: Some Speculations on Finding Found Poems”. *College English*, v.42, n.3 (November 1980).

simultaneously re-creating a synthesis of images, ideas and expression that reveal the *essential qualities* of recorded experiences:

**Found Poem: And So, I Dance**

I close my eyes...skipping barefoot.

Spirits speak to me.

And I hear and comprehend through my senses.

The wind blows gently,

Surround me here—

Song, spirit, sensation.

My forest muse, my world-within-worlds;

The nearby brook—

Brings me home.

I intend to stay here forever.

Blue sky and clouds

Dance and sparkle—

Transcends...

Timeless...

A blissful eternity.

I belong to it.

Rock thinking.

Witness the unfolding.

Spiraling, circular moments

Continually being born  
And sent aloft into the world.

Radiant and exalted melody—

A symphony.

I dance...

With the breeze, the sun, the birdsong.

Rhythmic percussion, delicate movement...

And so, I dance.

~Dianne Eno©, 2012

- Videography—offers a way to concretize and make the fleeting moments of the unfolding dance permanent artifacts. These may be “read” as text via a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. The video clips were a vital part of the creative process.
- Photography—see videography.
- Interviews—with dance company members/ research team in the form of discussions, personal conversations, more formalized one-on-one, open-ended interviews. (See appendices for *Interview Guide*).
- Research team discussions, fieldwork and rehearsal work sessions/de-briefings—see interviews. This portion of the research focused on drawing data from former members of the dance company through an open-ended discussion about “what it is like to dance on Mt. Monadnock” and more generally, “what it is like to dance in the natural environment”. In addition to verbal discussion, each participant created movement study responses which

were “performed” within the group gathering; a group performance piece was created from these individual movement studies.

### **Comprehensive Summary of the Research Process**

Throughout the research process, there were multiple cycles (iterations) of grounded theory processes put into action, as previously outlined. With each cycle, the research became more refined and moved closer toward a possible a theory (or theories). Corresponding and informing literature was constantly noted and recorded for its contributions to the research. Through the intentional pairing with the phenomenological approach, data were provided as rich descriptive renderings of the essential qualities of the phenomena in question, here, “environmental dance” and the interface of the dancing body-mind with the dynamic natural landscape where the dance unfolds. In a very similar way to grounded theory, phenomenological research is unpredictable and open ended. And like the environmental dancer’s body and the ever-changing landscape, such research is fluid and dynamic and requires the same attributes to be present within the researcher(s).

### **Dancer/researcher Orientation**

Each member of the research team met with me privately (informal interview) to discuss the requirements and demands of the research project, scheduling, performances, and other necessary logistical considerations. Then, the Goethean Scientific Method (5-step protocol) was explained and discussed, followed by a “natural” on-site or adapted in-studio practical orientation to the process as it would be implemented as our go-to primary research tool and creative process model. Sites and locations for the dancer orientations included: Central Park, NYC (team member Trayer Run-Kowzun); Antioch University New England, Keene, NH (team member Carin Torp); Gilson Pond Recreation Area at Monadnock State Park, Jaffrey, NH (team

member Amy MacQueen); and the summit of Mt. Monadnock, Jaffrey, NH (team member Mary Madsen). All GSM orientations were conducted by me, the research project designer.

### **First hike and Site Work**

A preliminary day onsite at the summit of Mt. Monadnock, allowed the dancers to explore, observe and move within the area where our data-collecting and explorations would take place. Team members were further oriented to the research and to the site by the following activities and tasks:

- Team members were given journals and art supplies for onsite and offsite use.
- Sense-of-place exercises (see appendix) used as the modes of explorative “dialogue” between body and granite.
- A “bare foot tour” of the mountain summit research and performance areas—team members were able to take photographs and journal during this activity. They were also able to move and improvise in and around the rocky granite formations. Time was also allotted for personal exploration.
- Team members are tasked with selecting a “micro-site, where they will begin each onsite session with a particular research task.
- A complete review and discussion of the Goethean Scientific Method followed by a practical application of each of the five steps at each team members’ micro-site; this was followed up by a team discussion. An exploration (as danced dialogue/ observation) of each step focused on the following:
  - 1) Experiencing (with Goethe’s “fresh eyes” approach--epoche, a practice likened to and referencing grounded theory (GT) “bracketing”) the physicality, material being of the phenomenon within the space/time matrix;



- 2) Isolating out the spatial experience (playing with this, through movement and observing) of the phenomenon of focus;
  - 3) Isolating out the temporal experience (playing with this, through movement and observing) of the phenomenon of focus;
  - 4) “Observing”, “perceiving: and “sensing” with all sensorial faculties (once again, sometimes these are not always “be-still” moment, but rather, can be a “be” moment;
  - 5) Seeking unity (“oneness”) with the phenomenon—an improvisational exercise is designed to be a “give-and-take” dialogue;
  - 6) Three (3) –four (4) iterations of the above steps as the primary way to engage with the land, phenomenon, the “micro-site” of each dancer/researcher.
- I introduced the concept of what I call “phenomenal mapping”—a technique I devised to expedite the process of building an intimate relationship between artist/researcher and the mountain landscape. It required each team member to engage various areas of the summit area, alternating between physical, improvisational movement (and sometimes just walking the rocky surfaces to get a basic “feel” for the terrain), journal-writing, photograph-taking, and generally beginning to blur the spaces of separation between team member and the landscape. Team members are asked to periodically close their eyes (on site and off) and to viscerally recall the sights, sensations and perceptions of this experience. This is intended to retrain the body and mind to act in concert as the intelligent “body-mind”; this is a necessary research tool and skill that was constantly honed over time. I firmly believe that such a retraining has helped to ensure a deepen, more fully informed experience of the mountain, encouraging an embedded sense of how

to move compatibly (and thus, safely) with the collaborating and supporting mountain landscape.

- On-site “data-tracking” is for use on-site or in the studio (See above Figure 50), as a primary way to monitor and organize data that were collected during any given research period--this tracking mechanism was organized into three (3) primary categories of data:
  - 1) Movement data—A way to chronicle the progress made by dancer/researchers in the application of the Goethean Scientific Method (GSM), as well as other research-focused movement activities, explorations, assigned tasks, later reflected upon in written field journal accounts;
  - 2) Verbal data/ De-brief discussions (treated as another layer/form of data)—group discoveries, revelations, problems, reflections, suggestions through the recounting of shared and individual experiences on site and in the studio;
  - 3) Visual data/ Observation—watching the research process of others generated more reflective journal responses for each research period; the team periodically shared journals with team members and me.

### **A Personal Day (of orientation) on the Mountain**

See specific entry in Chapter V, presented as “data”.

### **Iterations and Cycles of Studio Work (in preparation for site work)**

Studio time provided the much-needed focus on preparing for upcoming site work. Often, particular new tasks were introduced, discussed and practiced (where possible). A full de-briefing of the previous site work was done at the onset of the studio period. A full-review of and additional practice of the Goethean Scientific Method encouraged the confidence of team members and over time, they became experts in using this approach throughout all aspects of data collection.

## Site Work

- Use of the 1.5 hike to the site as a time for reflection, to review the Goethean Scientific Process and to generally make use of the sights, sounds and experiences as rich sources of inspiration and deepening moments of getting to know the mountain.
- Upon arrival, gather for a brief group warm-up/stretch-out, discussion of the day's agenda and the necessary intake of food and water.
- Team members disperse to their "micro-sites"; individual practical review of GSM; I visit each micro site and team member to observe and answer any questions.
- Journal-writing period.
- Lunch/discussion.
- Afternoon data-gathering task; movement studies; observation (by me) of on-going creative work and progress at micro-sites.
- Hike down from the summit.
- Additional iterations of studio prep and site work eventually produce data in the forms of: movement studies that capture the dialogue between team member and micro site; observations of dancers; photography; journal entries; sketch, maps and diagrams; the eventual development of loosely-structured improvisational movement score to be "performed" publicly on site.
- Throughout these data-collection focused work periods (on site and in studio), I began the process of the coding and memoing process immediately, which continued throughout and up to the writing stage of the research project. I also periodically reviewed the journal entries (and other forms of data) generated by the research team.

### **Public Summit Performance**

This performance, presenting the improvisational (semi-structured) forms of future co-choreographed research dance pieces presented on stage (Colonial Theater) as a multi-media representation of danced data and findings.

### **Additional Site Work**

After the summit performance the focus of the research project and its accompanying tasks shifted toward the final presentation performance. Several additional days of mountain site work gave way to a heavier schedule of intensive in-studio work. As we began to structure the research dance pieces, we continued to collect data, all the while. The structure of the final performance began to emerge:

- Five (5) dance research pieces envisioned (musical accompaniment remained as it was for the improvised versions of the emergent research dance works, refined, rehearsed, and costumed. Data analysis continued.
- Video montages capturing the “history” of environmental dance on Mt. Monadnock as well as still photography capturing site work are designed and completed.
- Staged performance (July 22, 2011); public discussion/ Q& A with research team followed.
- Additional data collection/analysis until theoretical saturation is perceived.
- Final collection of research team journals, further data analysis and exit interviews of research team members.

## Chapter V

### Essential Findings and Syntheses

#### Introduction to Essential Findings

In this chapter, I will present to the reader how “collected data” was interpreted, “analyzed” and finally, re-presented in uniquely-fashioned arts-based forms (as described in detail in Chapter IV) that are designed to collectively offer optimal insight into each of the driving research questions (reviewed, for the reader, at the beginning of Section #4--Literature as Data). This assemblage, also known as *pastiche* (Clandinin, 2007, p.586) of cross-referencing re-presentational forms include: 1) improvised movement, 2) created movement studies; 3) polished, choreographed dance pieces, 4) environmental dance performances, 5) art journaling, 6) photographs and photo-essays, and 7) CAP Ethnography (Creative Arts Practice). The CAP Ethnographic re-presentational forms include a coding protocol (that shares similarities to traditional grounded theory coding, also utilized here to draw out and illuminate the fundamental phenomenological characteristics of environmental dance experience), and, the re-presentational practice of constructing “found poems” and other narrative writing forms (Richardson, 2000).

In this grounded theory/phenomenological exploration of the phenomenon named “environmental dance”, the emergent facets of this nuanced genre of dance rise from the research tasks themselves. These tasks were undertaken on-site, in studio rehearsals, as the site-specific public performance at the summit of Mt. Monadnock and finally, as a fully-stage multimedia public presentation at the Colonial Theater in Keene, NH. Data was generated by and harvested from each of these tasks.

This chapter will illustrate each mode of re-presentation as a vital part of the story of this research project’s essential findings as it unfolds for the reader; it is sectioned into four (4) main

areas corresponding to the four interacting, cross-referencing data sources which include: 1) my own heuristic profile; 2) dancer-researcher phenomenological profiles; 3) the emergent literature review/memoir; and 4) the five (5) distinct research dance pieces co-created by the dance research team in collaboration with the mountain and presented in two (2) distinctly separate performance productions.

I began with the heuristic profile based on my own self-study, delving deeply into my own “lived experiences” as an environmental dance artist. This served to establish a baseline of foundational “lived environmental dance experience” that was constantly compared with and against data that has served to capture the “lived experiences” of members of the research team. In metaphorical terms I viewed this as an ongoing oscillation in our larger environmental dance research experience ecosystem—a dynamic give-and-take that was taking place throughout the entire research period. As my experience was negotiated with that of my dance research team a “universal” of environmental dance lived experience began to emerge and was found to exist somewhere in the steadied middle ground between my heuristic story and the team’s own phenomenological stories as they each unfolded.

This heuristic profile aims to tell the story of my environmental dance research journey as one single facet and as one piece of a larger dialogic process. As a phenomenological Human Science endeavor, I am bound to the longstanding tradition of bracketing my prior experiences, “knowledge” and judgments (constituted through the past twenty-five (25) years as a performing and teaching environmental dance artist ) so that a truer, universal snapshot of the “what’s-it-like-ness” of environmental dance may evolve over time, through my unfolding story. The concept of bracketing is akin to Husserl’s traditional notion of epoche (also known as phenomenological reduction). Clark Moustakis points out:

Husserl (1931, p.110) contrasted the phenomenological universal Epoche with Cartesian doubt. The phenomenological Epoche does not eliminate everything, does not deny the reality of everything, does not doubt everything—*only the natural attitude*, the biases of everyday knowledge, as a basis of truth and reality. What is doubted is the scientific “facts,” the knowing of things in advance, from an external base, rather from internal reflection and meaning (Moustakis, 1994, p. 85).

The Husserlian concept of phenomenological reduction is reminiscent of Stage One of the Goethean Scientific Method (GSM), known as “first impression” or first-meeting and this initial encounter with the mountain landscape as our research site calls for the same kind of setting aside prior knowledge and judgement in order to eliminate phenomenological “noise” of past experiences, enabling a pure and untainted (as much as is humanly possible) initial moment of engaging the research site/ phenomenon.



Figure 49: Winter on-site Goethean explorations--the creation of "micro-site" studies, focusing on “dwelling in and breaking out” (D. Eno, pictured); while we had intended to work on the summit, below-zero cold and strong winds inspired us to retreat to work at the tree line, on a sunny, south-eastern slope (DEFDW©)..

It also reflects the tenets of *tacit knowing* as Polanyi (1958) asserts as part of a dialectic of “dwelling in and breaking out” (Baumgarten, 1994; p. 11). I use this concept to accurately capture my integrated relationship with environmental dance. Baumgarten explains:

In dwelling is our extending ourselves into something known so well that it becomes an extension of the self and a tool for further exploration of reality. When a painter first picks up a paint brush as an object; but once the painter acquires the skill of using the brush, the brush becomes an extension of the painter’s body so that the painter may attend from the brush to the painting. The painter dwells in the brush, reaching out from this known entity in order to discover an as yet unknown, new reality, the painting. The particulars in which we dwell are clues for extending ourselves into the discovery of external reality; and by doing so we find meaning not in the particulars but in their integration. We dwell in our perceptions, former encounters with paintings, iconographic and formal features, and such to form a progressively more meaningful relationship with works of art (1994, p. 12).

Bringing my artistic vision of dancing-on-the-mountain into reality, working to develop environmental dance as a regular phenomenal event on Monadnock for over twenty-five years and now making this prior groundwork the topic of my doctoral research is a living example of Polanyi’s indwelling process as a part of the tacit way of knowing process. Baumgarten adds how intuition and imagination (interestingly, both addressed in Goethe’s own stages three (3) and four (4)) play a vital role in tacit knowing:

Thus, intuition sparks the imagination which implements our intention; imagination imbued with intuition informs and enriches our tacit mindbodily being [body-mind]. This process of knowing is not primarily a dialectic between imagination and intuition but a unique and entwined aspect of the act of extending ourselves mindbodily into tacit integrations that achieve an aim and appreciate a comprehensive whole” (p. 12).

This is precisely my aim in the following section. I begin with a single field journal account of my tradition of taking a solo day on the mountain to reacquaint myself with the landscape and to have a private conversation with the land, in the way that only an environmental dance artist can—through the body-mind. Arons and May (*Readings in Performance and Ecology*, 2012),



explain this kind of dialogue with the land, in the context of dance artist Anna Halprin's approach:

One way of getting at these corporeal interconnections that the dancer or the viewer discovers through stillness is to read Halprin's performances through the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who locates perception, creativity, and human intellect in sensory reciprocity, an on-going interchange between one's body and the bodies that surround it. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, he argues that the body's actions shift, adjust and change in response to a terrain and to an environment that is itself, changing and adapting... (320). What Merleau-Ponty call the "body subject [what I call the body-mind] is living, sensing, perceiving: uncanny in its adaptability and indeterminacy, the body exceed the limits imposed upon it by our long-held notions of the human/nature divide. Instead the body acts and is acted upon an unguarded conversation between the body and the landscapes it inhabits... In her dances, as in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology we witness the elimination of the mind/body, subject/object divide and a deeper understanding, instead, of a communion between mind and body, subject and object, human and nature (Arons & May, p. 119).

These "corporeal interconnections" were the necessary first order focus of this research, seeking to establish the unified body-mind as the common "state" of the entire research team. This heuristic self- study of my own interconnections are described by Moustakas (1994) as a "process that begins with a question or a problem which the researcher seeks to illuminate or answer. The question is one that has been a personal challenge and puzzlement in the search to understand one's self and the world in which one lives. The heuristic process is autobiographic, yet with every questions that matters there is also—and perhaps universal—significance. This allows my heuristic personal study to seamlessly segue as a context-setting mechanism for the research team members' own experiences and stories as a way to prove a multi-faceted exploration of environmental dance (1994, p. 17).

My heuristic story begins by an initial field journal entry of my solo day on the mountain that preceded the official beginning of the team research on site by several weeks. Analysis and

synthesis of this journal entry draws upon some of the CAP ethnography exercises prescribed by Laurel Richardson. It begins with what Richardson calls a “writing story”, which offers the break-down analysis of the original source of inspiration—the journal writing. This is followed by what she calls the “Narrative of the Self” which I interpret to be the synthesis and integration of the original experience and its analyzed parts, back into the greater-than-the-sum-of-its-parts gestalt story. The purpose is a deeper level of understanding and the creation of new meaning. Here is that story.



*Figure 50: Monadnock, mountain muse and research site (DEFDW©).*

## Section #1: The Mountain Dances

### Dance-research Team Member and Collaborator #1: Mt. Monadnock

#### Artist/Researcher Statement

[Excerpt from the video montage, Colonial Theater presentation, written in the spirit of giving voice to the mountain, by Dianne Eno]

“I am more than the sum of my parts. I am the rocky contours and forests that hold the heat from the sun; the cold from the snow and ice, and the history and mystery of my evolution. I am 3165 feet of material and symbolic strength. I am temporal change because nothing stays the same. Therefore, I dance, too. I speak to you through my multi-faceted landscapes, through the wind currents, through bird song, through the intricate patterns that the dancer’s body-mind knows and speaks. I am the wind; I am you and we are one.”

~Monadnock



Figure 51: The magical Monadnock landscape (photo courtesy L. Davis/ DEFDW ©).

## Section #2: My Heuristic Profile—A Research Baseline and Context

### Dance-research team member #2: Dianne Eno

#### Artist Statement

[Excerpt from the video montage, Colonial Theater presentation]

“My choreographic approach seeks to integrate the dancing human body with the dynamic, ever-changing natural environment. By adapting the multi-faceted lens of the Goethean Scientific Method as creative process we are able to synthesize the dancer’s own “inner geography” (realm of personal, subjective experiences) with the landscape’s exterior geography. The synthesis emerges from a self-organized dialogue between dancer and site, through the common matrix of time and space.”

~Dianne Eno

#### Process/ Reflection Journal Entry

##### Preliminary/Pre-research Project Self Orientation to Site

Rehearsal Location: summit of Mt. Monadnock.

Time: 8AM—2:30PM

Weather Conditions: very warm, high 80’s with a breeze; chance of thunder showers.

In attendance: Dianne Eno and the Mountain

*As has become a customary feature of my whole approach to mounting the Monadnock performance, research project I have decided to make this solo trek to the summit on this particular day a week or so from the official beginning of full company production rehearsals. The “hike-before” the production period begins has become a useful and inspiring ritual as a way to begin this daunting process. I know I will be embarking on a period of very challenging days and experiences ahead and this solitary hike, allows me some quality time to commune with Monadnock and to properly ground myself into this project. The coming together of two major events (performance on the summit and my academic research) represents my descent into a great unknown, into uncharted territory and I cannot imagine as I sit here on this boulder, how I will accomplish both of these tasks! But, I can feel the return of the excitement and welcoming*



*familiarity of this place—I feel a deep sense of belonging here and this alleviates my fear somewhat, somehow—as it always does.*

*This feeling of belonging is something that is always a dependable constant in this fluid, unpredictable process. This is one of the reasons I keep coming back for “more”.*

*I know that the purpose of this day of solitude on the mountain is meant as a means allowing me to dissolve all uncertainty and find the power (it exists here exclusively and it is palpable as I look about in all directions) to get me through to my goals successfully.*

*I began my hike this morning at approximately 8AM from the parking lot at the Old Toll Road trail head. The weather is warm, and the air is heavy and humid—looks like it will be mostly cloudy today with the sun breaking through every so often. I decide to take our normal “rehearsal” route*

*to the summit: up the Old Toll Road, which is a dirt road that gives way to the “White Arrow Trail” which ascends up the south western side of the mountain. I stop briefly at “our company rock” a large protruding yet smooth chunk of granite where we traditionally stop to drink water and remove any necessary layers of clothing. It is very humid but the rock feels cool and welcoming. I drop*



*Figure 52: A peaceful and inspiring hike up the White Arrow Trail and onto an abandoned trail to the summit (DEFDW©).*

*my pack, stretch for a bit, take a few gulps of water and then, begin to make my way up the “hill”. I see the summit from the old halfway house clearing and I note that I see no one at the summit. I stop a few times through this initial scramble up a series of boulder piles and plateaus and note how lush and green everything looks. The air smells earthy and wonderful and alive. I am aware of how profoundly I really love this place. I begin to think about how fleeting the production work for this performance makes my time and the dancers’ time here seem and I wish there was some way to preserve how luxurious and unrushed this experience feels today. What a treat to be here,*

*alone, without distractions! I hear a variety of Song-birds so diverse I could not guess their numbers; I also hear the sound of a distant chain saw. I see no one on this first leg of my hike.*

*Just above the turn off to the “Sidefoot Trail” to my right, I purposely take an old abandoned trail which follows a dry stream bed up and through more obscure forest which takes me a little more up a southern route to the summit. This route was suggested to us by the park manager as a way to save a half hour or so of our time and precious energies. Over the years I have come to appreciate the solitude of this out-of-the-way trail—I pass no one on my ascent. I stop at our usual two outcroppings for a little more hydration and to look at the view. My tired legs can also use a*



*Figure 53: The summit view at tree line (DEFDW©).*

*rest! I expected fatigue on this first hike of the season—I have been sitting for too many hours at the computer and now I will pay a price! Balance...Balance between the need to dance and to “be” here with the efforts necessary in order to pull off going to school, too. One feeds the other. This is a dilemma but I have to keep that concept of balance alive in my head. I also begin to think about balancing on the rocks as a dancer. This is an oddity for sure, but I have learned how to adapt and have accomplished this feat well! Hmmm....everything I need to know, the mountain teaches me! I take out my journal and make a few notes so I can write up a more thorough entry*





Figure 54: Near Thoreau's campsite, just below the summit (DEFDW©).

*at the top. I cannot see Boston today—too hazy. I could easily settle right here—nice place! I hear ravens in the jumbles above me. In a few minutes I will be at the summit. I wonder if I will see anyone I know there since I haven't seen a single soul yet! I cut into the woods and go*

*through a beautiful forested area that is moist and overgrown with ferns and other vegetation. In fact, this is the place where I found much of H.D. Thoreau's "flora" from his 1860 survey that I used to guide my quantitative study project for a Comparative Ecological Analysis class at Antioch a few years ago. I loved that project and as I walk through here I am reminded of it. I see many "old friends" as I pass through this seemingly timeless and untouched vestige of the past—this heavily wooded part of the mountain just below the rocky summit. Here, a yellow birch (*Populus alleghaniensis*), there some bluebead lilies (*Clintonia borealis*) interspersed with star flower plants (*Trientalis borealis*). I also recognize other familiar faces: American mountain ash (*Sorbus Americana*), Hayscented fern (*Dicksonia punctilobula*) and two of my favorite low-lying friends Clubmoss (*Lycopodium annotinum*) and Ground cedar (*Lycopodium complanatum*) in all their rich green glory! I can easily picture H.D.T. lumbering through these woods, looking down at his feet with great curiosity, jotting down all he sees—this part of the mountain exudes a heavy presence of that man that frequented this area and the summit several times. His campsites are not that far away—maybe I will visit the one near the summit...It smells heavenly in here...the earth I am walking on is uneven and mushy. There is a small stream that runs through, perpendicular to my hiking route and the ground surrounding that is marshy in some areas. The grade and incline of my route to the summit suddenly becomes noticeably steeper as I come out of the thick woods—I step out onto the "White Dot Trail" and can hear voices coming from my left. Back into civilization! Time to drink some water and put on sunscreen.*

*The last leg my hike is a killer today...legs are very fatigued. Slow steps and a steady pace...I am in the opening just below the "slide" and pause again...and the view is beautiful as always but it is hazy still. I continue to make my way up. I see Thoreau's campsite down to my right and decide that I will go directly to the summit and not make this side trip after all. Maybe on the*

way down...I am finally standing in front of the main rocky stage area. I continue on a bit more to the rocks where my dancers and I habitually “make camp” during our rehearsals. I always end up here when I get to the summit; I guess it is habit and it feels like home. There are several small groups of people in and about the rocks at the actual summit (I rarely make it all the way to the summit marker—usually it is too crowded and my focus is most always right here). There is a little breeze which is nice since it is hot. I note the time as being 10:26 AM. It was a nice hike up.

I take my pack off and decide to sit up against the granite wall behind me. The rock feels cool to the touch. I am starved so I decide to eat an early lunch—the mountain does that to you! While eating I survey the dance performance stage areas and note how really strange it is to see no dancing bodies there.



Figure 55: A steep ascent up the southeastern side of the mountain (DEFDW©).

*I am struck by how sculpted and multi-dimensional it looks to me. The contours of the rocks and the outline of such against the skyline are just the same as I imagined—these contours are imprinted on my brain and when I shut my eyes and*

*think of this place I can see the rocks as clearly as I do now. While everything seems to be in order, I think about how the elements do change the landscape here and how somewhere in the midst of rehearsals one of us will inevitably say something like “Hey, this rock wasn’t like this last year! Something is different—there is a chunk missing” or something to that effect. We know these rocks so well that we can even detect slight physical changes that might not register in a bigger, broader survey of the space as I am observing now.*





Figure 56: The rocky "main stage" at the summit (DEFDW©).

*I am thinking about how quiet and solid the main rocky stage looks now. Quiet power. In this seemingly dormant state (sans dancers), I still see it as a "place of dance". There is an animate (subtle, but animate never the less) quality—I imagine that perhaps the*

*landscape here has absorbed the energy of twenty-two years of dancing. How can these rocks not be affected by this? How can this place not take on that energy (physical, psychic and spiritual)? It is a Native American belief that the stone people "hold" all the prior history of the land and all that has occurred on the land over time. So, it makes perfect sense to me that this occurs in this instance too. These rocks have absorbed us and we, in turn, have absorbed the rocks. I am reminded of my dance piece Talking*



Figure 57: The "language of nature" (DEFDW©).





Figure 58: The northern side of the research and performance site (DEFDW©).

*“Talking Rocks” that really addresses this thinking. Dancers use hand held rocks (“stone people”) which they employ throughout the performance of the piece as percussion instruments beating out a rhythm that gives voice to the rocks and to the mountain for that matter. This idea comes from a very intuitive and organic part of my own creative process—it occurs to me that my dances are often expressions of my personal illuminations, discoveries and “truths”.*

*There is a definite magnetic draw of me to this place, I decide...I begin to walk around the performance space, recalling automatically the dances that have unfolded in each part of this immense stage area. It is really as if the memory of these dances are physically attached to specific places on the rocks. It is almost as if, as I walk about the space, that I am bumping into these dances as I go. A very interesting and somewhat eerie sensation! I am now in the backstage area and by the mountain cranberry bush that gives the dancers shelter and coverage during costume changes. I find a small tie from one of the costumes we used in the performance two years prior. It is nice to know the “green room” is still here.*



Figure 59: The summit performance area, "stage right" (DEFDW©).

*I am retracing the entrance pathway to Trayer's solo and note what a dramatic entrance this always is. I am now standing on the "peak" where she will be standing in stillness as her music begins. It is amazing to me what very little surface area there is here, on which to stand. It feels like I am suspended in mid-air—this is an exhilarating place to*

*be. In front of me, the "audience" behind me, a breathtaking view of the mountains to the north.*

*What a backdrop. It is as if this mini-peak grabs me, raises me up and says, "Here, look at this beautiful place, look at this beautiful land all around—you are small but you are a part of this!" A deep sense of belonging...I hope I can make my audience feel this way.*



Figure 60: Mapping out the research/ performance area; recalling dance and place through "muscle-memory" (DEFDW©).



I make my way to the main stage rock. Timidly, I begin to recall and trace out the movement sequences and placement on the rocks, of a solo dance piece I will perform this year. The piece is short but challenging physically. For a second I feel weak in the knees!

There is much physical, full body contact with the rocks and I begin to review a few of the more difficult sequences from memory. I am struck by how well the body remembers the critical little hand grips on certain rocks that can make the difference between a confident performance or tumbling off the front face of the stage—this would be a fall to the ground of about twelve feet. Yikes! I decide to systematically go through the dance to make note of the major necessary body placements and handgrips. These I will try to visualize in my studio run-throughs of the piece. Going through this now makes me feel much surer of myself. There are a few people at the summit and they are watching me—I am a little too self-conscious to continue and I stop. I return to the wall where I left my backpack and I sit. It is nice just to take it all in. I sit like this for quite a while. I note how strong a feature the horizon is as a backdrop to the “stage”. This is interesting because the scale is so different and contrasted between the “here” and “there”. There is a

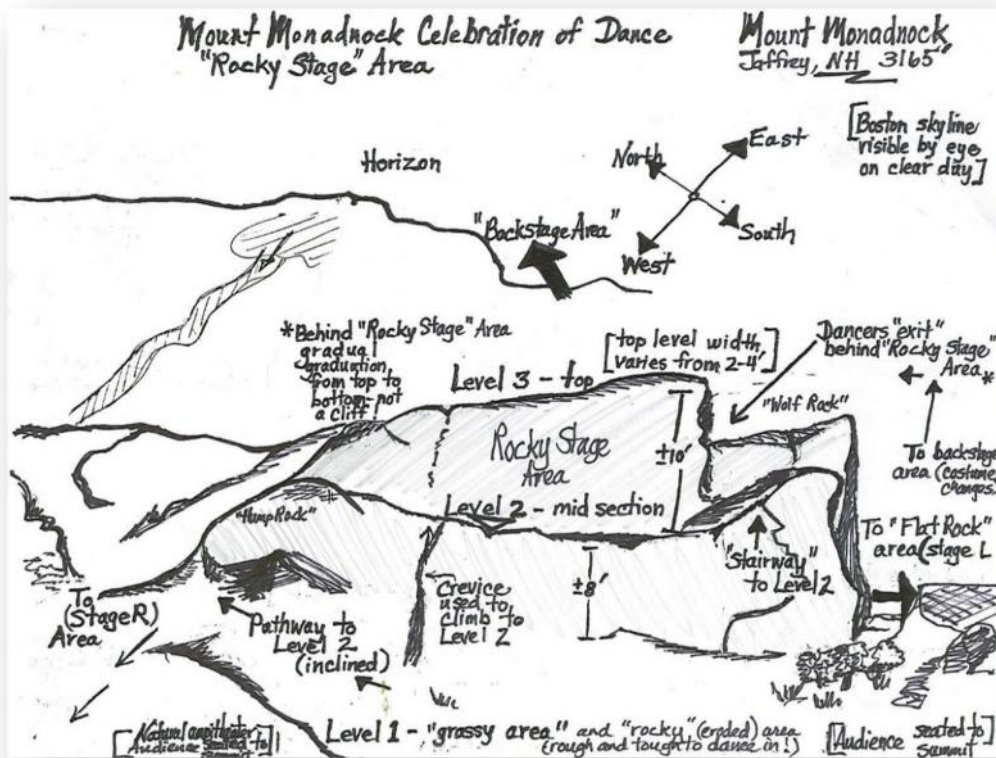


Figure 61: Sketched map of the research/performance area (DEFDW©).

perceptible connection between what is close up (nearly tangible) and far away (is that real? Or a mirage?) Add a dancing human form that creates a dialogue between the two. I think that

*perhaps a “sense of place” is determined in part, by a negotiation or compromise between these two distinct realms. I will think more about this later. Now, I am watching the ravens that frequent the summit. It is not often, that I do not see these comical birds here. They are obviously playing, enjoying themselves. They glide, dive and flip with joy! I can relate. This is a magical place.*

*It is 12:45PM and I decide that I will begin to hike down at about 1PM. I decide I should stretch my legs and back a little before starting out. I do this as I take in the last minutes of a peaceful and productive time on the summit. I am looking forward to coming back soon. I pack up and*



*Figure 62: Main stage performance area and research site (DEFDW©).*

*begin the hike down the mountain and back to the “real world”...*

*A peaceful, yet tiring hike down...My route—I took the “White Dot Trail” to “Abandoned Trail” to “White Arrow Trail” to “Sidefoot Trail” to the “Old Toll Road” back to the parking lot. Down by 2:35PM.*

### Writing-story—

#### **A reflexive, heuristic synthesis of “How I Happened to Write What I Have Written”, re: the above original journal entry, chronicling a day along the trails and at the summit of Mt. Monadnock)**

It strikes me, as I write this reflexive synthesis on my motivation to write the above original journal entry, that my journal-keeping parallels in a most interesting way, my need for an initial (almost ritualized) acknowledged starting point, as I begin any task. This starting point is charged with an inspired impetus that is clearly defined and reflected in my writing. The deeper I “dig” the more profound, nuanced and whole are my realizations. This procedural characteristic holds true for artistic endeavors or any other undertaking that stands before me.

In fact, I begin this journal entry by naming my traditional “hike before” as just that—a ritual of beginning or, the ceremonious act of renewal that gives a fresh new perspective on a process that has been in development for over twenty-five years (creating environmental dance performances on the summit of Mt. Monadnock). And so this entry in my production field journal is another manifestation of this ritual that provides the vital energy for completing another successful chapter in this annual event. Therefore, there is an element of authenticity that is transferred from the initial experience to any form of recollection and documentation, thereafter.

It is important for me to contextualize each day spent on the mountain. Boundaries are delineated in the traditional ways: I keep “statistics” concerning the linear time spent there, who is in attendance and I note the date and the weather conditions as well. But, this is the point from which I depart both in my thinking and my recollection of such as documented in my writing content and style. While there is a linear thread that serves a function of keeping track of the passage of time spent on the summit, I note that much of my thought process runs freely rather like a stream of consciousness. It reflects how my mind is shifting from and is attracted to the

“here” and “there” qualities that I experience in my summit rambling. I note how I feel, then I will describe what I see, what I do. I then, conclude with some sort of philosophical summation—my attempt to constantly synthesize my multi-dimensional, multi-faceted experiences on the mountain (microcosm) and in the natural world, itself (macrocosm). This is the detectable, cyclical pattern of *how* I experience the mountain, how I take it all in, and how I internalize the landscape. It is also a textured and richly descriptive account of my own “lived experiences” as an environmental dancer and scholar. It tells my story of the “what’s-it-likeness” qualities of being an environmental dance artist in a mutual, collaborative artistic relationship with this very mountain and this very site, at the summit.

My accounts of the day spent on the mountain in solitude are punctuated with vivid descriptions of familiar landmarks and these take on individual and recognizable personalities (I note my naming the place where we customarily stop for a rest and a drink of water as “our company rock”). I think of the mountain as an entity that is alive, animate and dynamically a part of our process here. I think of the mountain as a personal “acquaintance” that I have come to know over an extended period of time. I deny that this is merely a form of anthropomorphizing an “inanimate object”. Quite the contrary—the mountain is more alive and conscious than many humans I know!

I am acutely aware of how sensorial my recollection of the mountain experience is. When writing my journal entries I can smell the earthiness of the moist woodland soil, the trees, and the pungent roots of a variety of odiferous plants. I can recall, instantly the beautiful and mesmerizing melody of the song sparrow—my favorite bird—that frequents the tree-line boundaries enroute to the summit, or the boisterous “rawk” of the playful ravens that frequent the summit and keep good

company with me there. I constantly comment on colorations of things, from distinct contrasts to subtle variations that compose the diverse beauty of this landscape.

There is also strong evidence of an acute awareness or sensing of patterns throughout my various observations and experiences. This is how I make sense of all this mountain data that now floods my journal brain. I can readily make connections between things, events, and observations by my own sensitivity of the shared commonalities that link various natural phenomena together and make grand ecological sense in an otherwise, undetectable dance of indiscriminant details. Again, this realization speaks to the level of consciousness that underlies the experience.

There is also an interesting underlying historical awareness of all things Monadnock. I will recall some of the history of the mountain as a physical feature serves to stimulate that level of connection to the past. I attribute this to my sensitivity toward the passage of larger scales of time. Days spent on the mountain seem like seconds to me when I reflect on these days. Interestingly, I sense a completely different kind of time passage when the day is actually unfolding—as sense of timelessness, of time-standing-still seems to permeate the day...but I can relate to centuries of time as the real story-tellers. The idea of a hundred years seems a befitting way for a mortal (with an expected lifespan being less than this mere temporal flash-in-the-pan) to detect and consider change and evolution as a natural part of a greater creative process than my own. This noteworthy hundred-year increment also puts me in touch with another lover of the mountain—HDT (Henry David Thoreau) himself—and when I really want to delve back in time, I will go to his legendary mountain campsites and reflect on the subtle and not-so-subtle transformations of this landscape before me and what he might have concluded (Brandon, 2007; Cameron, 1985; Clark, 2002; Mansfield, 2006; Older & Older, 1990; Root, 2005).



This journal entry also points out to me how much kinesthetic sensation is pulled from the rocks themselves. I can recall dance movement segments simply by being in the location where these have taken place during past performances. The shapes, contours and textures of the rock revive muscle memory within me, as a dancer and as the original creator of the dance movement that has previously unfolded here on various parts of the performance area.

I observe things around me in a very holistic way. I seek to “know” a feature, a phenomenon from different angles; various perspectives. This feeds my basic philosophy/ belief that to truly “know” something you have to open yourself to all sides of its many, and sometimes elusive facets. Add to that that we all have different angles derived from our individual experiences and the idea of multi-faceted, non-absolute truth becomes a distinct possibility. The sharing of these unique perspectives adds to the body (or embodiment) of knowledge here (or anywhere for that matter). It is a matter of perspective, of the level of consciousness toward all “external” things, to be sure.

I experience all things in the natural world as the reciprocal exchange (a Merleau-Ponty concept) expounded upon by David Abram (1996) in *The Spell of the Sensuous*. I see clear evidence of this way of perceiving of and relating to the natural world, reflected in the writings of I compose in this journal. There is a distinct sense of a dialogue, a dialectic exchange, a give-and-take—or, as I like to refer to it, the “touch and be touched principle” that underwrites how I relate to the natural world. It occurs to me that this idea, that I have taken for granted, is in reality, a rarity.

## Narrative of the Self—A Synthesis of the Journal Entry

### (Capturing a day along the trails and at the summit of Mt. Monadnock)

#### “Mountain Mode”

If I could spend some time of each and every day on Monadnock I would. I retreat to the woods, slope and summit to think, for holistic rejuvenation, for artistic inspiration, and just to sit on the summit, soaking up the heat and wisdom I can feel emanating from the ancient rock there. As Henry David Thoreau wrote, “When I would re-create myself, I seek the darkest wood, the thickest and most interminable and to the citizen, most dismal, swamp. I enter as a sacred place, a *Sanctum sanctorum*. There is the strength, the marrow, of Nature” (*Walking*, 1851). In this very spirit, I have hiked Monadnock’s network of trails (safe to say) hundreds of times and the experiences of all of these grand treks never grow old. Quite the opposite—each one is always some unsuspected new adventure.

As an environmental artist that has a twenty-plus year span of creating site-specific dances that are performed annually for an expectant (some call it a cult) audience at Monadnock’s bare, rocky summit, it serves me well to keep my relationship with my trustworthy old friend (the mountain) current and active, fresh and vibrant. To this end, I have developed a creed of sorts that sums up my desire and artistic necessity to perpetuate an on-going exchange and dialogue with Monadnock. This private creed declares that “no new moss shall grow there, without my bearing witness to such”. This gives me the reason, excuse (some think I hike the mountain too much and run the risk of becoming a female version of the reclusive, eccentric Henry David Thoreau if I don’t watch out!), rationale, motivation to climb the mountain on a regular basis.

Each year, it is true that I am on the mountain for many days in preparation for my dance company’s annual performance at the summit. And now, my doctoral research brings me here, all

the more with much fervor, for the mountain will collaborate with my team and me, as we embark on this new mountain endeavor. But it is still such a luxury to roam the wooded slopes without a minute-to-minute rehearsal agenda minimizing my conscious contact with the rocks, the wind, the birds, and the flora. These are the critically important things—without quality time with each facet of this magical landscape I would have no dances to dance there. Without the designated time in which to indulge in Monadnock’s gifts, I would not know what I know about the mountain (micro) and more importantly I would not know what I know the macrocosmic applications of many of the ecological principles the mountain has (and continues to) teach me! And I could not speak Monadnock’s truths in my dances. Instead, my performance would be shallower forms for works that, otherwise, require me and my dancers to be committed wholeheartedly and holistically to the site. This takes a level of dedication, persistence and insistence that many may not understand or appreciate. But this creative, artistic creed has become the foundation of this embodied practice.

Many of my dance ideas come from hours of sitting on the summit or some other obscure outcropping at the end of some (preferably) abandoned trail--the major Monadnockphiles have shared this vital trail information with me and I am grateful for that--I put it to good use. One abandoned trail has become the site-rehearsal route to the summit for me and my dancers. This saves us twenty-to-thirty minutes of hiking time and wear-and-tear on already tired bodies and blistered feet; it also provides us with a pristine Monadnock experience, which includes crowd-less hiking, the coolness of the woods on hot summer days and limitless other sensorial delights that manifest in less crowded environments. Anyway, sitting in solitude is part and parcel of my creative process as an environmental artist.

The process of which I speak is a dependable phenomenon: usually, all I have to do is to sit and wait for the inspiration to hatch. And it does: usually in that somewhat typical “aha” /eureka

moment. This never grows old! The feeling of elation, the recognition of something (bigger than me) that beforehand was so hazy and obscure that I could not describe it to myself, elevates from the mists and presents itself in the brilliant sunshine of the day. Or, from the dense fog of an overcast day, as the case may be—there is a tendency to over-romanticize this creative process stuff. Sometimes it is not so glamorous at all—but it is, never the less, exhilarating and mind-expanding. It is our passion!

Along with using the hike as a vital part of my environmental artist toolkit, specifically as part of the process of creating new works, I also use it to get a production season off to an inspirational start. I hike (alone, usually) a week or two before my first scheduled studio rehearsal in the city. Seemingly this primes me with the deep, phenomenal connections to the mountain that this solitary hike provide for me—those unforgettable nuggets of mountain wisdom and raw inspiration that I need to sustain me through the next ten to twelve weeks of exhausting yet personally transforming work. This is both mental and physical strain that I often liken to running a marathon and at the end of a season, when the Monadnock performance is over and final bows have been taken, my dancers always concur with this characterization. This hiking ritual fuels me with the endurance to overcome such strain and I am able to share this power and empowerment with my dancers. Learning *how* to take the necessary time and effort to develop a personal acquaintance and rapport with the mountain opens us to a new way to experience what might otherwise, fall into the danger of becoming too ordinary, rote and taken-for-granted. Below the level of consciousness. At which point, I would worry that my dancers would soon become bored with the work.

So, I eliminate that possible danger first, by setting myself back in “mountain mode” (elevating the consciousness of the mountain within the body, mind and spirit) which I

purposefully and intentionally inject into each and every studio and site rehearsal thereafter. This tends to keep us all consistently in “mountain mode”. From what I observe from my rehearsal, this has allowed us to bring the mountain (at least in spirit) directly into a downtown Manhattan dance studio! This creates a surrogate authentic ambiance in which to work. Dancers work almost as if they were on the mountain itself—imagery of the “remembered” rocks come alive in their hearts and minds! So, when people I talk with about the process of mounting a dance production on a mountain summit scratch their heads when I tell them that we begin in the studio I tell them that *we bring the mountain into the studio with us.*

My time spent rambling throughout the great expanse of our somewhat complex performance area(s) at the summit first and foremost, puts me back in intimate touch with the physicality of the landscape itself. With this refresher course, I can close my eyes (anywhere) and recall with quite minute detail, the quality of the rocky surfaces and they vary here and there throughout the spaces where our dances unfold. I am able to envision characteristic, idiosyncratic rocks, boulder, outcropping and other outstanding and obscure features of the summit as well. A favorite of these is a mammoth vein of pink quartz that runs through the ending sequence of a solo I performed several years ago (*Prayer to the Universe*). It is amazing to me the impact that my prior knowledge of this phenomenal feature of the summit landscape has on my performance attitude, especially at such a critical point in the performance of the piece. The dance ends as I fade off and sink into the rocky jumbles facing east. Just as I am doing this, I am struck with the fact that I am standing on this most beautiful and amazing amassment of delightfully pink and transparent mineral. I feel as if I am dancing on gemstones. What a stage. I am transformed. And so is my dance-research team--the mountain exudes its more-than-human strength and profound beauty and its energies reverberate throughout our veins and right into the deepest recesses of our

souls. It is our highest aspiration to express this effect the mountain has on it, through the dances we perform here.

There are endless instances where such recognition of some distinguishing mountain summit feature manifests for us during performance (also in rehearsal) somehow helps to crystallize the performance through a re-edification of the dancer/ summit bond that has painstakingly been developed beforehand. The results, of course, are extraordinary and serve as another reason to bring us back to perform each year. We are a part of this mountain and this day serves to remind me of this enduring truth.

This highly-charged summit rambling also reminds me that each and every area where various dance pieces are set is charged with a distinct emotional energy. This is a palpable, sensed quality and it contributes mightily toward giving the summit its multi-faceted personality. This becomes a collaborative force contracted between choreographer/ performer and the mountain itself as it deeply shapes and informs the dances and ultimately the dance performance. It is as if these energy variations help guide or *map* dancers and audience alike, not only through the physical geography of the summit but also through the affective landscape as well. In fact, this facet of the performance *becomes* the very bridge between the *inner* and *outer* geographies and is a critical function in the development of a deep and engaged relationship with the site.

Other features this solitary exploration of the mountain provides, includes an unmistakable sense of timelessness and other-worldliness. “Up there”, on the summit, I always lose all track of the time...we are often late getting off the mountain completing a site rehearsal, as dictated by our modern obsessions with self-imposed linear time. The mountain offers a splendid respite from this temporal drudgery and that lack of a time structure seemingly is a fitting prerequisite to my

work here. This allows for a true sense of freedom from any and all restraints and it is this freeing sense that most fuels my creative process along. If I could only figure out a way to bottle this kind of “mountain time” for daily use! The other-worldliness that I speak of creates a sense of abundance and richness, a sense of endless, limitless possibilities. I attribute this to the expanse of a constantly retreating horizon, where there is simply no end in sight. Such are the delightful mountain “truths” that this brief sojourn provides for me and such is this is what I so desire to share with my dancers and audiences.

### **Section #3: Dancer-researcher Individual Phenomenological Profiles**

In this section I present a comprehensive “profile portrait” of each of our four (4) remaining dance-research team members. The profile comprises of a collection of several artifacts that include: 1) individual artist research statements; 2) a characteristic field journal sample, illustrating the individual style/”voice” of each dancer-researcher; 3) A “found Poem” interpretation (by me) of each team member’s interview transcript; and 4) a field journal excerpt from each team members’ journal. The artifacts, when taken together build a composite of each researcher, illuminating the diverse backgrounds, experiences as well as members’ own dance training and connections to the field that make each team member a valued contributor to this research, with distinctive perspectives to share.

The diversity of which I speak, brings an uncommon strength, innovation and creativity to the research process, reflected in the quality of the multi-voiced interactions in the field, in the rehearsal studio, in individual written reflections and on the performance stage. My dedicated team consisted of five (including myself): by name, they are, Trayer Run-Kowzun, who has a BFA in dance from Taipei National University of the arts, is a New Jersey-based dance educator at the university level and the longest performing member of my environmental dance company;

Mary Madsen, also a core member of the company, is a performing professional with various NYC-based contemporary dance companies and has a BFA in dance from the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee; Amy MacQueen, is a former core company member and is Assistant professor in the Department of Molecular Biology at Wesleyan University in Connecticut—she earned her doctorate in Genetics and Developmental Biology from Stanford University; Carin Torp, is the newest member to the company and she is a practicing dance therapist in the Keene, NH-area, with a degree from Antioch University NE. Additional biographical information on each of us can be found in the appendix “Mountain Dance” program from the Colonial Theater performance.

It was my goal to preserve and present the interview response transcripts in a creative, interpretive way reminiscent of the method employed by Bill T. Jones described by dance therapist/researcher Lenore Wadsworth Hervey in *Artistic Inquiry in Dance/Movement Therapy* (2000). This approach treats dance as a dialogic process and allows dance/movement to be intentionally utilized as an interpretive tool that mediates an understanding of one person’s experience by another. In an interview with Bill Moyers (1997), dance artist Bill T. Jones asks of his research participants: “What do you know? What do you know that I don’t know? What do we have in common that the average person does not? Tell me. Show me. And I am going to take it, going to make it songs, make it movement” (Hervey, 2000, p.95). In my own research circumstance, I interviewed (in-depth exit interview) as a final expression of each team member’s impressions, thoughts, opinions, and perspectives regarding the entire research process, which I later transcribed as a written record of the interview. I sought, just as Bill T. Jones did, to intimately know the experiences of others, to get under their skin and into their minds—to feel what they feel, and to be able to re-present that knowing and feeling in a worthy



way. So, how could I present this large body of data in a way that captured the essences of each team member's unique voices as artist-researchers?

I chose to use the recorded version of the transcript as a score (comparable to musical accompaniment) which I danced, as a way to follow my standard analysis/synthesis process (break down to build up). Hervey adds: "Dance and choreography are then like the heuristic process that Moustakas (1990) described as a form of research. There is no way to separate the experience of the dancer and choreographer from the dance" (Hervey, p. 104). My premise was as follows: 1) By "dancing" each one of my research team members' interview audio, I was receiving the input of the individuals' own voice, expressing their responses to my posed interview questions; 2) My own interpretation through dance movement allowed me to "experience" the interviewee's experiences (experiencing the experience) and to integrate the experience as an abstraction—the key, here, is the notion of integration, which implies that I have been able to permanently absorb this data and to holistically integrate it; 3) After allowing a span of time to pass (customary reflections/memoing were recorded in field journal) I created a "found poem" from each of the written transcripts that I had previously danced—this second level of abstraction served as a process of creative synthesis that aimed to capture the essences of the interview content; and 4) The finished poems are presented below, as "stand-alone" syntheses and essential research findings.

It was my premise that by allowing the interview to be transformed through two levels of abstraction (dance and poetry)--from the original verbal interview to a danced interpretation of the interview-as-accompaniment to the final "found poem" interpretation, I would be able to distill a very lengthy transcript into meaningful expressions of each team members' experiences. Dance and poetry are compatible and complementary forms of creative, artistic and aesthetic

expression—from my own work in developing optimal ways to draw out relevant data and equally optimal ways to analyze and synthesize them, I fully recognize and appreciate the nuanced power of the aesthetic experience as research. Hervey adds:

“...aesthetics was defined as the discriminating appreciation of qualities reflected in form. In attempting to shed light on aesthetic consciousness, four of its characteristics were described: a heightened awareness borne of experience with sensation, emotion and intuition; a strong appreciation of form; the ability to work fluidly within or between dynamic polarities of consciousness, and an awareness of one’s aesthetic values” (2000, p. 93).

In pairing dance/movement and poetry together in this way I experienced the synergy of the two as I strove to realize this particular research goal. Here are the dance research team profiles.

## **Dancer-researcher Team Individual Phenomenological Profiles**

### **Dance-research Team Member #3: Amy MacQueen**

#### **Artist/Researcher Statement**

[Excerpt from the video montage, Colonial Theater presentation]

“For me, applying the Goethean process to choreography facilitated following an invisible path through translation and transformation. The process, both sharpened my focus and, yet simultaneously blurred the view of the object under consideration.

The oscillation between sharp vision and vague intuition often, incredibly, gave rise to a creative process that was nearly impossible to retrace or track.” ~Amy MacQueen

#### **“Found Poem”: Amy MacQueen**

A synthesis created from the interpreted interview transcript:

Interview with Dance-research team member Amy MacQueen

Phenomenological “lived experience” profile analysis/synthesis

November 17, 2011

Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT.

### **Amy...The Science of Art and the Art of Science**

I

A lasting residual impression, reflex.  
 A creative process of “pulling it out”.  
 Moving from the specific to the general.  
 Feeling like I really knew and understood  
 What the process was.  
 Find the answer to the research question.  
 Time limit—  
 The time felt like a real constraint

Part of the creative process  
 To explore this tangent  
 Cognizant of the ideas that the process needed  
 Deadlines are good for creative beings  
 I wake up think stuff,  
 Always working...  
 Incredibly compressed experiences.  
 If I had months I would do a better job.  
 Remembering my own thesis defense,  
 To be resilient against failure.  
 You were at the top of the list,  
 Creative process,  
 Creating dance—  
 It is the same with science  
 You are alone.

## II

Most memorable moments—  
 Gilson Pond orientation and rehearsal with mosquitos  
 I have a visceral memory of those mosquitos and their bites  
 Trayer finding all those four (4) leaf clovers!  
 Creating something with the group  
 Memories all fall around me:  
 Intense work.  
 Lunches during extended daylong rehearsal sessions.  
 Getting to know one another.  
 Like going to camp.  
 Allows you to open yourself up.  
 Trust.  
 Impression of group dynamics:  
 All did a great job.  
 Up on the mountain, an extreme thrill—  
 Clouds coming in  
 And then...  
 One thing after another,  
 No music for performance,  
 We were just rolling with it.  
 Just that intensity!  
 Both the mountain section and the Colonial section  
 Were very separate in my mind  
 Just that intensity—  
 And everything worked so beautifully and then...

The clouds rolled in!

III

[Dance memories on Monadnock]  
 Had the whole summer.  
 Worked so well....  
 Memories of when we danced in the full moon on the mountain  
 More intimate  
 More private  
 We came up with the tools—  
 To feel that privacy  
 It is self-organizing; systems science—  
 It is emergent.  
 Keep growing, if allowed to just keep going  
 Deadlines...  
 To produce something.  
 Juxtaposed to the creative process of making this “thing”  
 These tensions—  
 Learn to be comfortable with that...

IV

Environmental dance has a strong component of improvisation.  
 Free flowing—  
 The works is NEVER done.  
 Improvisation felt more complete in a way  
 Because there wasn't a structure.  
 We are freed of the structure.  
 Everyone had what it is that we needed.  
 Constraint released.  
 Improv pieces—  
 Created in the moment  
 Produced less nervousness (in me)  
 To do the process totally;  
 Letting go—  
 More, the collaborative process  
 With the mountain dialogue.  
 Contrive, shape it,  
 Control it with human hands...  
 Truth is always a moving metaphor,  
 Applicable to science.  
 There is always a new question...

## IV

Choreography—

Communicating one set of truths.

Truth in one time, one aspect

Then the target changes.

These are snapshots of whatever the “truth” is...

Improvisation is based on themes,

As the driving force.

More like the actual process,

Of experimentation.

On the other hand,

Communicating the process of set pieces:

One truth.

One tableau.

One aspect.

## V

Goethean Process—

A new way of engaging with the site

I love the rep [repertory] pieces,

It is so good knowing what to do.

The Ayllu process—

We are really taking turns

Being,

Becoming the mountain.

Becoming part of the rocks

That kind of switch,

That give-and-take...

There is more invested in the improvisations

A connectedness between members

Of the group—

What we had experienced on the mountain.

Helped to direct improvs,

Knowing,

But didn't articulate.

All decided together [collaboration]

What it needed.

Synthesized.  
 Becoming the rocks.  
 And changing places.

## VI

Constraints of your own physical body  
 Like the fog...  
 Tool to make it “ok”.  
 When you are young—infinite possibilities  
 Getting wise is working with constraints.

## VII

Efficacy of method—  
 Points of view as research method  
 Idea as communicated to people,  
 Something I do in the lab.  
 Personal,  
 Selfish desire to find “beauty”.  
 I just want to know.  
 There is a very selfish component.  
 But then there is  
 Touching other people’s lives with it.  
 Helping others find a beautiful thing.  
 Seeing students to “see” that.  
 Performing is so emotional;  
 Can see people respond—  
 Something nice.  
 Unique.  
 Organic.  
 Natural.  
 Just noticing—  
 They are within.

## VIII

People stay in space  
 And dwell on something;  
 Catalyze some sort of reaction;  
 Something beautiful.  
 Arts do

What science would like to do--  
     Notice.  
     And dwell.  
 The arts comment with emotion.  
     Stay.  
     And dwell.  
 A dance class in our molecular science lab—  
     Liz Lerman.  
     “Tea House” dance piece.  
     Humanity,  
     At the core.  
 What is the difference between art and science?  
     What’s the difference?  
     Finding beauty—  
     A common goal in human endeavors.

## IX

What I loved about the dancing process  
 Goethean process as an embodied process  
     Enjoins the brain and the body  
     Able to touch other people  
     And have them dwell  
         Dance,  
     And other arts—  
         Grow,  
         Reflect,  
         Dance,  
         Repeat.  
     Get people to think.  
     Tool to get people to dwell,  
     Using beauty can facilitate that well.  
     Loved the video background.  
         The poetry.  
         Synergistic.  
     A powerful tool.

## X

Think back to Gilson Pond [Amy’s orientation]  
 My initial experience with the Goethean Scientific Process;  
     I remember feeling very inadequate!  
     Vulnerable.  
     Happy to have a process,



Structure.  
 Didn't feel adequate  
 About doing choreography.  
 A lack of confidence,  
 Now, more than when I was younger.  
 I could break free if I had to.  
 I could do it up--  
 the Goethean process helped.  
 Had something to do.  
 Tasks.

## XI

One [GSM stage] I was most attracted to—  
 Trying to picture the evolution  
 (Temporal Stage),  
 Gave me the most material.  
 History.  
 The hardest one [GSM stage]?  
 The very last one [becoming one with the phenomenon].  
 It required a complete release from the brain.  
 Lack of dance—  
 Not as comfortable in my own skin.  
 Mostly struggling—  
 Then I have a breakthrough on the mountain!

## XII

We used to spend six hours on the mountain  
 [Reminiscing about dancing in company years ago]  
 Just lying on the rocks.  
 It's like that.  
 Need time to just play.  
 Just to be!  
 [Radical ontology]  
 Exercise of rolling on my rock helped me—  
 My hope is that the five (5) stages  
 Can be more like play.  
 But because of time—  
 Constricting.  
 Controlling.

## XIII

You can touch something  
 By reflecting on the process.  
 Through the dances,  
 Less emphasis on product.  
 More, the process.  
 More time—  
 Just dwelling in the space,  
 The molecules.  
 Less time to play,  
 As we get more “established”  
 In our careers.  
 Lack of expectation—  
 Stay in grad school for ten (10) years [I can relate!]  
 To experience the *process*.  
 What I am going through now—  
 Technicians versus artists.  
 During this growth,  
 Not doing things on a linear path.  
 Going out on tangents.  
 Become like the universal model—  
 Nature.  
 Resilience.  
 Playing.  
 Little nuances.  
 Branch out into wonder.  
 That “play” thing is so important.  
 Experience of being collaborators.  
 Dancers...researchers.

## XIV

A changed relationship to the mountain?  
 We were doing this “process” fifteen (15) years ago!  
 Teaching kids in Terpsichore [my kid’s performing dance company]  
 Came to it—  
 And it resonated.  
 I actually feel like  
 Recalling the early days—  
 When we would go to the mountain,  
 The two of us.  
 We weren’t articulating it.  
 I owe the mountain more.  
 I miss the mountain,

And this kind of creative work.  
 Ahh, constraint [Amy is a microbiologist at Wesleyan University].  
 Ahh, life.  
 Basking on unlimited time spent on the mountain.  
 Sensitive to missing freedom.  
 (Stopped taking math).  
 Ahh, the mountain—  
 I wish I could envision the time,  
 When I can have time to play.

## XV

It's the brain/body working together.  
 The magic and synergy of the two.  
 Develop the tools to deal with the constraints.  
 Physical.  
 Get others (dancers) to do the work.  
 I could NEVER have the resilience you have.  
 And have the full knowledge that things could dissolve  
 [Referring to dancers quitting during the project]  
 People who are “passionate” [artists] are a little manic.  
 It involves an enormous amount of trouble—  
 Getting people to do what they need to do.  
 Just cannot imagine relying on people who are not clones of you!  
 It gets back to self-organizing.  
 People in their own ships.  
 It's the vision, looking past the “here”,  
 Envisioning where you want to be.  
 You need to visualize,  
 Do the actions,  
 And the mind will follow.  
 I think we are too programmed.  
 Absolutely.  
 Embrace unpredictability!  
 That is the “tool”.  
 I empathize.  
 You can see it  
 When it comes down to the final group.

## XVI

We knew where we were—  
 Where we were going.  
 It feels like power ball number choosing—how “it “  
 [Life and the dance production] came together!  
 Something about you that is talented.

Resilient.

XVII

I see two (2) components of the research mission.  
 To be able to want to teach,  
 Communicate,  
 A method that can help other people,  
 Dancers.  
 A process we can use in the creation of dances.  
 Verification of the method—  
 Put it into practice,  
 Teach it,  
 Verify it.  
 Just doing this research is giving answer to the model.  
 GSM.  
 Also, the subjective individual dancers’ “lived experiences”.  
 Each person [members of the research team] equals  
 A new brain.  
 A new pair of eyes.  
 Add a metaphor.  
 Organic.  
 Put the Goethean Scientific Method  
 Through the Goethean Scientific Method!  
 Understand it by reiterating it.  
 Have dancers give feedback and synthesize.  
 Synthesize what the truth of the process is!  
 Outcomes.  
 GSM—a moving target.  
 But are still categories and boxes.  
 People synthesize it in different ways.  
 The notion of the “ideal truth”—ephemeral.  
 A lot of research verifying method.  
 GSM put through the GSM!  
 Method—product—information tracking.  
 RESILIENCE.

XVIII

[Dissertation writing and anecdotal discussion]  
 The mountain performance versus Colonial Theater program  
 Much more scared of the Colonial performance!  
 The mountain makes up for human mistakes.  
 Because the dance there is a true “dialogue”, a give-and-take.  
 Not a preset thing.  
 Easier to let go

And give it your all.  
Envelope the movement.  
Intense rehearsing.  
We were exhausted.  
So beautiful and rewarding.  
Moved into performance mode. ~End



*Figure 63: Research team member Amy MacQueen, in April 2011 site performance on Monadnock. (DEFDW©).*

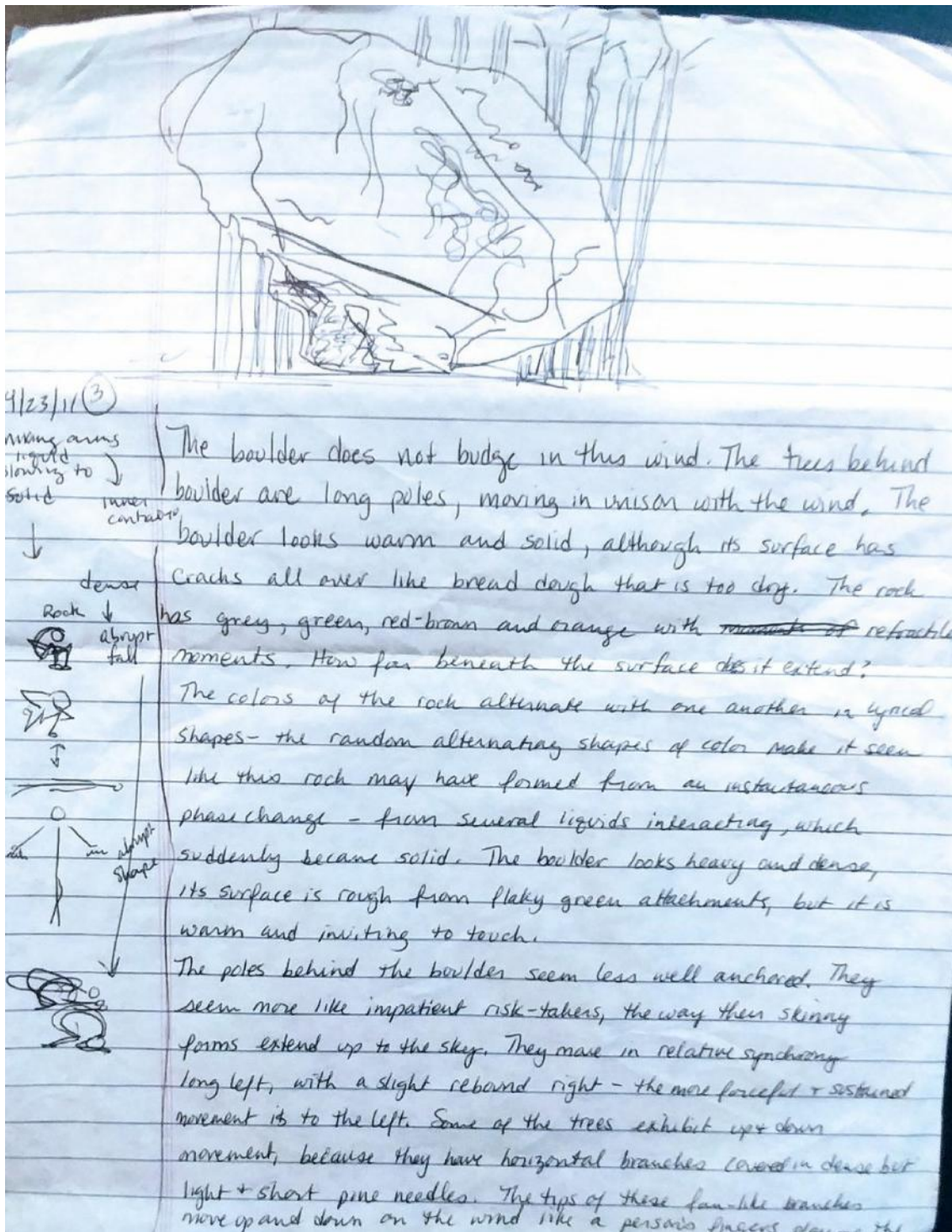


Figure 64: Amy MacQueen, field journal sample (DEFDW©).

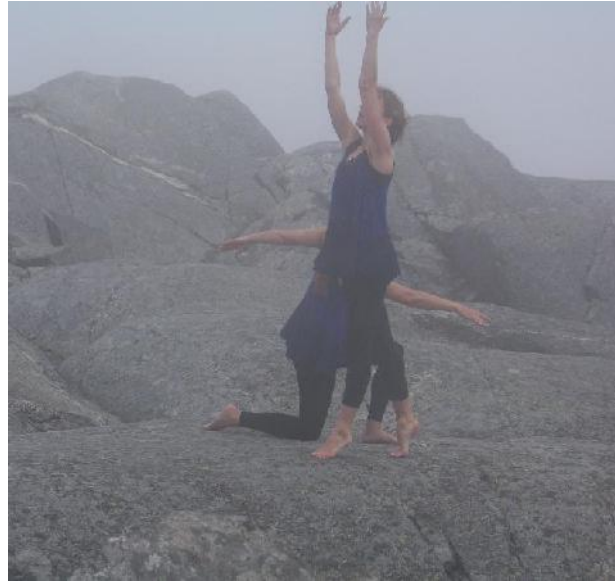


Figure 65: A. MacQueen and D. Eno in "Belong"  
(DEFDW©).



Figure 66: A. MacQueen with M. Madsen & T. Run-Kowzun in "Shapes of Trees" on Monadnock (DEFDW©).





*Figure 67: A. MacQueen In "Goethean Suite", solo "Air Cognition", Colonial Theater, Keene NH (DEFDW©).*



**Dance-research Team Member #4: Mary Madsen**

**Artist/Researcher Statement**

[Excerpt from the video montage, Colonial Theater presentation]

“Using the method allowed me to focus on the energy I was feeling from whatever space I was working in. It helped me ignore any judgement I might normally put on myself when creating movement or improvising because it felt like there was a clear map and within that, I felt like the mountain, itself, was guiding me.

The process kept me at ease and I did not feel overwhelmed by creating something as I sometimes do. It allowed me to stay in each moment more fully and move to the next, naturally rather than jumping ahead prematurely. I also felt more connected to the energy and the presence of the mountain, through a heightened awareness that the method naturally brings out.”

~Mary Madsen

**“Found Poem”: Mary Madsen**

A synthesis created from the interpreted interview transcript:

Interview with Dance-research team member Mary Madsen

Phenomenological “lived experience” profile analysis/synthesis

August 18, 2011

Grand Central Station, NYC

**Mary....A Sense of Flowing Water**

I

Ah, I remember!

To bring in some of our personal style,

Immediately be able to connect with the space,

Your true focus from the beginning.

Positive engagement—to be moved emotionally,

To have a reaction, with the positive reinforcement of the arts.

## II

Instinct—to repeat the steps, being open to just absorb, mindfully—  
 The space.  
 To really see it—like a kid.  
 Exploring,  
 Playing,  
 Noticing--  
 All these little intricacies.

## III

Find a space that is intriguing-  
 There is something about that which inspires  
 Inspires ideas  
 Or has a light to it  
 And so you decide to look a little deeper  
 To think about its history...  
 And then slide forward—  
 A kind of coloring over time.

## IV

Try to find a connection between it and you,  
 What kinds of feeling and energy?  
 And for me, the energy was definitely a very big thing!  
 The energy—  
 Really helped me find an honest connection  
 To the space  
 I was working in...  
 And it somehow related to me.  
 Even though I am human.  
 It really helped me transport the movement to the stage  
 To visualize how the movement might adapt,  
 But still keep the mountain sensations  
 As something I could reference.

## V

I felt that there was an energy in the crevice that was pulling  
 My hand, my foot—  
 Like it wanted me to notice what was going on down there!  
 So, that informed me  
 My movement  
 Onstage—  
 Even though the crevice was not there.  
 It informed the quality of the movement

That was transferred to the stage.

VI

I think the method worked great  
 In the beginning I mentioned  
 That I was excited—  
 To open up the process  
 To be able to bring some of our own selves into the process  
 So it was more of an immediate result—  
 You are not just trying to connect to another person's ideas.

VII

I think it is a short cut—  
 Still time to input back and forth between you and the choreographer  
 As a dancer you always want that feedback  
 Adapt it, evolve it...  
 For me, it's the connection of the movement to the space.  
 The initial experience—a little overwhelming.  
 There was much to talk about initially  
 And to process  
 The process made a lot of sense  
 Once you put it into action  
 Sounded a little complicated—  
 And then you just throw yourself into it!  
 Get out of the headiness  
 And just do it.  
 I questioned myself at first—  
 Am I doing this right?  
 As we improvised, were we doing the process right?  
 But then I started letting go—  
 I did not ruminate on that for long  
 I just kept going back to the process  
 And allowed it to guide me.

VIII

No time to sit and  
 Question every little thing.

IX

And yes, there was an immediate connection  
 A very personal connection.  
 To the ideas,

To the concepts.  
 Anyone learning repertory  
 There is an information transfer  
 And you naturally forget you are just learning the steps.  
 Repertory is more about learning  
 Later, you come back to the underlying idea  
 And you realize the connection is there...  
 Awareness of the space.  
 Why it is moving you to do certain steps, movements...  
 You sort of transfer that information  
 After going through the process.  
 Your senses are heightened.

## X

In learning repertory—  
 There is a transfer  
 And the process helps that, too.  
 The [Goethean] process refreshes  
 The relearning of the repertory.

## XI

I think the process has definitely changed my relationship to the mountain.  
 I am more aware of its intricacies.  
 That the mountain has a voice  
 And a life...  
 And whether or not  
 I am conscious of it,  
 I think that it still stays within me.

## XII

The change, the evolution of my  
 Relationship to the mountain—  
 The shift was pretty immediate for me.  
 In my first experience on the mountain for this project  
 I was really focused on the details,  
 And the intricacies of the little things  
 That the audience would not see—  
 But that I could see!  
 Being up close and personal with the space;  
 The energy was resonating  
 From my spot.  
 From that crevice I was exploring  
 And the other rocks around it that I used to push off from sometimes...  
 And the energy of the air all around the space.

## XIII

And you know—  
 The next time I came back  
 I worked on those very same things...  
 And the third time (right before performance on the summit)  
 I felt comfortable with what I had started creating—  
 Something new;  
 Another layer;  
 I became the eyes of the space.

## XIV

I remember one time—  
 I was doing this roll...  
 And I had not really noticed the straight-down  
 Aspect of the ground before...  
 But I noticed that this one time  
 While doing the movement  
 And I recalled thinking—  
 “Well, that’s really interesting!”  
 It gave me a totally different feeling.  
 There is always so much more to explore.  
 The process is limitless.  
 There is so much more the space can give—  
 Much of it comes though my senses—  
 What I can see.  
 Like when I was working with energy—  
 Like the wind or the breeze in your face,  
 Tactile sense.

## XV

As I continued to connect with the space  
 At that moment—  
 I felt like I was almost the things I was working with  
 I was seeing this all in a totally different way  
 A totally different  
 Perspective.

## XVI

As I was rolling onto the rocks

I was an extension of that space  
 And like my eyes were its eyes.  
 You discover things and work with them;  
 You become comfortable with them  
 And then something else pops up!

## XVII

I think it is just the realization—  
 That through my experiences I was learning  
 And realizing  
 That the rock and the crevice has a life of its own  
 And that it has gone through something  
 Of a history.  
 A process.  
 An evolution.

## XVIII

We often look at things around you in a very external way  
 The Goethean process makes you have  
 A completely different perspectives—  
 More internal.  
 Empathy.

## XIX

I feel that I was really connected to what I was doing.  
 And WHY I was doing it.  
 And where it came from.  
 Hopefully the audience was able to see this,  
 Feel this.  
 It just goes back  
 To what I was saying earlier—  
 I was able to transfer movement to the stage  
 Using the same energy qualities.  
 The same resonance with the phenomena I was working with

## XX

The process felt especially authentic.  
 In the process of making the site piece Ayllu,  
 When we started working on it in the studio,  
 We realized that we were to be the rocks for each other  
 Whatever specific given moment—  
 We took turns automatically!  
 To be there for and being that rock for someone else.

It  
Did  
Work.

## XXI

The evolution of that piece—Ayllu, let's see:  
In a logical way,  
It is coming together was easy for me—  
It was easy to take the movement and put them on stage.  
To have a “still” ground, with a lot of space to move in.  
It provided another experience of doing the actual steps;  
It was exciting.  
A new way—

## XXII

But we were not really aware of the video backdrop at all.  
I think the way we did this  
Was relatively seamless.  
I think movement transferred from the mountain to stage  
Pretty easily.  
But there was a whole other layer—  
The video  
Which we barely had a chance to realize

## XXIII

So I wonder  
What would happen?  
If we had more awareness of that  
And developed something of that, too.

## XXIV

You know  
Maybe there are other things  
The kinds of things you don't really realize  
Until you do it—  
Maybe there are other relationships  
That will come out of  
Something there.

## XXV

But then reverting back to the Goethean process,  
Just carrying the sense.  
And the ideas.

Of being aware of the mountain.  
 And the structure.  
 And its energies.

## XXVI

Even for the rep pieces  
 It makes things  
 Similar in order to transfer to the stage because—  
 Otherwise movement could become very flat in a way—  
 So it really was so important to keep that resonance  
 Of what happened on the mountain  
 Because the landscape  
 Adds a huge dimension to the piece.

## XXVII

Yeah.  
 My internal awareness of the mountain  
 Comes and goes  
 Especially since I live in a place  
 Like New York City

## XXVIII

If you are talking about...  
 Transferring it—  
 The mountain.  
 To your own life.  
 I think—  
 Using the practice over time  
 Will have more influence.  
 You turn it into a dance practice.  
 Over time  
 It can really change a person's perspective,  
 And outlook.

## XXIX

Yeah.  
 I do feel that there is a residual of the process and the mountain there  
 It is sort of...unconsciously there.  
 The process definitely works  
 And I saw it work in some pieces better than others  
 Some of that had to do with  
 Time constraints.  
 You know



Like me—  
 Coming later into the process.  
 But from what I experienced  
 I think the [Goethean] process does bridge the gap  
 Between the mountain and the stage  
 And between the inner and outer landscapes.

XXX  
 The mission for the research...  
 Explorations of concepts and ideas that you are “given” from “place”  
 The collaborative process—  
 Was great.  
 For me  
 The collaboration happened more in the studio,  
 With the group work  
 When we were making Ayllu

XXXI  
 I was able to really experience the process in the making of Ayllu  
 I think it worked great!  
 Because everything was just naturally there.  
 We were able to see things that were happening  
 From the outside,  
 As a creative collaborative process  
 Where our placements were  
 And you know—  
 You guided us through the different things  
 And then we were able to make our own discoveries within that.

XXXII  
 I mean—  
 The process that you set up  
 It gives structure,  
 As a starting point,  
 And eventually that structure leads—  
 Having that structure,  
 And putting it into practice.  
 Having the [GSM] structure in place  
 Gets you out of questioning yourself,  
 Helps you focus on the idea,  
 To be mindful of the process.  
 And that going through those steps  
 Leads you to the product

That is  
Continually evolving.

XXXIII  
The process  
Becomes like a blueprint—  
Or a map.  
It is a way to have more confidence  
In the creative process.  
To have more freedom  
In the creative process.  
To be more open to  
Other possibilities.

XXXIV  
I want to go back  
And talk about process a little more—  
It grows  
From unexpected places,  
In unexpected ways,  
And eventually you and the others  
Are doing holistic practice.  
You are practicing the process  
And it becomes engrained in you.

XXXV  
[Creating “Ayllu”] was really great.  
It was exciting.  
And I felt rewarded in some way.  
It brought me to a more personal place  
In my personal section.  
Then—  
It involved into this group thing.  
That really felt organic;  
And within the group context, too.

XXXVI  
I would say one of the outgrowths of the GSM  
Is learning how to really use your senses.  
Your senses to observe the environment you are in.  
As well as becoming part  
Of the environment.  
Putting yourself in the position

Of being the eyes for—  
 And the voice of—  
 The environment.  
 I guess we really are empathizing  
 And using that as an impetus to explore.  
 And learn.  
 And communicate.

## XXXVII

I think GSM can be developed as a teachable practice;  
 It can transfer to the studio.  
 And it does parallel with some improvisation classes.  
 It is similar to others things we touched upon.  
 There is a relationship—a contextualizing one.  
 It is a reinforcer to some of the other things I have done as an artist.

## XXXVIII

I think I am only beginning  
 To touch upon the collaborative process of making my solo.  
 I feel like I developed  
 A clearer contribution.  
 The idea to directly link  
 To what we were already working on  
 [at our micro sites].

## XXXIX

In creating that solo  
 It was like an infiltration of ideas  
 That eventually arrived and melded together  
 Sort of like fleeting moments of little flowers in the grass,  
 Where I was working—  
 Or the leaves of a tree  
 Images like stepping over a stream;  
 Or the sky.  
 I used things like that within the improv—  
 And definitely the sense of flowing water.  
 ~End

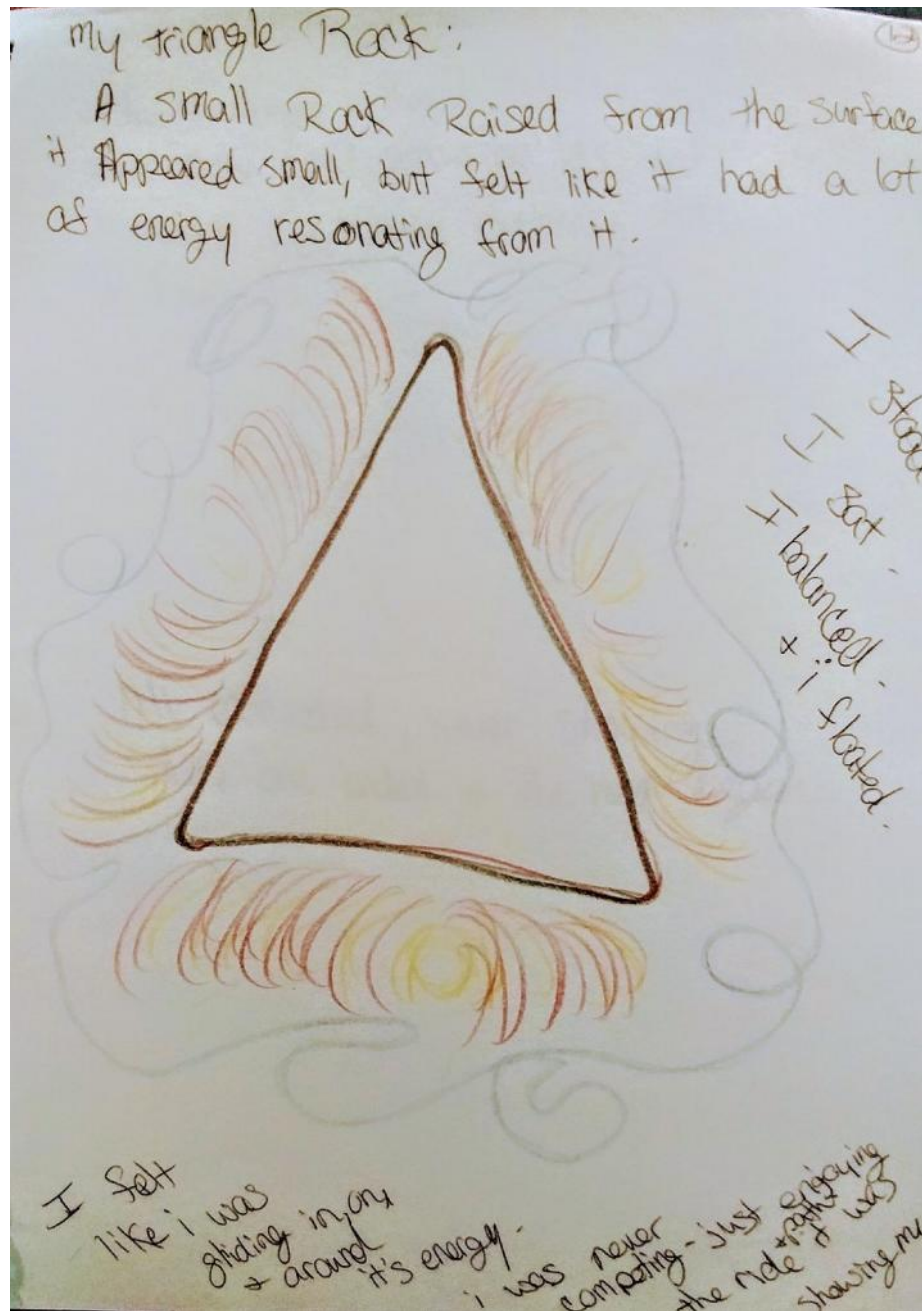


Figure 68: Research team member Mary Madsen, field journal sample #1 (DEFDW©).

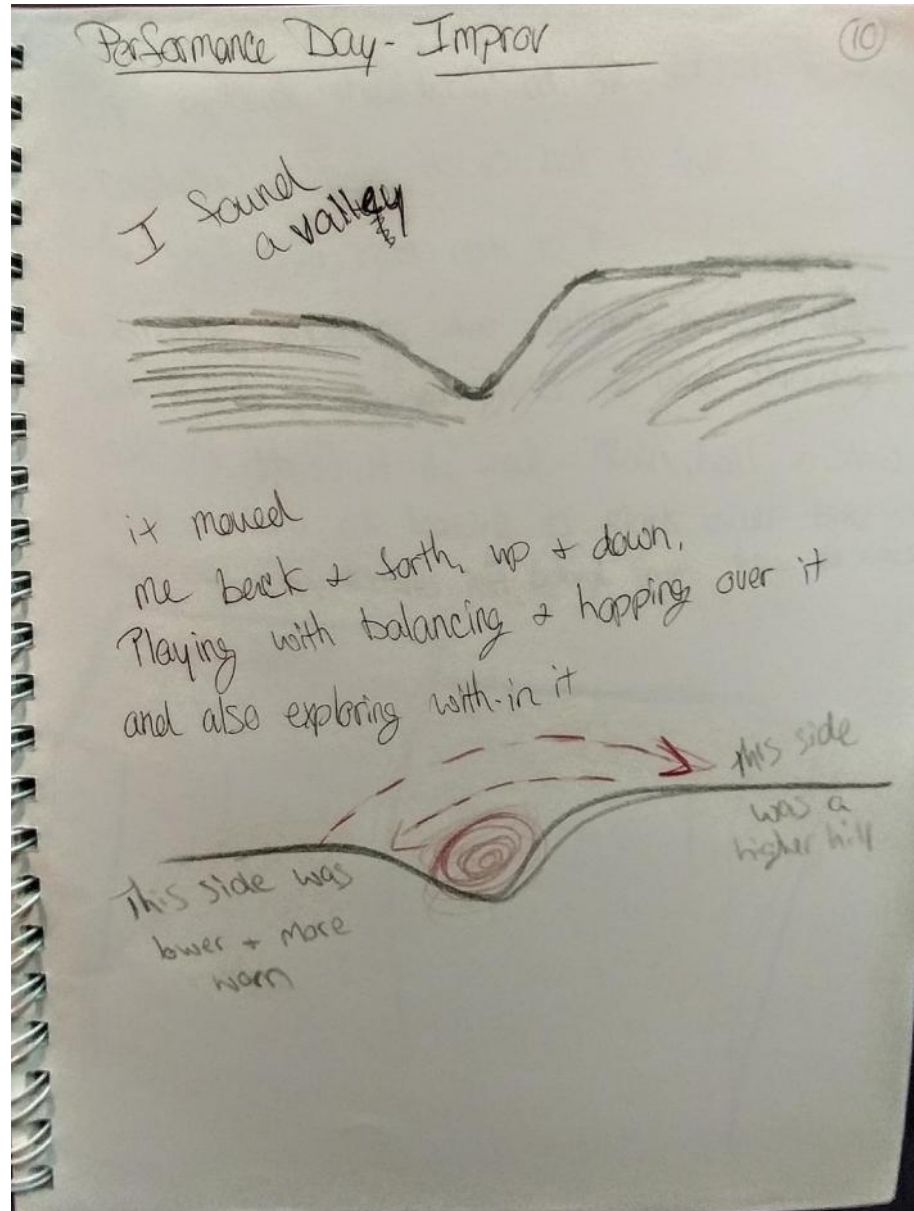
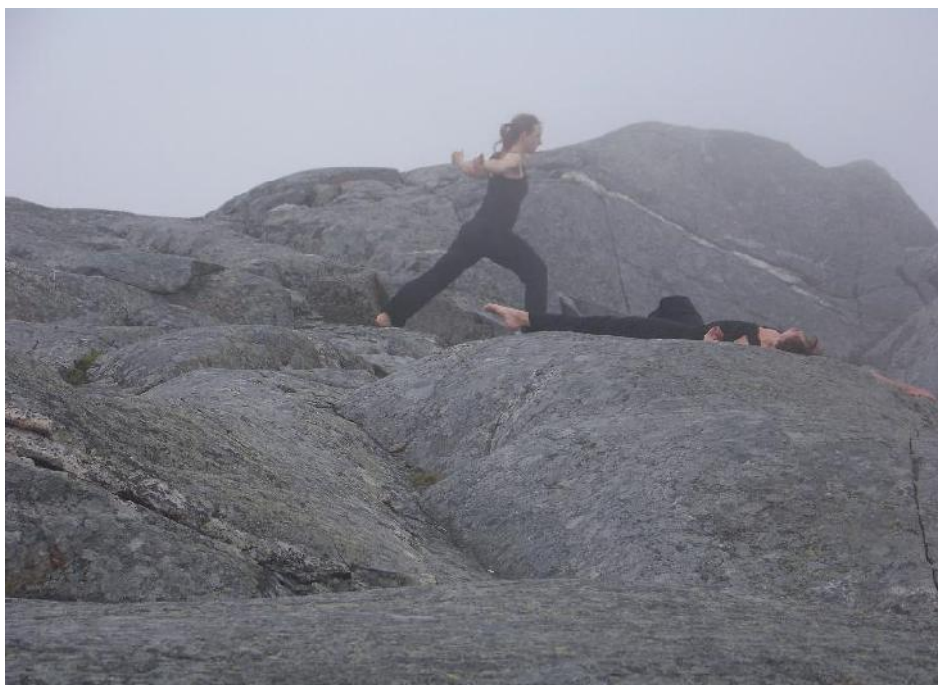


Figure 69: M. Madsen, field journal sample #2 (DEFDW©).



*Figure 70: M. Madsen in Goethean Suite, improvisational performance study, Mt. Monadnock, April 2011 (Photo courtesy of P. Rein/DEFDW©).*



*Figure 71: M. Madsen & T. Run-Kowzun performing "Mountains, Part I", on Monadnock, April 2011 (Photo courtesy of P. Rein/DEFDW©).*



*Figure 72: M. Madsen, C. Torp, T. Run-Kowzun & A. MacQueen in "Ayllu", a creative Goethean collaboration, for "Mountain Dance", Colonial Theater, Keene, NH, July 2011 (Photo courtesy of P. Rein DEFDW©).*

## Dance-research team member #5: Trayer Run-Kowzun

### Artist/Researcher Statement

[Excerpt from the video montage, Colonial Theater presentation]

“A creation process is new to the eye and mind. Movements come from the natural elements that move people’s hearts. ~Trayer Run-Kowzun

### “Found Poem”: Trayer Run-Kowzun

A synthesis created from the interpreted interview transcript:

Interview with Dance-research team member Trayer Run-Kowzun

Phenomenological “lived experience” profile analysis/synthesis

September 19, 2011

Grand Central Station, NYC

### Trayer...There is Always a Different Way

#### I

What I think about the process?  
I think, well, it is so different than what we used to do  
The repertory work—you just learn it, and do it.  
This time—  
You literally have to get into the site.  
Your environment.  
Before you can work the research.  
For the Goethean process,  
I actually still think about it.  
I don’t remember every single stage

#### II

Or what it is—  
But I remember how you do a stage.  
For me, it is a work in progress,  
From one stage to the next.



I am still thinking about it.  
 I wish we could have lots more time to do it.  
 It is like experimenting with something.

## III

I do not mean every single step;  
 Working to get away from typical,  
 [Normal way we have worked on site before]  
 You get moving to it,  
 Like doing a different math.  
 Certain steps I think it is helpful,  
 But I cannot really say which step.  
 I just feel some need for more time,  
 Getting away from our other way of thinking.

## IV

Actually, I do like the different ways we have used the process  
 For this project.  
 I remember when you gave us pictures [working in the studio]  
 Of the mountain—  
 Oh yes—beginning Ayllu—No!  
 It was the one you gave us solo parts to work on  
 [Goethean Suite]  
 What piece was that?

## V

I like the one we danced  
 On our own  
 [Micro site solos]  
 Also I think you give direction;  
 You give us task to create movement;  
 It was a good process.  
 Everybody looking at same thing  
 But coming up with very different ideas.  
 Like bracketing suggests—  
 You just do it!  
 And you have to spend so much time.  
 I know you might not trust something right away,  
 It's the time factor.  
 If you are given a task you can work [the process] into it.  
 You find people to do movement.  
 Now, you give the creative a task  
 And this process

Ok. How are you going to come up with something?

## VI

You give it expression  
 You want to create something  
 That is about different nature idea.  
 I remember the first time now [orientation in Central Park]  
 You asked me to walk around and look at everything around us  
 To find something to explore  
 That inspired me  
 I was in Central Park I remember  
 I was drawn to something  
 And the method gave me a different way to explore [it]  
 Then, in the end, I feel different  
 Because on the mountain, I know the mountain  
 This tree—  
 What are you going to say to me?

## VII

In the beginning—  
 We went through the five steps  
 One and two we find something to do with the exercise  
 [Find micro site]  
 During the time we have to work  
 You say go through each of the  
 One, two, three, four, five stages.  
 Five Stages—  
 And suddenly I am creating something!  
 I feel sometimes it is just easy  
 Do you want to do one meaning through the whole process?  
 Or do you want to do something different this time?  
 We can choose what to focus on  
 And then listen  
 To hear what it says  
 One day we do the five parts  
 And we stick with the same subject  
 Very different feeling.  
 I agree that we do develop the idea over time  
 We do the five process one section at a time,  
 And we work with one step for quite a while.

## VIII

Your body want to do what it wants

But when you are in a group working  
     You have less input into it  
     One will say "let's do this"  
 And another will say "How about this"  
     And together  
     We are all working the stage(s).  
     We are all in the same kind of stage  
 And in solo work you can just go into  
     Whatever stage you want to work.  
 Sometimes we could go from stage one to three,  
     Or when in two I could jump to four!  
     Sometimes I feel it's a bit difficult to  
     I remember you said—  
 You can dance to anything and that's true  
     You can move, you can do anything.  
     It is important to ask sometime  
     "Are you really true to the exercise?"  
 You understand how you are looking at the subject [phenomenon]  
     In a different manner  
     You can dance to anything.

## IX

It is really hard to tell how others participate  
     I guess it depends  
     Upon the person  
 And how they experience everything in life.

## X

I can do the five stage all the same way  
     If I want to.  
     But I think the method  
     Can bring out some people's creativity  
     It might even be easier for people  
     Who do not know that much about dance.  
 So you are thinking about his as more like improvisation?  
     That is what I say—  
     If that is the point  
     The dancer can make the point stronger  
     If we are producing  
     A new way,  
     A new product  
     Maybe we need longer to work it out  
     For people who never dance before—  
     It's actually easier for them

They say—  
 Ok, I never dance before  
 But I can express that kind of idea.

## XI

By moving the body—  
 Natural, organic.  
 I think for the trained dancer  
 I think this is more like:  
 Ok. I can move my leg, my arms  
 A certain way  
 And that is good  
 That is how I might feel comforted  
 This is what I have been doing  
 So I guess  
 When you use your body  
 More than you use your head  
 Like you are thinking  
 But your thinking is more at the physical level  
 You know more like you are in your mind  
 That is general for most people I think...

## XII

I know this method we use  
 We find a different perspective about the dancing  
 Using the imagination.  
 Everybody stresses different things.  
 Where does inspiration come from?  
 Whether a mountain, a river  
 The process is different.  
 How does you want to capture that idea?  
 How do you want to transform that idea?  
 Change it to the physical.  
 Sometimes it is not an easy thing to do.  
 It is not easy because you are thinking how your body is going to do it—  
 Two arms, two legs one head equals one body  
 But if you try to create things  
 When you are used to it and your projection  
 It is not just one way,  
 One person does it  
 I don't know—  
 I think sometimes creative process is never easy  
 It is a little bit hard I think  
 Even when we perform in space

You give us the things [choreography, ideas]  
 And we work on it over time  
 For example—  
 We did the elements differently  
 Fire, earth, water, air  
 It does not mean you tell us what earth is

## XIII

We will focus  
 Each on what we feel earth is  
 And what it [interpretation] should be like  
 You give us a little something [guidance/ task]  
 And we just do it!  
 I think the process can deepen  
 The way we connect to the subject  
 And make the dance  
 Over time  
 To really get into it  
 I think the connection gets even better!

## XIV

In the performer point of view  
 You give us direction  
 And we are doing different things together  
 You give us the [idea] of the work  
 And then we feel something  
 You are courageous to do something like this  
 With the method  
 You give us a new way  
 To find what we are looking for  
 Even though  
 We love it all  
 Always with a different way.

## XV

You draw the lines on the rock we dance on  
 [One of the tasks was for dancers to create movement tableaux  
 Based on lines drawn to mark out the structure and energy of the rocks on the mountain]  
 You direct—  
 Ok, you go there-there-there [pointing]  
 It is not just like you do this and you do that  
 This shows us a new way to see the mountain.

## XVI

And a way to use the stages  
 Because you are focused on the stages, we are too  
 And this kind of exercise helps dancer to understand the stage  
 [In this instance, Earth Cognition]  
 And how it can be seen on the mountain  
 And interpreted.  
 Of course, we still have choice.  
 When we interpret,  
 We give the idea of the rock energy  
 Earth energy  
 The picture--you give us something to look at  
 In the studio to remind us  
 I look at them and it gives us direction  
 Like a map.

## XVII

You draw lines  
 We could see it  
 We are working on those lines [of energy] on the rocks  
 To get into the energy of that space  
 To follow the stages  
 Maybe we were not think of the stage  
 This gives us direction  
 And we just do it  
 Then we say what stage now?  
 Maybe the process is reversed—  
 The mountain is doing choreography too.

## XVIII

I think the process worked well.  
 It was quick  
 Because that became our constant point of view  
 Our method  
 Each time we do it, it becomes stronger  
 We did not overthink  
 We just did it  
 We took a look at the photo  
 Made movement  
 And evolved it together, into the tableaux  
 You know the stage  
 And you know what to do  
 To interpret it  
 Yes, it was a good process to collaborate  
 It just went that way--easy.

Easy to work with these people  
 And the perspectives of everyone added so much  
 To our interpretation.

## XIX

Going through the stages on the mountain at my place  
 I see a crack in the rock  
 And I begin by saying  
 “What did the crack do in the life of that rock?”  
 Maybe it just is there to show me there is always a different way  
 To see things  
 And interpret the story of the rock  
 You can work in the very same spot  
 Over and over  
 And make many, many different discoveries!

## XX

In the beginning with the “first impression”  
 [Beginning the process of making “Ayllu”]  
 You said to work and then come back  
 Where we discussed the process and our discoveries  
 You said the same thing in rehearsal  
 We came back into the process  
 It stayed the same  
 Always it was—  
 What could happen?  
 It is more like experimenting  
 Like discovering.

## XXI

I think in the past of the mountain  
 Even though we work with similar idea  
 This is different  
 It comes from our focus together  
 But I think the stages can transfer to the old way  
 Does not mean you cannot picture what your element is  
 Because it lives in your head  
 The source of inspiration  
 Makes something come out!

## XXII

It was some idea coming out about it [the site]  
 You start the study  
 The constant way of the process

Toward the end I was thinking about the final stage  
 This happened because of our focus together  
 I was more conscious of the step  
 I tried to follow all of the stages  
 In the beginning I was not sure  
 And I ask am I doing this right?  
 At the end, everything jelled together!

## XXIII

I wished we had a little more time  
 Although sometimes I got a little bored  
 One time I fell asleep on my rock on the mountain!  
 But when I feel this way  
 I will just move on to the next stage  
 You have to know when to move on  
 You can know when to go on to the next one  
 And how are you going to find the simple things?  
 It is not easy to do  
 If you find one single phenomenon,  
 And then you go on from there  
 Through each stage.

## XXIV

[Mountain performance]  
 I did not feel so much developed  
 I didn't feel as much  
 Because we danced in a much bigger space  
 Even though we also danced in our places  
 Really hard to do—  
 To go through the five stage  
 But when you are in a situation and you want to develop it  
 You pick one thing  
 And then it's on to something else—  
 I have to go over there  
 It's a different juice  
 Not a cup of tea  
 They do not mix together  
 You try to mix together  
 And in the end you still have two different juices  
 When you see something in your head  
 What is in your head?  
 What comes from the orange juice?  
 What comes from the apple?



## XXV

If you say that—  
 That the mountain is what you feel  
 I feel happy  
 And of course you can dance what makes you happy—  
 Start to think in stages  
 If that is true  
 Is that stage really that?  
 The concept is not visual  
 [Dancer ruminates about the structure of the GSM process]  
 Do you think the Goethean method—  
 When using it to make a study about the mountain  
 Would you be thinking more about the inspiration from the mountain?  
 Or did the mountain make you feel?  
 [These are not mutually exclusive things]  
 So, the Goethean method—  
 Is not easy work.  
 I mean,  
 We think about using it outdoors  
 For me the hard part is the time factor.

## XXVI

[Talks about the complexity or simplicity of various phenomena]  
 When you show some of those pictures  
 It could be a single flower  
 And you can dance from that  
 That is what I think—  
 I feel those things  
 Those small things actually teach you to know,  
 What people should think.  
 Just a flower or  
 Someone might say:  
 “Oh my god, what is this? It is beautiful!”  
 Some people never love flowers  
 And some people do—  
 You know what I mean?  
 Because in human life you can find a bunch of flowers;  
 And you can see them right there growing—  
 And you can wonder what happened to the flower.  
 It can inspire you how to look  
 How to really get into it...

## XXVII

That's what I am saying  
 [You can become the flower in your body-mind]  
 You can look at it and you can imagine  
 It's a kind of juice...  
 But for me, I am thinking about it  
 And I prefer the visual...

## XXVIII

You show people all about the space  
 Ok--let's do an exercise now on the mountain  
 With a rock  
 Figure out what moves your mind [about the rock]  
 And how the subject changes,  
 How this moves your thoughts in a different way  
 How you look at things  
 When I say I prefer to look and see  
 If you are going to use imagination that's a different way...  
 When you look at the phenomenon,  
 And it is moving, it is different.  
 We dance away—  
 People might notice the difference  
 That is how I feel—  
 You have to REALLY SEE.  
 It is a great study about how we see things,  
 How you look at different phenomena.  
 How we look at things with a different perspective  
 You see one way, others see another way  
 Your interpretation is yours [alone].

## XXIX

Sometimes I think it is good to see how other people interpret things  
 I do like to work together  
 It is much better because everybody has different input  
 Even though we are different  
 We are the same  
 We are in the same stage  
 And we each offer a different point of view  
 Our thinking jells [universals].

## XXX

I always love the outdoors.

So, for me it is always that  
 The art and inspiration is right there  
 When we go up the mountain  
 Before the method  
 It is like your “stage” and you just dance out  
 The problem that is given to you  
 And we just dance it, right?  
 But now you are going there to do something different.  
 Sometimes we are using the dance in a different way  
 To address a different problem.  
 Sometimes I get a different feeling working on the mountain.  
 When you go up there you see the mountain with first impression  
 If it is windy, cold, I say it feels cold  
 I was not thinking that much about that different level  
 I just had to follow what we had to do [task]  
 I ask though  
 Did I really incorporate everything in?  
 Is that really how I am feeling?  
 Is it really true what I am doing?  
 Some parts feel a little rough  
 To just go through the process it wasn't complete  
 Yet I really feel SOMETHing  
 Somedays I feel I want this part to go faster and then,  
 Others go slower—  
 I give a lot of thought  
 And it feels really cold  
 It is a great study how you look at different things  
 Different perspectives  
 How you look at the mountain the way you already know  
 How we are still walking the same way up to the top.

## XXXI

And I do another way—  
 And I think, I don't remember this!  
 Actually, I do not know how to get to the top from here!  
 I say to myself on that hike,  
 That is very interesting because when we are hiking [to the summit]  
 We ALWAYS go the same way  
 And we get used to it.  
 It can be this way [referring to GSM now]  
 You can use a different way to get in there  
 There's no one way  
 There are always other ways  
 You can give and take...

## XXXII

But it is ok.  
 Maybe I go and sit once on the rock  
 And I sit there and I think  
 The world is so beautiful!  
 And so I think  
 Oh, I could be part of this mountain  
 Mountain and the rock.  
 Something different here  
 Maybe I didn't thinking about this before  
 How do you say?  
 We have a process,  
 The mountain is there  
 It has been there for long time  
 And it's a whole bunch of rocks  
 If that give inspiration for your task  
 Then remember there are different paths to the top  
 It can be that there is no flower at the top  
 But you can remember another time when the flower was there...  
 And I think about the rocks  
 They stay but the flowers die  
 But we always can keep the flower image  
 But that is in your fantasy  
 At the top there is rock, moss and dirt  
 Your phenomena can appear at any moment.  
 That's what I say—walk different paths,  
 See something new  
 Something makes me feel connected to the mountain  
 Or some phenomenon...  
 Maybe I take something away with me  
 That can help me with my element dance;  
 The fire [Goethe's fire cognition].

## XXXIII

And many times I have been to the mountain  
 And did not think about it.  
 Just rehearsal.  
 GSM works more to inspire  
 A different way of thinking.

## XXXIV

For me, I would not tell students about the stages  
 Of the method  
 I would say—  
 Let's look at the mountain

And see what you see  
 And store that in your head  
 Because you can take a picture with your head  
 Kids are pretty good—  
 When they like something they picture it in their heads  
 And they don't forget.

## XXXV

So, I tell them—  
 Let's just walk around  
 And let's see, let's pick out  
 One of your favorite things.  
 And I would ask them about their impressions.  
 You don't want to get them over-thinking,  
 They might show you something.  
 They will probably mimic what they see,  
 And that is their first impression  
 And then I might say,  
 "What happened?  
 How could you move like that?  
 What is it [phenomenon] telling you?  
 That is where it comes from—  
 That is the second stage.  
 And we go on through other stages.  
 You can really tell what is each stage.  
 But if you really think about it  
 You just do it!  
 You don't think about it,  
 You do the process,  
 To be creative and go stage by stage--  
 And you know?  
 They might look hard enough to find something,  
 That they never thought of before.

## XXXVI

[About journaling]

I do like drawing, drawing is quite interesting  
 Because you have an image in your head  
 You can draw it—straight lines, squiggly lines, whatever—it is fine!  
 It actually helps the image develop in your head  
 And the image to come out on the paper  
 How to remember the stages?  
 You can draw different things.  
 You can draw how it makes you think,  
 Your thoughts...

## XXXVII

I think about the mountain to the stage [process]  
 I think it striked expression from natural [nature]  
 When you go outdoors it helps you to be aware of what is going on  
 In your own little world—outside.  
 It makes you AWARE.

## XXXVIII

Something about it—  
 I think aware [awareness] in dance for me  
 Is really aware how this Earth is going  
 Makes you aware—  
 That is how I think environmental dance should be.  
 Should be in the context of aware how we are living  
 And how the Earth is living,

## XXXIX

The tree doesn't move by itself, but you know the tree trunk is twisted  
 [Describing Krumholz trees on Monadnock]  
 I might ask—"why are you twisted?"  
 And the tree might say to you—  
 Well, something happened.  
 The wind came and the wind changed the tree.  
 You can picture it.  
 You say "hi" to the tree and it says "hi" back.  
 You feel that if you have time being there  
 The movement will happen  
 And it will only happen outdoors like this.  
 Because you can really see and feel it.  
 Or maybe you can touch it.

~End

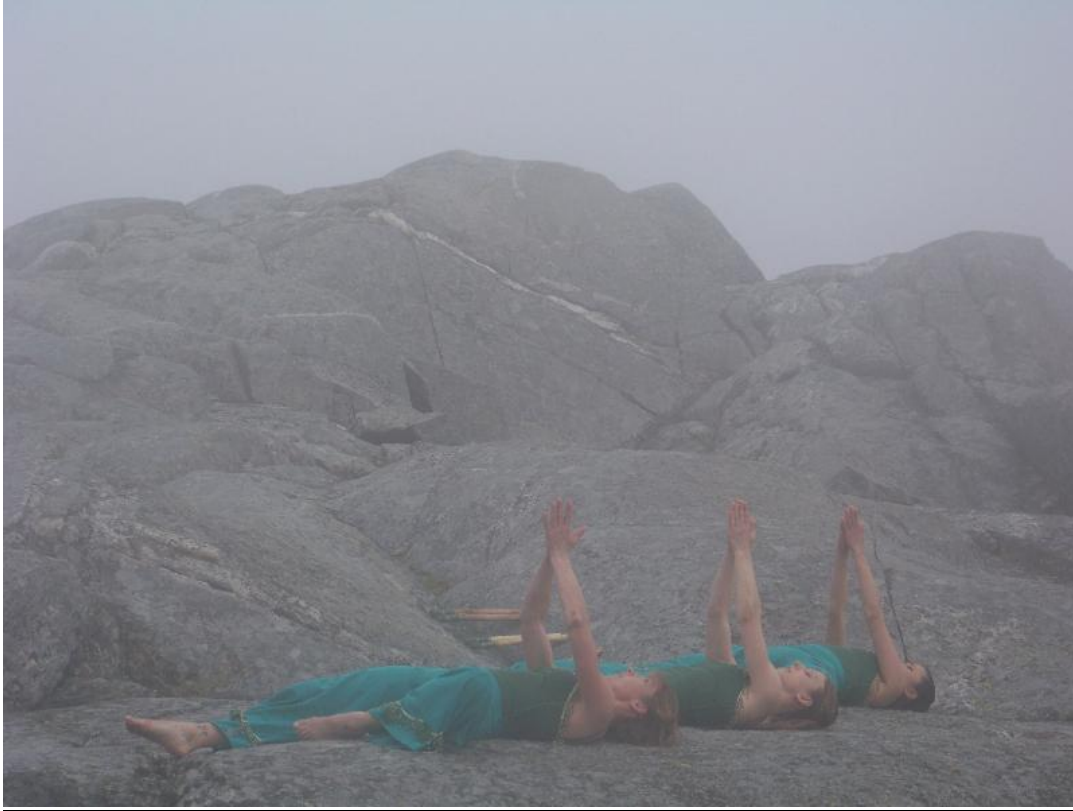


Figure 73: Research team member Trayer Run-Kowzun with A. MacQueen and M. Madsen in “Shapes of Trees” ((DEFDW©).



Figure 74: T. Run-Kowzun during research team orientation; “learning” the Goethean scientific process (GSM), in Central Park, NYC, January, 2011 (DEFDW©).

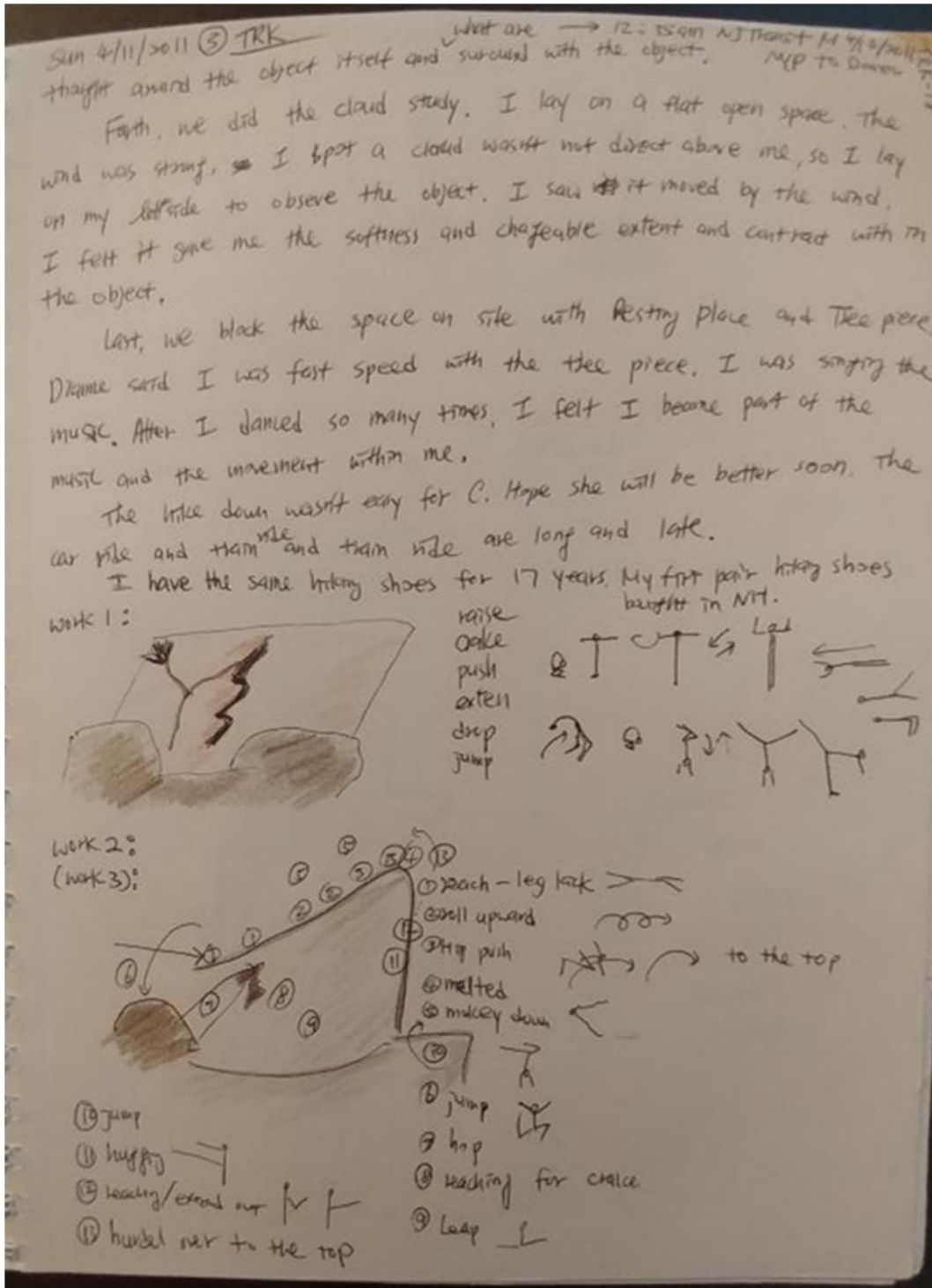


Figure 75: T. Run-Kowzun, field journal sample (DEFDW©).





*Figure 76: Soloist T. Run-Kowzun and company members in "Goethean Suite--Fire Cognition" in Mountain Dance at Colonial Theater, Keene, NH April 2011) (Photo courtesy of P. Rein/ DEFDW©.).*

**Dance-research team member #6: Carin Torp**

**Artist/Researcher Statement**

[Excerpt from the video montage, Colonial Theater presentation]

“I pause with my heart open for first encounter. Then I dive in with zest as I expand in my understanding with the most blissful moment of all—We join in balance as one.”

~Carin Torp

**“Found Poem”: Carin Torp**

A synthesis created from the interpreted interview transcript:

Interview with Dance-research team member Carin Torp

Phenomenological “lived experience” profile analysis/synthesis

September 17, 2011

Panera Restaurant, Keene, NH

**Carin...the Heart Connection**

I  
 The initial workshop—  
 Really exciting.  
 In terms of new information  
 Accessible to my own way  
 Of doing things  
 I really appreciated—  
 Three of us in the room,  
 Doing the same thing  
 Yet we expressed in very different ways  
 Still  
 There was a commonality.

## II

Exciting for me that day  
 Validating my own body's way of knowing  
 Learning something in a new way.  
 This kind of thing  
 Definitely easy to dive into  
 From the first day  
 The journaling process—  
 “Ok, yeah. That works!”

## III

The mountain—  
 Beautiful!  
 And I would love it.  
 Something really lovely about it.  
 Ah,  
 I was relying on my sense  
 Of what we were going to achieve  
 “I really think this is going to be a good day!”  
 Then I think I was disappointed  
 I was not doing more rep pieces  
 Late winter and spring rehearsals—  
 “Ok. Everybody's dancing”.

## IV

[I talk more, for a moment about the need for team members to cast away personal expectations  
 in favor of developing and putting the GSM into practice for the sake of the project],  
 Something about the [GSM] process felt really natural to me

Very quickly assimilated.  
 Easy.  
 Surrendering to process was easy for me to do;  
 “Ok. Here I am [talking to chosen micro site on the mountain]!”  
 “That's my spot!”  
 That was it—my first impression.  
 “Come on over here, Carin!”

## V

I knew it was my spot.  
 From my sense of my lying flat on the rock;  
 The invitation of that was there.  
 A place where the whole expanse of my body can feel that spot;  
 My whole connection.

## VI

On the first hike—  
 When we stopped at first clearing  
 I was struck by the angles of the rocks.  
 Before, my impression was much more generalized  
 When we got to the top  
 That [same] angle was there  
 Yet something ne  
 Triangular inclined planes  
 Never thought of Monadnock that way before  
 My curiosity was engaged by that  
 Something about—  
 A little mini landscape  
 It was there—a little mini...  
 [Searching for word, Dianne offers “microcosm”]

## VII

But I mean, really...  
 It was very much like my spot  
 Was talking to my heart in a way—  
 “Hi! Come be with me!”  
 I embraced that.  
 “Of course, I will come be with you” [conversing with micro site]  
 I could not refuse.  
 My relationship with my spot deepened in a way  
 I thought about that spot all the time  
 I used “my” to describe it—like I was in possession of it  
 It felt like it had a hold on me  
 We were in relationship—together.  
 The whole GSM process I trust.  
 And I definitely trusted my spot.  
 We just did it—the study.  
 Just like having a conversation with a friend.  
 I was just so in it.

## VIII

I was in conversation, yes, it was reciprocal.  
 It did become a place of comfort  
 In terms of maybe negating negative things  
 Hard to describe this to other people—  
 I have this space and we are working together  
 Creating something.

## IX

During the project I went on vacation to the Cascade Mountains  
     A large lake  
 And eight (8) to nine (9) thousand feet peaks  
     The second we were there  
 My connection to my spot was there!  
 Those peaks just wrapped me right into my spot!  
     Looped me in, right there—  
     Because I knew my spot  
     And I knew it so well  
     So there it was  
 I am STILL connected to my spot.

## X

That piece was—  
     Not a shrinking of the world  
     Those mountains and my spot,  
     My eyes were seeing these peaks  
     But  
 My body was knowing them in a different way;  
     Somehow my body was taking in  
     The view  
     In a different way.  
     That never happened before.  
     Like I brought along  
 The instrument of observation (not the right word).  
     I wasn't actively thinking about it at all  
     Quicker than instantaneous  
     "This is it".  
 It [body] is trained but I will need to keep it tuned up.  
     But the body knows  
     What to do?

## XI

Not wholly unlike what I was doing in my own work [dance therapist]  
     Definitely like my body is an instrument  
     I feel empathy  
     It is a natural thing  
     For me to hug trees  
     And to feel the life of things  
     That has always been there  
 But there is something about trusting in the knowing.

## XII

There is something about--  
 I don't know [thinking]  
 Even though in those instances  
 I was just actually using my eyes  
 They became a part of the whole me  
 In a different way  
 Felt like my whole body was much more  
 Taking in the information  
 Like a seventh sense.

## XIII

Trusting that communication,  
 And trusting that dialogue...  
 Like you can read someone's mind  
 Is really KNOWING!  
 I now know things in a different way  
 Trusting that  
 Feels like there is a word  
 But not 'empathy'  
 Something more—  
 Having to do with that connection  
 That kind of understanding...

## XIV

Exhilarating to hike up,  
 Rehearse.  
 Exhilarating and exhausting  
 That day [refers to mountain performance],  
 Amy and I got there early.  
 It was beautiful.  
 And then—  
 The fog.

## XV

Worried that not as many people will come  
 Rehearsal was great  
 The music was great  
 Dancing to the music—  
 The music really helps  
 When it surrounds us and comes from all around  
 I was very energized...

## XVI

I loved the Cloud dance [Cloud Study]  
 One of my favorite ones!  
 It was ok??  
 When we were actually IN the clouds?  
 It wasn't as fun.  
 My feeling in the misty clouds—  
 Harder to keep connection to the audience  
 I am inward with the clouds  
 But I loved the whole Goethean improvisation  
 [Talking about the 5-part Goethean Suite Improv now]

## XVII

Hardest part—  
 The music changes [with each new section]  
 And you are forced to switch gears...  
 I was disappointed I did not get to do more in June  
 I felt like I was always waiting  
 I liked the more  
 Intense  
 Long  
 Rehearsals  
 But we needed more of them.  
 Then you mentioned to me about using my journal  
 To create a connecting [segue] piece  
 The work sessions were amazing  
 I loved it!  
 Smooth.  
 Energizing.  
 Collaborating.  
 Perfect!  
 This is what I was envisioning  
 The whole thing to be like—  
 Having it more improve  
 And then, set it.  
 Everything worked!

## XVIII

One other thing I felt good about—  
 Extended rehearsals  
 As a company we got more done in that mode  
 All of us there  
 And eating together  
 Talking  
 We made that connection

Part of me wanted to do  
The (GSM) process with each other!

XIX

Over all--

The performance was very fun!  
I was disappointed there were not more people  
I really liked it.  
Carrying the dream-catcher [large prop used in the theater performance]  
Something about that I really liked  
Got to make eye contact with the audience  
Something really lovely about that  
And my costume changer was really sweet

XX

The performance felt good—  
I did love how  
We turned ourselves into the mountain  
It felt so much...  
It felt so much like the mountain was there  
And fleeting thoughts of  
How much does the audience feel this too?  
The method feels like it was very quickly assimilated.  
Easy to use--  
Pretty rapidly learned with practice,  
Making good use of time.  
Great!

XXI

The trusting piece—  
Allowing what is there and trusting that  
Collaborative dialogue  
Instead of “how do I do this work”  
“Make it fit”  
It was more  
You just do the process  
You are in this site  
You do the process  
And there you are!

XXII

Yes!  
I felt like I was doing movements



That I would not necessarily have thought of  
 Or chosen!  
 But then again,  
 The movement was there—  
 Felt like something that the mountain had its voice  
 In those movements,  
 In a different way [not preconceived].  
 It takes away some of that ego  
 A purity of the space  
 That comes through in a different way.

## XXIII

It is hard to find the words  
 To describe my own transformation  
 Through the process  
 Feels like—  
 My soul has always had a connection  
 To the natural world.  
 Like my heart [gestures pulling something from her heart]  
 Like it is coming from my heart  
 My pulling my heart open  
 And offering it on open palms  
 Having that willingness  
 To be really vulnerable.  
 And trusting myself  
 And the “other”  
 To come with that openness  
 That openness of discovery  
 That leads to this new place we don’t know—  
 Until we get there.

## XXIV

Usually on my hiking trips  
 I will journal, do some writing.  
 Then after doing this new practice with journaling in this way  
 I now say  
 “You know what? I am not taking this [journal] along anymore!”  
 I went out and bought the same kind of art journal  
 THIS is how I want to express  
 My hiking trips from now on.  
 This is it for me.  
 Historians won’t know what I did;  
 I am going to do this more.  
 I don’t have to stop—I can keep going!

## XXV

If there were not this journal piece—  
 Then maybe there would have to be a constant talking.  
     De-briefing.  
     Journaling—  
     What was so exciting  
 Is that there was a way of concretely being the dialogue  
     (Not going there to sit and talk to myself)  
     And channeling the mountain—  
 The journal work allows this to happen  
     In a deep way.

## XXVI

The project experience has intensely transformed  
     My relationship to the mountain  
     Like a person that I love  
     Both the sense  
     Of more connection  
     And also—  
     When I am far away I feel connected  
     There is also a kind of longing for it  
     It feels like you are talking to a real person.  
 I don't have a lot of years of relationship with Mt. Monadnock  
     But it feels like we are just a part of each other  
     Now.  
 I guess I think I did convey these feelings to the audience.  
     I feel I did.  
 I got the feedback that they could feel my joy.  
     {Regarding the inner/outer geographies}.

## XXVII

One of those times we GSM (warmup)  
     I was kind of lying, my head down—  
     On a rock and I was upside down  
 And I was seeing the rock and sky upside down  
     A sensation that happened—  
     Is the answer to this?  
 Maybe the sense that there are so many ways to experience—  
     The way the sky is seen from here  
     Is NOT how it is from there.  
     There are different realities—  
     They are all still the same.  
     In a really strong way  
     You can know something.  
 And at the same time you can know

A tiny dot of it!  
 But that doesn't negate the power of what you know.  
 And the enormity of the connection.  
 Again,  
 I feel like my spot [micro site] and I  
 Have that knowing and connection.  
 But these experiences are just a drop in the bucket!

## XXVIII

I think there is something  
 About the process—  
 Each step,  
 And really being able to consciously set aside—  
 So you can really have that first impression moment  
 Even with something you think you are pretty familiar with.  
 New understanding  
 New depth  
 New appreciation  
 The ease with which the connection occurs makes  
 The trust in your own ability to relate increase.  
 What feels like it would be really valuable [as an application]  
 If people felt more trusting about  
 What they are feeling  
 What they are perceiving  
 What they are noticing  
 When they are engaged in their natural surroundings.

## XXIX

The dialogue piece—  
 They [nature's phenomena] have something to share as well  
 We dominate nature—  
 We appreciate it  
 But we don't dialogue with it  
 Very much.  
 This [GSM] process allows it to happen.  
 You become different  
 And larger  
 When the sum of two is bigger than one plus one!  
 The process really allows that to happen.  
 [The research mission].

## XXX

To find out if teaching  
 And allowing the process

To be used  
 Can bring a more authentic approach  
 To Environmental dance.  
 Environmental dance is similar to authentic movement  
 Where there is a witness-mover dialogue.  
 This is a process of validating one another.  
 As a researcher—  
 I felt like I allowed the spot to be there  
 And do its thing.  
 I did not have to force or try  
 But I did have to be there fully.  
 As a performer—  
 What I was doing  
 Was being in that space  
 And being in that process.  
 In connection with the stage—  
 It felt like that connection was very different.  
 In a way,  
 It was about being IN the essence of the mountain experience  
 And somehow that radiates outward  
 Into the world.

## XXXI

Something here feels similar to my own work  
 I am conscious about working the steps  
 More intentionality about certain things  
 That feel valuable  
 Feels richer—  
 I am more appreciative [time spent in nature].  
 I feel more of a connection  
 It enriches my life even back in the office  
 Maybe what it is  
 Is that heart connection  
 It is a part of you  
 I really own that this part of the world—the mountain  
 Is part of me, now.  
 I am proud of that.  
 Wow!  
 I am part of that!

~End

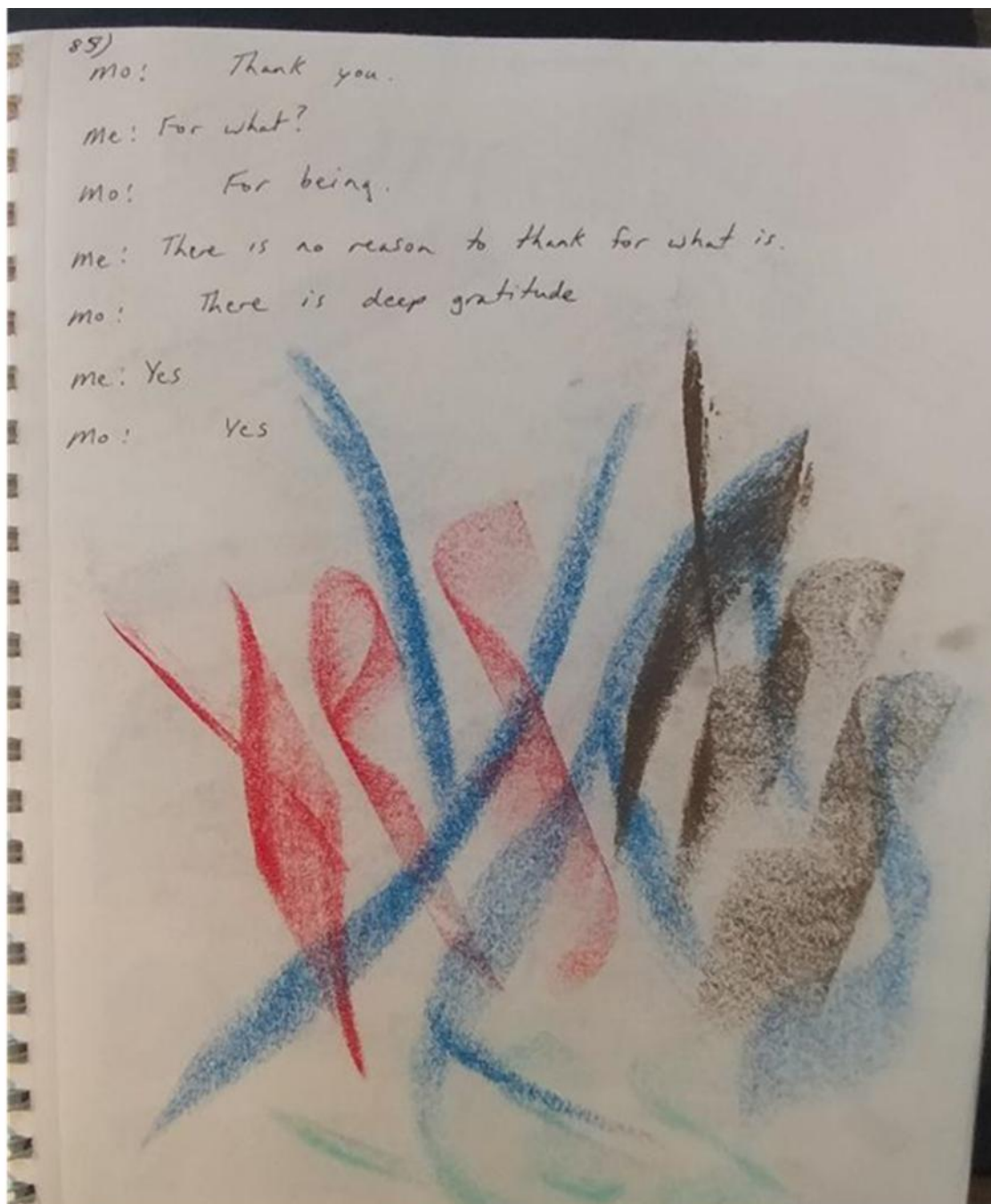


Figure 77: Carin Torp, Field journal sample #1 (DEFDW©).

99) That cold, windy raw Saturday 4/19 that didn't bring us to the physical top of the mountain yet gave me such a profound sense of knowing. When Trayer said I was addicted, I quickly rebutted, for this connection is much too sweet and I think healthy to be an addiction.

I'm not sure why, but birch bark called to me as we came down that day and it's calling to me now for something. I'm not sure what.



I am  
mountain  
strong and free  
remember me in  
your bones as you stand  
tall, remember me in your  
muscles as you contract,  
remember me in your heart  
as you love, remember  
me in your soul as you  
pass from this world  
to the next. Remember.  
I say remember.

Figure 78: C. Torp, field journal sample #2 (DEFDW©).



*Figure 79: Research team and dance company member Carin Torp and company in "Ayllu" (DEFDW©)..*

## Section #4--Literature as Data: Open Coding and “Found Poem”/Essences:

### Interpretations of Literature Review/Memoir Narratives

The following presentation of research materials illustrates the analysis/synthesis process that characterizes the way I have adapted and employed Grounded Theory (GT) coding analysis protocols. For the purpose of such illustration, this specific section of Chapter Five (5), “Essential Findings and Syntheses”, is broken down into the following cross-referencing components. These include: 1) A brief review of the eight (8) nested research questions; and 2) Each Jewel (#1- 8), representing the emergent eight sections of the literature review/ memoir. Under each separate Jewel section (denoting the eight (8) distinct discipline areas of emergent literature), the following, sub-sections demonstrate for the reader the interrelationship between the literature review/ memoir (Chapter Two (2)) and 1) research questions that drive this research process; and 2) A “seed questions” corresponding to each of the original research questions; 3) “found poems” that capture the *essences* of the emergent data derived from the individual disciplinary sections of the literature review/memoir. A comprehensive list of emergent *selective coding* specific to each of the eight (8) sections of the literature and lastly, a comprehensive list of *emergent properties*, that are derived from (and have been further generalized from the previous, more specialized level of the *selective coding* process) have been compiled in **Appendix C**. Keeping the reader in mind, this has been done to ensure that the linear listings of these codes do not interrupt the flow of this research story.

The employment of grounded theory as the overarching approach to data analysis, is inductive (moving from the individually-focused and therefore “specialized”, “lived experiences” of the dancer/researcher team to the more generalized codes that emerge throughout the multi-staged analytic/synthetic handling of all data). I have chosen to not include the original, first-round of *open-coding* (representing the first level of abstraction, as each stage is



intended to move ever-closer to “theory generation”) because this initial stage of analysis produced prolific quantities of codes. I have opted, instead, to share the second-level coding, selective coding and continuing through to the final stage that is aimed at re-synthesizing data which has been broken down (analysis) in the form of universal “essences”. These essences, or “Essential Findings” as this chapter title states, become the emergent “theory(s)” we, as grounded theory (GT) researchers are questing for. The “found poems” are those very essences/emergent “theories”.

In much the same way that the presented research dance pieces are stand-alone, irreducible “theories” in the “danced dissertation” format (Colonial Theater production/presentation), so are the “found poems” as they are presented in this section. Each found poem becomes the emergent “theory” of each separate section of the multi-faceted disciplines represented in the non-traditional, GT literature review/memoir. The entire analysis/synthesis process utilized for this section of the research project is thus: Data is actively collected in a variety of field, studio and performance experiences; these experiences generate multiple, on-going layers of narrative data in the form of movement studies, observations, field notes and reflective journaling; these are reflected upon and are memoed (by me, typically in my field journal); from this on-going reflective process, ideas and ideological connections to other literature disciplines emerged; further reading, data-collection, reflection lead to a narrative exploration of how those individual eight (8) discipline areas may serve to inform and illuminate the research happening in the field; and finally in the writing phase, the review becomes data which undergoes an analysis process of its own, resulting in the re-synthesized data, in the form of the “found poem”.

In spite of the time-consuming reality of this multi-layered, multi-staged analysis protocol, it has served this research project well, in moving from the very specialized experience of the individual dancer-researcher (inductive) to the grander, universal profile of environmental dance (deductive) that has organically emerged as a result. The protocol has therefore provided an optimal way to process large quantities of data in a systematized way that has helped to guide and map the analysis phase. This emergent literature review has revealed itself to be a very vital part of the emergent data that has enabled us to draw out new knowledge and meaning while preserving the integrity of the poetic, expressive, interpretive “voices” of environmental dance.

The nested set of relational, contextual research questions include:

- Question #1—“What is the lived experience of the environmental dancer/researcher? What is the personal development and “dance journey” of the dancer/researcher (from childhood)?”
- Question #2—“What are the historical dance roots (lineages) of environmental dance (as practice, performance and pedagogy)? How does the dancer/researcher thread of development reflect the historical development of dance and environmental dance? How does one define environmental dance?”
- Question #3—“What is it like to dance (engage) with the natural site?”
- Question #4—“How does a systems science paradigm inform this research? How is the Goethean Scientific (5-step) Method adapted as an effective environmental dance research method?”
- Question #5—“What is the significance (and the process) of “bridging inner and outer geographies to the practice of environmental dance?”

- Question #6—“What is the significance (and the process) of “site channeling” (giving an expressive voice to the landscape/site) to environmental dance inquiry?”
- Question #7—“How does environmental dance reflect ritual action? How does environmental dance act as a catalyst for the transformation of the human/nature relationship?”
- Question #8—“How does environmental dance inspire and promote a critical ontology? How is environmental dance a transdisciplinary practice? What would an environmental dance (K-12) eco-pedagogy look like?”

### **Jewel #1: Childhood Experience and Education**

#### **“Found Poem”/ Essences**

Seed Question #1--Who am I (are we) as a child (as children) of nature

#### ***And So I Dance, II***

*Down that familiar path,  
Tree roots and pine needles lead  
Where the woods are magical.  
Spirits dwell there and speak to me—  
Earthy discoveries that I feel  
Through my senses,—  
My own native tongue.  
The wind that blows  
Is at once song, spirit and sensation.*

*Forest muse of this mystical, magical place—  
My world-within-worlds.  
A harmonic familiarity,  
The swaying rhythm of the canopy above  
Feels like home.  
I stare at the blue sky and clouds  
That dance and sparkle.  
Deep green boughs, blue jays and crows—  
This moment of repose in a timeless spot.*

*A blissful eternity.*

*Deep and imaginative ruminations,  
On this behemoth rock.  
I feel my rock thinking with me,  
How to be strong, patient—how to just “be”.  
In swirling, circular and spiral moments—  
My imagination is bursting.  
A symphony of feelings and intuitive knowing.  
I am a part of this.  
Only thing left to do here: dance!*

*I am filled to capacity  
With magical, sparkly “things”!  
Fairy dust dirt, the breeze, the sun,  
The birdsong.  
The lights dim once again, as I take my place—  
And so I dance.*

## **Jewel #2: Parallel Dance Histories**

### **“Found Poem”/ Essences**

Seed Question #2—How did I (we) get here?

#### ***Dancing between Worlds***

*I enter the big old rustic barn—  
Bakalar Studio.  
I slip on ballet slippers,  
I take my usual place at the ballet barre.  
With both hands resting on the barre,  
Looking out the open windows,  
An intriguing juxtaposition of dance, nature.  
To be drawn in by the “choreography”—  
Of the birdsong,  
The sun’s warmth,  
The cooling morning breeze—  
The first descending movement into grande plie—  
The gateway into the structured world of classical ballet.*

*To sense this “dance between worlds”,  
And the barn wall that separates dancer from nature.*

*Self-reflecting,  
Feeling a magnetic interest in what is happening “outside”.*

*A contrast between our dancer-bodies  
 To darting, gliding birds.  
 How grounded we are, in our art—  
 Although we aspire to dance otherwise.  
 Birds dance in flight.  
 How free they are...*

*A short walk through the wooded area,  
 Down a path,  
 Past the farmhouse,  
 A larger boulder surrounded by a backdrop of trees.  
 Repose and reflection  
 In the heat of the summer day.  
 The coolness of cold granite,  
 The beauty of the day,  
 Quiet solitude and inspiration,  
 Intense classes, rehearsals and performances.  
 I love this place!*

### **Jewel #3: The Phenomenologies**

#### **“Found Poem”/ Essences**

Seed Question #3—How do I (we) as an environmental dance artist “speak” (dialogue) with nature?

#### ***I Become a Part...***

*In this early morning coolness  
 A lavish vertical climb through a beautiful forest.  
 Birdsong fills the air with melodious scales.  
 My excursion along Pumpelly Ridge--  
 Thayer loved to wander  
 And contemplate magical thoughts of a higher order.  
 I marvel how Thayer and I share the same muse.*

*The mountain spirits dwell—  
 Artistic inspiration invading the spirit;  
 It nurtures the body-mind  
 And enlivens the senses.  
 Heaven-on-earth  
 In all its solitary splendor.*

*The omnipotent presence of angel-spirit—  
 She protects this beautiful place.  
 Peace, solitude and magical wonder—*

*This glorious day on the mountain.*

*I contemplate—  
The angelic spirit of this magical place.  
I look to the sky—*

*The ever-changing shapes of billowy clouds.  
This extraordinary experience.  
I begin to move at the suggestion of the clouds,  
Sacred birdsongs, sacred forest, sacred rock, sacred clouds, sacred steps.  
I approach the cairn—  
An altar to the angelic being.*

*My place on the rocks,  
Wind buffets the landscape.  
An unexpected sense of belonging here.  
Belonging—  
A timeless, eternal way.  
To feel this—  
To know this truth.  
Wind joined by first notes of music,  
Rapidly moving shadows of clouds above me—  
Felt moments.  
I feel cool granite—grounded.*

*I give voice to this landscape,  
Channeled through the physical body.  
I dance between two worlds,  
Alive, activated and responsive.  
I feel the energy of the mountain;  
A melody and rhythm carries me.  
I seek my own deep affinity for Monadnock.  
I feel the familiar patterns of dance steps;  
With full-body contact with the rocks.*

*The uneven contour, roughness, coolness of granite—  
I, breathing into the Earth, am aware of the support the rocks afford me.  
For an instance, I become a part of this landscape:  
The “touch and be touched principle”;  
I feel the warmth of this emergence—  
With the rocks, the wind, the clouds, the sun.*

### Jewel #4: Holistic Science and Goethe

#### “Found Poem”/ Essences

Seed Question #4—How do we experience and express human-nature unity and wholeness?

#### *First Meeting*

*The morning air is crisp and fresh—  
On this sunny day.  
Mission--Seek to collect data in a nuanced way,  
A creative process,  
Goethe’s scientific process.*

*To choose our “micro-sites” to call “home”,  
Each one of us will:  
Study,  
Create,  
Explore and  
Collect data—  
Developing an intentional and deepened connection—  
An on-going dialogue with each micro-site.*

*We gather at the trail head,  
A dragonfly, a good omen!  
The hike-  
Warms our dancer bodies, prepares our minds—  
Body and mind are unified, by necessity.  
Holistic principles that support the paradigm shift.  
Ambitious plans—onward and upward,  
Putting the method finally to work, the formal beginning—  
A long and magical research journey!*

*The summit—shrouded in a beautiful, shifting mist.  
The ritual of warming and stretching;  
We honor the body-mind instruments of our research.  
We begin the search for our individual “places”—  
The source of an endless flow of “data”,  
The micro-sites where each of us will “dialogue” with the mountain.*

*We introduce ourselves to our micro-sites,  
In a “first-meeting” ritual.  
We experience dimensions of the phenomenon—  
Of form,  
Evolution over time,*

*Gestural essence,  
Sensing a unity through reciprocal dialoguing.*

*Dancer-researcher #1—  
Crevices and a deep cavernous split,  
She explores with her limbs.  
Rock that suggests cascading—  
Her movements attempt to capture fluidity.  
She “speaks” to these rocks—  
One single gesture,  
Into an ever-evolving exchange.  
Rock speaks then dancer responds,  
But the lines of separation seem to blur.  
A growing sense of unity—  
Wholeness,  
Emerging gesture giving unspoken meaning.  
She channels this message and expresses it outwardly.  
Magical, engaging.*

*Dancer-researcher #2—  
The angularity of her micro-site,  
Balance will become a process of adaptation—  
She experiments with sudden bursts of interpretation.  
Stillness of angular form—*

*She responds to the demands of the site.  
Visible growth in using the guiding process;  
The development of a balanced give-and-take,  
Between dancer-researcher and rock.*

*Dancer-researcher #3—  
An area that backdrops the mainstage rock.  
A series of percussive movements accentuate  
The angular jumbles.  
She conveys fluid fleshiness;  
The rock answers back—timeless strength,  
Etched and worn in its glacial remnants.  
A sense of transcendence—a timeless sense of being  
Between human and the granite bones of mountain.*

*Dancer-researcher #4—  
The slanted, curving surface of a giant protrusion of granite,  
Near a summit pool.  
She lies prone, intentional stillness—sinking into the rock.  
A palpable deep connection;  
Goethe’s unity between human and rock.*



*An emotional layer;  
A privilege to watch this honest, authentic exchange.*

### **Jewel #5: Patterns, Fractals, and “the Language of Nature”**

#### **“Found Poem”/ Essences**

Seed Question #5—What is the significance (and the process) of “bridging inner and outer geographies to the practice of environmental dance?”

#### ***Ephemeral***

*Orienting dancer-researchers.  
My mission—introduce the Goethean process;  
And what I call “the language of nature”—  
Developing emerging movement vocabulary;  
To “dialogue” with natural phenomena,  
To experience the natural landscape in a deeper way,  
To co-create an authentic expression of reciprocal dialogue.*

*I carry a basket of natural phenomena—  
In the studio I place natural objects in an arc across the floor.  
Acorns, starfish, shells, pinecones, branches and roots—  
Bark from trees, stones, seeds, leaves, feathers and flowers.  
Candle, fan, soil and water—a ceremonial ritual.  
I encourage my orientees to observe and experience what is before them—  
Explore infinite movements, shapes and energies,  
The expressive, interpretive body.*

*Ephemeral—ever-changing, shifting and evolving phenomena;  
Static—unchanging, frozen shapes of phenomena.*

*The fluid movement of water;  
The once-visible cloud—  
Evaporating and dissipating into thin air.  
Differentiate these from the static appearance of tree branch shapes—  
That anything in nature is static is only an illusion.  
The natural world is ever-transforming.*

*A series of movement explorations—  
To discover first-hand,  
The “language of nature” is already embodied by each and every being.  
Universal communication—begin to speak fluently with the body-mind.  
Twist spines and spiral outward;*

*Stretch limbs, contract, expand, circling in a multitude of ways;  
 A triangular base.  
 Experiment fearlessly.  
 The synergistic aspects of “form” and “function”  
 Deeply and profoundly connects us to nature.*

## **Jewel #6: Art, Metaphor and the Role of Journals**

### **“Found Poem”/ Essences (#1 of 4)**

Seed question #6—How do we as environmental dances/researchers embody and express the landscape?

***Not Alone**  
 Huddled in my sleeping bag  
 With only my eyes exposed to the elements,  
 My back against a sheltering ledge.  
 Half-hidden full moon, phantoms clouds like whirling dervishes—  
 The wind continues to howl—the cry of ghost wolves?  
 No real sense of passing time;*

*A peaceful reprieve from the linearity of life.  
 The ecstasy of Monadnock’s sublime timelessness.  
 My thoughts dance with the wind.*

*Occasionally, the wind pauses.  
 Past experience—  
 Wind gusts can knock me off my feet.  
 I keep my center of gravity low.  
 Turbulence has passed—  
 I stretch to a starlit heaven and the rise of the full moon.  
 Summit landscape—illuminated—  
 A dazzling opalescence.  
 Granite sparkles like diamonds,  
 And I ceremoniously walk the sacred space.*

*I sit for what seems like a passage of another lifetime.  
 The spiraling nature of my thoughts,  
 Returning me to the here and now.  
 The peaceful stillness is pierced.  
 I am not alone.  
 I sit in frozen amazement.  
 A lone coyote saunters up the ridge and is gone.  
 Did I really see that?*

**“Found Poem”/ Essences (#2 of 4)**

***Portals***

*Hike to the summit—  
A quintessential perfect experience.  
A heavenly day.  
Working in our “places” among the wide span of rocky landscape  
Our summit performance stage,  
Our research laboratory,  
Our portals—  
To dialogue with the mountain.*

*This has developed  
Into a beautiful,  
And rich,  
And observable practice!  
With a deeper engagement  
The intimate, animate conversations  
That always begin our research visits here.*

*Move to our places  
Amongst the summit jumbles and boulders,  
An automatic activity.  
This one-to-one time  
Of connection to the mountain.*

*I observe—  
This unique process,  
A dialogic process.  
Moving, expressive, gestural bodies  
Engaging the rock.  
Unpredictable moments—  
Of writing, mapping, sketching  
A quick note taken—  
Capture an “aha” moment;  
Record the sequence of newly-created movement.  
Sometimes—  
Poetry is a better way  
To capture a mountain moment.*

*Intriguing.  
Inspiring.  
I sit on the rocks to observe.  
I have become  
So taken by the process  
As it unfolds.*

*Deeply engrossed periods of writing,  
Seated stillness,  
Beautifully expressive, poetic bursts of movement.  
Dancing bodies against the gray rocky surface*

*Of Monadnock.*

**“Found Poem”/ Essences (#3 of 4)**

***First Light***

*It is darkest before dawn.  
Mind and muscle,  
Hiking a rather vertical route—  
Fallen trees become “felt presences”.  
We learn to feel our way through the forest—  
Wind currents shift as we ascend—  
Sleepy fog dissipates.  
The sky above, is lightening.*

*A danced ceremony for the mountain, the sun,  
A darkened, lively and animate landscape.  
An isolated strain of birdsong,  
The sleepy mountain begins to stretch and awaken.  
We bear witness,  
In the faint light.  
It feels like home.*

*An easterly glow—  
A quickening sense.  
It is eerily calm and silent.  
The passage of time...  
We begin to move through the dance—  
An abstract realm where human-ness and mountain-ness converge.*

*The sun begins to rise—  
A commanding dance of her own.  
The mountain celebrates dawn.  
This is worth remembering...Dancing with first light.*

**“Found Poem”/ Essences (#4 of 4)**

***Graining***

*Memory of creating—  
A dance.  
Dancing like a mountain.  
I recall—  
A sunny day on the summit  
Eighty digital photos—  
Covering the site of this dance’s unfolding.  
Looking through the camera lens—  
Helped to particularize  
The landscape  
Where dancer would perform.*

*A metaphorical rendering of what happens—  
Audience witness.  
To “see” particular things  
At the micro level.  
There is a dance term—  
“Graining”.  
The purposeful emphasis  
On some external feature of the space—*

*This point of shared focus.  
The camera—  
Helping me to “grain”*

*To specifics in the landscape.  
A source of inspiration  
Will feed the dance form.  
I take pictures that support an existing image.  
I take pictures  
To capture the raw nuances of the site.  
New connections between vision, site and dance.*

**Jewel #7: Ritual**

**”Found Poem”/ Essences**

Seed Question #7—How does environmental dance reflect ritual action? How does environmental dance act as a catalyst for the transformation of the human/nature relationship?

***Ritual of Return***

*An anticipating audience seated  
Throughout the jagged jumble.  
Sun intermittently peeks  
Out from behind a cloud  
On cue—*

*We ceremoniously enter the performance space.*

*Accordion music hints of a Parisian bistro--  
We dance in stylized movement and gesture that suggests hiking.  
Clad in hiking gear and boots.  
In silence we seat ourselves  
On the expanse of flat granite  
As if we had just arrived—  
At the summit for weekly rehearsal*

*We create the iconic tableau  
Of randomly resting environmental dancers  
Taking a moment to celebrate breath-taking views.  
We call this dance “The Resting Place”  
Performed every year  
Our “ritual of return”*

*It tells the story of our being here.  
It is ceremony.  
Our return to place.  
Our reconnection to the mountain—  
The vessel that holds this performance;  
A sense of deep connection.  
Strains of a different rhythmical melody overtake bistro music.  
Dancers remove boots.  
From hikers to barefoot dancers we begin to rise from our resting spots,  
In unison.  
We move.  
This special landscape,  
The vista beyond us,  
One-by-one we dance our way along the rocks,  
Only to disappear,  
Behind Main Stage rock.  
We beckon the audience to come along with us...*

*Behind the rock—  
A very quick costume change  
From hiking garb,*

*To ephemeral blue and white costumes--  
 Transforming dancers into more-than-human elements  
 Reflecting nature above us...  
 Rainstorm builds within the music—  
 Thunder crashes.  
 Dancers explode onto stage once again--  
 Jagged lightening-like movements and shapes.  
 Magical moments—  
 A distinct feeling.  
 Breaking down boundaries of dancer-and-mountain  
 Of being carried by the mountain.  
 A feeling that forever plants itself in the muscle memory.*

*A series of heralding drumbeats  
 Gather energy in swirling patterns of a culminating quickening  
 An ethereal melody takes over—  
 Lifts us like lotus blossoms opening in time-lapse photography  
 Flowing gestures connect us to the sky above—  
 Human conduits between heaven and earth.  
 Warmth from the sun  
 Triumphant over clouds  
 Will be forever imprinted on mountain and environmental dancer,  
 This bond of a ritual of return...*

## **Jewel #8: Transdisciplinary**

### **“Found Poem”/ Essences**

Seed question #8—How does environmental dance as practice, performance and pedagogy, embody a paradigm, epistemology and ontology of holism?

#### ***Cloud Shifting***

*To radically let go—  
 Of controlling the process,  
 Of generating new movement.  
 In the context of dialoguing with the mountain phenomena—  
 A bold new approach.  
 Stretch(es) our imaginations.  
 Open up—  
 To a different way of perceiving nature;  
 Allow true and equitable collaboration.  
 Natural phenomena—  
 The clouds.  
 Above us—  
 Our cues from the more-than-human-world.*

*A strong sense of place.*  
*A sense of belonging.*  
*To learn to let go—*  
*To become an empty vessel,*  
*And fill with the richness of the “integrated other”.*  
*To allow space for the single phenomenon*  
*To take the lead,*  
*To guide the direction and emergence—*  
*“Dancing” a paradigm shift.*

### **Section #5: The Research Dance Pieces**

This section presents essential findings for each of the five (5) research dance pieces that were created as integral pieces of the research project. Data collected onsite provided a bountiful, and rich source of ideas, inspiration and thematic material, while the adapted steps of the Goethean scientific method provided the creative process template.. The research pieces evolved over the duration of the research project. They were presented at the site-specific public performance at the summit of Mt. Monadnock in May 2011—for this performances the individual pieces were presented in their ever-evolving structured-improvisational forms. The site-specific performance provided another inspirational layer of informing, shaping data for the theater performance. The dance works were presented on the traditional stage, in their final, layered, multimedia forms, which served as the culminating dissertation performance at the Colonial Theater in Keene, NH.

The evolutionary process of each piece is chronicled in the following collection of essays that describe: 1) the *inspiration* for creating the individual dance research piece; 2) the emergent connections of the research questions to the research dance pieces; 3) the creative process of making and performing the dances; 4) the emergent, essential findings from each research dance piece; 5) photo collages (either presented separately or as embedded illustrations of the essay; 6) selected journal artifacts and excerpts that provide another visual interpretation



of the creative process; and 7) the unique attributes that help to distinguish each dance piece from the others. In this instance of the “research dance piece” the dance becomes, at once, the data and the data-collection method, the essential new knowledge (meaning) and the fluid, dynamic method of delivering this new knowledge and meaning to the observing audience. Each dance piece stands on its own merit, as a unique facet of a multi-voiced expression and re-presentation of the essential findings of the research. Here are the dances and their essays.

### **Research Dance Piece #1 “Goethean Suite” –Essential Findings**

#### **Original Inspiration**

Early on in my doctoral journey, I became intrigued with Goethe’s “phenomenology of nature” (See Chapter Three: Goethean Science as an Adapted Method for Environmental Dance Research), which he systematized as a process of five (5) prescribed, interacting steps, known as the Goethean Scientific Method (GSM) or Goethe’s holistic science. This discovery has had a lasting impact on my academic pursuits, my environmental dance practice and as a result, it has dramatically shaped the course of this research. I adopted the GSM as the underlying creative process and as the primary method employed, I recognized that I would have to devise an inspiring and informative “tutorial”, so that the observer of the research dance pieces could understand this unique creative process used consistently in the making of the dance research pieces. Such an instructive presentational device would necessarily take place at the onset of the staged performance experience. It would also provide a danced way to elucidate our creative process (a meta-dance--as a dance piece about creating the dance pieces). This creative mission is what initially inspired the creation of “*Goethean Suite*”.

The final dance piece premiered at the Colonial Theater “danced dissertation and public defense” presentation of *Mountain Dance* (July 22, 2011). It was structured in five (5) distinct

vignettes. These corresponded to Goethe's five steps: *The preparatory stage* (first meeting/initial encounter with the natural phenomenon); *Stage One: Exact Sense Perception* (perception, spatial considerations of the phenomenon); *Stage Two: Exact Sensorial Fantasy* (imagination, temporal considerations of the phenomenon); *Stage Three: Seeing in Beholding* (inspiration, allowing the phenomenon to "speak" for itself); and *Stage Four: Being One with the Object* (intuition, unity with the phenomenon) (Brook, 1998).

### **Choreographic design and structure**

The opening vignette introduces the five members of the dance research team and the mountain itself. Each of the four (4) vignettes, featured a soloist, with other members of the performing ensemble performing in supporting roles to the solo. The intentional structuring of this solo-within-the-ensemble arrangement was used to illuminate the particular element that Goethe associated with each of the four major stages: "Earth Cognition" corresponds with stage one (space/form); "Water Cognition" with stage two (time/imagination); "Air Cognition" with stage three (inspiration) and Fire Cognition with stage four (intuition). Each vignette and solo evolved out of its own very emergent creative process between the soloist and me.

I danced the first solo, representing Stage One (Earth cognition). The solo was created from an onsite data-collection process that included a series of times spent on site, dedicated to the observation of the static formations of the rocky summit landscape. I studied the lines, textures and the landscape's innate energy as a way to absorb a lasting impression of the site where I was working. I sat and observed, I danced, I intuited, I reflected, I wrote, I diagrammed. I drew maps and I photographed the rocky formations that surrounded me in order to "dialogue" with the mountain summit about the rocky character of its material being. I played with all of these methods of engagement as a way to explore both positive space (the general dance concept that addresses space that is filled by observable, sensed matter) and negative space (space that is

void of matter, “air-space”). As I improvised, I began to knit together a sequence of shapes that collectively re-presented what I learned from my “dialogic experiences” with the rock and air and earthly elements on site. I would leave the mountain, ready to reflect on these ideas and experiences and began to connect them with geological concepts, astrological (ritualized) notions of earthiness and literature that touched on what was evolving in the body-mind, on site. From my diverse and dense collection of site data I crafted my “earth cognition” solo.

As an integral part of the intended structure and choreography of this vignette, I created a backdrop tableau (that the dance research team performed) to the foregrounded solo, as a study of the mountain’s inherent sculpted “personality”. The series of changing shapes (much like a kaleidoscope) were created through a studio-based collaboration between my team and me. We used photographs (marked with what I called “red energy lines”) to inspire the creation of this series of shapes connected with transitioning movement and placement changes of the dancer researchers. Dancers were costumed in blues, greens, browns and grays. Photographs capturing the spatial aspects of the landscape were put together in a slideshow which played on a large screen simultaneously as the dance unfolded on stage.

The photo montages presented on the backdrop movie screen were an integral, recurring feature of each multi-media research dance piece presented at the Colonial Theater (Keene, NH), adding another layer of expression and interpretation to the production. Also, each of the final production pieces shared several similar procedures and tasks. These served as part of the general process for the making of the dances and included: various forms of data collection as a repertory of tasks undertaken on site. The creative process of making the research pieces also included these core activities: self-reflection, journal-writing, photography, team process discussions, studio workshop sessions and rehearsals.

The second segment offered a movement study of Stage Two: *Water cognition*, the temporal aspects of the ever-evolving, “life” of the mountain landscape site. Mary Madsen collaborated with me on the making of the water cognition solo: as part of her on site research work she researched and sourced movement ideas from improvised studies and I devised the structure of the solo. Since this exploration of water cognition evolved to be a study of the evolutionary, temporally-calibrated life of the mountain landscape, the temporal aspects of the mountain and its ever-evolving story recall Clandinin’s and Connelly’s concept of the “four (4) directions in any inquiry” which the authors relate to Dewey’s concept of interaction (the human factor), is pertinent to Goethe’s idea of evolution (2000, p. 50). If one looks *inward* there is a focus “toward the internal condition”. Alternately, an *outward* focus moves one “toward the existential condition” (the environment, the natural environment, in our case). And the movement *backward/forward* addresses issues of *temporality* which is the realm of the environmental dance piece/ performance’s unfolding within the site (pp. 50-53).

As a way to be able to experience the evolution of the mountain’s rocky landscape over the passage of time (centuries) I theorized that we needed to devise a “time-travel” strategy. Employing the imagination, at Goethe’s suggestion, I suggested to Mary that we could experience the passage of “time” through the intentional temporal manipulation of the movement sequences we were creating in the studio (from the raw material of data gathered on site). It seemed that we could only truly experience and express the evolutionary sensation (forward growth) of the mountain (“storyline” captured in movement sequences) by reversing the “forward moving” sequences, which, in my mind, mimicked Clandinin and Connelly’s concept.

So, this is what we did—in the studio we set movement sequences that moved forward and then we completely reversed the movements themselves and the pathways they created

through space, to create additional, evolutionary-reflecting phrases. This was a challenging and interesting process—one that really did give us a glimpse into the profound qualities of passing time, juxtaposed to a mountain that existed, for us, in the poetic “here-and-now.” Mary’s solo was supported by ensemble members moving through a series of repetitive phrases that vacillated between slow-motion and up-tempo speed variations. Costuming was done in flowing, watery blues.

The third segment, *Air cognition*, was danced by Amy Mac Queen. Movement was again, gleaned from improvisational data-generating studies at the summit of Monadnock and evolved over time. Musical accompaniment featured an audible human breath and heart beat that marked out the even-tempo quality of the movement sequences. There was a meditative quality underlying this segment, due, most likely to the mesmerizing inhale/exhale quality of the music. Movement captured the feeling of ethereal flow, capturing our body-minds’ muscle memory of mountain breezes, air patterns and steady winds.

Amy’s solo exuded a feeling of a give-and-take between her movement and it’s unfolding onstage, juxtaposed to the movement patterns of the supporting ensemble sequences—this juxtaposition produced a cause-and-effect relationship/tension between the soloist and the ensemble. Existing between these two realms, a sense of peaceful calm and balance emerged and created a zenlike ambiance that matched the simplicity of the dance segment’s design.

*Goethean Suite*’s final segment was *Fire cognition*, performed by research team member Trayer Run-Kowzun. Inspired by the radiant qualities of the sun (with the spirit of fire) as we experienced on the mountain, this solo (with an ensemble processional of movement that expanded, and filled the stage like the gradual flickerings of a spark-growing-into-a-blaze) created a ritual-like mood exuding mystery and mysticism. Positioned center-stage/ forward,

Trayer danced behind a collection of burning candles, illuminating her facial features and staccato, fire-like movements in the warmth of its glowing light—the backdrop, photo-montage filled the stage with images of orangey-red and yellow flames, and lightning strikes (captured in actual photographs of Monadnock thunderstorms). Lights lower and fade...

## **Research Dance Piece #2 “Monadnock Angel”—Essential Findings**

### **Original Inspiration**

Abbott Thayer’s historical portrait of the benevolent angelic being who hovers over the more obscure places on the mountain, has long haunted me. In fact, when I am hiking along the ridge (Pumpelly Trail from the Dublin Trail) I always think of her (and Mr. Thayer) and carry her image along with me throughout my time spent there. I am always taken by surprise how “other-worldly” the mountain-scape feels along the ridgeline that traverses several small peaks with beautifully-carved granite outcroppings (the ancient remains of a glacier) mossy, tree-filled mini-forests and valleys.

It takes several cycles of this ascend-only-to-descend pattern of moving through this soulful landscape, for the pilgrim-hiker to make his or her way toward the summit. Pumpelly Ridge (7.2 miles from rail head to summit) is not among the easier trails on Monadnock—but somehow, one easily forgets the physical challenges at first-view of the mystical crown of the mountain and at some nonspecific point in time, ethereal forces take over and power the feet along this path. The ridge hiker always has the vision of that elusive summit in sight. It is energizing. Inspiring! When I am here, I can easily imagine the painter’s own inspiration for painting her—she is here! And she watches over this magical place and elevates the thoughts of those who traverse this long journey to the mountaintop. The spirit of this pristine place becomes rooted in your heart and mind. The imagination is infused in wonderful ways that linger on long after the hike.



Figure 80: "Monadnock Angel" painted by Abbott Thayer (Courtesy of Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA. ©).

One artist's inspiration can easily become the inspiration of another artist, as I found out. Taking this notion one step further, one artist's art can also ignite the creative vision of another—this is how this particular research dance piece originated. *Monadnock Angel* (the dance) came to be because Mr. Thayer's painting of her, first danced in my mind. Through this image, I was able to feel Thayer's own love and his sense of belonging to this place nestled in mountain wilderness and to this ridgeline trail where he often wandered. It is a blissful, magical place. One that demands protection—by an angel.

My goal was to bring her to life in movement sequences that echoed the song sparrow melodies, and captured the sparkling sun-lit mica schist, the cooling breezes that swirled in the valleys, the lush mosses, ferns, the laurels and conifers—there was bountiful evidence of her presence. *Monadnock Angel* was everywhere, and the land here, simply danced. Her enduring presence fueled by the artists' enduring vision is palpable! You can feel the energy. The artist and the angel—they are here. I could not wait to begin this collaborative, creative adventure.

## Costume Design

This research dance piece featured an original costume design by textile artist Karen Skogland. I was in search of a costume that would replicate and capture the flowing gown worn by *Monadnock Angel*. The “look” I was seeking was a long Greek tunic. After much research we found that the name of the type of stylized garment was a “Delphos”. I immediately remembered the Isadora Duncan techniques classes I had taken, where we were required to wear a Greek tunic! And there was a period designer, Mariano Fortuny, (known for his “secret” pleating technique) who created various interpretations of the classic Greek chiton, which he called the “Delphos” (Metropolitan Museum of Art website). So, Karen and I embarked on another *Monadnock Angel* collaborative adventure—one that took us to the garment district in Manhattan, in search of the classic Fortuny-inspired fabric (intricately-pleated silk). We found yards of a beautifully-flowing cream-colored silk which was custom-pleated and then transformed by Karen into my exquisite *Monadnock Angel* Delphos!



Figure 81: Dianne Eno in "Monadnock Angel" (Photo overlay, courtesy of P. Rein/ DEFDW©).



The costume, itself, the garment and the aura it created as I wore it, created a sense of lightness. It transformed me from my reality of earthy weightedness to one that elevated me in spirit and in physical sensation. I felt as if I moved above the material surface of the earth, which in this case, was the rocky, root-bared trails of Pumpelly Ridge on Monadnock., even if only a few inches above terra firma. The lightness of the garment I wore to perform the piece profoundly influenced the movement choices that I made in order to compose the dance. I also spent one onsite rehearsal on the mountain, once the dress was finished, in order to discover how I would and could move while dancing in it. The costume added a dynamic new layer of life to the dance piece.

### **Choreographic design and structure**

The creation of *Monadnock Angel* required that I begin what would become a deep and frequent and long-enduring “dialogue” with Pumpelly Ridge. I would also become “conversant” with Abbott Thayer as well, in order to thoroughly understand his complex relationship with the mountain and angel-being he created to protect and watch over the land he loved so deeply. The creative process of this research dance piece would need time to foster these relationships and to learn the stories buried deep within them. I would need to traverse the ridgeline frequently, and experience this place in all seasons—to feel the life of the place and to become sensitive to the presence of Abbott’s angel. I would look for her...and through Goethe’s process I would be able find her and to channel her, her energies and bring them to life. Artistically, this challenging idea intrigued me. The dance piece would also bring to life an important part of my phenomenological study—to treat Thayer’s painting as a “readable” Hermeneutic text <sup>76</sup> which I would

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<sup>76</sup> My reference to “hermeneutic text” is meant to imply that the process of creating this solo involved numerous interactions of interpretive engagement with all facets of this research piece. These facet include, the landscape, the

interpret through environmental dance movement. I would also “read” the landscape along the ridge in the very same way. There was a story—a mountain tale to tell here.



*Figure 82: An ice-covered trail marker on Pumpelly Ridge, where Thayer frequently hiked. I came upon this ice angel during onsite research in February 2011 (Photo courtesy L. .Davis/ DEFDW ©).*

My summer visits to Pumpelly Ridge were blissful excursions spent in timeless and magical solitude that brought me closer and closer to my quest. To know the angelic presence that dwelled here. The trail always provided a kind of peaceful solitude that allowed the imagination to run with wild abandon. I danced, I explored. I marveled at the flora and fauna that I had the rare opportunity to engage. I watched billowing cumulo-nimbus clouds create a heavenly layer of images that benignly rumbled with awe-inspiring, transformative power. I learned to read the land around me with the sensitivity of a lone painter in love with such mind-clarifying solitude and sunshine. Every breath here, was a breath of pure mountain air and

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ideology of Abbott Thayer as environmentalist and artist, and the real-time engagement with the original “Monadnock Angel” portrait, at the Addison Gallery of American Art in Andover, MA.

inspiration. I rested on the rocks and soaked up the summer heat like a snake as I marveled at what a perfect setting and circumstance to be guided by Goethe's own ritual of multi-faceted way knowing the phenomena. Transcending. Transformative. I danced, I wrote. I walked on and on...In the autumn, there is even more of a sense of solitude along the Ridge. Not in a lonely sense—not once in my solitude there, did I feel alone because I was not alone.

She was here and she made her presence felt in ways that I just had only to give the benefit of the doubt—a rock placed directly in the path of a hike-weary me, fashioned just like a welcoming easy chair; an impromptu dance with a tree; birdsong so spirit-filled that you never wanted it to end; the shadow dance of ever-shifting clouds as they moved with such grace and power around the mountain summit; a bird feather floating on the breeze; the rainbow of color that flooded the senses in three-hundred-and sixty-degrees of mountain magic. Still more to know and to take in. I continued to walk on...

There are no accurate words to capture what it is like on Pumpelly Ridge in February. It is as if the magic of this place exponentially expands in the cold. There is no contraction—just expansion of experience, of a continuing story line, and of the magical, fleeting sense of angelic presence. As I approached my “rehearsal site” (at the junction of Pumpelly Ridge Trail and Red Spot Trail that takes you onward to the summit) I see in the distance, the ice-covered cairn and I am again left with no words to describe what I witnessed. I have captured it here in a photo that confirms I am in the presence of Monadnock Angel! I so I dance for her, and with her that day. And I walk on...

Springtime has arrived and I find myself once again at the magical cairn. I spend an hour or two “rehearsing” the movement that I have crafted over the previous months—but the movement was always so elusive. It was constantly evolving—as if I were attempting to translate something and had the unrelenting urge to keep trying to find the right words. I

reflected on this a lot. And then—I understood. The dance was dancing me! I decided to accept the fluidity of movement phrases that wanted to continue to evolve. I was being channeled—I danced accordingly.



Figure 83: D. Eno in "Monadnock Angel" (Angel overlay photo courtesy of P. Rein/ DEFDW ©).

As I entered the Addison Gallery of American Art (Andover, MA), I was filled with curiosity and giddy anticipation. I was finally going to meet her—in her original form. I had contacted the gallery folks and had inquired if I might be able to visit her—I told the curator about my research. I was generously offered a special showing of Thayer's painting of *Monadnock Angel* (archived and in storage). She was brought out of storage and into the private viewing room. As I walked down the long hall to the viewing room I could see the painting through the glass doors. There she stood—magnificently textured in the paint that Thayer had lovingly used to bring her to life on canvas.

There she stood, taller than me, bigger than life ("first meeting"—I can hear Goethe reminding me). I could feel the power of the artist's interpretation. I could feel her presence

once again. The sights and sounds of Pumpelly Ridge came flooding back into my memory. For quite a long while I just stood there and studied her. I sat with her. And I wrote. I photographed. I practiced her elegant and intricate hand gestures. And then finally—I danced with her. One of the curators came into the viewing room and said to me, in a half-whisper: “Go ahead. Dance like no one is watching”. And so, I did.

On April 22, (the day of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary performance of the Mt. Monadnock Celebration of Dance) I took my place to perform *Monadnock Angel* on a flat expanse of rock that allowed me to see the junction cairn and the audience before me. The day had started in sunshine but now the summit was shrouded in intermittent fog. No matter—such a lovely affect. I stand ready to begin but there is no music—the moisture from the fog had caused an equipment failure. I begin to move through the first sequence of movement, and as I do, a song sparrow pierces the silence with her magical vocalizations. And so...I danced.

This piece was finally performed at the Colonial Theater performance a few months later (on July 22) with a backdrop montage of photography that chronicled my creative journey. My musical accompaniment for that performance was a sound collage of Monadnock native birdsong that complemented a live vocal interpretation of excerpts from my field journal. Although the mountain was miles away, I still felt its presence through this performance and I am certain that the mountain’s angel danced with me that day. The creative process of making this dance still haunts me with its profound magic and transformative gifts. I will carry these with me forever.

### **Research Dance Piece #3 “Cloud Study”**

#### **Original Inspiration**

The inspiration for this research dance piece came from the idea that we never really experience the *whole* of nature in our normal, everyday functioning as human beings—we can

only hold parts of it in our field of vision, attention span and awareness field. What I mean by “experience” is not just a passive, fleeting acknowledgement but, instead what I am seeking is a full-on engagement and an active mindfulness with interacting, over-lapping natural phenomena. I am looking for a reciprocal exchange that can only come from such holistic engagement.

One day while observing my team working with the GSM at their individual micro-sites, I began to notice that very little focus was placed in the radically “above”-places that were a vital part of the whole landscape in which we were working. This led to some serious ruminations about the notion of wholeness and the holistic perspective that drove my work. This was the environmental dancer’s mantra—wholeness. But how to bring that upper, heavenly dimension into our work?

So, I decided to create a “score” (an instructive series of specific guideposts that dancers use to create a performance improve--dancer jargon for improvisation--with a particular focus) That tasked the team to focus (or “grain” to—more dancer jargon) on a particularly dominant natural phenomena in the whole field of our macro site. That mindful shift from focusing on the micro-site to expand awareness to include the whole (namely the under-appreciated clouds that moved above us in a breath-taking, ever-evolving dance of their own) was the starting point for this structured improvisation score which would serve as one of our research pieces.

### **Choreographic design and structure**

On this particular beautiful day with a crystal clear sky full of puffy white clouds, my team and I began our field work with a conversation about Merleau-Ponty’s (1962) and Abram’s (1996) concept of reciprocity. We discovered that even when we are actively and mindfully in that Goethean space of dialogue with the phenomenon of focus, we are still in the throes of the dominant paradigm. We are still wielding our choreographic, creative power over the “other”. So we concluded that it was simply not enough to be “in mindful dialogue with’—we needed to

tweak this idea. What we were actually seeking, in order to stay true to our transformation into a holistic paradigm, was an equitable, give-and-take conversation between two collaborating phenomena (dancer and site, or phenomenon of focus). Then I asked my team: “what would happen if we actually and willfully relinquished our “control” over what unfolded in that dialogue?”

I then asked my dancers to join me in a playful experiment based on that question. I asked that we all lie down flat on our backs on a large expanse of flat rock nearby. As we all stretched out, I asked that we all become mindful of all that was surrounding us here, at multiple scales. I asked for the focus to become “grained” toward the sky and the billowy clouds moving over us and the mountain landscape. We spent ten minutes or so just joyfully watching the clouds.

Then, I asked that we begin to move in a grounded kind of “cloud dance”. As I sat to observe now, I could see evidence of that old paradigm of human-control-over-phenomenon in the way I saw that my team was actively constructing their studies. We needed to “shift the paradigm”.

I asked the team to come back to a neutral level of awareness, lying once again in a supine position on the rocks and to return to observing the phenomena that surrounded us in this space on the summit. I asked them to become mindful of the cloud movement—and to focus on a particular isolated cloud and further, to allow the cloud to guide you through its movement. In other words, we were going to relinquish our control over the creative process, in order to let the clouds, themselves, instruct the process. As I observed the team at work, I saw the physical manifestation of this new paradigm of wholeness where the authenticity of reciprocity was made visible in the unfolding and mesmerizing dialogue between environmental dancer and cloud.



Figure 84: "Cloud Study" danced by the research team, Mountain Dance, Colonial Theater, Keene, NH (DEFDW©).

This structured improve research piece soon became everyone's favorite mountain exercise. It was premiered on April 22, 2011 at the summit, during a very foggy summit performance. However, the intermittent fog simply created a new cloud experience and collaboration. As our performance improve/reciprocal dialogue with the fog unfolded on the summit that day, we learned, first hand, that the natural elements always have something to say and will forever inspire us in some new and refreshingly inspiring way.

The fog turned out to be more instructional in the continued evolution of this performance improve than we ever could have realized on that foggy summit. During our stage performance at the Colonial Theater a few months later, as we roll in from the wings of the stage into our *Cloud Study* places, we were thankful for our fog-as-cloud experience on the mountain. On stage, with a backdrop of a photographed slideshow of Monadnock's beautiful billowy white cloud, and as we moved with the memory of the fog guiding us in this dance piece, we disappear into and emerge out from the fog-like dry ice mist rising from the stage surface. It felt eerily reminiscent of the mountain performance!



## **Research Dance Piece #4 “Word Dance”**

### **Original Inspiration**

The inspiration for this piece evolved from the need to create a segue piece that provided a multi-segmented from a wholly-conceived and conceptualized dance piece. What was needed was series of inter-related vignettes of movement that introduced each dance piece in the program—this would be a dance piece unto itself but would also serve as the connective tissue which would weave together all of the dances into a cohesive whole.

### **Choreographic design and structure**

Like many wonderful moments of illumination, the structure for the making of this research dance piece came out of thin air. *Word Dance* was borne out of two disparate thoughts coming together at the optimally perfect time—as I was reading through one of the team members’ journal (Carin Torp, our newest team/company member), I suddenly had the image of the dancer dancing to her journal entries! In that quintessential “aha” moment, I could see this as an effective and meaningful way to address my dilemma for devising a way to connect the pieces of this production together into a true gestalt of our myriad of research discoveries. The author of the original field journal entries (team member, Carin Torp) would perform each of the vignettes!

As a collaborative effort, Carin and I held several meeting sessions to discuss the process ahead of us and to select the journal entries that would best serve this dance piece. My company manager (who was also a trained opera singer and dramatist) would interpret the journal entries that I would convert to essential distillations. I would use my favorite “found poem” technique. Once the text/accompaniment was set, we met as a group for two extended rehearsal periods and put together a profoundly beautiful re-presentation of Carin’s journal entry/found poems. Together we created movement sequences inspired by the images that emerged from the poetry text.



Figure 85: Carin Torp in "Word Dance", Colonial Theater, July 2011 (DEFDW ©)

In performance, each vignette not only served as the “connective tissue” for this production, but it provided a powerful and poetic statement about one of our primary research goals and mission—to reunite body with mind. Here, in the very structure of this dance piece we called *Word Dance*, Carin personified this goal—as her words and dances became unified before our very eyes. *Word Dance* is exemplary as a true expression and celebration of the body-mind of the environmental dance.

### **Research Dance Piece #5 “Ayllu”**

#### **Original Inspiration**

The inspiration for this research dance piece came from a chapter entitled *Critical Ontology and Indigenous Ways of Being: Forging a Postcolonial Curriculum*, authored by Joseph Kincheloe.

It provided me an in-depth discussion of the concept of “indigeneity” which is a concept that

deeply informs the emerging practice of environmental dance as eco-pedagogy. In the chapter, I came across an interesting word, “ayllu”. This is a word originating from indigenous Andean culture of Peru, meaning kinship between humans and other humans as well as a kinship between humans and “animals, plants, streams, rocks, and spirits [genius loci] of a particular, geographical place” (Kincheloe, 2006, p.18). I immediately connected the meaning of this term to my own interest in a radically-transformed human-nature relationship, a form of *indigenous relationship*, or indigeneity. It also seemed very relevant to the idea of “dialoguing” with the more-than-human-world, an essential feature and activity of this research project. So, Kincheloe’s article help me to conceptualize a research dance piece dedicated to exploring these two vital environmental concepts—“indigeneity” (critical ontology) and “dialoguing” (a facet of environmental dance research action/practice). The dance was aptly named “Ayllu” and featured the research team as the performing ensemble.

### **An Original Musical Score**

A two-part abstract “musical sketch” created by music artist and environmentalist Nathaniel Hoag, was created from re-working and engineering a natural soundscape he captured in recordings. On various sites throughout the mountain landscape. The musical composition was aptly titled *Monadnock Sketch*. Its hauntingly abstract qualities supported the underlying premise that the research piece was a true “dialogue” between human and mountain scape, in a language that both entities have fully embodied and understand.

### **Choreographic design and structure**

The process of co-creating this piece began on our first day of site work on the mountain. The research team would use their individual micro-sites from which to gather data for the piece. We discussed the concept of “ayllu” and the two related concepts of “indigeneity” and

“dialoguing” and how these were all integral ideas driving the research. Research team members were tasked with sourcing material (data) for the composing of two (2) key movement phrases<sup>77</sup>. The first of the two phrases would be a distillation of a study focusing on aspects of “dialoguing” with the site from the perspective of the dancer-researcher. Then, the process would be reversed—phrase two would entail creating a movement phrase as a result from considering the process of “dialoguing” with the site and phenomenal aspects of the site from the perspective of the site. Itself. This would provide a deep dive exploration into other integral environmental dance concepts: “giving voice” to the site (and other phenomena contained within the site) and “channeling” the site (see nested research questions). Continued refinement and distillation of movement material finally resulted in two polished phrases occurred over the next weeks on site and in the studio. The April 22, 2011 Monadnock summit performance gave the team a chance to continue the sourcing and refinement of movement material and to share the process in a public performance.

In a single, daylong rehearsal workshop (Fishkill, NY, June 2011) we gathered with our, mountain energies, imaginations and completed phrases with the goal of co-creating and setting the final ensemble dance piece. First, we worked to share and discuss individual phrases, and we began to compose a cohesive “whole” from these originally creative contributions of each team member. This process experience was once of the most highly-charged creative process of the entire research project. I stood “outside” the dance (I was acting as co-creative facilitator and

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<sup>77</sup> “Movement phrases” refer to the units of choreography that when combined, comprise the finished dance work. “Phrase” suggests that the elements of the dance piece are structured much like a written paragraph, where movement (or dance) phrases are intentionally and logically ordered movement motifs and ideas. These are ordered in such a way by the choreographer(s) so that the sequences created the desired artistic meaning.

would not be performing in this piece, even though I worked through the sourcing process on site) and directed the timing and sequencing of phrases as they fed into the structure of the dance.

Some particular movements were taken out of the context of the originating phrase and used as points of emphasis, often by repeating them as motifs throughout the choreography. I videotaped phrases and the actual dance-making process, as it fell together with amazing and inspiring ease. It was beautiful in its simplicity and dialogue, and it was beautiful in its organic flow—everything about it, served to illuminate the mission of the piece.

One of the essential “aha” moments that emerged from the process, was the idea that the team was able to feel the collaborative presence of the rocky mountain summit where the materials for this dance piece originated. The dance was still “rooted in the mountain” and the mountain was rooted in each one of us as well. We were connected in deeply profound ways that we fully realized in this most amazing day of process, and creative flow.

In between movement sessions the team and I would sit and talk about our individual experiences of this process. We were all in awe of the simplicity and ease of putting together the piece. Many of us admitted to a reluctant mindset and a general skepticism about the artistic merits of the collaborative process. But in very aesthetically-pleasing ways this creative process proved beyond any doubt that this particular kind of creative collaboration as a reciprocal dialogue between the environmental dancer and the phenomenal co-collaborator was grounded in artistic efficacy and integrity.

One of the intriguing gestalts (dancer + mountain landscape= something, somehow made greater and more spectacular through this danced give-and-take dialogue, than just the mere physical juxtaposition of the two (2) separate entities of human + rock) to emerge from the dance and discussion periods that took place that day in the studio was that each dancer was “carrying

the mountain” within them. And, in this “carrying”, dancers were able to spontaneously transform themselves into the rocky landscape of the mountain, responding to another dancer’s need to dialogue with the rock. So, dancers became rocks and returned to their human forms in a spontaneous, ever-changing, ever-giving-and-taking movement dialogue that created the palpable presence of the mountain landscape among the dancers. This was all a very intuitive and organic transformation—in the initial phase of creating and setting the specifically sequenced phrases of the dance piece, there was no hesitation, just instantaneous “knowing” on the part of every acutely-attuned dancer.

The staged performance was back-dropped with a montage that chronicled the creative process: from mountain to mountain performance to studio to stage! One of the missions of the research project was “bringing the mountain to the traditional stage”. In the truest spirit of the indigenous attitude captured in *Ayllu*, this dance piece successfully fulfilled the mission.



*Figure 86: "Ayllu" danced by the research team, Colonial Theater, July 2011 (DEFDW©)*

## **Section #6: Emergent Connections of Research Questions to the Research Dance Pieces**

### **Question 1 (“Lived Experience”):**

Focusing on the lived experience of the environmental dancer (moving from the “specific” to the “universal”)—this is embedded within the creative process: dancers gather “data” on site which is re-presented within the format of the dance piece. Dance research team members better understand their own specific “lived experiences” as environmental dancers through the comprehensive experience of creating and performing research dance works.

### **Question #2 (Recognizing and Honoring Historical Roots):**

The historical roots of the environmental dancer (moving from the “universal” to the “specific”)—each member of the dance research team brought a diverse set of skills and artistic experience to the research project. By following a consistent protocol and by utilizing the GSM as a kind of standardized template of the creative process team members were able to transform their existing dance knowledge and expertise in order to efficiently work as collaborators, while at the same time, being able to showcase individual expressiveness and technical style. Additionally, dancers were able to translate their personal dance training and experiences into a new form/ technique that moves beyond the systematized structures of Western dance. In doing so, team members became fluent in the movement vocabularies afforded by the archetypal “language of nature” which is the very foundation of the defining technical and metaphorical /expressive aspects of environmental dance as an emergent genre.

**Question #3: Engagement of the Site**

The manner in which environmental dancers engage with the site is a process of transformation that happens via the Goethean Scientific (five-step) Method. As an inherently-holistic approach, it guides us in loosening the hold of the predominant Cartesian paradigm established in our collective roots of Western thought, culture and dance training. It allows us to develop a voice of expression that speaks first and foremost from the land, itself and therefore elevates the status of the land and enables us to enter the new space of equitable dialogue with the-more-than-human-world. We become holistically-refashioned dance gestalts—we take our foundational training and transform our inner geographies through the Goethean way of engaging with the external natural world. Our creative expressions mirror this transformation as they become evidence that we have become more than our Western-based dance experience.

**Question #4: Systematizing the Goethean Process as Creative Process**

Our ability to adapt and systematize the Goethean (5-step) Scientific Process is comprehensively demonstrated through each of the five (5) research dance pieces (Seamon & Zajonc, 1998). In fact, each of the pieces is created through the guiding steps of this holistic scientific process of inquiry; *The Goethean Suite* was consciously constructed to provide dynamic, “performed” “tutorial” for Goethean holistic science newbies (i.e., “the Goethean what?”). It worked immeasurably well as a multi-faceted tool for this research project. It enabled us to: 1) engage with the site in a holistic way that, in turn, allowed us to “dialogue” equitably and directly with the landscape of the mountain (the “what?”); 2) comprehend and “speak” the “language of nature” through our aware, mindful and conscious body-minds and to become the expressive proxies of the natural world; (the “how?”); and 3) create a new form of dance that is based on and celebrates the reunification of the body and mind and thus, human and



nature—this also applies to other paradigmatic binaries that have long been in existence (the “why”?). The triad of what-how-and-why opens the door toward the Goethean/ Environmental Dance Process becoming a teachable system of expressive holistic learning. It offers at once, an underlying paradigmatic shift, the unity of art and science, the mind and body and the human and nature, a vehicle for transformation and a blueprint of learning the forgotten “language of nature”.

### **Question #5: Bridge between Inner and Outer Geographies**

Environmental dancers become proficient in the ability to “traverse” between the two realms we know and refer to as “the inner and outer geographies”. This term is referenced and utilized throughout this research paper. What is meant by “bridging” the two realms is this: the portal between the inner realm of the individual (specific, internal landscape of personal experience, reflection, cognition, dreaming, visioning, imagining, etc.) and the outer realm of the universe (the natural world and beyond, the realm of phenomena and experiences, of action and environmental dance) is opened by the engagement of the environmental dancer with the site.

The Goethean-based environmental dance process becomes the transformational way to permanently access both dimensions, in a mindful way—to be able to pass freely, back and forth between these two realms. One must also embrace the inclusion of the “integrated other” [my term], which is similar to the Nicolescuan term “included middle” meaning, that in all holistic endeavors, nothing is to be excluded or overlooked within a process (2008; 2010). This is then, seen as a reciprocal, iterative exchange of experience and experience-generated new knowledge inputs and feedback loops, with one constantly informing and transforming the other. This is the locus of all creative imagination and inspiration and where the seeds of environmental dances are generated.

### **Question #6: Site-channeling/ Giving “Voice” to the Landscape**

GSM allows us to mindfully engage with the natural site, in a way not unlike how one would engage with another human being—with directness, respect, kindness, empathy, curiosity and authenticity. By opening ourselves to this new way of engagement we experience the land (or the site, mountain, natural world, universe) in a nuanced way that is rooted in the ideals of belonging, inclusivity, empathy and equitability. When we are open, we have the ability to see nature with Goethe’s “fresh eyes” and begin to discern the ancient dialect of patterns and fractals of static and ephemeral forms and functions that makes the universe work--a true “language of nature” that exists within us and outside of us and in the spaces in between. This language enables a deepened way to speak with the land and to hear what it has to say back to us. It is from those kinds of exchanges that we craft the content of our dance pieces and give voice to the land as we dance as proxies of the land. This represents a dramatic shift in perspectives. It is from this intimate exchange that we begin to connect to the spirit of nature, the *genus loci*. We begin to develop a sense of authentic indigeneity as the spirit-infused alternative to the concept of earth stewardship. This is where the seeds of an eco-centric, environmental ethic takes root allowing a shift toward eco-centered values and cultural norms. This is also where the last stage of the Satori Loop is established (body-mind-Earth-spirit).

### **Question #7: Environmental dance as Ritual**

The use of the GSM infuses a decidedly “ritual-like” sensibility into our site work on the mountain. The step-by-step process of engaging with, dialoguing with and dancing within the rocky landscape can be seen (even in its most rudimentary form as research method/ task organizer) as a ritual used to neutralize the longstanding separation of human from nature, and

body from mind. Both are fundamental concerns to the environmental dancer-researcher. In addition to the primary ritual of healing binary splits, there is a sense of ceremony that emerges from the unfolding of the environmental dance research pieces. This is most likely due to the elevation of the status of nature (the landscape/site) in the process and product of our work on the mountain, where the mountain is engaged as an equal player in the creative process.

### **Question #8: Transdisciplinarity**

All aspects of this research project are transdisciplinary. Furthermore, with a shared worldview that acknowledges the complexity of multiple realities, transdisciplinarity (Nicolescu, 2008; 2010) emerges as suitable foundational philosophy of environmental dance. And, as such, each of the research dance pieces echoes the tenets of this radically holistic view of the universe. It is radical in the sense that there is a prevailing theme of unity--a seamless inseparability that makes meaningful relationships and connections, as it enjoins disparate entities, disciplines, approaches, ways of thinking, ways of reasoning, ways of perceiving, ways of knowing, ways of being, and ways of believing. Transdisciplinarity seeks to marry isolated disciplines and approaches and it is from these unlikely pairings we can now allow for the possibility of intriguing, serendipitous cross-pollinations that hold the potential for new ways of being and knowing (like GSM and environmental dance) to emerge. It supports radical transformation of how we engage the world—through a critical ontology. Each of the research pieces, (derived through GSM) reflect this radical worldview.

## Chapter VI

### Concluding Remarks and Future Research

In this final chapter, I take the opportunity to further explore several of the more outstanding, emergent facets from this research. These particular areas of interest warrant a deeper interpretation, and a second glance--a reminder as to how these play a prominent role in this project's mission to define and delimit "environmental dance" as practice and performance; and further, how these distinguishing traits may be applied to the design and future development of a systematized curriculum, which I have identified as an *eco-pedagogy of environmental dance*. These integral areas of interest include 1) Goethe's holistic science, which my research team and I refer to as *Goethe's five-step scientific process* (Seamon & Zajonc, 1998); 2) Nature's repeating patterns and the "language of nature" (Kryder, 2000), which allows the expressive dancer/student to "translate" vital knowledge and wisdom of the natural world into the metaphoric movement vocabulary of dance--allowing the dancer/student to "traverse" the realms of inner and outer geographies, linking experience with reflection, while inspiring an embodied sense of intimately "knowing" the other (nature), and re-expressing that knowledge through "environmental dance"; 3) The Satori Loop™, which works as an emergent vehicle of transformation, noting its potential as a paradigmatically-shifting theory-and-practice model, discussed in detail, in Chapter II; 4) Transdisciplinarity (Nicolescu, 2008; 2010)--its relationship to critical ontology and how "environmental dance" (in both theory and practice) is a transdisciplinary endeavor and 5) how my own creative process as an "environmental dance artist" has dramatically shifted, throughout the evolution of "environmental dance", over time and throughout the natural course of this research journey, and how this shift has transformed how we (my company and research team and I) go about *doing* "environmental dance". Taken

together, these defining, emergent features will be utilized as the foundation posts of a new way of engaging the natural world, a re-envisioned way of knowing and being in nature—through the systematized, teachable eco-pedagogy of “environmental dance”.

### **A Creative Process Transformed by Goethe**

I am compelled to begin this concluding section by backing up to address the last point on my list of five gems of discovery afforded by this research project—this entails my telling the story of how this research has so dramatically transformed my own practice as an environmental dance artist and educator. In many ways, my transformation illustrates how each of the remaining four (4) facets (Goethean scientific method, the “language of nature”, the Satori Loop©, and transdisciplinarity) have combined to formulate a hybridized way that has resulted in the radically-altered approach I use to engage with my sites, to create my dance works, to guide my company members and to teach my students. This transformation has turned out to be an evolution in my own thoughts and actions I have taken as a teaching artist; one that has not taken the more linear track necessary in the writing up of this dissertation research, itself, has followed; instead this has been an enlightening, challenging and cyclical process of discovery, experimentation, and constant refinement that forever spiral inward and downward toward further discoveries, experiments and “environmental dances” that are never truly finished.

Over twenty-five years of creating dance pieces for annual public performances at the summit of iconic Mt. Monadnock, located in southwestern New Hampshire left me feeling that as an “established artist”, I was somehow missing some indistinguishable, self-imposed mark. That I sought to deepen the work, the creative process and my relationship to the mountain, itself, in some unknown way that I set out on a quest to find the answer to.

I spent much time contemplating my creative process of making “environmental dances”. I recognized that I was creating dances that were inspired by the place where they ultimately unfolded in performance. My company and I spent hours on the summit, dedicating ourselves to grueling rehearsals and we knew the mountain and all of its idiosyncrasies well, yet a feeling of “almost-but-not-quite” haunted me and persisted for some time. It was during that period of creative incubation that I happened upon Goethe’s work, during my second year of doctoral studies. As I studied Goethe’s five (5) step process, I knew instantly I had found what I was looking for.

In the past, I would make my annual pilgrimage to the summit to seek mountain inspiration (see Chapter V) and to create a new dance piece from some as yet unknown source of insight. I was intentionally seeking a vision, as I customarily would do. I would return home and go to the studio where I would work very hard to create movement phrasings and structures that would eventually take the form of a new dance work. Then, after preliminary work completed in the studio, my company and I would venture to the summit to work with the movement material and to “block” out the dance pieces in the performance space—weeks of rehearsals onsite, would prepare dancer and dance for performance. While this process worked well, I sought to find a different way, somehow utilizing GSM.

From the onset, I was amazed at my discovery that Goethe’s scientific method paralleled my own existing creative process, yet I had never conceptualized my way of making “environmental dances” in quite this way. A preliminary stage (the first of five (5) cumulative stages (see Chapter III) allowed me to approach the “object” of my interest (note the language and how it reflects the “old paradigm”) and to observe it at close-range. Next I would explore the concept of “time”/evolution and the “story of evolution the “object” might tell (if only it could).

Then came the consideration of “form”—how “the thing” took up space within the rocky mountain landscape. Then, by setting all of this aside, Goethe wanted to allow the thing to speak for itself—I imagined that I should be “listening” for what the “object of my study” had to say on its own merits—this step was particularly daunting for me to comprehend at first. The last step in the process was to try to sense a “unity”, a wholeness between me and “the thing”. The process, itself, had a neat and orderly, yet unrestricted (emergent) sense of flowing logic.

As a choreographer, I could sense the nonlinear, freeing sense of such order and logic in Goethe’s process and I recognized that this sense of ease and flow was what was missing, in part, from my own process. I also noted that while using the process to source movement material for a new dance piece, I began to broaden the scope of what I was taking in—I was sensing a new wholeness, a sense of interconnectivity, a sense of complexity a sense of context. Each phenomenon was a web of intricately-woven strands of a greater, more-fascinating story. I was beginning to see that my myopic focus on one particular thing in a vast and complex field of many “things” was limiting, as well, as it became yet another constraint on the creative process. I needed to adopt Goethe’s approach, quite literally—and I did.

What I found is that this very “aha” moment of realization revealed how stuck in the “old paradigm” way of thinking and doing I was. As I began to craft the research dance pieces for this research, I could quite literally feel the shift in the energy driving the work—and so did my dance research team. Movement ideas came out of the fog with ease; sourcing movement material became an inspired and informed Goethean adventure onsite; team members were eager and enthusiastic to do the work; research time on site flew, even though there was an almost-mystical sense of timelessness as we worked on the summit, week after week, season after season; we thought of the mountain and all of her phenomenal treasures as part of “the team”;

and there was sometimes the uncanny sense that the dances were creating themselves. We were in-the-flow (Nachmanovitch, 1990)! This subtle, yet monumental shift has not only changed how I think about and approach my creative work now, it has, transformed the dancers and the mountain itself—my process, the body of work as it evolves over time (as regenerating, never-ending cycles of discovery), my dedicated partners in this endeavor, including Monadnock, herself are the living, dynamic paradigm shift-in-motion. The shift in the creative process I describe here, will undoubtedly and dramatically shape the curriculum that this research will inspire.

The fortunate discovery of and adapted utilization of the Goethean Process (also referred to, as “Goethe’s holistic science”, “Goethe’s scientific process (GSM)”, “Goethe’s five-step process”) provided my research team and I with a consistent template to follow throughout the duration of the research. This protocol, aligning with the intentional methodological pairing of grounded theory with phenomenology immediately allowed us to engage the site in a radical new way—instead of dancing on rock, we were, in actuality, dialoguing, collaborating and dancing *with* the site, in an equitable give-and-take exchange. From this applied adaptation of Goethe’s holistic approach, we can begin to envision a definitive “environmental dance” epistemology and ontology, as a transformative way to heal the long-existing human-nature split. We begin to see a vision of a new way to engage nature (perhaps, a teachable one); what is more, we begin to see the walls of separation blur, sensing the once-obscured reality as we dance with nature, that as human beings, we are nature.

In contemplating how Goethe’s “way of doing science” (Seamon and Zajonc, 1998), may guide the development of an “environmental dance eco-pedagogy”, I suggest that the potential benefits will minimally include:



- 1) The synergistic, complementary, holistic pairing of arts and science, long viewed as disparate, separate “universes”;
- 2) The design template for a holistic educational approach, that easily reaches across disciplines--again, creating bridges toward complementary (if not Gestalt) ways of knowing;
- 3) A way to radically re-envision “environmental education” in Western culture;
- 4) A way to structure creative, outdoor engagement of students to landscape/site;
- 5) A way to experience the synergy between the “analytic” approach with “synthesis”, since this feature is built in to Goethe’s scientific method (see Chapter III);
- 6) A nuanced way to build and celebrate community through connectivity and ritual; and
- 7) A way to instill a sense of wonder and awe in the learning experiences, through the imaginative and inspired engagement of the “environmental dance” learner.

And finally, I would like to mention one other side-benefit of this work as I work to apply it to the development of an eco-pedagogy. This is the well-founded assumption that the “environmental dance” student will automatically become knowledgeable of and experienced in applied Goethean science. This new knowledge will be at once residual and cumulative, providing a new way to experience a deep and lifelong connection to the natural world from which we, as humans, ultimately originate. In a uniquely fresh way, the student will express deep levels of holistic learning through physical movement, sourced from, created with and expressed in nature, herself.

### **The “Language” of Nature’s Repeating Patterns**

A second strong point of interest lies in the systematization of repeating, ubiquitous patterns of nature—what I have referred to consistently as the “language of nature” (see Chapter II, Jewel Five). This language, is contained within and is expressed by all of nature’s

phenomena, at all scales, and manifests as interesting, inspiring points of commonality that we, as humans recognize as “familiar” through our perceptions, observations, experiences, via our senses and through our own physical bodies. Further, we are able to transform these recognized patterns as expressions of knowledge, generated by the natural forces of phenomenal being—through what I intuit to be the universal creative process. The environmental dancer/researcher/student mirrors this vast source of nature’s wisdom and re-expresses it through what I also intuit as a micro version of that creative process, that comes to life through the dance, alive at once in a matrix of time and space, along a spectrum of movement to stillness. This is precisely the creative, interpretive, and “felt” sense which is expressed by the dancer/researcher/student, in order to be able to “translate” vital knowledge and wisdom of the natural world into the metaphoric movement vocabulary of the dance study or the more formal, performance piece. This is the process that allows the dancer/student to traverse the realms of inner and outer geographies, linking experience with reflection, while inspiring an embodied sense of intimately “knowing” the other (some phenomenal aspect of nature), and re-expressing and reinforcing an integration of that knowledge within the artist or student, through the “environmental dance” experience.

The “language of nature” is the vital source of connection of the body-mind to the Earth (nature) and this is the *learned embodiment* that is guided by and deepened through the Goethean process. It also serves as a very basic eco-pedagogical tutorial that enables the “environmental dance” artist/researcher/dancer to: 1) find commonalities that are shared throughout phenomenal nature (the spiraling nautilus shell that reflects not only the macro universe but the micro movements of the human spine); 2) create a bridge and a bond between the phenomenal human and the phenomenal site (sense of place); 3) allow the “environmental dancer” to create

metaphorical expression inspired by a phenomenal reality that exists within the learning site (creative process of bridging “inner and outer geographies”); 4) to allow the “environmental dancer” to experience the natural world in its inherent complexities and interconnections; and 5) to provide an infinite array of archetypal templates as the source of an “environmental dance” movement vocabulary.

### **A Future Research Focus—Developing the Environmental Dance Eco-pedagogy**

The third area for further exploration, as a potential philosophical foundation on which to build a systematized environmental dance curriculum (K-12 and beyond) is the emergent theory that I have named the *Satori Loop*<sup>78</sup> and have previously discussed in Chapter II. In essence, the Satori Loop functions to consciously shift the epistemic and ontological underpinnings of a proposed “environmental dance” eco-pedagogy, mindfully away from the influence of a predominant reductionist, positivistic paradigm of current western culture—this serves to challenge status quo teaching and learning in nature, by turning it on its head. At the same time, we are addressing the same components that a more traditional, environmentally-focused pedagogy would necessarily address—such learning almost always involves the interactive elements of the learner’s mind (thinking, reasoning functions), the learner’s body (the physical locus of perceptions, senses and experience), the natural environment (the “thing” studied and experienced) and in some but not all instances, there is also a spiritual aspect included in the curriculum design. In some cases, the spiritual aspect may make intentional references to models of indigenous ways of knowing and being in nature, and may also serve as the inspiration for the consideration and development of an inclusive environmental ethics (Armstrong & Botzler, 1993; Berleant, 1992; Brady, 2003; Carlson, 2000; Davis, 1980; Dryzck, 1997; Habermas, 1980;

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<sup>78</sup> See Chapter II (Jewel Six, for a more in-depth discussion on the emergence of the Satori Loop©.

Katz, Light & Rothenberg, 2000; Keller & Golley, 2000; Kemal & Gaskell, 1992; Light & Rolsten, 2003; Light & Smith, 1983; Mendoz, 2000, Milton, 2002; Naess & Rothenberg, 1990; Rothenberg, 2011; Taylor, 1986) . The connection of environmental ethics and environmental dance will also be an area of further future inquiry.

Of paramount importance to “environmental dance” is the desire to unify the traditional split between the human mind and body, which is a recognizable relic of Cartesian ways of knowing and being in the world. In Chapter II, I present a discussion of the evolutionary history of artistic and educational dance in western culture and I make the claim that such earlier forms, schools and genres, reflect the cultural underpinnings of various times in our societal advancements; this claim supports the idea that where “environmental dance” urgently seeks to heal the body-mind split, the earlier schools of traditional artistic dance actually promoted the separation of the body-mind. In all aspects of emergent “environmental dance”, the optimal learner is the individual who enjoys the holistic integration of the one’s body and of one’s mind, early on in the learning process. In fact, the reunification of the binary of body-separate-from-the-mind is a necessary prerequisite for “environmental dance” performance, research and pedagogy. This shift from the binary splits toward the unification of the dancing, thinking body-mind of the “environmental dancers” or student is echoed through the holistic paradigm that will underpin such an eco-pedagogy.

Another difference in how the components of body-mind and Earth (nature) interact and engage, has to do directly with how the learning curriculum must be designed. A theoretical framework begins to take shape through the intentional ordering of how the components are guided to engage with one another. The “environmental dancer’s” body-mind is empowered to engage the natural learning (or research/performance) site in a pre-determined holistic way that

continues to encourage a suitable, complementary worldview that promotes an equitably-ordered relationship with the phenomenal “other” (natural phenomena). By breaking down and possibly eliminating such self-imposed barriers and isolating degrees of separation, the “environmental dancer/researcher/learner” experiences a deeper engagement with nature, the site, the facilitator and fellow dancers.

The cumulative quality of the Satori Loop© learning experience allows on-site creative experiences to deeply root the learner within the site, itself. As I have chronicled here, through numerous illustrative journaled accounts of our fieldwork, I had the opportunity to witness this firsthand, as my research team proceeded through our onsite research activities and tasks. Nature becomes real, in new and excitingly inspiring ways that negate the objective, at-arms-length abstractions that only serves to stunt the development of a truly intimate understanding of the phenomena that is the focus of this exploration through “environmental dance”. A sense of place begins to develop and over time, so does a feeling of attachment as this layered, iterative learning process continues to deepen the experience, allowing, in turn, an emerging sense of belonging, a sense of collaborative partnership, as well as a sense of affinity and empathy toward phenomenal nature.

Through the intentionally-ordered approach afforded by the Satori Loop©, the integrated human body-mind is then prepared to integrate, in turn, with “Earth” (including nature/natural phenomena) in this prescribed approach; and finally experience the authentic spiritual connectivity between “environmental dancer”/ researcher/ learner and Earth in a reciprocating way (Abram, 1996). Nurturing relationship to Earth/nature/place/phenomenon via the Satori Loop©, is a deep-diving process, one where the “environmental dancer”/student is thoroughly invested in all aspects of the learning experience, in ways that are intended to transcend other

more mainstream methods of learning-in-nature. The Satori-Loop© approach engages arts-based learning in nature (via “environmental dance” and complementary learning methods such as journaling) as critical epistemology and ontology. It moves the learner toward developing a new way of engaging and “being in” nature--a nuanced way that opens a new door for an eco-ethos to emerge. Instead of perceiving separation and “otherness” in the learning experience, a sense of place is strengthened and fortified through an intentional goal of developing a sense of indigeneity. The learner begins to perceive a one-ness with nature. As I move into the curriculum-design phase of this ever-emergent work I readily acknowledge and honor the complexity of nature, and in turn, the complexities of the human/nature relationship. In particular, I aim to highlight those intriguing complexities as they are encouraged to emerge through the “environmental dance” learning (and performance) experiences. This serves as an underlying premise in the development of a comprehensive curriculum based on this research.

The curriculum that will ultimately originate from this research will move well beyond the realm of multi-disciplinary or even interdisciplinary-oriented teaching and learning. As a form of dance (and environmental education) that is already steeped in the exploration and creative expression of phenomenal complexities, an “environmental dance” eco-pedagogy will, instead, seek to ground itself as a true transdiscipline (See Chapter II, Jewel Eight). This kind of learning will seek to make inroads and connections to seemingly disparate areas of knowledge and experience, in order to expand the understanding of “environmental dance” as a complex phenomenon, itself. And as in Indra’s net, “environmental dance” and its corresponding “environmental dance education” moves “dance” (in general) from its static places in history into a realm of nuanced possibilities as it emerges strengthened by its ability to reflect and refract other bodies of existing knowledge, frameworks, theories, practices, experiences and realities.

Environmental dance is gifted in its inherent ability to enjoin two very separate universes--of dance and nature, simultaneously; and so it does with art and science as well. I have discovered through this research journey that it is in the most unexpected, curious places where we may find the most intriguing, exquisite mysteries and complexities—the true jewels of Indra’s net. In these overlooked, unlikely pairings and partnerships, we may discover new ways of knowing and being that are ever greater than the sum of their individual disciplinary parts. And then it may seem quite plausible that we are the very nature we have isolated from ourselves, and that the mountain, in fact, always dances within each of us.



Figure 87: DEFDW Dance Company and research team (DEFDW©).

### ***Mountain Dance***

*Dancing like a mountain...  
But “how does a mountain dance?” one may ask.  
With power... With mystery... With harmony...  
Beauty... Balance and strength.*

*But “how does one know this is true?”  
Through quality—not quantity.  
These things cannot be counted.*

*Power.  
The mountain stands alone—  
Solid and strong.  
Unmoved in space and time.  
(At least this is how most humans perceive it)  
Like the power of the dancer’s legs—watch.  
Heart, mind and spirit follow in a similar rhythm, pulse, pattern.  
But all things change over time—  
This is how it is.*

*Mystery.  
What is the magnetizing force that draws us here?  
That sustains us?  
Inspires us?  
That allows us to feel the wisdom  
And the ancient knowledge held in these granite rocks?  
Time; years; patience; willingness...  
Less of fame and fortune;  
More of humbleness and awe.  
This experience of raw wonderment.  
Untainted by human ambition.*

*Only honesty flows  
Through the underground currents that feed and sustain the dance here.  
The belonging wholly/ holy to this place and vice versa.  
That is the gift.  
That is why we are here.  
Lesson learned.  
Now to share this “knowledge” with others.  
“What knowledge?”*

*The dancer becomes more like the mountain  
And mountain is dancing, to be sure.  
You can see this with your own eyes...  
If you choose to see.  
If you choose to be with this reality.  
An extraordinary phenomenon opens new possibilities—  
Tangible ones, felt ones.  
No need to count this or account for this in some analytical way;  
Just take it all in through open eyes and heart...*

*Balance.*



*You either have it or you don't.  
 But it is necessary for the survival of the species!  
 Another lesson of the mountain.  
 Wise mountain, wise teacher...  
 Wide base supports all effort; just being.  
 A fundamental principal of the universe?  
 The dancer's body answers this mystery  
 With flowing affirmations of synchronicity.  
 Balance on a single limb—solid, assured, immovable...  
 In harmonious dialogue and response  
 To the impetus of the raw elements  
 That might envision a different reality.  
 These want to move the dancer, like wind...  
 The wind—Blows through the impervious spirit  
 Dancing to mimic the mountain's strength.  
 Dancer negotiates these forces that would move mountains...  
 And they do—over time...  
 But for now, stand solid in this place and time,  
 And revel in this sacred opportunity.  
 Feel the strength of the mountain take over,  
 Surging and coursing through limbs and hearts and veins.*

*Dancer spirals, reaches for heaven in ways previously unimagined...  
 She piously retreats, then tries again to do the impossible—  
 Or is it possible?!  
 Spinning, stretching, extending,  
 Saying without speaking, seeking to “know”  
 What the mountain is saying.  
 The wind continues to blow.  
 From the west, then from the northwest,  
 In a dynamic dance of its own.  
 Dancer balances “mountain-ness”  
 With her own human-ness,  
 On one foot, other leg extended to the heavens,  
 Buffeting the winds that cause the mountain to roar.  
 But, curiously, there is no place to fall—  
 The only option is transcendence and ascension here.  
 Such is the nature of harmony, beauty, reciprocity  
 (As the dancer's body humbly demonstrates).  
 The mountain says so.*

~Dianne Eno©, 2011

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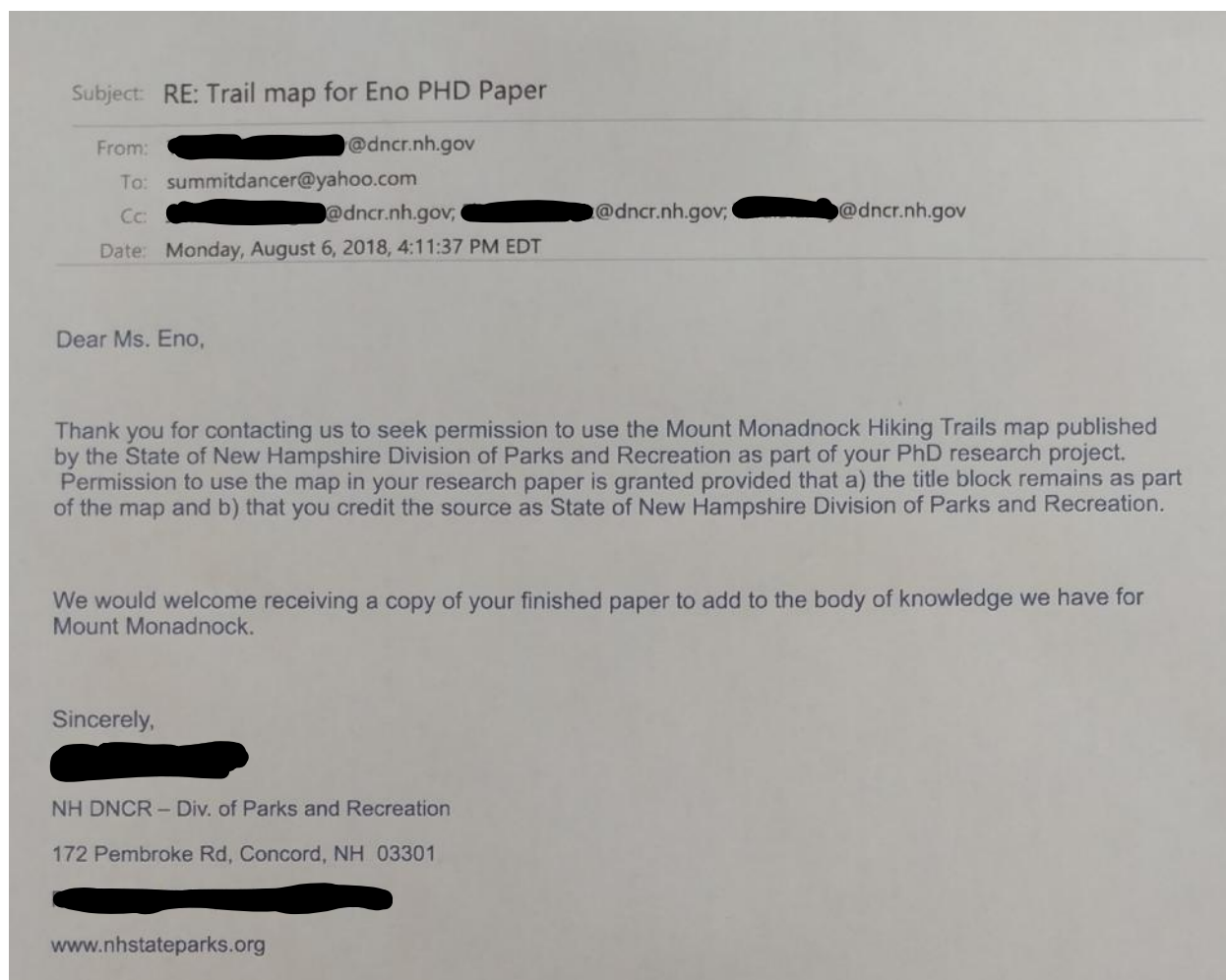
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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: PERMISSIONS



*Permission to use image of "Monadnock Trail Map" from State of NH Parks and Rec.*

Subject: RE: Permission renewal request

From: [REDACTED]@andover.edu

To: [REDACTED]

Date: Monday, August 6, 2018, 12:14:45 PM EDT

Dianne,

I hope all is well and thanks for your request. I see no problem with you including the image in your final dissertation and continuing to use it in your dance performances. If you need anything else, please let me know.

Good luck and take care!

[REDACTED]  
Registrar

Addison Gallery of American Art

Phillips Academy

Andover MA 01810

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[www.addisongallery.org](http://www.addisongallery.org)

*Permission to use image "Monadnock Angel", from John Sousa of Addison Gallery*



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Swanzey, NH 03446  
(603) 357-6005  
info@fusiondanceworks.net

**Contract/Release—2010-2011 Seasons (Dissertation Project & Performances-Dianne Eno)**

Contract Date(s) Ongoing Project Performances / Dissertation Project

**Contact Info**



**Contract/Release—**

I, Dianne Eno, understand that I have been selected to participate as a member of Dianne Eno/Fusion Danceworks and by Dianne Eno in her dissertation project and its related performances, and I agree to fulfill the requirements of rehearsals, meetings, classes, workshops and public performances as presented by the choreographer/ artistic director Dianne Eno. I understand that the discipline of dance and specifically, site-specific outdoor performances and their necessary preparations are physically demanding and while representing that I am capable of participating successfully in this project, I acknowledge that taking part is at my own risk leaving EarthDance Institute and Dianne Eno/Fusion Danceworks free from any and all liabilities due to injury. I further agree to cooperate at all times with project leaders and will strive to the best of my ability—to be on time for all rehearsals, meetings, performance calls, etc.—to inform the director of late arrivals or absences in advance, whenever possible—to follow through on commitment to the project and cast members, seeing the project to its completion, and—to strive toward professional conduct at all times. I understand that photographs, videos, etc. from classes, workshops, residencies, rehearsals and performance may be used for promotion/publicity/publications by EarthDance Institute, Dianne Eno/Fusion Danceworks, or Dianne Eno, and I authorize their use. Compensation, in the form of an honorarium is intended for this project, and is dependent on the success of fundraising efforts related to this project, and is determined on an individual dancer basis, upon successful completion of the project, and at the discretion of the organization.



5/7/11

Dancer Signature

Date

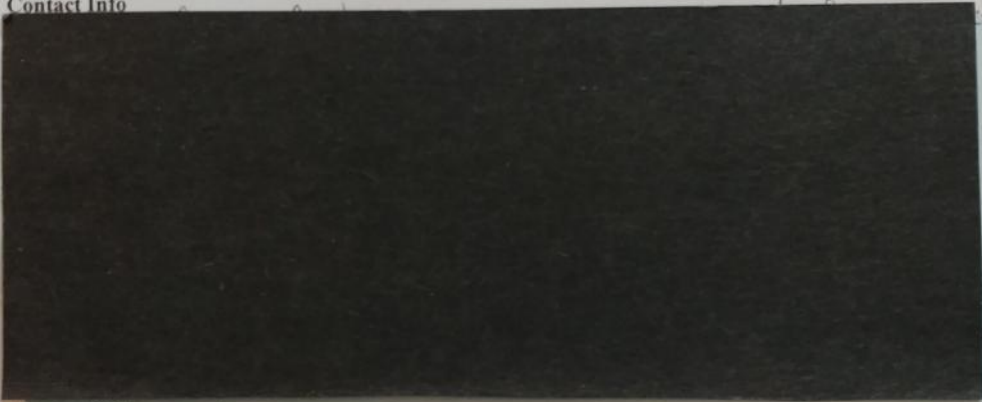


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Contract  
Date(s) Dec. 2010 - July 2011 Project 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Performances  
Dissertation

**Contact Info**



**Contract/Release—**

I, Mary Madsen, understand that I have been selected to participate as a member of Dianne Eno/Fusion Danceworks and by Dianne Eno in her dissertation project and its related performances, and I agree to fulfill the requirements of rehearsals, meetings, classes, workshops and public performances as presented by the choreographer/ artistic director Dianne Eno. I understand that the discipline of dance and specifically, site-specific outdoor performances and their necessary preparations are physically demanding and while representing that I am capable of participating successfully in this project, I acknowledge that taking part is at my own risk leaving EarthDance Institute and Dianne Eno/Fusion Danceworks free from any and all liabilities due to injury. I further agree to cooperate at all times with project leaders and will strive to the best of my ability—to be on time for all rehearsals, meetings, performance calls, etc.—to inform the director of late arrivals or absences in advance, whenever possible—to follow through on commitment to the project and cast members, seeing the project to its completion, and—to strive toward professional conduct at all times. I understand that photographs, videos, etc. from classes, workshops, residencies, rehearsals and performance may be used for promotion/publicity/publications by EarthDance Institute, Dianne Eno/Fusion Danceworks, or Dianne Eno, and I authorize their use. Compensation, in the form of an honorarium is intended for this project, and is dependent on the success of fundraising efforts related to this project, and is determined on an individual dancer basis, upon successful completion of the project, and at the discretion of the organization.

[Redacted Signature] 5-7-2011  
Dancer/Signature Date



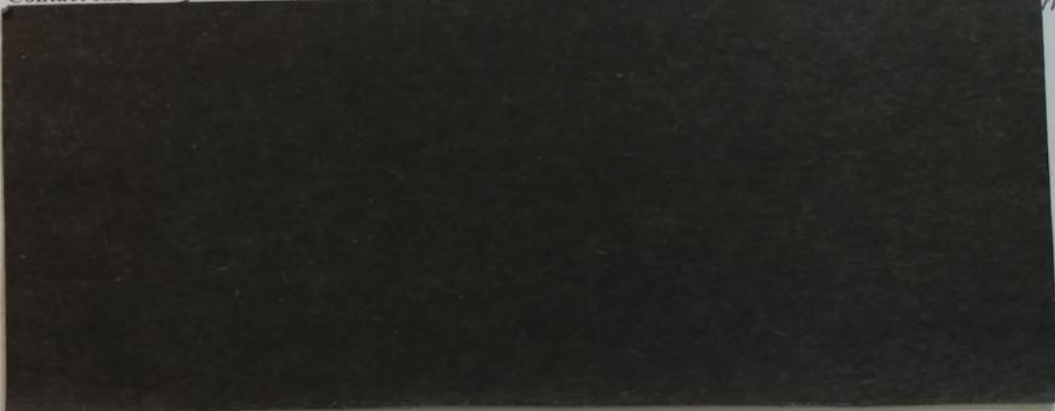


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Contract Date(s) Dec. 2010 - July 2011 Project 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Performance Dissertation

**Contact Info**



**Contract/Release—**

I, Trayer Run-Kowzun, understand that I have been selected to participate as a member of Dianne Eno/Fusion Danceworks and by Dianne Eno in her dissertation project and its related performances, and I agree to fulfill the requirements of rehearsals, meetings, classes, workshops and public performances as presented by the choreographer/ artistic director Dianne Eno. I understand that the discipline of dance and specifically, site-specific outdoor performances and their necessary preparations are physically demanding and while representing that I am capable of participating successfully in this project, I acknowledge that taking part is at my own risk leaving EarthDance Institute and Dianne Eno/Fusion Danceworks free from any and all liabilities due to injury. I further agree to cooperate at all times with project leaders and will strive to the best of my ability—to be on time for all rehearsals, meetings, performance calls, etc.—to inform the director of late arrivals or absences in advance, whenever possible—to follow through on commitment to the project and cast members, seeing the project to its completion, and—to strive toward professional conduct at all times. I understand that photographs, videos, etc. from classes, workshops, residencies, rehearsals and performance may be used for promotion/publicity/publications by EarthDance Institute, Dianne Eno/Fusion Danceworks, or Dianne Eno, and I authorize their use. Compensation, in the form of an honorarium is intended for this project, and is dependent on the success of fundraising efforts related to this project, and is determined on an individual dancer basis, upon successful completion of the project, and at the discretion of the organization.

[Redacted Signature] 5/7/2011  
Dancer Signature Date



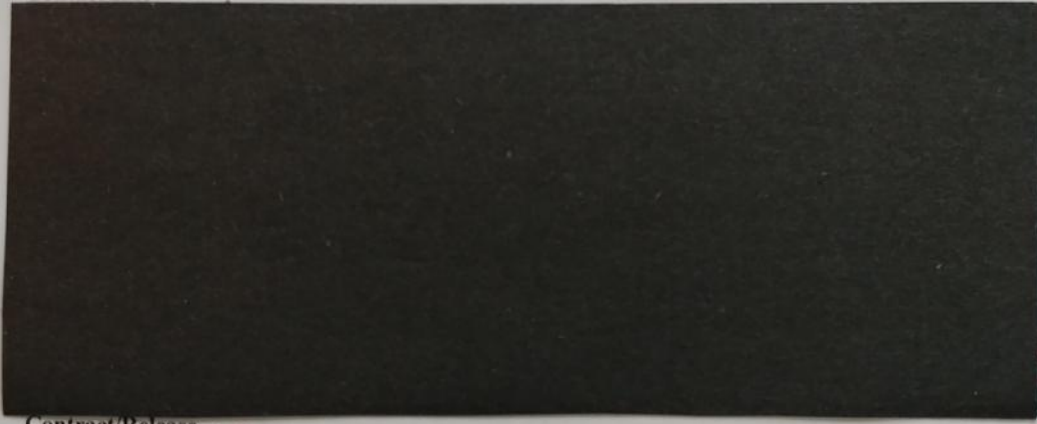
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**Contract/Release—2010-2011 Seasons (Dissertation Project & Performances-Dianne Eno)**

Contract

Date(s) Dec 2010 - July 2011 Project 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Performances & Dissertation

**Contact Info**



**Contract/Release—**

I, Amy MacQueen, understand that I have been selected to participate as a member of Dianne Eno/Fusion Danceworks and by Dianne Eno in her dissertation project and its related performances, and I agree to fulfill the requirements of rehearsals, meetings, classes, workshops and public performances as presented by the choreographer/ artistic director Dianne Eno. I understand that the discipline of dance and specifically, site-specific outdoor performances and their necessary preparations are physically demanding and while representing that I am capable of participating successfully in this project, I acknowledge that taking part is at my own risk leaving EarthDance Institute and Dianne Eno/Fusion Danceworks free from any and all liabilities due to injury. I further agree to cooperate at all times with project leaders and will strive to the best of my ability—to be on time for all rehearsals, meetings, performance calls, etc.—to inform the director of late arrivals or absences in advance, whenever possible—to follow through on commitment to the project and cast members, seeing the project to its completion, and—to strive toward professional conduct at all times. I understand that photographs, videos, etc. from classes, workshops, residencies, rehearsals and performance may be used for promotion/publicity/publications by EarthDance Institute, Dianne Eno/Fusion Danceworks, or Dianne Eno, and I authorize their use. Compensation, in the form of an honorarium is intended for this project, and is dependent on the success of fundraising efforts related to this project, and is determined on an individual dancer basis, upon successful completion of the project, and at the discretion of the organization.

[Redacted Signature] 5-7-11  
Dancer Signature Date





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Contract/Release—2010-2011 Seasons (Dissertation Project & Performances-Dianne Eno)

Contract

Date(s) Dec. 2010 - July 2011 Project 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Performances / Dissertation

Contact Info

Contract/Release—

I, Carin Torp, understand that I have been selected to participate as a member of Dianne Eno/Fusion Danceworks and by Dianne Eno in her dissertation project and its related performances, and I agree to fulfill the requirements of rehearsals, meetings, classes, workshops and public performances as presented by the choreographer/ artistic director Dianne Eno. I understand that the discipline of dance and specifically, site-specific outdoor performances and their necessary preparations are physically demanding and while representing that I am capable of participating successfully in this project, I acknowledge that taking part is at my own risk leaving EarthDance Institute and Dianne Eno/Fusion Danceworks free from any and all liabilities due to injury. I further agree to cooperate at all times with project leaders and will strive to the best of my ability—to be on time for all rehearsals, meetings, performance calls, etc.—to inform the director of late arrivals or absences in advance, whenever possible—to follow through on commitment to the project and cast members, seeing the project to its completion, and—to strive toward professional conduct at all times. I understand that photographs, videos, etc. from classes, workshops, residencies, rehearsals and performance may be used for promotion/publicity/publications by EarthDance Institute, Dianne Eno/Fusion Danceworks, or Dianne Eno, and I authorize their use. Compensation, in the form of an honorarium is intended for this project, and is dependent on the success of fundraising efforts related to this project, and is determined on an individual dancer basis, upon successful completion of the project, and at the discretion of the organization.

Dancer Signature

May 7, 2011  
Date

*Carin Torp Research Team Member Release*

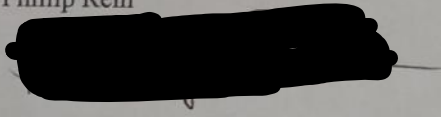
July 31, 2018

Photo Use

To Whom it May Concern,

Dianne Eno (d.b.a. Dianne Eno Fusion DanceWorks DEFDW) has my permission to include all images/ photographs of the Monadnock dance project (including the "Angel Overlays" ) in her dissertation and associated performances.

Phillip Rein

A large black rectangular redaction covers the signature area, obscuring the name and any handwritten notes or dates that might have been present.

*Phillip Rein--Photo Use Permission*

To whom it may concern

Dianne Endo has permission  
to use my photographs for  
her dissertation.

[REDACTED]

Larry Davis 8-3-2018

## APPENDIX B

### Transdisciplinary "Jewels" and GT Analysis/Synthesis: General Codes and Emergent Properties

Note: Below is a compilation of the codes (and “emergent properties) that were derived through the grounded theory (GT) analysis/ synthesis of the “data” gleaned from each of the eight (8) jewels in Chapter Two.

#### **Jewel #1 Childhood Experience and Education**

##### **Text/ general “coding”—**

Tacit knowing  
 Bonding with nature  
 Childhood imagination  
 Outdoor-oriented childhood  
 Venturing into wild nature as ritual  
 Time spent in nature  
 Sensing order in nature  
 Nature-organization/self-regulation  
 Patterns in nature expressed in dance  
 Holistic perspective  
 Nature as source of inspiration  
 Philosophical underpinnings of an eco-pedagogy  
 Ecological concepts emerge in childhood nature play  
 Systems thinking  
 Healing Cartesian binary/splits  
 Constructivism/eco-constructivism  
 “Aha” moments  
 A sense of magic  
 A sense of wonder  
 A sense of awe  
 Goethe connection/ holism  
 Reciprocal relationships  
 Metaphors emerging from nature  
 Language as system of symbols  
 Collective symbolic meaning  
 Collaborative meaning-making  
 Concepts of multiplicity, diversity  
 Scaffolding in learning  
 Paradigmatic tensions  
 Concept of synergy  
 Feelings of belonging to nature  
 Feelings of being nurtured by nature  
 Feelings of being humbled by nature

Effects of alienation (from nature)  
Physical, psychological, and spiritual exile  
Nature deficit disorder  
Awareness-building  
Systemic problems  
Environmental problems  
Anthropocentrism  
Western worldview  
“Koyanasquaatsi”  
Earth-centered philosophy  
Free time in nature  
Human development  
Disconnection from nature  
Complex interaction with the natural world  
Cognitive development  
Nature as infinite reservoir of wisdom  
Meaningful, memorable primary experiences  
Experiential learning  
Nature patterns, models, archetypes  
“Language of nature”  
Fractal patterning in nature  
Development of observation skills  
Lost sense of awareness  
Instilling intellectual confidence  
Development of sensory mechanisms  
Senses  
Perceptions  
Nature provides unstructured play  
Nature provides imaginative play  
Process over product  
Fascination  
Restorative power of nature  
Solitude in nature (benefits)  
Nature metaphors  
Engagement with nature  
Creating art in the natural environment  
Sensitivity  
“We learn what we care about”  
Personal connection to the natural environment  
Transfer learning (analogy/models)  
Bonding with nature/ natural world  
Nature phobia  
“Spirit of place”  
Place-based  
Indigeneity  
“Stewardship” as a Cartesian term

Complicated versus complex systems  
 Culture-nature duality  
 Childhood “special places” in nature  
 Integrative arts/ environmental education model  
 “Naturalistic intelligence”  
 “A child of nature”

### **Emergent Properties—**

Knowing, Bonding, Imagining, Venturing, Sensing, Self-regulating, Patterning, Recognizing, Expressing, Perceiving, Inspiring, Healing, Teaching, Playing, Intuiting, Constructing, Magic-making, Awe-inspiring, Reciprocating, Wondering, Connecting, Emerging, Communicating, Meaning-making, Collaborating, Scaffolding, Developing, Interacting, Developing, Fascinating, Restoring, Engaging, Creating, Transforming, Integrating.

### **Jewel Two—Dance History; Macro and Micro**

#### **Text/ general “coding”—**

The larger universe of dance  
 Evolution  
 Unexpected art event on summit  
 Phenomenon of environmental dance  
 Emergence, emergent features  
 Disciplinary boundaries  
 Juxtaposition of dance to nature  
 Two separate “worlds”  
 Dialoguing  
 Reciprocity  
 Interconnecting/interconnections  
 Interacting/interactions  
 Shift in perception  
 Shift in paradigms  
 Transforming/transformation  
 Sense of belonging  
 Meta-artists  
 Synthesis  
 Evolutionary lineage of dance  
 Process of unfolding  
 Discernible boundaries  
 Historical context (of environmental dance)

Childhood experiences in nature  
 Human-nature dialogue  
 Childhood dreams  
 Consummate tomboy  
 Ballet as Western paradigm  
 Dance as a “defining force”  
 Dance as a “powerful way of knowing”  
 Synergistic relationship  
 “Nature-and-dance” as a way of knowing  
 Process of evolution  
 Dance as a universal expression  
 “To dance is human”  
 Dance as a primary aesthetic form  
 Dance conveys through artistic expression  
 Dance is a conveyor of metaphor  
 Dance as a conveyor of feelings  
 Dance as a conveyor of thought  
 Dance as a conveyor of visions  
 Dance as a conveyor of beliefs  
 Dance provides a contextual lens  
 Danced as ‘composed human behavior’  
 Dance is “intentionally rhythmical”  
 Dance is “culturally patterned sequences”  
 Dance is nonverbal  
 Dance is “aesthetically-valued motion”  
 Human body as instrument of dance  
 Space/Spatial  
 Rhythm (time)  
 Dynamics/energy (force, effort, quality)  
 Time and space (where dance exists and unfolds)  
 Dance affected by physical environment  
 Environmental dance as genre  
 Reciprocal/fluid relationship of human to nature (v/v)  
 Environmental dance as nonliteral (metaphorical)  
 “Dance unfolds at once in time and space”  
 “Theater of the natural environment”  
 Points of origin  
 Artistic vision shaped by mentor  
 Human-nature relationship transformation  
 Dominant paradigm

Separation of body and mind  
Separation of human and nature  
Paradigmatic splits  
Healing the body-mind split  
Dance as a mediating force  
Dynamic relationship with gravity  
Modern dance as “terrestrial”  
“Dancers fall to rise again” (fall and recovery technique)  
Modern dance as freedom to express  
Modern dance as rebellion  
Earthy, organic purity  
Highly systematized technique  
Post-modern  
Bodies that speak (for themselves)  
Teaching artists in schools  
Dance as education  
Growing interest in dance education  
Lineage connection of environmental dance to modern dance  
Environmental dance as a complex system of symbols  
Environmental dance as conduit for connecting emotions to “outer worlds”  
Environmental dance as embodiment of nature  
Environmental dance as embodiment of holistic paradigm  
Dance as a semiotic system  
Environmental dance is transcendent, transformative and transdisciplinary  
Environmental dance as co-creative expression of the land  
Potent rite of bonding human to nature/ nature to human  
Environmental dance as a reciprocal dialogue/ reciprocity  
Dance as an immediate, sensuous experience  
Dance is processual  
Dance is sequential  
Dance as evocative expression  
Dance as embodies psychology  
Dance as ritual  
Dance as gateway to enter inner geography  
Dance as a method of symbolic conversation  
Dance as inter-subjectivity  
Dance as a living, breathing, dynamic communion with nature  
Dance as ritual and ceremony  
Improvisation as spontaneity  
Improvisation as instantly-generated movement



Improvisation as research tool  
 Improvisation as a moving stream of consciousness  
 Improvisation as creative process  
 Improvisation as holistic engagement of the body-mind  
 Improvisation as a vehicle for employing GSM as creative process  
 Improvisation as a way of “mapping” the research landscape  
 Improvisation as a way to orient environmental dancer to site  
 Improvisation as performance  
 Improvisation as data  
 Improvisation as discovery process  
 Improvisation as “intuition in action”  
 Improvisation as “flow”  
 Improvisation as vehicle for body/mind-Earth-spirit unity

### **Emergent Properties—**

Expanding, Growing, Evolving, Emerging, Boundary-making, Juxtaposing, Separating,  
 Dialoguing, Reciprocating, Interconnecting, Interacting, Shifting, Perceiving, Transforming,  
 Belonging, Synthesizing, Unfolding, Discerning, Contextualizing, Experiencing, Dreaming,  
 Defining, Way-of-knowing, Synergizing, Relating, Expressing, Forming, Conveying, Feeling,  
 Thinking, (En)visioning, Believing, Composing, Patterning, Sequencing, Moving, Spacing,  
 Affecting, Originating, Shaping, Mediating, Forcing, Freeing, Rebellious, Systematizing,  
 Speaking, Teaching, Educating, Dancing, Symbolizing, Conducting, Connecting, Embodying,  
 Transcending, Co-creating, Bonding, Sequencing, Evoking, Ritualizing, Living, Breathing,  
 Communing, Ceremonializing, Improvising, Generating, Creating, Engaging, Mapping,  
 Orienting, Performing, Discovering, Flowing, Unifying.

### **Jewel #3: The Phenomenologies**

#### **Text/ general “coding”**

Universal structures of dance  
 Shift from the theoretical/philosophical to “lived experience”  
 Heuristic self-study  
 Imagination, memory affecting perception  
 Body-mind holds experience and integrates it  
 Inner and outer geographies and landscapes  
 How experiences in nature shape the individual  
 Embodied knowledge  
 Being one with nature through artistic experiences

Embracing evolutionary change  
 Spontaneously-improvised dance phrases  
 Non-verbal dialogues  
 Metaphors of transformation  
 A journey of inner and outer growth  
 Dance-as-data  
 “Listening to our body data”  
 “Our bodies have a memory”  
 “Being in the world”  
 First person experience on the mountain  
 Noema (focus—shared, first hand experiences)  
 Noesis (process—how we experience the mountain)  
 “Lived body” (of the dancer-researcher)  
 “Less-than-me-and-more-than-the-site”  
 Experience as an integrated part of the dancer-researcher  
 Experience as transforming the “inner landscape”  
 Heuristic process  
 Transforming the human relationship to nature  
 Environmental dance as a vehicle of transformation  
 Balance of power and agency  
 Tension between artist and landscape  
 Macro tension between humans and environment  
 Land becomes co-creator, collaborator, co-performer  
 Personal development as artist  
 Heuristic self-study as evolutionary process  
 “Goethean phenomenology—an artistic mode of cognition”  
 Action in thinking  
 “Reassertion of our indigenous soul”  
 Goethe’s phenomenology of nature  
 Giving voice to the landscape  
 Environmental dance shaped by the quality of the human-nature relationship  
 Quality of human-nature relationship transforms environmental dance  
 Dramatic shift in perspective  
 Choosing to dance in and with the land

### **Emergent Properties—**

Universalizing, Structuring, Dancing, Shifting, Living, Experiencing, Self-studying, Imagining, Affecting, Perceiving, Holding, Integrating, Shaping, Individualizing, Embodying, Changing, Improvising, Phrasing, Dialoguing, Transforming, Journeying, Growing, Listening, Being,

Sharing, Relating, Balancing, Co-creating, Collaborating, Co-performing, Developing, Knowing, Acting, Thinking, Reasserting, Choosing.

#### **Jewel #4: Holistic Science and Goethe's Scientific Method**

##### **Text/ general "coding"—**

Relationship of art to science  
 Holistic science  
 Creative process of making art  
 Process of scientific inquiry  
 Paradigm shift  
 Way of knowing  
 Unity  
 Interconnection  
 Relationship  
 Synergy  
 Self-organizing  
 Co-evolution of macro and micro systems  
 Gestalt of dancer-rock dialogue  
 Autopoiesis  
 Systems science  
 Holism  
 Quantum physics  
 Indigenous science  
 Phenomenology of nature  
 Initial first impressions  
 "Exact sense perception"  
 Earth cognition  
 "Exact sensorial fantasy"  
 Dynamic mutability  
 Water cognition  
 "Seeing in beholding"  
 Emergent gesture and essence  
 Channeling  
 Dreamlike engagement  
 Air cognition  
 "Being one with the object"  
 Intuition  
 Fire cognition

Duality of analysis and synthesis  
 Complex system of inputs and feedback loops  
 Collision of paradigms  
 Indigenous mind-set  
 Holistic epistemology  
 Sensed shift in perception  
 Multi-dimensional knowledge  
 Gestalt  
 Site-specific performance  
 Unity of dancer and site  
 Biophilia—locus of human/nature bonding  
 Reconciliation of subject/object tension  
 Blurring the lines of separation and duality  
 Law of thermodynamics  
 Basic principle of ecology  
 Microcosmic nature of site-specific interpretation  
 Cycles of interconnectivity  
 Complementarity  
 Synergy between art and science

**Emergent Properties—**

Relating, Making, Art-making, Creating, Inquiring, Shifting, Way-of-knowing, Unifying  
 Interconnecting, Synergizing, Self-organizing, Co-evolving, Perceiving, Sensing, Knowing,  
 Mutating, Seeing, Beholding, Gesturing, Intuiting, Analyzing, Synthesizing, Looping, Colliding,  
 Performing, Bonding, Reconciling, Blurring, Separating, Integrating, Interacting,  
 Complementing.

**Jewel #5: Patterns, Fractals, and “the Language of Nature”**

**Text/ general “coding”—**

Metaphoric notion of dialoguing with nature  
 Ability to read nature’s signs  
 Goethe’s concept of “lawfulness”  
 Fractal reflections of timeless patterns  
 Ubiquitous recurring patterns  
 Threads of commonality  
 Form and function in a systematized composition  
 Repeating patterns in nature  
 Field of evolving, dynamic “aliveness”

Holistic language  
 Paradigm of dualities  
 Primal way of communicating  
 “In the flow”  
 Critical union of body and mind  
 Holistic intelligence  
 Elegance of the body-mind  
 Long-forgotten language  
 Archetypal patterns  
 Story of the landscape  
 Archetypal templates  
 Poetic expressions of connections and commonalities  
 Ever-evolving phenomenological narratives  
 Gestalt-like network  
 Transdisciplinary endeavor  
 Sophia’s body as a language of form  
 Nature’s forms as invisible forces made visible  
 Environmental dance translates energy into form  
 Body as vessel to hold and reinterpret nature’s expressions  
 Environmental dancers as nested systems within larger systems  
 Timeless expanding scales of universal material existence  
 Metapatterns as “patterns of patterns”  
 ”A field is an energetic component of an archetype”  
 Subtle energy fields  
 Environmental dance existing within the subtle energy realms  
 Body-mind as a unified, holistic state of being  
 Satori-Loop © as paradigm shift (in practice)  
 “Loop” refers to the iterative, Hermeneutic-like process  
 Body-Mind-Earth-Spirit  
 Anamneses—being in the flow  
 Environmental dance as a ritual of dialogue  
 Environmental dance giving voice to the Earth

### **Emergent Properties—**

Dialoguing, Reading, Signing, Reflecting Patterning, Recurring, Forming, Functioning,  
 Composing, Repeating, Evolving, Living, Speaking, Communicating, Flowing, Unifying,  
 Storying, Expressing, Connecting, Narrating, Networking, Translating, Holding, Forcing,  
 Reintegrating, Expressing, Nesting, Existing, Meta-patterning, Being, Shifting, Looping, Giving,  
 Ritualizing.

## **Jewel #6: Art-based Practices, Narrative Inquiry, Journaling, and Field Journals**

### **Text/ general “coding”—(Section #1 of 4)**

An iterative process

A reciprocal dialog between dancer-researcher and the dance site

Nature’s language as our own, artistic, expressive movement vocabulary

Arts recognized as ways of knowing

A radical, emergent (transdisciplinary) paradigm

Synergistic relationship between narrative/writing and dance

Unification of body (dance) and mind (reflective writing)

Journal narratives as multi-faceted points of view

Site-work with intermittent journaling

A way to relive experience

A way to concretize the dance experience

A way to re-synthesize experience into the memory of body-mind

A kind of metaphysical gestalt

The language of nature transcends all scales of time and space

Journaling as a way to mediate nonverbal experience

“Prime source of learning is rooted in the body-felt experience”

Creative dialogue between dancer and dynamic landscape

“Muscle-memory”

Memoried experiences

Environmental dance as a way for making nature’s expressions visible

Humans as conduits of Earthly expression

Translating the “language of nature” through art

“Language of nature” transcends scales of time and space

Synergism over competition

Landscapes of personal experience/inner geography

Reciprocal flow between inner and outer “worlds

Embodied point of view

“Writing is essentially attention”

“Bodily attending”

Journaling as dancing on paper

Muscle memory as embodiment

Writing as a method of reflection

Writing from the body as an interaction between knowing and being

The art-nature connection

Art as a holistic language

Art as a transdisciplinary instrument of discover

Environmental dance as a narrative phenomenon  
 Narrative inquiry as narrative experience  
 Temporal dimensions of narrative inquiry  
 Dance as a pre-linguistic phenomenon  
 “Experiencing the experience”

**Emergent Properties—**

Iterating, Reciprocating, Dialoguing, Expressing, Speaking, (Ways of) Knowing, Radicalizing, Emerging, Synergizing, Relating, Narrating, Writing, Dancing, Unifying, Journaling, Reliving, Experiencing, Concretizing, Synthesizing, Memorying, Transcending, Mediating, Rooting, Feeling, Creating, Making, Making (visible), Translating, Scaling, Flowing, Embodying, Attending, Knowing, Being, Discovering, Inquiring.

**Text/ general “coding”—(Section #2 of 4)**

Extraordinary experiences of dancing in the natural environment  
 Focus is on the personal  
 Recreating narrative through memory relationships  
 The re-expression of some prior experience  
 Convergence of the personal with the universal

**Emergent Properties—**

Experiencing, Dancing, Focusing, Recreating, Memorying, Relating, Re-expressing, Converging, Universalizing.

**Text/ general “coding”—(Section #3 of 4)**

Meaning-making from memoried experiences and perceptions  
 “Reflection” as a way to attend to experience  
 “Re-presenting” as telling about experiences  
 Found poem as an emergent re-presentation of data  
 “Transcribing” as recording the actual experience  
 “Transcribing” as “incomplete, partial, and selective”  
 Meaning is mined from interpretation  
 Dance and writing as symbiotic  
 Dance and writing as synergistic  
 Deeper meaning over new meaning

Embodiment/ “put the body back in the mind”  
 Metaphor as a tool of embodiment  
 Metaphor as an anchor in time and space  
 Environmental dance speaks in (nature’s) metaphors  
 Internalizing metaphor within the realm of inner geography  
 “Living systems must categorize”  
 The embodied mind  
 Metaphorical expression as a vital component of communication  
 Primary metaphors as part of cognitive unconscious  
 Visual narrative inquirer

### **Emergent Properties—**

Meaning(making), Memorying, Experiencing, Perceiving, Reflecting, Telling, Emerging, Transcending, Selecting, Mining, Interpreting, Writing, Synergizing, Deepening, Anchoring, Speaking, Internalizing, Living, Categorizing, Expressing, Communicating, Narrating, Inquiring.

### **Text/ general “coding”— (Section #4 of 4)**

Experience phenomena from many different angles  
 Open-ended, never-ending dialogic process  
 Notion that dance pieces are never “finished”  
 “Three dimensional landscape of narrative inquiry”  
 Inner and outer worlds merge with temporalities  
 Visual narrative inquiry as a tacit process  
 Methods of “holding the experience”  
 Concretizing an impermanent, fleeting phenomenon

### **Emergent Properties—**

Experiencing, Dialoguing, Narrating, Inquiring, Merging, Holding (the experience), Concretizing.

### **Jewel #7 Ritual**

#### **Text/ general “coding”—**

Environmental dance as a way of dancing our connections to the Earth  
 Environmental dance as public ceremony  
 Environmental dance as a way of strengthening the bond between human and place



Environmental dance as ritual  
 Ritual-as-dialectic  
 Ritual as a living, organic phenomenon  
 Ritual as a symbolic expression of lived relationship with the land  
 The notion of the “living” ritual  
 Environmental dance demonstrating form, function, and symbolic meaning  
 The myth-ritual synergy  
 Myth (“the thing said) and ritual (“the thing done”)  
 Ritual as negotiator of “dichotomies and dialectics”  
 Ritual as a way to heal the western thought-and-action split  
 Ritual as dialectic  
 Ritual as a mechanism to mediate social tensions  
 Ritual as a tool of reintegration  
 Ritual as a mechanism to heal the mind-body split  
 Ritual as a force behind paradigmatic shift  
 Art and ritual as symbolic systems  
 Ritual as mechanism “for the resolution of basic oppositions”

### **Emergent Properties—**

Dancing, Connecting, Ceremonializing, Strengthening, Bonding, Ritualizing, Living,  
 Symbolizing, Expressing, Relating, Living (ritual), Demonstrating, Forming, Functioning,  
 Meaning, Synergizing, Saying, Doing, Negotiating, Healing, Thinking, Acting, reintegrating,  
 Forcing, Shifting, Systematizing, Resolving, Opposing.

### **Jewel #8 Transdisciplinary**

#### **Text/ general “coding”—**

Transformational nudge  
 Transdisciplinary mission to integrate inquirer with the inquiry  
 A gestalt of enlightened understanding  
 Indra’s Net as a fractal, reflective metaphor  
 Human lives as complex fractal reflections  
 Multiple realities  
 Extreme holism  
 A deeper, holistic place  
 “The integrated other”  
 “Phenomenal mapping”  
 Environmental dance “channels” the energies of natural phenomena  
 “Energetic imprint”

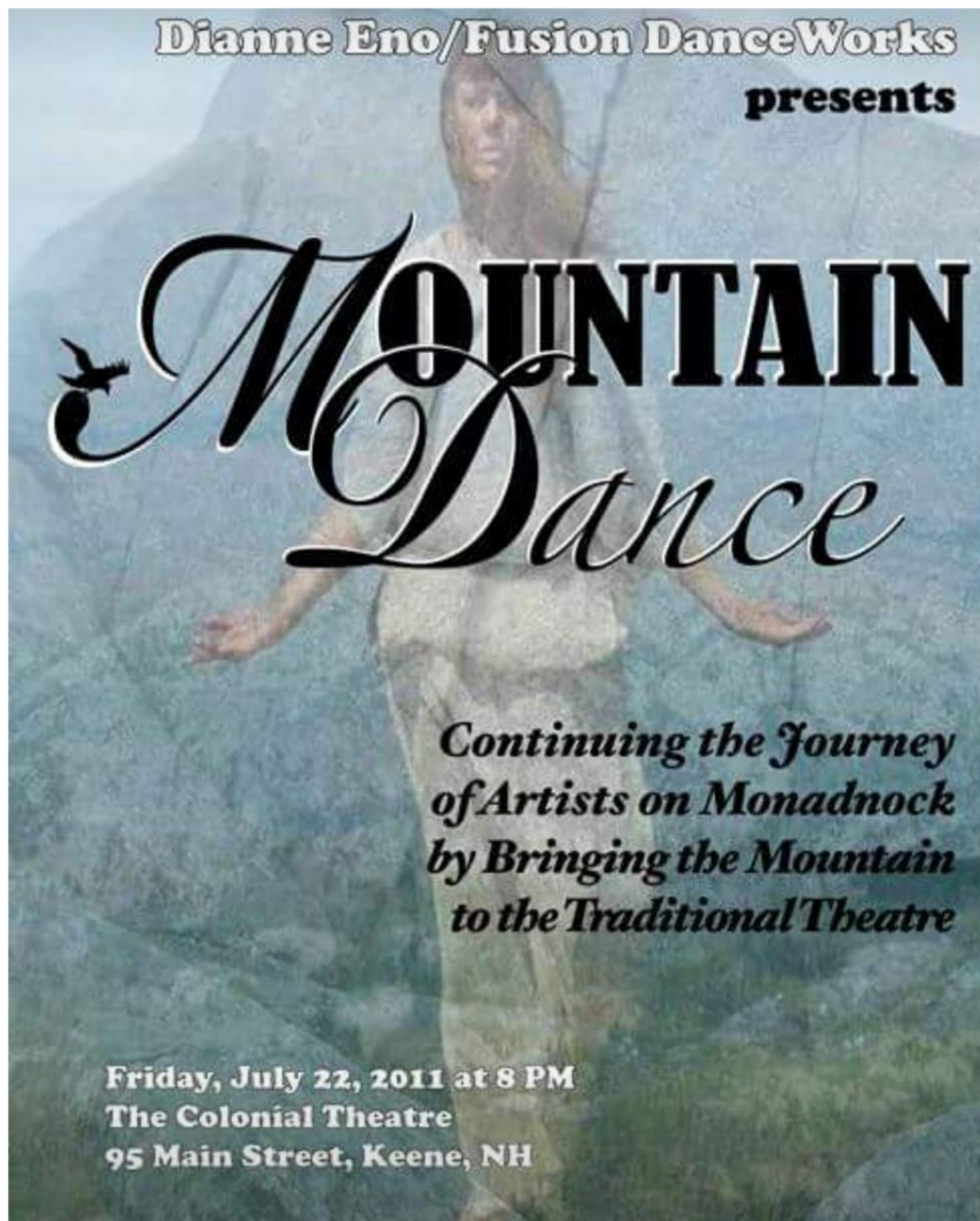
A gestalt-like philosophical foundation  
 Draw together rich bodies of knowledge  
 Weakening in efficacy of specialized knowledge  
 Thorough intersubjective engagement between binary agents  
 Transdisciplinarity as a transcendent force  
 Levels of reality  
 “The logic of the included middle”  
 Complexity in transdisciplinarity  
 Overcome Cartesian reductionism  
 Space between inner and outer geography—“the hidden third”  
 Importance of “the space in between”  
 A process that is always evolving  
 Satori-Loop © as isomorphic  
 Vision of reality that embraces holism, diversity, complexity, integration, synthesis  
 Transdisciplinary inquiry reflects a holistic epistemology/ontology  
 A radical transdisciplinarity  
 Environmental dance as a homeostatic agent  
 Need for a renaissance of the “synthetic method”  
 Enactivism  
 Cognition arising out of direct engagement/interaction of human with environment  
 Spatial gap between human subject and phenomenal object  
 Goethean Scientific Process as an analytic/synthetic process  
 Natural phenomenal entities are “alive”  
 Perception of temporal unfolding  
 Phenomenological ontology  
 Equitable dialogue with the mountain landscape  
 The “living spirit of the mountain”  
 Environmental dance as a Goethean science-driven art form  
 Rooted in systems of indigenous ways of knowing  
 Indigenous worldview as transdisciplinary  
 Indigenous concept of “body sense”  
 Body-mind as the site of phenomenological connections  
 Indigenous way of thinking is fundamental to the concept of Satori Loop ©  
 Indigenous worldview as a critical ontology  
 Environmental dance as a critical ontology  
 Environmental dance as ritual of human connection to the land  
 Interconnecting threads of relational thought  
 Satori-Loop © as a roadmap toward inclusivity and wholeness  
 Embodiment of the land  
 Transformed human/nature relationship

Environmental dance eco-pedagogy of transformation

**Emergent Properties—**

Transforming, Integrating, Inquiring, Enlightening, Understanding, Reflecting, Mapping, Channeling, Imprinting, Drawing (together), Weakening, Specializing, Knowing, Engaging, Transcending, Forcing, Including, Overcoming, Reducing, Ever-evolving, Visioning, Embracing, Synthesizing, Radicalizing, (Way of) Knowing, (Way of) Being, Enactivating, Analyzing, Living, Perceiving, Unfolding, Living (spirit), Forming, Rooting, Sensing, Connecting, Interconnectivity, Relating, Thinking, Empathizing.

APPENDIX C: "Mountain Dance"--Colonial Theater (Danced Dissertation) Program; DE/FDW ©



**Dianne Eno/Fusion DanceWorks**  
**presents**

# *M***OUNTAIN** *Dance*

*Continuing the Journey  
of Artists on Monadnock  
by Bringing the Mountain  
to the Traditional Theatre*

**Friday, July 22, 2011 at 8 PM**  
**The Colonial Theatre**  
**95 Main Street, Keene, NH**

## TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

### I. THE RESTING PLACE (1985)

Created for the first Mt. Monadnock Celebration of Dance in 1985, this piece celebrates the "ritual" of hiking Mt. Monadnock. Dancers are gradually transformed into the natural elements and surrounding landscape.

Choreography: Dianne Eno  
 Dancers: Dianne Eno, Amy MacQueen, Trayer Run-Kowzun, Mary Madsen & Carin Torp  
 Music: Andreas Vollenweider

#### Word Dance

Each Word Dance will take us on an experiential journey through the eyes, mind and body of the dancer researcher.

Words: From the research journal of Carin Torp  
 Dancer: Carin Torp  
 Vocalist/Interpreter: Nancy Howard

### II. CLOUD STUDY (Dianne Eno Dissertation Research Piece #1)

Research mission: this study explores how we may allow the natural phenomenon of the clouds (or the rocks or any other feature of the natural world) to literally move us. We suggest that this allows the creative process of making new movement for dances to become an equitable "dialogue" between dancer/researcher and here, in this instance, the clouds above us. In this way, we relinquish our "control" of the natural elements we are focusing on and allow those to instruct, guide and inspire us as artists.

Studies By: The Dancers  
 Dancers: Dianne Eno, Amy MacQueen, Trayer Run-Kowzun, Mary Madsen & Carin Torp  
 Music: Achillea "Angels Voices"

#### Word Dance

### III. MAPPING PROJECT: RAVENS' DANCE

The concept of this study is based on an exercise during which the dancers moved through the landscape, later recalled through their movements the landmarks they found significant. We use the acrobatics of the indigenous ravens as a basis for structure or foundation on which the dance is built. The dancers' improvisations honor the ravens who are always with us on the mountain.

Studies By: The Dancers  
 Dancers: Dianne Eno, Amy MacQueen & Mary Madsen  
 Music: *Aroha Eternal* by Hands Upon the Blackened Earth

#### Word Dance

### IV. MOUNTAIN DANCE

Mount Monadnock speaks to us in a slide show of images.

Words: poetry by Dianne Eno  
 Vocalist/Interpreter: Nancy Howard

### V. MOUNTAINS (1989)

Choreography: Dianne Eno  
 Danced By: Trayer Run-Kowzun & Mary Madsen  
 Music: Tracy Chapman

### INTERMISSION

#### Word Dance

### VI. AYLLU (Dianne Eno Dissertation Research Piece #2)

Studies By: The Dancers  
 Dancers: Dianne Eno, Amy MacQueen, Trayer Run-Kowzun, Mary Madsen & Carin Torp  
 Music: *Monadnock Sketch* by Nathaniel Hoag

Here, dancer/researchers explore their own individual experiences of creating environmental site-specific dance as a form of autopoietic language, in this context as dialogue, communicative exchange, and conversation between dancer and site. The title, *Ayllu*, is a concept from indigenous Andean culture that means kinship between humans and other humans as well as between humans and animals, plants, streams, rocks, and spirits [genius loci] of some particular, geographical place. This dance piece allows for individual and collective voices and serves as an evolutionary description of environmental dance.





VII. **SPIRIT CALLER (1994): A Tribute to Monadnock in Native American Sign Language**

Choreography: Dianne Eno  
 Dancer: Dianne Eno  
 Music: Ed Van Fleet  
 Poem: *My Help is in the Mountain* by Nancy Woods



Word Dance

VIII. **THE SHAPES OF TREES Parts 1 & 2 (1998)**

Choreography: Dianne Eno  
 Dancers: Dianne Eno, Mary Madsen and Trayer Run-Kowzun  
 Music: Loreena McKennitt  
 Poem: *The Shapes of Trees* by Dianne Eno

*When the great tree falls Hearts grow dark and spirits bow;  
 Tears fall like the rain—(Remember the shape of that tree).  
 Long life of wisdom is gone now, Only to return again, As a new day—  
 Shine down upon this tiny seed (And let it remember the shapes of trees that came before).  
 Wise old tree, teach us to live—  
 Sprout and grow, renewing breaths of promise With a wisdom that lasts forever.*

“Ceremonial Sticks” designed and created by Ms. Eno represent the Oak, Ash, Red Spruce, White Pine, Black Birch and Maple tree people.

Word Dance

IX. **GOETHEAN SUITE (Dianne Eno Dissertation Research Piece #3)**

Studies By: The Dancers  
 Dancers: Dianne Eno, Amy MacQueen, Trayer Run-Kowzun, Mary Madsen & Carin Torp  
 Music: Achillea and Karmacosmic & Darshini

This is a five-part exploration and expression of Goethe’s five-step *scientific process* that has become an integral part of the *creative process*, the primary way in which the dancer researchers engage with the natural landscape/site. Ms. Eno seeks to develop this approach as a “eachable skill, making it a viable new pedagogical tool. Unknown to most is that Goethe’s method was also adopted by Henry David Thoreau and was most likely his own model of engagement with Monadnock in the mid 1800’s.

Tonight we demonstrate how we employ this method in the process of sourcing dance material through structured improvisation — a *creative collaboration between dancer/researcher and rocky landscape*. In doing so, a deep relationship develops with the site where the dances unfold. Note: you may see dancers pausing to write in journals, take photos or simply sitting and observing; these activities are an integral part of the research process. The specific research missions are as follows:

- **Dance Segment #1 “Goethean approach, Stage One” (bracketing)** – Illumination: Seeing the mountain landscape through fresh eyes.
- **Dance Segment #2 “Goethean approach, Stage Two” (Exact Sense Perception/ Earth cognition)** – Perception: Seeking form and relationships and patterns of form; objective space and place.
- **Dance Segment #3 “Goethean approach, Stage Three” (Exact Sensorial Fantasy/ Water cognition)** – Imagination: Evolving movement; time flow.
- **Dance Segment #4 “Goethean approach, Stage Four” (Seeing in Beholding/ Air cognition)** – Inspiration: Opening space for the landscape to “speak” its truth; the essence or gesture of the landscape.
- **Dance Segment #5 “Goethean approach, Stage Five” (Being One with the Object/ Fire cognition)** – Intuition: Embodied expression; giving voice to the phenomenon, here the rocky landscape of the summit where we dance.

VIII. **MONADNOCK ANGEL (Dianne Eno Dissertation Research Piece #4)**

Dancer: Dianne Eno  
 Vocalist/Interpreter: Nancy Howard  
 Music: Achillea  
 Montage concepts: Dianne Eno  
 Montage editors/designers: Bill Mack, Phillip Rein & Dianne Eno  
 Onsite Photographers: Larry Davis & Phillip Rein

This research piece is based on Abbott Thayer’s painting *Monadnock Angel*. This collaboration between Ms. Eno, a vocalist and the mountain will use a hermeneutic-phenomenological approach to derive data from a viewing of the original painting and by hiking Thayer’s beloved Pumpelly Trail on Monadnock. Ms. Eno used the Goethean method to “source” movement material that will become the final finished piece. The accompaniment includes spoken text based on accounts from Ms. Eno’s journals of working on site on Pumpelly Ridge.

*We invite you to stay after the performance for a question and answer session with the cast.*



EarthDance Institute, Ltd. dba Dianne Eno / Fusion DanceWorks (Box 10127, Swanzey, NH 03446)  
501(c)3 Non-Profit Donations gratefully accepted. [www.fusiondanceworks.net](http://www.fusiondanceworks.net)

#### Our Special Thanks To:

Mary Anthony, and our primary photographers for many years: Larry Davis, Wayne Brink & Deborah Michaels. Also to Ms. Eno's Dissertation Committee: Dr. Charles Curtin, Dr. Fred Taylor, Dr. Will LaPage Dr. Rima Faber and Prof. Susan Loman for their continuing guidance and support.

**Staff:** Artistic Director-Dianne Eno, Technical Director-William Mack, Company Manager-Nancy Howard, Lighting Designer-Alex Trombly, Stage Manager-Emily Dixon, Rehearsal Assistant-Trayer Run-Kowzun, Costume Mistress-Barbara Jeffrey, Photographers-Larry Davis, Phillip Rein, Wayne Brink, Deborah Michaels

**Our EarthDance Institute, Ltd. Board of Directors:** William Mack, Dianne Eno, Wayne Brink, Phillip Rein, Deborah Michaels, Meredith Bird Miller & Emeritus Dr. Will LaPage.

Earth Dance Institute and Dianne Eno/Fusion DanceWorks wish to acknowledge with gratitude some of the many dancers who have contributed to the development of Ms. Eno's body of environmental dance work over the span of our twenty-five years as true "artists-in-residence" on Mt. Monadnock. Collectively, these dancers have spent hundreds of hours rehearsing in dance studios and on site and have graced Monadnock's rocky summit stage, inspired by the magic of the landscape while inspiring others to experience the mountain through the magic of their dances.

*In alphabetical order:* James Baldwin, Kathy Barnes, Pamela Barnes, Nancy Blake, Janis M. Brown, Rick Brown, Kimberly Burden, Cindy Buswell, Carol Casey, Mario Cossa, Nell Cochrane, Becky Curry, Alexandra Daniels, Shari Danza, Carol M. Davis, Stephanie Dixon, Karen Dostilio, Leda Dostilio, Jennifer Dunnington, Wendy Dwyer, Kristen Freeland, Anne Furfey, Arianne Gallagher, Jesse Lindsey Gibbons, Jill Glennon, Jennifer Johnston, Sarah Johnston, Linda Katz, Lauren Kelly, Michelle Kinney, Teodora Koleva, Wendy Kostowicz, Erica Kruger, Joanne Kruger, Jessica Lawler, Susan Levine, Brittany Logan, Melissa Lopata, Christine Luby, Julie Lucia, Amy MacQueen, Mary Madsen, Frances McCague, Kent McClelland, Kristin McClanahan, Oceane McCord, Shana McGiffin, Sonja Medeiros, Barbara Mellish, Cindy Messer, Ruth A. Messer, Deborah Michaels, Gale Rockwell Minton, Deborah Mitchell, Naomi Oullette, Joanne Pappajohn, Katherine Parker, Rebecca Patek, Missy Pfohl-Smith, Wendy Presby, Vicky Quintillio, Danielle Ramet, Christopher Raymond, Keith Rudolf, Trayer Run-Kowzun, Lynne Russell, Laurie Seibert, Kate Kelly Skinner, Sydney Skinner, Richard Stockwell, Monica Suarez, Carin Torp, Chris Truitt, Samara Vachss, Katrina Van Zee, Betty Walker, Dana Walker, Betsy Westerman, Faith Willette, Marilyn Wyzga, Lyndi M. Young

#### UPCOMING WORKSHOPS:

**Thundermoon Environmental Dance/Art Camp** (August-2011; Jaffrey, NH; For Children & Young Adults): An exciting summer program at Monadnock State Park that uniquely combines dance, art, science & the natural environment.

**Acadian Sunrise Environmental Dance Excursion** (Fall-2011; Pretty Marsh, ME; For Artists & Educators): A ground-breaking Fall program uniquely combining, movement, art, teaching methods & the natural environment in a beautiful ocean setting.

### DIANNE ENO/FUSION DANCEWORKS CREATIVE COLLABORATORS



Larry Davis is best known as "the guy who climbs Mount Monadnock" every day. He did so for 2,850 consecutive days between 1990 and 1999, one of his three hiking records. Originally from the Monadnock Region, he has climbed Monadnock well over 5,000 times, and is rarely seen without his camera. Out of 15,000 images he has done on Monadnock and other New England peaks, he has gathered about 50 favorite scenes that are presently being displayed at the Jaffrey Recreation Center. He has volunteered for the National Public Service since 1984. In 2011, after joining the Appalachian Mountain Club, he adopted part of the Appalachian Trail in the Presidential Range of the White Mountains. Larry is also volunteers at Monadnock State Park, where he assists in everything from trail work to rescues. His photos have appeared in *Backpacker*, *Outside* and *Yankee* magazines, and he was mentioned in the book *Monadnock: More Than a Mountain*. Recently, he has been involved in filming a feature-length documentary about Mount Monadnock. Larry is a long-time supporter of Dianne Eno's work, functioning as

a company photographer, and his images are part of today's program. What he would say to our audience is, "Maybe we've already met on the trail."

Nathaniel Hoag embarked on an audio exploration of Mount Monadnock as part of his Master's thesis for Antioch University New England. A hotspot for wildlife and the most-climbed mountain in the Western Hemisphere, Mount Monadnock features an incredibly unique and diverse soundscape. *Monadnock Sketch* is Nathaniel's response to his study of Mount Monadnock's geologic history. Nathaniel's approach to listening and composition is rooted in the works of R. Murray Schafer, David Rothenberg, Pauline Oliveros, and many others who commune in the intersection of music and nature.



Nancy J. Howard has performed extensively as a vocalist and spoken word artist in both the United States and Europe. She studied classical vocal performance at Eastman School of Music, but ultimately graduated from Boston University with a degree that included concentrations in journalism, psychology, photography and film study. An original member of the musical group Main Street\*Broadway, Nancy has been a featured soloist at many area churches, Swamplaxt games, and performed in the musical *Godspell* at the United Church of Christ. A career veteran of the printing industry, Nancy has done book and graphic design, editing, and writing for the web and major print publishers. She is also a published poet. Her roots in the Keene area are deep, and she enjoys doing her part to strengthen the community. She is a registered leader with the Boy Scouts of America and helped one of her sons with conservation projects in Keene's Ashuelot River Park on his trail to becoming an Eagle scout. Nancy encourages you to find your voice and walk your own path.

Karen Skoglund is our costume designer who seeks new and challenging experiences in the creation of clothing, both new and historical reproductions. A graduate of the Fashion Institute of Technology and Parsons School of Design, she thrives on giving sewing and tie-dye workshops in her New Jersey studio. Her experience includes 25 years of custom tailoring fabrics, including handwoven textiles, antique lace and linens. She constructs "one-of-a-kind wearable art pieces in collaboration with other artists." Karen created Ms. Eno's *Monadnock Angel* costume as a faithful homage to Abbott Thayer's painting.





## DIANNE ENO / FUSION DANCEWORKS DANCER / RESEARCH TEAM

DIANNE ENO is a native New Hampshire environmental artist, choreographer, and performer. Professional training includes Jacob's Pillow Dance



Festival and School and Dance Theater Workshop in NYC. Ms. Eno is the founder and artistic director of Dianne Eno/Fusion DanceWorks, presenting the company's well known "Mount Monadnock Celebration of Dance", now in its 25th season. Ms. Eno has presented her work internationally, in the 1998 UK Tour of the original Native American inspired theater piece, "A Circle 'Round the Sun," she served as principal collaborator, choreographer, performer, researcher and Native American sign language interpreter in conjunction with the Plymouth (NH) State College Education Department. Often staging her dances in unlikely places in the out-of-doors, she and her company have performed on mountain summits, in rivers and streams, in forests and along the rugged and rocky coastline of Maine. In 1998 and 1999, Ms. Eno was Artist-in-Residence at Acadia National Park in Bar Harbor, Maine. Much of Ms. Eno's work is fused with Native American Sign Language, creating a unique movement style reflecting her own American Indian roots.

Workshop presentations include, "Dancing the Medicine Wheel: Model of the Creative Process" has been presented at a variety of venues including The Sacred Dance Guild in Ottawa, Canada, and the Art/ Culture/ Nature and Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment Conference at Boston University. Other venues include The Sage School in Foxboro, MA and Lesley University/ Institute for Body, Mind and Spirituality, "The Art of Stewardship", Unity (ME.) College, Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education, Convocation Conference. Ms. Eno has also presented her work at the 8th International Transformative Learning Conference (Hamilton, Bermuda).

With an undergraduate degree in Dance from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and an M.A. in Environmental Conservation Education from New York University / Steinhardt School of Education, Ms. Eno is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the doctoral program of Environmental Studies at Antioch University New England. She has studied Goethean phenomenology at the Nature Institute (Ghent, NY) and Systems Theory and Science with Fritjof Capra at the Center for Ecoliteracy (Berkeley, CA), as it applies to issues of sustainability and education. Her research areas of interest include the relationship of human development and nature; causes and consequences and of human isolation from the natural world with environmental dance as an embodied, holistic remedial practice; the human body as an extension of nature (with a focus on nature's repeating, archetypal patterns as "language"); how the Goethean scientific method and systems theory (with a holistic, synthetic epistemology) can inform the environmental art creative process; indigenous and contemporary ritual and the creation of a deepened sense of place (environmental dance as ritual); concepts of indigenous ecology and alternate world views as positive models for environmental stewardship and sustainable living practices.

Trayer Run-Kowzun is an adjunct professor at County College of Morris (CCM), Centenary College (CC), and is a certified Pilates instructor. She received her BFA in Dance from Taipei National University of the Arts. Her teaching credits include American College Dance Festival Association (ACDFA) 2005-2011 at Montclair State University, Williams College, College of Brockport, Penn State University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Elon University, and various residences and master classes in NYC, NJ and Taiwan. Ms. Run-Kowzun joined Dianne Eno/ Fusion DanceWorks in 1994, and has performed with Freeman Repertory Dance Company, ACDFA, CCM, CC, the International Festival of Dance Academies in Hong Kong and Taiwan, Charles Weidman 100th Celebration (NE), Metro Arts/Thirteen Dance festival, and with various artists in NYC, PA, and Taiwan. She is a former "Modern Dance" scholarship recipient at the Jacob's Pillow.



Mary Madsen is a small town gal from Maribel, WI, and holds a BFA in dance from the University of WI-Milwaukee. Since graduating, she has been living and working as a dancer, choreographer and Pilates instructor in New York City. Mary is excited to be joining Dianne Eno/Fusion Danceworks on the mountain again, and now on the stage. Most recently, Mary has danced for Regina Neiman and Company ('05-'10) and John J Zullo Dance ('09-'11). Other performing credits include Simone Ferro and Friends II as a Solo Guest artist, (Milwaukee '09), David Appel Dance, Rebolgar Dance Theater, and Foothold dance. In 2005, Mary co-founded the Indie rock band performance group Jigsaw Soul, which she worked with as choreographer, performer, and curator. Early in 2008 she appeared as a featured dancer in their music video Cockroach Hotel. Other choreography credits include the production of *You Can't Take it With You* at the University of Rochester, NY ('08), and *Open the Dark Door* in the New York Musical Theater Festival ('09). "I continue to be inspired

by the momentum of everyday life on the city streets and now I have been inspired by the intricacies in nature on Mount Monadnock. I ask - What inspires you?"

Amy MacQueen grew up hiking and dancing in the region, and performed on Monadnock in 1991 and 1992. In 2002, she earned her doctorate in Genetics and Developmental Biology from Stanford University, and is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry at Wesleyan University in Connecticut. Her scientific research focuses on the choreography and mechanics of chromosome movements during the formation of sex cells. Her two children, ages 6 and 4, love to visit their grandparents in Hancock, NH. Amy feels extremely honored and lucky to have been given the opportunity to dance again on Monadnock's summit.



Carin Torp has been a dancer all of her life and in fact her dad swears that she was doing the twist before she could walk at nine months. She had formal training in ballet, jazz and modern dance from an early age in the Pacific Northwest and has studied international folk dancing, ballroom dance, Skinner Releasing Technique and Authentic Movement as well. She currently does a great deal of her dancing and choreographing on the stage with fellow community theatre performers or on the contradance floor. She is also an avid outdoors person and considers one of the best times of her life to have been through-hiking the Appalachian Trail with her husband Tom. Dancing on mountaintops is practically a perfect combination. Carin holds a master's degree in Dance/Movement Therapy from Antioch University New England in Keene, New Hampshire and has a private practice as



a Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist and Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor. She believes in the power of movement of our bodies to help us heal our own and the earth's wounds, and to give us the purest expression of the joy of being a part of the interconnected web of life here on earth. She has become very connected to "her" spot on Mt. Monadnock and is excited to share the dance with you.

#### A Note from Director Dianne Eno:

For those who regularly attend DE/FDW performances on Monadnock's summit, this year's performance in late Spring was a radical departure from our long history of late summer/ early September appearances. Yet, Monadnock is inspiring and enticing, mystical and magical at any time during the year – my adventurous dancers and I have been especially looking forward to this unique opportunity to experience yet another facet of the mountain, through the art of environmental site-specific dance. The fact that we may, indeed, have the added texture of Mother Nature's own special effects elevates the necessary spirited mindset of the environmental dance artist—the idea of dancing in snow is an intriguing one!

This year's goal is to inspire a deepened sense of place as dancers express this critical connection through a moving, dynamic "dialogue" with the mountain, while preserving the organization's original mission, to continue the tradition of artists on the mountain. By celebrating our local natural landscapes through the arts, I believe that deeper connection to our local "places" will inspire a greater understanding of global environmental issues. For the first time ever, the audience will be invited to dialogue and dance with the company at specified times.

These unique features of this performance underlie the company's exploration of a new approach to making environmental dances, which is an integral part of my doctoral research. This ultimately lead to the creation of several new dance works that are being showcased in tonight's 25th anniversary Colonial Theatre performance. This performance of the new works is in conjunction with, and as culmination of my doctoral research in environmental dance at Antioch University New England. It also serve as a final public presentation of my dissertation, complete with an audience dialogue (talk-back) at the end of the evening.

This dissertation research addresses these questions:

- What is the lived experience of the environmental dancer?
- What distinguishes environmental dance from other dance forms.
- What is the relevance or relationship of systems thinking to environmental dance?
- What is it like to dance in the natural site and engage the landscape as a dialog?
- What does it mean to bridge the inner and outer geographies through the experience of environmental dance?
- What is the experience of site channeling like? How does one give voice to the landscape through the actions of environmental dance?
- What metaphors emerge through the creative, expressive and performance processes of environmental dance as an "autopoietic" language of ecological connectivity and synthesis?
- What would an environmental dance eco-pedagogy look like?

As part of a two-year creative journey, tonight's performance will share with you a glimpse into the creative process of making environmental dances. As part of my research, I am intentionally orienting this creative process as a system's theoretically-inspired way of making dances that aims to holistically re-imagine the human-nature relationship. To this end, I have discovered the Goethean scientific method through my studies that I have used as a model for this new creative approach. Together, over the course of many months, through challenging and rich dance experiences on the mountain through all four seasons, my dancers (who served double duty as my collaborating research team) and I have explored this way of engaging the site/ landscape and we look forward to sharing this process with you today.

Our creative process honors not only the mountain but also you the audience both as part of the collaboration and the expression of our deep connections to this special place. Please feel free to join in following the performance with questions. I also invite your feedback via our website and Facebook page. I wish to offer a special thanks to Monadnock State Park Manager Patrick Hummel. And thanks to our dedicated and talented dancer/ researchers who ultimately make this work and our season of performances possible! Enjoy the performance!

#### *My Help is in the Mountain*

*My help is in the mountain where I take myself to heal  
The earthly wounds that people give to me.  
I find a rock with sun on it, and a stream where the water runs gentle,  
And the trees which one by one give me company.  
So must I stay for a long time, until I have grown from the rock,  
And the stream is running through me and I cannot tell myself from one tall tree.  
Then I know that nothing touches me, nor makes me run away.*

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***Heartfelt thanks are due to our friends for their generous help:*** RJ Sports, Ramunto's Brick Oven Pizza in Keene, The Lane Hotel, The Monadnock Inn, The Inn of the Tartan Fox, Thorndike's, Elizabeth Nieckoski, the many helping hands from The Moving Company, and to our families for their patience and understanding.

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### Mountain Dance

Dancing like a mountain...  
 But "how does a mountain *dance*?" one may ask.  
 With power...  
 With mystery...  
 With harmony...  
 Beauty...  
 Balance and strength.  
 But "how does one know this is *true*?"  
 Through quality – not quantity.  
 These things cannot be counted.

Power.  
 The mountain stands alone –  
 Solid and strong.  
 Unmoved in space and time.  
 (At least this is how most humans perceive it)  
 Like the power of the dancer's legs – watch.  
 Heart, mind and spirit follow in a similar rhythm, pulse, pattern.  
 But all things change over time – this is how it is.

Mystery.  
 What is the magnetizing force that draws us here?  
 That sustains us?  
 Inspires us?  
 That allows us to feel the wisdom and the ancient knowledge held in these granite rocks?  
 Time; years; patience; willingness...  
 Less, fame and fortune; more of humbleness and awe.  
 This experience of raw wonderment.  
 Untainted by human ambition.

Only honesty flows through the underground currents that feed and sustain the dance here.  
 The belonging wholly / holy to this place and vice versa.  
 That is the gift.  
 That is why we are here.  
 Lesson learned.  
 Now to share this "knowledge" with others.  
 "What knowledge?"

The dancer becomes more like the mountain  
 and mountain is dancing, to be sure.  
 You can see this with your own eyes,  
 If you choose to see –  
 If you choose to be with this reality...  
 An alchemy of this rare circumstance –  
 An extraordinary phenomenon opens new possibilities –  
 Tangible ones, felt ones.  
 No need to count this or account for this in some analytical way;  
 Just take it all in through open eyes and heart...

Balance  
 You either have it or you don't.  
 But it is necessary for the survival of the species!  
 Another lesson of the mountain.  
 Wise mountain, wise teacher...  
 Wide base supports all effort, just being.  
 A fundamental principal of the universe?

Monadnock Angel (in process)



The dancer's body answers this mystery with flowing affirmations of synchronicity.  
 Balance on a single limb—solid, assured, immovable...  
 In harmonious dialogue and response to the impetus of the raw elements that might envision a different reality.

These want to move the dancer, like wind...  
 The wind—  
 Blows through the impervious spirit dancing to mimic the mountain's strength.  
 Dancer negotiates these forces that would move mountains...  
 And they do—over time...  
 But for now, stand solid in this place and time,  
 And revel in this sacred opportunity.  
 Feel the strength of the mountain take over,  
 Surging and coursing through limbs and heart and veins.  
 Dancer spirals, reaches for heaven in ways previously unimagined...  
 She piously retreats, then tries again to do the impossible—  
 Or is it possible?!

Spinning, stretching, extending,  
 saying without speaking, seeking to "know"  
 What the mountain is saying.  
 The wind continues to blow.  
 From the west, then from the northwest, in a  
 dynamic dance of its own.  
 Dancer balances "mountain-ness" with her  
 own human-ness.  
 On one foot, other leg extended to the heavens.  
 Buffeting the winds that cause the mountain to roar.  
 But, curiously, there is no place to fall—  
 the only option is transcendence  
 and ascension here.  
 Such is the nature of harmony, beauty, reciprocity  
 (as the dancer's body humbly demonstrates).  
 The mountain says so.

—Dianne Eno, 2007

*Monadnock Angel*  
 by Abbott Thayer  
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 of American Art



*Nature is loved by what is best in us.*  
 — Henry David Thoreau

## APPENDIX D

### Glossary of Terms

Accommodation—A term from Piaget’s work, referring the process of integrating new information/ knowledge into the pre-existing individual schema (See *assimilation* and *schema*).

A priori—assumption; thinking based on something previously known.

Anima mundi—the spirit, soul of the world.

Archetype (archetypal movement)—original model, primal pattern (i.e. “nature’s repeating patterns”). [See *pattern*].

Assimilation—A Piagetan term referring to the process of changing one’s “schema” in order to adapt to new learning/ knowledge (See *accommodation* and *schema*).

Bracketing—Husserlian term which refers to the intentional suspension/ setting aside of one's own beliefs, preconceptions in the reality of the natural world in order to be able to experience and discern the essential structures of the phenomena of the world.

Chiasmic—“dynamically intertwined” (see: Shotter, J. “Cartesian Change, Chiasmic Change: The Power of Living Expression”. *Janus Head*, 6 (1)); synergistic relationship between two contrasting entities.

Constructivism—In this teaching and learning paradigm, the focus is more on the learner than on the teacher (taking a more secondary role as facilitator); learning is thus an individualized act of meaning-making that arises out of holistic, primary, hands-on experiences; learning is contextualized and dependent upon and shaped by all prior learning; leading theorist include Piaget, Dewey, Vygotsky (social constructivism), Bruner and Gardner; this epistemology is in contract to Objectivism/Positivist theory where passive learning based on objective fact and logic is rote--typically transferred from teacher to student.

Container—I conceptualize this as the physical body as container of the mind and consciousness; also the *body-as-container* delineates the inner landscape from the realm of the outer landscape (see “inner landscape” and “outer landscape”).

Corporeality— refers to the notion of the lived body or embodiment (see *embodiment*).

Dance ecology (ecological dance)—artistic, expressive embodied engagement with the natural environment; a new dance form that combines elements of ritual with a primary focus on the exploration of dance, dancer, audience and place as interactive and dialogical phenomena existing and unfolding at once in the time/space continuum. [See *environmental dance*].

Dance phenomenology—the study of the actual lived experience of the dancer dancing. Phenomenology seems to offer the researcher an optimal way to study dance in that the phenomenological approach addresses all of the structures of human existence which include lived time, lived place, lived relation, the lived body and embodiment which are coincidentally the defining aspects and features of dance. My research refers to the work of two preeminent dance phenomenologists Maxine Sheets and Sondra Horton Fraleigh.

Dasein—Heidegger’s “being there”; “being-in-the-world”.

Dialectic—the tension between two disparate, conflicting phenomenon seeking a balanced point of resolve.

Diasporatic—the effect of scattering or of the dispersion of a phenomena (typically referencing a language or cultural phenomenon) that begins in a concentrated form [In metaphorical terms, I think of this as a pebble-in-a-pond effect, where the initial forceful drop of the pebble into pond water creates a “ripple-effect” that eventual works its way outward with concentric waves that disperse into nothingness].

Dichotomy—contrasted separation of two different, often contradictory phenomena, ideas, notions.

Ecoliteracy—a way of knowing/ understanding the complexity of the natural world’s processes in a holistic systems-thinking orientation that illuminates ecological principles through a focused study of contexts, patterns and inter-relationships as the source of an ultimate wisdom underwriting sustainable living philosophy and practices.

Ecological identity—how humans internalize and outwardly express through action their level of perceived integration (oneness with) the natural world. I also like Thomashow’s definition: “ecological identity refers to all the different ways people construe themselves in relationship to the earth as manifested in personality, values, actions, and sense of self.” [from: *Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist*, p.3]. This concept is also reminds me of deep ecologist Arne Naess’s notion of the *ecological self*. Taking the idea further, I also think of a *sense of self* as the realm of “inner geography” and a *sense of place* as the realm of “outer geography”; environmental dance allows for a reciprocal dialog between *self* and *place* which, ultimately, is the nexus for human-embodiment-of-the-natural-landscape.

Ecological perception—what humans can perceive through the senses and how they can describe the world through experiences at the level of ecology (i.e. landscape scale/ environment).

Eco-pedagogy—the Paulo Freire-inspired movement (critical education) which in turn inspires and guides my work. [See: *Ecopedagogy Association International* (EAI) at [www.ecopedagogy.org/](http://www.ecopedagogy.org/), “a loose planetary network of oppositional scholars, educators, and activists who seek a critical ecological analysis of the grave threats to life on earth that presently exist and who wish to use a wide range of educational strategies to combat them as part of a



movement for change. We believe that environmental education standards, or education for sustainable development as a curricular focus that is not infused throughout all of learning, represent an educational failure in the face of our growing ecological catastrophe. In this, we seek to move beyond single-issue environmental education methods, limited sustainable development frameworks, and other narrow ideological frameworks to forge a multiperspectival and critical pedagogical dialogue for earth justice, peace, and flourishing”—excerpt from website].

Effort/ shape—a movement theory developed by Rudolf Laban as the framework for a universal system and language for understanding, observing, describing and notating all forms of movement.

Eidetic—An extremely accurate and vividly detailed memory/recall of any (a priori) experience (a condition, quality of human recall/reflection).

Ekstasis/ Ekstatic—(see time/ temporality). To stand outside of oneself, to move beyond oneself, transcendent (derivative of Greek ex-stasis, meaning ecstasy).

Embedded—integrated within, not separate from.

Embody/ embodiment— to integrate within the body as incarnation; bodily integration within a greater systemic whole, as embodiment of the landscape (see corporeality).

Empiricism—knowledge derived from sensual experience, observation and/or experimentation.

Engagement—how two (sometimes disparate) entities interconnect and communicate with each other.

Environmental awareness—explicit consciousness of one’s own body-mind as an integral, dynamic feature of the natural world in which one is embedded; taken further, such consciousness approaches issues of normative (ethical) obligation where it is the case that once one is “aware”, then one is obliged to act/ behave in sustainable ways that serves a mission of preserving the natural world.

Environmental dance phenomenology—I am drawn to using the phenomenological approach in my own efforts to flesh out environmental dance as a new genre of dance for the very reason expressed above: phenomenology offers an optimal framework for the study of environmental dance and I model my research approach after the work of dance phenomenologists. Aside from offering this optimal general framework, another obvious theoretical basis stems from Merleau-Ponty who drew attention to and emphasized the primary role of the human body in its experience of the world (embodiment). Dance is especially concerned with embodied experience, since this is a defining feature of dance. My work, however, complicates the original circumstance of dance phenomenology by embedding dance in the natural environment. Now it is necessary to incorporate an understanding of landscape, place, the natural world all through the common lens of phenomenology. In so doing, I propose that we may be able to better understand of the human

experience of relating to the natural world—environmental dance offers the richness of a phenomenologically-based study of this lived experience symbolically through environmental dance. In a way, environmental dance becomes an expressive, metaphorical proxy for the human-nature relationship. I also see a greater purpose for phenomenology as both an artistic tool (a way to explore my creative process on site in the creation of environmental dance) and as a pedagogical tool (allowing me to develop phenomenologically-based experiential learning embedded in the natural environment). I propose that such pedagogy may “teach” humans how to deeply reconnect to the natural world through experiencing firsthand what it is like to embody the landscape through environmental dance. [See *eco-pedagogy*].

Environmental dance—the expression of the reciprocal and fluid relationship of human (dancer/ audience participant) to nature and nature to human, through the art of organized movement and motion that seeks to embody the landscape in an abstract, often non-literal contemporary style; the performance of environmental dance unfolds at once in time and space, in the theater of the natural landscape [working and evolving definition].

Epiphenomenal—an abstract concept; a product/ construct of the human mind. [From: Robbins, B. D. “New Organs of Perception: Goethean Science as a Cultural Therapeutics”. *Janus Head*, 8(1), 2005, (p. 116).

Epistemology—theory(s) of knowing and knowledge (i.e. *objectivist, constructivist*).

Epoche—intense personal focus on the inquiry at hand; bracketing of all presuppositions, prior knowledge, biases, etc.; suspending one’s “natural attitude” so that one allows the phenomenon to reveal itself; the ability to see phenomena (as the things themselves) as that which is observable (and describable) before us.

Essence--From the Greek *ousia*, which translates as “the inner essential nature of a phenomenon, the true being [ontology] of a thing. The Latin *essentia*, from *esse* translates as “to be.” My own understanding of *essence* is the what-ness/ being-ness of a phenomenon. In Plato’s thought essence is the grasp of the very nature of something, of which any particular instance is only an imperfect example or imitation. [“*Eidos* is Plato’s alternative term for idea/ form/ structure which Husserl utilized to designate universal essence... Some phenomenologists make a distinction between *Grundwesen* (basic or fundamental essence) and *empirisches Wesen* (empirical essence). In this Husserlian distinction basic or ideal essence is accessible to phenomenological intuiting.” Goethe’s UrPhenomen.

First-Person Phenomenology—primary engagement, first-hand experience, observation and description of the phenomenon becomes the basis for first-person phenomenological inquiry. [From: <http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/glossary/glossary.html#essence>].

Genius loci—literally, the “spirit of the place”; I use this term interchangeably with “sense of place.”

Goethe’s Phenomenology of Nature—a direct and intimate experiential engagement between observer and the phenomenon in question where the observer allows the phenomenon to “speak” for itself through a method that seeks to reveal a universal gesture, essence; the goal of this approach is synthetic, multi-faceted description of phenomena as opposed to the atomistic, analytic reduction methods of traditional science. Goethe developed this approach well before Husserl was credited with being “the father of phenomenology”; I would argue that Goethe may have been the first “phenomenologist”.

Goethean Scientific Method—the process of observing, describing and drawing forth the universal essence/ gesture of the phenomenon; the process is systematized through five (5) ordered steps which can be elaborated further through additional iterative cycles of these prescribed steps. I recognize within this process a similarity to my own creative process, the approach I take in my own collaboration with the natural landscape as I create site-specific dance. Because of this similarity, I have adopted the Goethean Scientific Method (GSM) as a way through which to stage experiences where dancers in my performing company may be oriented to the site and may begin to develop the sensitivity to fully embody the landscape in which they perform. Additionally, I see the GSM as a model for an environmental eco-pedagogy which I am currently developing as part of my doctoral research. Such serves a further purpose of creating a direct and effective bridge between the arts and science bring the two into a synergistic alliance. Each of the stages of the GSM process is described below [From: Brook, I. “Goethean Science as a Way to Read Landscape”. *Landscape Research*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 1998 (pp. 51-69).

- Bracketing (GSM/ Preparatory stage)—setting aside anything previously known with regard to the phenomenon in question, allowing the phenomenon to “speak” for itself; here the goal is to pay attention to the first impressions one has of the phenomenon, as if seeing it for the first time (very similar to Husserl’s epoche).
- Exact sense perception (GSM/ Stage one)—here the goal is use one’s perception to see *form*, a static representation of the thing observed; this happens through intentional detailed observation, seeking the “basic fact” of the phenomenon, via the senses.
- Exact sensorial fantasy (GSM/ Stage two)—it is necessary for the observer to purposely employ the imagination in order to perceive a fluidity in the phenomenon’s evolutionary process (its mutability) which sets the phenomenon in motion; the goal here is to attempt to perceive the temporal unfolding and animate life of the phenomenon, as well as its flowing history, unfolding evolution and its “becoming”.



- “Seeing in beholding” (GSM/ Stage three)—here the goal is to let the phenomenon “speak” for itself as the observer seeks inspiration as a way to allow the phenomenon reveal its own gesture and essence; by attempting to pause active perception, the observer allows the phenomenon to express itself through the observer (reminds me of a kind of channeling); this is often described as a “dreamlike activity” where the observer/researcher express knowledge/data gained through previous stages through some sort of artistic expression.
- “Being one with the object” (GSM/ Stage four)—now the observer calls on intuition to go beyond what the previous stages of the process reveal; the observer uses the human ability to conceptualize to further describe the phenomenon as well as to serve the phenomenon; this, to me, suggests a kind of intersubjective dialog between the observer and the phenomenon being studied.

Grain—a dance term referring to intense focus by the improvisational dancer through gaze, intention and movement.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology—inquiry into the meaning of human texts where texts can be written material as well as any other cultural artifact that can be interpreted/ “read”. Environmental dance is a text. I have included these three forms of phenomenological inquiry because geophenomenologist claims that that are complementary and work synergistically together. This is particularly relevant as my own research will employ this trio of methods for that very reason.

Heuristic research—personal discovery of the meaning of experience(s) through reflexivity; a method developed by Clark Moustakis in which the source of knowing comes through tacit, intuitive and/or experienced phenomena (focus on the domain of “outer geography”) a process which is further clarified and refined through what Moustakis terms “indwelling” and “focusing” (reflexive acts) (the domain of “inner geography”).[See Moustakis, *Phenomenological Research Methods*].

Holistic/ holism—an approach which emphasizes the synthesis of the whole instead of a separation and reduction into parts; I also take this notion a step further and include the concept of the Gestalt, in which the whole is something greater than the sum of its parts.

Horizon—the aspects or characteristics of a phenomenon not captured through the act of perception (Husserlian term).

Inner geography—the internal realm of human being; also, my term for what Husserl calls ‘lived experience’ (die Erlebnis).

Intentionality—consciousness actively and purposely directed toward a particular phenomenon (Husserl).

Intersubjectivity—reciprocal “dialog” between two or more subjects; while dialog usually refers to communication between humans, I extend the concept of reciprocal “dialog” to include other phenomena, such as the landscape, or a particular place. Although this extension abstracts the concept into a sort of symbolic action (i.e. human dialog with elements of the natural environment, or as in “giving voice to the landscape”) I believe that by extending the idea of intersubjective dialog with nature moves us closer to a perspective that supports a more eco-centered human-nature relationship. If we assume that humans are an integral part (or extensions) of nature, then such an ecocentric perspective may possibly create a model of egalitarianism within all such dialogs. My work is based on the assumption that it may be possible to achieve a universal environmental ethics that may only originate from such intersubjective dialog/ action toward the natural environment. I envision environmental dance as a model of intersubjective (symbolic) “dialog” with the natural world working to inspire such ethical action.

Kinesthetic—perception/ sensation of bodily motion, force, weight and orientation in space.

Landscape—an expanse of the natural environment captured within the boundary of vision; bounded space; the spatial scale in which environmental dance (and mundane human activity) takes place.

Lifeworld—(*Lebenswelt*), the world of lived experience; our natural, pre-theoretical experience of life; the world as given, unreflected-upon reality, the taken-for-granted world of the natural attitude; Husserlian term, referring to the space of lived experience, the “world of immediate experience,” the world as “already there,” “pregiven,” the world as experienced in the “natural, primordial attitude,” that of “original natural life” as described in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. “Husserl makes a critical historical and phenomenological distinction between (1) our theoretical attitude to life, borrowed from the Greeks, and (2) our natural pre-theoretical attitude to life on which all theorizing is based and from which all theorizing is ultimately derived.” The term “natural” refers to original (naïve), pre-critical and pre-theoretical reflection. [From: <http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/glossary/glossary.html>].

Lived experience—Husserl’s *die Erlebnis*, the immediate, pre-reflective mundane actions of human life; “the locus of phenomenological reflection, its beginning and end, is the intelligibility of lived experience.” [From <http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/glossary/glossary.html>].

Macrocosmic—complex system/ structure of a grander scale (i.e. global, the universe, cosmos) built from smaller scale, nested structures (holons) that share similar features and patterns of the larger.

Metabletics—J.H. van de Berg’s historical phenomenology.

Metaphor—symbolic representation of one concept in terms of another.

Metaphysics—philosophical study of that which transcends the physical realm and focuses on the nature of reality, including the relationship between mind and matter, substance and attribute and fact and value; the branch of philosophy which studies the nature of “being” (ontological considerations) and “knowing” (epistemological considerations).

Microcosmic—smaller scale version of the macro system/structure (see macrocosmic).

Natura naturans—nature’s eternal process/state of “becoming”. [From: Robbins, B. D. “New Organs of Perception: Goethean Science as a Cultural Therapeutics”. *Janus Head*, 8(1), 2005, (p. 120)].

Nature/ natural world—the nested systems of the universe beginning at the micro level moving through a continuum of interconnected fields to the macro level.

Noema— Husserlian term; one of two sides of intentionality; if noesis is “perceiving” then the correlative noema is the “perceived”, not to be confused with being the object, itself.

Noesis—Husserlian term; one of two sides of intentionality; noesis refers to that which “gives sense to the immanent object of consciousness.” Examples: perceiving, believing, valuing, feeling, remembering. [From: William Large, *The Noesis and Noema* available at [www.arasite.org/noesis.html](http://www.arasite.org/noesis.html)].

Non-verbal/ pre-verbal—without spoken words (language) as a mode of expression.

nothing-butness—another expression of nihilism (disbelief in an objective truth), associated with the Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm/ reductionism.

Objective/ objectivism—truth (universal) and phenomena (objects) exist independently of individual perception.

Ontology—the state of a phenomenon’s “being”; being precedes knowing so therefore ontology is a primary consideration over epistemology from a phenomenological perspective; being-ness; Heidegger referred to ontology as the “phenomenology of being” [from the glossary of *Phenomenology online*: <http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/glossary/glossary.html#essence>]

Outer geography—my term for the external landscape of experienced phenomena.

Phenomenological experience, however, is not limited to the external world of the “experiencer”, since it is possible to experience internal phenomena as well. This notion supports by belief that our fleshy boundaries are merely a mirage—all phenomena are fields of integrated, overlapping and interconnected energy and matter. Hence, humans are not separate from the natural world—they are of the natural world in a fluid and dynamic way.

Pattern Language—systems of patterns that work together and create a “whole”. Architect, philosopher Christopher Alexander classifies such as *language* much like any spoken language. Environmental dance is based on a *pattern language* which, in turn, is based on the identified archetypal, repeating forms found throughout and comprising the natural world [see *pattern*].

Pattern—discernible, recognizable repetition in form. Nature’s (observable) repeating patterns (i.e. point, step, column, branch, radial, loop, circle/ sphere, wave, spiral, laminar flow/chaos, grid, triangle, are what I refer to as the “language of nature” (See Kryder, RP. 2000. *Sophia’s body: Seeing primal patterns in nature*. Crestone, Colorado: Golden Point Productions). I have incorporated these twelve basic patterns, identified in Dr. Kryder’s work, in the foundational learning experiences that I have designed and lead environmental dance students through, as a way to “teach” students how to embody the landscape by learning to “speak” (with their physical bodies) the “language of nature”. Students must first “experience” these archetypal patterns by observing them in nature (via the Goethean scientific method, i.e. the *phenomenology of nature*) The creative process of making site-specific dances is dependent on a fluency of this language. This fluency also encourages the reciprocal exchange between environmental dancer and site, a dialog that re-animates the site while at the same time illuminating a deep sense of place.

Perception—information/ knowledge derived from sensual engagement with the natural environment.

Perceptual ecology—Humans gather information/ knowledge about the environment and interact with the knowledge via action; there is a reciprocity between the environment and human perception-action that acts much like a “dialog” (as described by D. Abram in *The Spell of the Sensuous*); this notion is based on the work of Merleau-Ponty (concepts of embodied knowledge and reciprocity) and Gibson (ecologically- framed theory of human perception).

Phenomenological reduction—to see a phenomenon anew by suspending one’s own viewpoint; seeking to reveal the essence of the phenomenon.

Phenomenology—the study of phenomena as they appear to us in experience or consciousness. Phenomenology is both a philosophy and method of inquiry/ analysis, attributed to Edmund Husserl (“Back to the things themselves!”): philosophically, phenomenology opposes an objectivistic science where phenomena exist “out there”, independently of human consciousness and are reduced to atomistic parts through analysis; as a method of inquiry phenomenology is based on the notion that reality consists of phenomena and events only as they are perceived in human consciousness. A common ground shared between phenomenology and the traditional scientific method is empiricism. I see the phenomenological approach (combining philosophy with method) as a holistic, synthetic way of studying the human experience of being in and of the world within the defining structures of temporal and spatial realms—one which rises above the limited perspective of objectivism and seeks to attain a reciprocity, a “dialog”—an intersubjective engagement not only with other humans but also with any natural phenomenon in question.

[Comment: Aside from being both a longstanding philosophical tradition and research method, I see the potential for phenomenology to become a pedagogical tool that may aid in educational reform in ways that no other intervening forces have been able thus far: I envision phenomenology (a teaching practice and pedagogical philosophy, as modeled in my own work in the development of environmental dance as eco-pedagogy) as a direct route toward a more constructivist (and holistic) epistemological orientation, that holds the potential to free educators (including and perhaps especially environmental educators) from the limitations of the dominant positivistic (mechanistic, reductionist-based) paradigm. Teachers and students alike would greatly benefit from direct exposure to primary learning experiences in the natural environment that intentionally incorporate aspects of the phenomenological process/ approach].

Phenomenon—that which can be experienced.

Place—a bounded geographic space distinguishable by idiosyncratic features.

Place-based—a focus on the local level (micro) as opposed to the global (macro) level.

Plato’s Five (5) Solids—In solid geometry, the five types of polyhedrons (tetrahedron, cube, octahedron, dodecahedron and icosahedron: Pierce, Rod. "Platonic Solids" Math Is Fun. Ed. Rod Pierce. 11 Jul 2008. 26 Feb 2009 <[http://www.mathsisfun.com/platonic\\_solids.html](http://www.mathsisfun.com/platonic_solids.html)>) These polyhedra, described and connected with the “five elements”—fire, earth, air, water and ether, respectively, by Plato (*Timaeus*), were used by Laban in his classic exploration and systematic analysis (Labanalysis) of the relationship of human movement to immediate space [See Laban’s principles of effort/shape].

Pre-reflective awareness—implicit self-consciousness (In Sartre’s terminology (*Being and Nothingness*), *nonthetic* awareness of the self; therefore consciousness has a *thetic*, or explicit awareness of the self which Sartre bases on the notion that the act of reflecting results in the explicit awareness of the self as a separate entity/ object.

Reciprocity—a relational arrangement where there is (typically beneficial) mutual exchange; this is a Merleau-Ponty term used to describe the reality of the human/nature relationship as a “dialog” (also referenced in D. Abram’s *Spell of the Sensuous*); I describe reciprocity between humans and the elements of the animate earth as the “touch-and-be-touched principle”; I utilize this concept in my site-orientation exercises designed to acclimate/ introduce environmental dancers to the site because it directly reinforces the idea that humans are integrated extensions (parts of a greater whole) of the landscape.

Referential-representational understanding—engagement with the phenomena from the “outside” position of separateness from the phenomena (a characteristic of the Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm/ approach). [From: Robbins, B. D. “New Organs of Perception: Goethean Science as a Cultural Therapeutics”. *Janus Head*, 8(1), 2005, (pp.113-126)].

Reflexivity—conscious (self) awareness of the effects of the researcher (past experiences, preconceptions, biases) on the research itself; also refers to the practice of reflection.

Relationally-responsive understanding—embodied engagement with the phenomena (a characteristic of Goethean scientific method). [From: Robbins, B. D. “New Organs of Perception: Goethean Science as a Cultural Therapeutics”. *Janus Head*, 8(1), 2005, (pp.113-126)].

Schema—According to Piaget, an individualized mental framework through which the world is observed, experienced and interpreted with experience-generated categories about people, places and events.

Sense of place—the quality of the human relationship to place including emotional, geographical, social connections to a particular geographic location; human connection to locale which acknowledges the identity, collective atmosphere/ ambiance or idiosyncratic characteristics of the particular locale coupled with human emotional attachment to and personal identification with it.

Site-specific—here, dance created for and inspired by a particular, bounded geographical space (place).

Space/ spatial—I am partial to Merleau-Ponty’s two categorizations of space. First, there is *objective space*, a physical dimension defined and delineated via a rational and empirical approach to analysis. A second type of space, *existential space*, is, from a phenomenological perspective, lived space, the realm of the emotions, feelings and imagination (and virtual space). Dance (and environmental dance) necessarily exists and unfolds in both types of space simultaneously. Sartre also addresses the notion of space-time, which is an integral feature of dance / environmental dance: “By motion space is engendered in time” (Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 213).

Subjective/ subjectivism—individual experience or interpretation of truth (knowing) in contrast to externally existing facts/ evidence (objectivism).

The Four (4) Core Fields of Philosophy—(1) **Ontology** is the study of *being* (i.e. “what is”); (2) epistemology is the study of *knowing/ knowledge* (i.e. “how one knows”); (3) **Logic** is the study of *valid reasoning* (i.e. “how one reasons”); (4) **Ethics (deontology)** is the study of *right and wrong* (i.e. “how one ought to act”) and (5) **Phenomenology** is the study of *experience* (i.e. “how one experiences”). [Smith, David Woodruff, “Phenomenology”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (Ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/phenomenology/>].

The Four (4) Existentials—Max van Manen’s **lived space** (spatiality), **lived time** (temporality), **lived body** (corporeality) and **lived relation** (relationality/communality). These are particularly relevant structures to consider with respect to environmental dance (dance unfolds at one in time and space as expressed by the actions/ movements of the human body in relationship to other

phenomena. These features also happen to constitute the common ground of all human experience. Therefore, it can be said that environmental dance (and dance, in general) symbolically re-presents aspects of human existence. One may think of **embodiment** as a fifth existential, a domain that pertains directly to environmental dance.

“The One and the Many”—the age-old philosophical problem of attempting to understand the vastness of phenomena in the universe by searching for that one unifying element/ structure that binds all phenomena together. Goethe’s holistic mode of consciousness (as opposed to a purely analytical mode) enabled him to differentiate between what is *general* and what is *universal*; “unity in multiplicity” (the structure of the general) as well the reverse circumstance, “multiplicity in unity” (the structure of the universal) is reflected in human consciousness in similarly differentiating ways: the general is derived from the consciousness of the unity of the intellectual mind and the universal is derived from the unity of the intuitive mind. Related to the concept of the holon/ holograph. [see Bortoft, *The Wholeness of Nature: Goethe’s Way toward a Science of Conscious Participation in Nature*, pp. 84-85].

The Twelve Senses—an expansion/re-working of the standard five (5), this Steinerian conceptualization suggests that the original senses are an incomplete set and that there are actually twelve (12) senses organized in three categories as follows: upper, middle and lower senses. These categories imply a developmental ordering of skills and activities associated with each sense and help to show how these emerge through a schema of development over time, suggesting a hierarchy of interdependence and interaction between them. I find them especially applicable to understanding the subtleties of Goethe’s approach to the phenomenology of nature; just as I have adopted the Goethean Scientific Method as a way to contextualize the creative process of environmental dance and learning through environmental dance experiences, I have also adopted Steiner’s enlightening concept of the twelve (nested) senses. These twelve senses are: **upper senses** (the sense of “I”; sense of thinking; sense of speech; sense of hearing), **middle sense** (sense of smell; sense of taste; sense of sight; sense of warmth), **lower senses** (sense of touch; sense of life; sense of self-movement; sense of balance). I identify these as the pathways that bridge the “inner” and “outer” geographies. [From: <http://www.hltmag.co.uk/jan04/sart4.htm>].

Time/ temporal—linear time (Western ideology/ orientation), circular/cyclical time (indigenous orientation). The same two categorizations from *space* (see above) can be applied to time. Also there are the common and recognizable realms of past, present and future; the perception of the present can be described as an infinite (never static but always fluid) continuum of “now”. (See *ekstasis, ekstatic*). “Original temporality is founded upon the *ekstatic* structure of the human consciousness-body. Man does not have a past since he *is* his past in the mode of not being it; he is always already present. He does not have a present, but *is* his present in the mode of not being fixed in the instant: his present is a flight which projects him into his future. Finally, he does not have a future since he *is* his future in the mode of not being it; his future is not yet, but is outlined upon the present out of which he moves toward the future as a goal. Man comprised temporality

within himself, for he is such an *ekstatic* being; he is always at a distance from himself, always in flight.” [From Sheets, *The Phenomenology of Dance*, pp.16-17].

Transcendental Phenomenology—inquiry that seeks to describe and find meaning in other human’s experiences.

Ur-phenomenon—Goethe’s notion of the essential structure of the phenomenon; archetypal essence; implies that the phenomenon is an ever-active process of becoming.

Zarte Empirie—Goethe’s “delicate empiricism” (more towards a position of ‘universal subjectivism’), which is in stark contrast to the positivist brand of “at-arms-length”, “out there”, objective empiricism.



## APPENDIX E

### *Sense of Place Exercises:* **“Bridging Inner and Outer Geographies”** A Facilitator’s Guide

#### Overview of Exercises

- **Exercise #1 “Body/ Landscape Dialogue”**—A microcosmic exploration; awareness and perception building through sensorial development—used on on-site, as “warmup”.
- **Exercise #2: “360° Scan”**—A comparative micro/macrocosmic exploration: sensing differences in scale.
- **Exercise #3: “The Barefoot Tour”** –Micro explorations of various interconnected yet distinct “places” within the environmental dance space, in this instance the rocky, bare mountain summit; such allows for the development of an intimate understanding of the physical aspects of the landscape and personal discoveries availed by utilizing spontaneous movement responses and the physical senses as “vehicles of exploration”).
- **Exercise #4: “Negative and Positive Space”**—“Holding” and “being held”. (See Feld & Basso, *Senses of Place*, p.25).
- **Exercise #5: “Rock Rolling”**—This exercise is based on an underlying artistic attitude and philosophy that aims to realize a sense of humans-in-harmony (as opposed to human-in-conflict) with the natural environment.
- **Exercise #6: “Reciprocity: The Touch and Be Touched Principle”**—Inspired by Merleau-Ponty’s concept (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*).
- **Exercise #7: “Take a Hike: Discovering a Micro/ Macro Bridge”**—Embodying Nature’s Repeating Patterns in Human Movement.

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#### Objectives

- To introduce and orient dancers/ workshop participants to the performance and/or workshop site [each of the exercises described here have been inspired by and designed for the summit of Mt. Monadnock, although they can easily be adapted for any “natural” site].
- To explore issues of scale, both spatial and temporal; also the concepts of “the microcosmic” as contrasted to “the macrocosmic”.

- To aid in the development of rudimentary and ultimately, a refined sense of awareness and perception of the natural environment through the lens of site-specific sensorial development work, i.e. *ecological perception*.
- To develop a sense of concentration and focus within an animate and dynamic landscape.
- To become “comfortable” and “familiar” with the natural site.
- To develop higher-order thinking, meta-cognition and an ecological consciousness.
- To introduce and promote the idea of a “reciprocal” and “inter-animated” human relationship with the natural world.
- To introduce extraordinary and unexpected ways to “see”, “know” and “understand” the natural world.
- To hone and utilize *perception, imagination, inspiration, and inspiration* as a set of necessary features of holistic environmental dance learning.
- To promote the idea that humans are an *integral part of* the natural environment (as opposed to being *apart from* the natural environment).
- To help dancers and workshop participants discern between the concepts of *space* and *place*, as the natural perceptual evolution of their relationship with the site.
- To help dancers and workshop participants relearn the *language of nature* (“nature’s repeating patterns”/ archetypes).
- To help dancers and workshop participants develop a *sense of place*, as a model for developing an ecoethics-based relationship with the natural world.

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### Inspirational Highlights and

#### Noteworthy Concepts from the Literature

- Merleau-Ponty’s concept of *reciprocity*.
- Maxine Sheet’s discussion (*The Phenomenology of Dance*, p. 21) on the unique circumstance of dance-as-phenomenon with regard to temporal/ *diasporatic* considerations: A pre-reflective awareness of time is thus intrinsic to any “lived goodbye”; thus, it is intrinsic also to the dancer’s lived experience of the dance. A dance as it is performed, is experienced by the dancer as a perpetually moving form, a unity of successions, whose moments cannot be measured: its past has been created, its present is being created, and its future awaits creation. Yet, it is not an externally related series of pasts, presents and futures—before, nows and afters; it is truly *ekstatic*, it is in flight, it is in the process of becoming the dance which it is, yet is never the dance at any moment. The dance at any moment is diasporatic, a perpetually moving form whose “moments” are all of a piece.”
- David Abram’s concept of *animate earth* and “*the bodies silent conversation with things*” (*The Spell of the Sensuous*).

- Sondra Fraleigh’s discussion (*Dance and the Lived Body*, p. 8) of phenomenology’s “most distinctive feature of the lived-body concept is its *non-dualistic* thesis, its rejection of classical and Cartesian dualism” (such dualistic thinking is “well-entrenched” in dance. [Feeds/ supports idea of dance as embodied practice and is in keeping with my own paradigmatic ideologies].
- Rudolf Laban’s *principles of effort/ shape* (*Laban for All*, p.24) and the relationship of *Plato’s five solids (or crystals)* and their corresponding relevance to the elements of earth, air, fire and water (these Plato reduced to triangles)—this informs and provides new insight into my work with elemental archetypes as inherent human movement motifs (see exercise #7) [I plan to delve into to newly-discovered connection, in the future].
- In Edward Casey’s essay *How to Get from Space to Place*, his inclusion and discussion of Husserl’s function of *horizon*: “...we continually find ourselves in the midst of perceptual horizons, both the “internal” horizons of particular things (i.e., their immediate circumambience) and the “external” horizons that encompass a given scene as a whole (*Senses of Place*, p. 17).
- Kant’s notion that “nature makes itself specific” (*Senses of Place*, p. 19) and Newton’s description of time and space as “God’s infinite sensorial” (*Senses of Place*, p. 28).
- Casey’s discussion on how “places *gather*”, “*hold*” and “*are held*” [active passivity] (*Senses of Place*, p. 25).

### The Exercises

**Exercise #1 “Body/ Landscape Dialogue”** (a microcosmic exploration)—

Awareness and perception building through sensorial development.

**Part One:** Lie down on the back with legs and arms extended, in full contact with the earth’s natural surface, face up and with eyes closed. “Grain”\* to the immediate surrounding’s details and idiosyncratic characteristics through the auditory sense, the surficial sensations of wind currents (or the lack of currents identified as “stillness”), the temperature of the air and rock surfaces as detected by the skin with an awareness of the sources of temperature variances (the sun, wind, rocks, etc.). Slowly and carefully extend arms, legs and use hands and feet to detect the textures of the surface. Open the eyes and take in what “information” the sense of sight adds to the experience. How does the purposeful awareness of these factors help the experiencer to “define” the physicality/ geography of the experienced space? [These exercises are designed so that they can be done in conjunction with journal writing exercises; if journal writing was to be

included here, some designated time would be taken at this point to reflect and write.] \* “Grain”/ “graining”—a dance term referencing the dancer’s intentional *focused energy and awareness through the senses* on some particular external feature or detail (particularly in improvisational dance scores) that informs and inspires the creation of a particular movement response to this stimulus. A simpler definition for the purpose of this exercise is *intensified focus, concentration*.

**Part Two:** Repeat above in supine position (roll over to a comfortable facedown position with eyes closed once again). Repeat above exercise sequences—note sensorial differences and similarities between Part One and Part Two. Open eyes and repeat sequences as in Part One, as well.

**Part Three:** Roll backward onto right side. Repeat above process (first, with eyes closed, then with eyes open). Note sensorial differences and similarities between Part One and Part Two.

**Part Four:** Roll forward onto left side. Repeat above process (first, with eyes closed, then with eyes open). Note sensorial differences and similarities between Part One, Part Two and Part Three.

**Exercise #2: “360° Scan”** (a comparative micro/macrocosmic exploration)—Sensing differences in scale.

**Part One:** Begin this exercise seated comfortably on the ground/ rock surface with legs bent and crossed in front of the body. Sit with a tall and fully extended (yet, not tense) spine; arms, shoulders and neck are relaxed. Remain seated/ grounded in this position throughout the exercise.

Begin with eyes closed (taking in auditory “data”); Continue this exercise by twisting/ torqueing the spine and neck gently to the right and then to the left to take advantage of a full 360° range. Return back to original “neutral” beginning sitting position. With eyes still closed, slowly begin to reach out into the surrounding space (feeling the air with hands/ arms). Continue to develop this process by exploring the space above and around the seated body. Finally, reach to the ground to feel the textures of the surrounding surfaces; note textural subtleties/ strong characteristics.

**Part Two:** Open eyes and take in the visual depths of the space between “here” and the horizon. Begin this observation with a “micro lens” (that is, observe everything in the immediate area where seated). Proceed on an “observational journey” via concentric circles (thus, moving away from the area of the centrally seated position). Proceed in this way, slowly, purposefully from “center” increasing the observation distance outward in 20’ increments. Continue this process until focus is on the horizon. Repeat the spine twist left and right to provide a full 360° range of observation. [Journaling to supplement this exercise.]

**Exercise #3: “*The Barefoot Tour*”** \*\* The direct experience of the physical, phenomenal detail(s); to become “familiar” with the landscape (micro explorations of various interconnected yet distinct “places” within the environmental dance space, here the rocky, bare mountain summit; such allows for the development of an intimate understanding of the physical aspects of the landscape and personal discoveries availed by utilizing spontaneous movement responses as the “vehicle of exploration”). Another important feature of this exercise is *barefoot contact* with the rocks as dancers traverse and explore the site—such sensorial engagement is a departure from the “expected” normal experience and therefore makes this experience unique and most likely extraordinarily memorable.

Dancers (or workshop participants) begin to “explore” the spaces that comprise the performance area (the mountain summit in proximity of the Main Stage Rock areas, and adjacent areas stage left and right of this prominent feature) by moving improvisationally throughout the space, (improvised movement serves as the primary form of locomotive action moving each dancer within, around and through the space). Sensorial stimuli inspire spontaneous movement that allows the dancer(s) to move within, around and through the space, allowing the discovery (through this holistic experience) the distinguishing characteristics of each particular area.

Periodic journaling (as well as videotaping) helps to record and solidify the experience. Group discussion and a collaborative creation of a “map” complete the process aimed at allowing dancers to begin to “know” their surrounds (where they will stage, rehearse and perform various site-specific environmental dance pieces). Such a map will serve to differentiate “places” (with distinguishable and “known” boundaries) within the context of the larger space (summit area that includes both performance and non-performance sites, audience seating areas and junctions in the trail systems that converge at various spots on the summit where it is most likely that people interact with environment, dancers and other hikers). Boundaries may be determined collectively and/ or individually and will be reflective of the contours and consistencies of the immediate landscape and how it is perceived to be part of a greater whole. The boundaries of a certain outcropping, isolated from other rocky prominences, for example, may delineate a smaller (micro) “place” within the greater space (“macro”).

\*\* [I have decided to use this idea on a grander scale to inspire another “mapping” project—dancers and I will improvise our ways up the winding White Arrow Trail to the summit, stopping in twenty minute increments to rest, rehydrate and journal. A culminating activity will be to collaborate on the design of a creative visual “map” of this journey (which will highlight critical reflections, ideas, landmarks, physical interactions with the environment, etc.) up the mountain and to illustrate the new “knowledge” it reveals. I may also interview participants as part of a debriefing activity. The process will be videotaped and a multi-media performance piece will be presented as a final project. The mission of this project will be to demonstrate how environmental dance can (1) connect humans to the landscape through spontaneous experiential

exploration; (2) provide dancers with intimate knowledge of the landscape through a “dialogue” that ultimately allows the emergence of the “sense” of the “place” being explored; and (3) affectively bond the dancer to the “place” through this transformative experience, ultimately inspiring a sense of responsibility and stewardship. From intimate dialoguing and “information gathering” through the physical experience of the landscape, I contend that dancers “become” an integral feature (note: the impermanent, fleeting nature of such is irrelevant) of the landscape, thus effectively bridging the realms of inner and outer geographies (interior human landscape and external physical landscape of the natural world) via environmental dance, it seems possible to be able to develop a personal relationship with that landscape (by willfully dialoguing with it through dance and journaling). It may also be possible to develop an affective bond with “place” at this juncture, although to believe that this so and further, that it is part of a natural progression of experiential events that I am outlining here, may require a bit of a leap of faith. An even greater leap is required in order to ultimately arrive at a destination of “responsibility” (stewardship) toward “place”. But, this is the level of engagement that seems most likely to be capable of producing such desirable goals as these. I also contend that the vicarious nature of the audience experience of such is every bit as potent as is the firsthand, physical experience had by the environmental dancer.]

**Exercise #4:** “*Negative and Positive Space*”—“Holding” and “being held” (*Senses of Place*, p. 25). Environmental dancers (or workshop participants) create exploratory studies of “negative” and “positive space” as delineated by the landscape contours and rocky formations (jumbles, outcroppings and boulders) that are characteristic of Monadnock’s summit. The concepts of negative and positive space are universal to the design considerations of all forms of art, and are especially relevant and informing in the unique circumstances afforded by environmental dance performances in situ in the natural environment. These related, if not synergistic concepts are defined as: (1) negative space—emptiness and void space that surrounds any object of form and (2) positive space—the form taken on by matter as it fills a void with lines, designs, shapes and colors. Related is the concept of shape (or contour) and I think of such as being the distinct quality ascribed by an object’s external surface and form as it manifests in space and is surrounded by negative space.

Such provides the foundational *consciousness* and *awareness* of the physical relationship and nature of the dancer’s human form to the dance environment’s seemingly static form. Such exploration leads to the ultimate contemplation surrounding the issues of scale. Human bodies move, change and evolve intensely and dramatically over a relatively compressed, short span of time. In contrast, the natural environment almost exudes an air of static permanence—however, this is an illusion since “movement”, “change” and “evolution” also transform the face of the landscape over greater, extended expanses of time. Size is another factor that is readily explored through this exercise and this sets up yet another dramatic contrast to explore. See also, Casey’s concept of *container* and that which is *contained* (*Senses of Place*, p.25).

Through the use of this study on negative and positive space, it is possible and plausible that the dancer will detect the juxtaposition of human space and time with environmental space and time. Only through an acute awareness of this contrast that becomes “visible” in the local, site-specific circumstance (as through this exercise) can we truly begin to understand the complex nature of the human/ environment relationship. Ultimately, through a symbolic rendition offered through the environmental dance experience, this notion (realization?) of the existence of parallel scales is relayed to the observing audience as well. Such awareness is paramount, since I believe that issues of scale (and our general lack of awareness and consideration of scale) underwrite many of the environmental crises we are now facing.

For the purpose of this exploration dancers must first find an interesting “site” in which to work. The summit landscape offers a rich array of mini-environments to explore: from deeply chiseled crevices to sculpted jumbles of granite, dancers find ways to fill negative space of this 3-D rock-scape with their own bodies and alternately explore ways to create negative space by the way they sculpt and mold their bodies in space. Both circumstances are explorations of movement that are first and foremost micro “studies of place” inspired by the rocks themselves. Such an experience leaves the dancer with new ways of “seeing” and “being” in this environment and opens them up to the space as “place”, a specific locale for the unfolding of a dance inspired by the site.

Process notes can be recorded as a supplemental journaling component to this exercise. Studies are “rehearsed” and set in memory so they can be shared with the group. This is an excellent way to “source” new and original movement material and I use it as such, often. In fact, this is an integral part of my choreographic creative process.

**Exercise #5: “*Rock Rolling*”**—Dancers position themselves on/ in rocks/ crevices of their choice and begin a full contact exploration of the rock and immediate surroundings by slowly rolling from place to place as the soul means of locomotion through space. By sensing when to give into the landscape (synthesizing with) or repelling against the surface (separating from) dancers can become adept at harmonizing with the specifics of the dance site. This informs us how to navigate through the fluid circumstances and unpredictable variables of the environmental dance performance. In large part, this is an exercise in developing resilience in a physical sense (learning to “go with the flow”) so that this idea is readily conveyed in an abstracted, symbolic form, expressed by the dancers’ movement vocabulary that has successfully internalized this “lesson” taught by the rocks.

This exercise is based on an underlying artistic approach and philosophy that aims to realize a sense of humans-in-harmony (as opposed to human-in-conflict) with the natural environment. We, as performing artists, must master this philosophy as a tangible skill, before we can convey a symbolic rendition of such through our art, artistry and performance. This exercise is to be done in short increments/ segments of moving/ rolling over the rocks with mini-debriefing sessions in between. Aside from its “harmonizing” effects, this exercise is also intended to

acclimate the dancer to site in profound and radically extraordinary ways, making each one aware of the endless movement possibilities to be derived from this environment. While this exercise has been inspired by and designed for the training of environmental dancers as they prepare to perform on the rocky summit of Monadnock, this exercise can easily be adapted to address any outdoor environment. A simpler version of this exercise can be offered as workshop material for the layperson/ student as well. In addition to its multitude of artistic and awareness-building functions, this exercise is also great fun!

**Exercise #6: “Reciprocity: The Touch and Be Touched Principle”—**

This exercise is inspired by Merleau-Ponty’s concept of *reciprocity*, and its multiple variations and derivatives as outlined in David Abram’s *The Spell of the Sensuous* and Edward Casey’s essay *How to Get from Space to Place*. A few of these conceptual first cousins include “interanimation” (Basso), a “dialectic of perception and place” (Feld), who also says: “as place is sensed, senses are placed; as places make sense, senses make place”! (*Senses of Place*, p.19). These ideas are also akin to those put forth by Abram in *Spell of the Sensuous*. Again, like all of the exercises described here, a primary goal is a refined and highly developed sense of awareness/ perception-building of the reciprocal nature of human/ dancer to site and site to human/ dancer.

The process is intentionally simple and uncluttered in its design: dancers “place” themselves randomly within the site. A brief improvisational exploration of the chosen mini-site sets up the intentional establishment of a still (held) position. Dancers remain “frozen” in position while contemplating the idea of being “acted upon” (or “touched”) by the immediate structure(s) (such as a boulder) of the natural environment of the summit. Dancers begin to move with the environment, keeping this new perspective alive during the process. Now, the dancer is “informed” by the idea that the environment is an active co-creator in the (creative) process of responded to the site through improvised (spontaneous) movement. [This could also be done with pre-set, choreographed movement as well, and will add an interesting variation to the exercise.] A short discussion (and/or journaling session) precedes a reversal of roles, i.e., the dancer now hold a still position within the environment while contemplating the opposing point of view—dancer-acting-upon-environment; next, dancers move with this awareness. Another short discussion precedes the final segment of the exercise with seeks to synthesize both points of view into a harmonizing exchange suggested by the “touch-and-be-touched” awareness. Three different foci on awareness produce three radically different movement responses! How do we choose to engage with natural phenomena and “move” (dance/ exist) with/in/on the natural environment? *Intentionality*.

**Exercise #7: “Take a Hike: Discovering a Micro/ Macro Bridge”—**

Embodying Nature’s Repeating Patterns in Human Movement.



**Part One--Introduction:** Dancers begin by searching for evidence of basic (universal) repeating patterns embedded throughout the immediate summit landscape. These basic forms include: (1) point; (2) step/ gradation; (3) branch; (4) spiral; (5) radial; (6) loop; (7) column; (8) wave; (9) triangle; (10) circle; (11) grid; (12) chaos/ laminar flow [these universals are also described in the work of artist Pattee Kryder in *Sophia's Body*]. Also “Other Related Concepts to Consider” [to be introduced/ discussed as introduction]—

1. Symmetry/asymmetry
2. Balance/harmony/diversity
3. Microcosm/macrocsm
4. “Static” archetypes (leaf shapes, vein patterns, silhouette of a mountain, etc.) vs.
5. “Ephemeral” archetypes (ocean waves, tornado, cloud formations, etc.)

Dancers/participants will seek out, observe and reflect on each of the twelve (12) patterns/archetypes. This is a process of discovery and reflection on these archetypal patterns as they (generally) manifest in nature and as they (specifically) exist within the summit area. Dancers’ journal and make notes on the unique characteristics of each repeating pattern found on the “discovery hike” around the hat humans are an integral *part of* the natural environment, demonstrated by dancers’ mountain top. Dancers create and experiment with simple movement ideas that best allow you to express each archetype. (They are encouraged to avoid the obvious and to expand their awareness of the site through such experimentation). Dancers then experiment and refine movements to one essential representative of each archetype. The idea here is to discover through “the language of nature” [what I call nature’s repeating patterns as outlined by the twelve archetypal forms listed and described] the ability to reproduce and reflect the essential qualities of these archetypal patterns in their own movement. This profound sense of integration (“belonging”) is expressed artistically and symbolically through environmental dance.

### **Variation #2:** Individual Work—Creating Archetypal Movement Phrases

Select 3-5 archetypes. Create a phrase (Structured with a beginning, middle and end) for each chosen archetype.

Things to Consider Checklist: Consider and observe the following as applied to the natural feature—Initiation of the movement; Connection of different parts to each other and the relationship of this to its movement; Sequencing of movement; patterns and repetitions. Consider, next, the Effort qualities (Rudolph Laban’s work) of the natural feature (As common “language” and theory of movement description, to describe)--Space—Direct/indirect (How does the feature-movement fill the space, “move” through and in the space?); Weight--Strong/light; Time--Sudden/ sustained; Flow—Bound/free—continuous. Consider the shape qualities of the feature--Shape/flow—growing, shrinking, folding; Direction—arc-like/ spoke-like—overall floor pattern; Shaping—molding, carving, adapting (for future exploration of positive/negative space). Consider the unique combinations of these ideas as they apply to the natural feature, the

focus of our observations, add to its uniqueness and are reflected in its essence. Record observations and movement ideas in journal. Share studies and brief discussion/ comments.

## APPENDIX F

### “Senses”

#### List of Natural Senses and Sensitivities

##### The Radiation Senses—

1. Sense of light and sight, including polarized light.
2. Sense of seeing without eyes (such as heliotropism or the sun sense of plants).
3. Sense of color.
4. Sense of moods and identities attached to colors.
5. Sense of awareness of one’s own visibility or invisibility and consequent camouflaging.
6. Sensitivity to radiation other than visible light including radio waves, x-rays, etc.
7. Sense of temperature and temperature range.
8. Sense of reason including ability to insulate, hibernate, and winter sleep.
9. Electromagnetic sense and polarity, which includes the ability to generate current (as in the nervous system and brain waves) or other energies.

##### The Feeling Senses—

10. Hearing including resonance, vibration, sonar, and ultrasonic frequencies.
11. Awareness of pressure, particularly underground, underwater, and to wind and air.
12. Sensitivity to gravity.
13. The sense of excretion for waste elimination and protection from enemies.
14. Fee, particularly touch on the skin.
15. Sense of weight, gravity, and balance.
16. Space or proximity sense.
17. Coriolis sense or awareness of effects of the rotation of the Earth.
18. Sense of motion, body movement sensations, and sense of mobility.

##### The Chemical Senses—

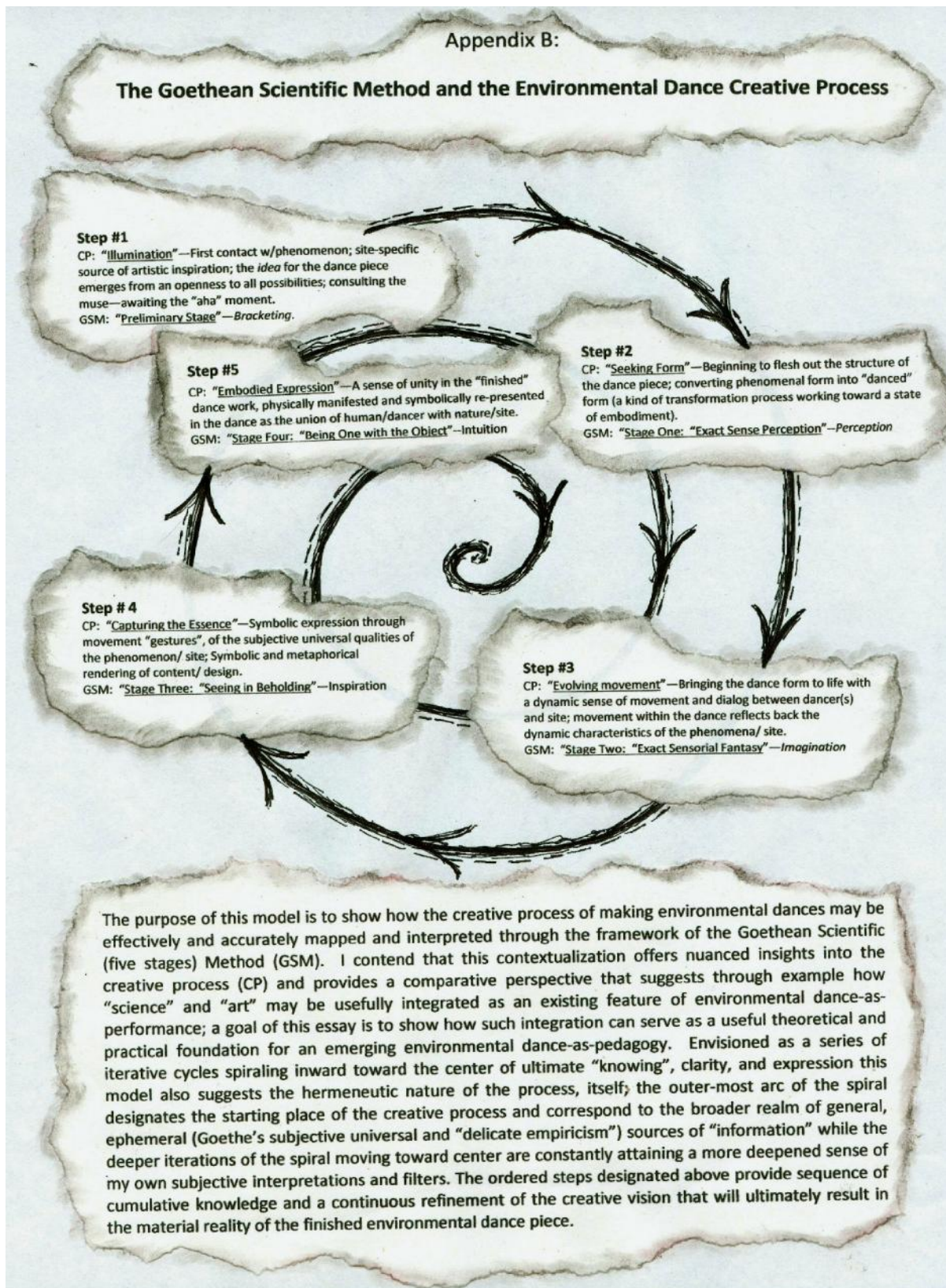
19. Smell with and beyond the nose.
20. Taste with and beyond the tongue.
21. Appetite or hunger for food, water, and air.
22. Hunting, killing or food obtaining urges.
23. Humidity sense including thirst, evaporation control, and the acumen to find water or evade a flood.
24. Hormonal sense, as to pheromones and other chemical stimuli.

### The Mental Senses—

25. Pain, external and internal.
26. Mental or spiritual distress.
27. Sense of fear, dread of injury, death, or attack.
28. Procreative urges.
29. Sense of play, sport, humor, pleasure, and laughter
30. Sense of physical place, navigation senses including detailed awareness of land and seascapes, of the position of the sun, moon, and stars.
31. Sense of time.
32. Sense of electromagnetic fields.
33. Sense of weather changes.
34. Sense of emotional place, of community, belonging, support, trust and thankfulness.
35. Sense of self, including friendship, companionship, and power.
36. Domineering and territorial sense.
37. Colonizing sense, including receptive awareness of one's fellow creatures, sometimes to the degree of being absorbed into a super organism.
38. Horticultural sense and the ability to cultivate crops, as is done by ants that grow fungus, by fungus who farm algae, or birds that leave food to attract their prey.
39. Language and articulation sense, used to express feelings and convey information in every medium from the bees' dance to human literature.
40. Sense of humility, appreciation, and ethics.
41. Sense of form and design.
42. Reasoning, including memory and the capacity for logic and science.
43. Sense of mind and consciousness.
44. Intuition or subconscious deduction.
45. Aesthetic sense, including creativity and appreciation of beauty, music, literature, form, design and drama.
46. Psychic capacity such as foreknowledge, clairvoyance, clairaudience, psychokinesis, astral projection, and possibly certain animal instincts and plant sensitivities.
47. Sense of biological and astral time, awareness of past, present and future events.
48. The capacity to hypnotize other creatures.
49. Relaxation and sleep including dreaming, meditation, and brain wave awareness.
50. Sense of pupation including cocoon building and metamorphosis.
51. Sense of excessive stress and capitulation.
52. Sense of survival by joining a more established organism.
53. Spiritual sense, including conscience, capacity for sublime love, ecstasy, a sense of sin, profound sorrow, and sacrifice.

[Source: Cohen, M.J. (2007). *Reconnecting with nature: Finding wellness through restoring your bond with the Earth.*]

## APPENDIX G: GSM and the Environmental Dance Creative Process



## APPENDIX H

“WORD DANCE” Narrative Accompaniment for Mountain Dance (Colonial Theater Performance)

**Excerpts from Research Team Member Carin Torp’s Journal—  
As accompaniment, interpreted by Nancy Howard;  
Concept—Dianne Eno, for “Mountain Dance”**

Word Dance #1 (p. 81) (*This segment occurs after “The Resting Place” and becomes segue to “Cloud Study”*).

Twisting my world  
The sky is framed  
With immense arabesque  
Melting, stretching in, reaching out...  
Bulging little turns  
Following and spiraling into stillness.

Word Dance #2 (pp. 17/ 18 (vol.2)) (*This segment occurs after “Cloud Study” and segues to “The Mapping Project” /”Raven’s Dance”*).

I stand tall and proud  
A being of earthy stony bones  
I carry many others with great  
Gratitude for my place here.  
I sing with the wind and leap  
With darting ravens.

I call to many and only  
A few hear this call  
Fewer still, heed it and take my hand.

Generous are they who  
 Fall into me as I cradle them  
 And learn more of who I am  
 And we are...

Yet sometimes I reject or wish  
 I could,  
 The ugliness of destruction,  
 Of hatred and unconsciousness...  
 I roar like the mountain  
 I am  
 And when I am heard  
 The world is increased into  
 Aurora-like miracles.

Word Dance #3 (p. 103) (*This segment occurs before "Mountain Dance"/*

*"Mountains"—we may need to eliminate this one, TBD).*

What seemed to draw me in yesterday was a sense of connection; that ridge line in front of me extending out in both directions and connecting eventually with every other ridge line or valley or lake or...ad infinitum.

Word Dance #4 (p. 45) (*Dianne's edit to shorten*) (*This segment occurs right after intermission, before "Savage Essence"*).

Points of color...  
 Steps of the rocky reaches high above...  
 Branches in the trees, branching of the trails...of cloud tendrils  
 Spiraling clouds around the top of the mountain...  
 Radial angel wings in snow, reaching lines...from trees, arms of mine Reaching up and out...  
 Follow the looping line from the top of the mountain...to the tops of trees..,

And back again...  
 Columnar trees...  
 Wavy breath of breeze...  
 Triangular notch...in my view of the mountain...  
 Circular trunks and...spots of lichens...  
 ...The vertical trunks and the horizontal branches forming a grid...  
 The snowy drape, laminar flow, cascading down the mountain all around us.

Word Dance #5 (p. 28) (*This segment occurs before "The Shapes of Trees"*).

I spiral into layers of mysterious becoming that is  
 Ordinary yet absolutely extra-ordinary.  
 I go into dark depths of stone that yet are illuminated  
 By the light of strength and a most warm soul/ essence/ force  
 Here now and then  
 And what a life's journey to behold.

Word Dance #6 (p. 104) (*This segment occurs before "Goethean Suite"*).

Undulating to eternity...  
 I can sense going on forever...  
 Fluctuations of the universe coursing through the marrow of my stones...  
 Repetitious yet subtly different...  
 Internalized magic...

Word Dance #7 (p. 79) (Dianne's edit to shorten) (*This segment occurs before Part II of "Goethean Suite"*).

Earth and sky touch here.  
 In fact become entwined  
 The rippling waters and tufted clouds  
 Of a piece of landscape make  
 Distant hills and nearby boulders  
 Are twin roller coasters  
 And upside down I am again surprised  
 By this shrunken world that is so enormous...  
 I am delighted by surprises that do not, in fact, answer to the description  
 Of surprises;  
 They are not expected because nothing is expected.  
 All is as is.



The buffeting wind rocks me on this cradle of granite  
 And wisps of wisdom nudge me through soles and pores and strands of hair,  
 Deliciously delightful.  
 We breathe as one...

Word Dance #8 (p. 96) (Dianne's edit to shorten) (*This segment occurs before Part IV of "Goethean Suite"*).

Vertically strong and preciously focused  
 We unbalance ourselves as we seek  
 The implicit truth and trust  
 Twisting and straightening

Gradually and then oh so abruptly  
 Contract the macro to micro  
 Spinning, pushing up and not quite off  
 Tethered together and embracing whole of fortune  
 Finding magic in moments of solid knowing  
 Born from the instruments of ourselves  
 And we get it,  
 We capture essences not like fireflies in a jar  
 But as nuances of subatomic particles  
 Infinitely minute and enormous at once  
 Wondrous exploration of relationship between that which is  
 No longer me and you  
 But ONE with many parts.

## APPENDIX I

“Monadnock Angel” Narrative Accompaniment for Mountain Dance (Colonial Theater Performance)

### MONADNOCK ANGEL (PART I)/ Mountain Dance

**[This journal entry to be interpreted /read during projection of original portrait, “Monadnock Angel”; narrated by Nancy Howard for: *Mountain Dance* performance, Colonial Theater, Keene NH]**

ITERATION #1 She stands perched on a rock, just as I have done so many times. She is a graceful figure, hauntingly beautiful, aura glowing and immediately recognizable as an angelic being. Wings poised for ascension, hands held in open delicate gestures of beckoning and gentleness. Serenity paints her face with ethereal lightness. I can feel that lightness---it emanates from & swirls & spirals within & around this mountain landscape.

ITERATION #2 She stands stalwart, a foreground feature of a more complex composition where the human elevates to a higher form (albeit angelic), and glistens as brightly as mica in the sun. She exudes this kind of mountain energy, and comes to life before my eyes dancing between the realms of earthly flesh, mountain granite, and the ether of other-worldliness. There is reciprocity, a complete circuitous loop of such energy----that connects angel to mountain to angel. Heaven to earth. The circle is complete & eternal. Angel and mountain bond together as one. We can tap into this wellspring.

ITERATION #3 As I continue my gaze upon the portrait before me, I feel the presence of airy lightness, a strong benevolence of spirit. She stands before the summit in graceful flow, pleats of expression, hands outstretched, heart open. I can feel her levitate to watch over Thayer’s beloved landscape, where I myself have purposely rambled, explored & dance in order to garner a glimpse into the inspiring & eclectic mind of an artist who loves the landscape of the mountain like so many of us.

ITERATION #4 Now, I let her speak to me. I hear no words, only the mountain melodies and rhythms that vacillate from the depths of the forest & echo through the granite jungle, cliffs & boulders that define her higher elevations. Her message is clear---there is a serene magic here, it emanates from cracks & crevices, and is carried in the wind. And in contrast to the light &

lightness, there is a part of her that fiercely roared out against all senseless human acts that might harm this magical place. She calls upon us to be mindful of all things.

ITERATION #5 I look at her once more, the last of 5 distinct & perpetual perspectives. She draws me into her world of spirit & wholeness. I imagine myself dissolving as human, and regenerating as the ethereal form ready to carry on her mission as Thayer intended. She is calling each one of us to protect this precious thing we call Monadnock. And I know I will have many more conversations with her still.....

“Monadnock Angel “ Part I... continued (Creative Process slide show with narration interpretation of Dianne’s journal entries) by Nancy Howard [each entry read in sync with projection of each “winter rehearsal” shot]

Winter Angel #1—

..My crystallized vision of a new dance piece, expressing itself through nature's own repeating patterns that become the "language" of my dance.... my dance will "speak" the essence of Abbott Thayer's mountain angel.

Winter Angel #2--

Contemplating Thayer's vision: What would an angel do here?

Winter Angel #3—I literally through the inspiration of another artist, as well with the mountain itself.

Winter Angel #4--

I ascend to a "higher place"--the summit and the ridge provides an ethereal and dreamlike ambiance as I work out movement phrases and ideas for the dance piece.

Winter Angel #5--

Moving with bone-chilling wind...a vision emerges.

Winter Angel #6—

An alpine flight of fancy...

Winter Angel #7—

...Reaching for the very things that elevate us here the magic of the landscape, the solitude of a winter day, the spirit of the mountain and those spirits that protect her...

Winter Angel #8—

Goethean Scientific Method is used in this hermeneutic process as choreographic creative process--one with the mountain...and her "angel"

Winter Angel #9—

Descending into the granite...in a flash, I return to my mortal consciousness...

Winter Angel #10—

Dancing the tension between groundedness (mortal limitations on an earthly plane) and a more ethereal state of being (the lightness of angelic presence)...

Winter Angel #11—

Dancing between heaven and earth...I seek to dissolve dichotomies and dualities, to transform "otherness" to "oneness"...

Winter Angel # 12--

Balance...peace...benevolence--I hear the eerie strains of a distant song sparrow and dance to "converse" with the Angel of the mountain...she is here!

Winter Angel #13--

..And she lifts me up...

Winter Angel #14—

...and shows me that this is peace...

Winter Angel #15—

I recognize her as myself...I am home.

Winter Angel #16—

Monadnock Angel's presence manifested through nature herself! I am humbled...and in awe.

## APPENDIX J

(Sample Site-work Agenda)

**Dianne Eno/Fusion DanceWorks Dissertation Project**  
**Sitework Session #2—Mt. Monadnock**  
**Agenda: Sunday, February 20, 2011**

### General Site work Goals:

- ❖ To develop a sense of ease in working with/ refining /developing this collaborative research process/ method (adaptation of the Goethean Scientific Method).
- ❖ To feel at ease and able to work on site in a wide variety of environmental circumstances.
- ❖ To release tensions, fears, past knowledge, memories, self-talk in order to become open to this new process and in order to embody/ embrace the site as co-collaborator.
- ❖ To intimately get to “know” Monadnock in her wintry state (evolution/ dynamic change).
- ❖ To “dialog” through movement (as “language”) and from this to be further able to re-express, re-interpret and re-present your new “knowledge” in the written text (prose/ poetry) and artwork of your personal project journaling process [from “dialog” to data].
- ❖ To source movement materials, ideas, themes, motifs for...
  - 1) Your individual *Sense of Place* studies (short solo study of 5-8 phrases of movement that makes a complete statement about the “place” where the study originates;
  - 2) Your original movement “contributions” to be used in the choreographic process of making the 5-part Goethean dance piece.
- ❖ To experience you, the artist and co-researcher as a part of the self-organizing process that defines the mountain and its summit where we dance—in other words to experience yourself as an integral part of the evolution, dynamic change that defines the site.
- ❖ Always be patient with nature and humble in knowing that we can do nothing except accept the weather conditions as they come...have faith that the work will get done. ☺

### Site work for the day:

1) **Warm up:** Moving through the Goethean Process...

- ❖ Choose a site-based phenomenon via the “Preparatory Stage”
- ❖ Progress through the cumulative other 4 stages via movement and then multi-layered journaling.

2) ***Sense of Place I***: solo studies TO BE VIDEOD and PHOTOGRAPHED: create a 5-8 phrases of movement material as a choreographed personal “statement”/ expression of your own connections to the micro site of your choice (you will commit to one place and keep it as your collaborative partner in this exercise)...

- ❖ Dance team #1—you have already begun this exercise; please continue to develop/ refine and finish your studies.
- ❖ Dance team #2—choose site and create studies (goal is to catch up with Carin and Rochelle today, if possible).

3) **Sense of Place II:** “Map” the entire performance space via movement (note contours, space(s) that attract/ repel/ do under-noticed/ are obvious—note subtle and dramatic differences within the landscape and how these make you feel, move, see, intuit, etc. AS A CONTINUATION OF THIS EXERCISE each of us will construct an artistic re-expression/ re-presentation of this as a physical map of the entire dancescape (macro performance space at the summit)—use the art media of your choice (collage, on site photos, your original drawing, poetry, paint, markers, etc.). These will be exhibited at my defense along with all other materials generated through our research. Have fun!! VIDEO/PHOTO documentation by Dianne and/or all dancers

4) **Source specific movement material for the 5-part Goethean dance piece** that Dianne will choreograph (over the next few weeks) and then “teach” to the dancers. We will also have a group discussion about this from which I will devise a “guided imagery” warm up, designed to help introduce the process in its environmental dance adaptation. VIDEO/ PHOTO documentation.

5) **Cloud Study:** more work with the research method via movement. Dianne to introduce and lead (clouds to determine whether or not we will end the session with this exercise!) VIDEO and PHOTO documentation.

**Some Suggestions /Prompts for Continuing the Journaling (Writing and Arts-based Methods):**

1) As researchers we are taking on a unique, alternate perspective that allows us to engage with the dance site (Monadnock's rocky summit) as a true collaborator in the research process. This perspective intentionally seeks to blur the subject/ object line of demarcation that exists in conventional positivist research. We are using dance and movement as the "language" through which we actively dialog with the performance landscape. I mentioned above, that I will soon be interviewing you. Try "interviewing" the mountain. Refer to my research questions as listed in the dissertation proposal and from these begin to formulate what YOU as researcher would like to inquire about. Compose a series of 4-5 questions and then interpret/ convert them into original movement phrases. Journal about the process and "rehearse" the questions enough so that you commit them to memory. You will then "dialog" with the summit during our next visit. While on site, you will compose "responses" to your danced interview questions, as if channeling what the mountain has to "say" in response to your interview questions.

2) Secondary reflections on sitework experiences (some prompts to utilize on secondary reflections of your two mountain/ site visits to date):  
Concerning a SENSE OF PLACE--what thoughts/ reflections may have contributed to an overall sense of connection, relationship to the mountain? What recurring themes may have emerged for you that might relate to our initial visit to the summit (can you in some way connect our first visit to your visit to the clearing today?)? Or, to other visits you may have made to the mountain in the past?

3) Reflections on your role as a co-researcher: How do your journal reflections, and other creative work related to this project (including dance/ movement creation and other arts-based

creative expressions) relate to the Goethean 5-step method and vice versa? Did today's visit help you to further develop an understanding of the GSM (as our research method)?

4) More secondary reflection on site-work: Did you engage in "dialogue" with the mountain via movement-as-language (in other words, did you create movement as a way to express/convey your experiences of the mountain today?)? [I will be looking for movement ideas/ motifs to use in the continuing, ongoing process of choreographing the GSM site (see dance piece descriptions in my proposal). This dance piece will be performed on the summit in April and then again in each of the following two other performances.

### **Items for Discussion at Breakfast/ Some Reminders:**

- ❖ Please identify all journal entries by including the following standard information: date, site location, weather description (if not a studio session), brief description/ recap of session agenda/ artistic goals, PAGE NUMBERS of journal entries that will remain consistent throughout the entire journal/ process.
- ❖ Please also identify your various "layers" of journaling...In other words ID the very initial entry as "original" or "initial" entry or simply "layer #1". Then when revisiting that entry to do further reflection (or to respond to "prompts" exemplified below) please identify these as "second" or "third" layers, as applicable.
- ❖ If at all possible try to journal on a daily basis (this will be a challenge—we are all busy!) but it will make the data-generating work easier and more meaningful (and deeper) in the long run. Try not to let journal entries get backlogged—it would be optimal to complete AT LEAST THE INITIAL JOURNAL ENTRY before the next work session (site or studio). Additional reflections and other artistic renderings will happen when they happen!
- ❖ Scheduling and rep work...TBD
  - Possibility of Natasha and Tray travelling to NH with Dianne on a Friday for a Saturday studio session at Antioch with Carin and Rochelle?
  - NYC studio time on Fridays?
  - We need to get 4 rep pieces underway before the weather breaks...
  - Will we need another winter site visit, if the conditions at the summit will not allow us to accomplish all that we need to? Or can we wait for less-challenging weather conditions?

### **Nearly finalized Performance Dates:**

- ❖ 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Summit Performance—May 7/8 (Rain date or alternate weekend May 21/ 22) [Must avoid Antioch Commencement]
- ❖ Colonial Theater Performance—Friday, July 22, 2011 Load-in/ Dress on Thursday, TBA

Final Dissertation Defense—Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup> or Sunday (if need be—some of my committee members have to fly in from out of town). There is also the option that the performance will stand as the defense itself (we may have an after-the-performance public Q & A session in which we will field questions from the audience and committee members).

## APPENDIX K

### Nature's Repeating Patterns ("the Language of Nature"/ Twelve Archetypal Patterns):

#### Guide for Onsite Research



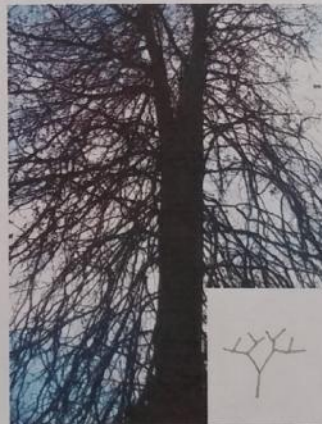
Archetype #1—Point (compressed, collapse-in, contract, condense inward from expansion, potential growth, unity)



Archetype #2—Step (graduation, sequential, paused progression, alternating pause, growth pattern)



Archetype #3—  
Branch  
(expansion, sequential,  
growth)



## NATURE'S REPEATING PATTERNS



Archetype #4—Spiral (expansion, outward from compression, indirect progression, growth)



Archetype #5—Radial (expansion, outward from compression, direct progression, growth)

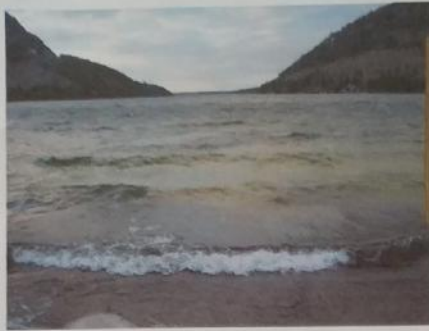


Archetype #7—  
Column  
(extension from  
compression, direct  
progression, growth)



Archetype #6—  
Loop  
(feedback,  
progression/  
regression  
sequence  
(progression-  
dominant),  
intermittent growth)





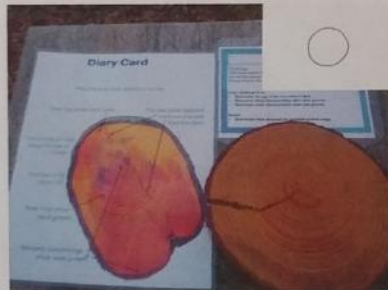
Archetype #8—Wave (rhythmic, interrupted directness, indirect progression, recession/procession process, intermittent growth)



Archetype #9—Triangle (growth/inverted growth, expansion to compression (& vice versa), stability, balance)



Archetype #10—Circle (balance/equal expansion from compression, unity, constant continuity, alpha-omega (no beginning & no end))





Archetype #11—Grid (stability, balance, strength, regulated structure)



**SOURCE:**  
Kryder, R.P. 2000. *Sophia's Body: Seeing Primal Patterns in Nature*. Crestone Colorado: Golden Point Productions.

Archetype #12—  
Laminar Flow (random, indirect expansion, growth, unregulated structure)

