

***Dancing The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind*^{TMSM}**

An Arts-Based Research Exploration

By Linda Lack

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Abstract

Three dance videos and the contextual essays are the result of three years of immersion using arts-based research methodology, celebrating primary experience as valid and useful within academia. The basis of this project has been to explore the relationship or non-relationship between primary experience and worded experience in the arts, and in movement therapy. The work begins with a literature review that explores the idea that dance itself is the “living” literature of our field.

The Portals Project is a literal investigation of the differences between primary experience, translated experience, and pure dance art. This is achieved by portraying movement, first in silence, next with a narrative score accompanying the same movement, and finally by presenting an excerpt from a masked dance performance piece. Viewers/participants are asked for their reactions. This dance performance video has functioned as an elicitation tool.

The Arts-Based/Body-Based Interview, poses questions about the meaning and impact of *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind*^{TMSM}, the technique that the author created and practices with a community of movers. Some of them were also participants in this research. The responses were non-verbal, and were the basis of and the inspiration for the dance video-art project *Wilderness Rituals*. *Wilderness Rituals* aesthetically expresses the findings of the arts-based body-based interviews. It is a piece of *magic realism* where the real (research responses) are fused with the fantastic.

Ascent-I will not be Sad in this World is a dance performance created by the author and integrates three years of this research. This performance combines and stages the worlds of art and movement therapy, functioning together. It acknowledges primary fundamental human experience (Art, Dance

and Movement) as a means to preserve and understand our own humanity. It is the aesthetic analysis of the findings of this study.

DEDICATION

For Sandy Kennedy, whose love and belief in all possibilities gave me the time, space and energy to reach out and become who I have become. These are the gifts of Heart and Spirit for which I will always remain deeply grateful.

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Chapter 1: *Introduction*

The Thinking Body, the Feeling Mind^{TMSM}: An Arts-Based Research Exploration

The only valid thing in Art is the one thing that cannot be explained. To explain away the mystery of a great painting would do irreplaceable harm, for whenever you explain or define something you substitute the explanation or definition for the image of the thing.

Henri Matisse

This body of work is an inquiry into dance, movement and ritual. I came to this work through a lifetime commitment to dance, movement, and performance and with a passionate interest in arts-based research as a tool to promote and advocate dance/movement/ritual as healing, teaching and learning modalities.

Throughout this study, I pursue Shaun McNiff's (1988, 1992, 1998) call for artists/scholars to engage in *arts-based research*¹ methodology. My research and its outcomes were thoroughly informed by the principles and methods of arts-based research. McNiff defines art-based research "as a method of inquiry which uses the elements of the creative arts therapy experience, including the making of art by the researcher, as ways of understanding the significance of what we do within our practice" (1998:13). This methodology offers unlimited possibilities into the realm of research. As an artist, the reality of immersing myself into the unknown and uncertain, as a mode of exploration and inquiry is a familiar one. During this research I inhabited many roles: these included, researcher and subject, artist and scholar, choreographer and dancer, performer and ritualist, as well as healer and therapist. Similar to Patricia Fenner's experience (1996) my research was largely experimental and "outside the bounds of conventional research methodology" (37; cf. Hervey 2000:69). Like Moustakas (1990) and Fenner (1996), my research process was one of complete immersion and surrender, a process these authors have referred to as "indwelling" (cf. Hervey 2000:70). I did not seek complete detachment from my co-collaborators or research process, as is usual in social scientific research. Rather, I strived to live, in my body, to dance every part of my research and to understand the process through primary experience and bodily knowing.

In her important work, *Artistic Inquiry in Dance/Movement Therapy* (2000), Lenore Wadsworth Hervey paves the way for the use and understanding of dance/movement in arts-based inquiry. Hervey writes,

Dance/movement therapists also value the body as a vehicle of expression and a rich source of information. Assumptions such as "the body doesn't lie" and concepts like "body ego" and "body memory" are generally accepted" (83); Dance/movement therapists assess meaning through the expression of the body. Therefore they trust the body as a source of data and rely on their understanding of body experience as a form of data analysis (83).

I have conducted this arts-based research study, using dance/movement to “understand” and “analyze” the data gathered, using many of the tenets proposed by McNiff and Hervey.

The acknowledgement and true acceptance of the process of making art in high-level academia as a means of knowing, researching, or creating important human understanding is finally gaining momentum. While arts-based research has been part of on-going projects in places like Great Britain, Canada and Australia, in the United States we have just begun embracing the artist and the creative process in the global research community. Shaun McNiff finally named, validated, and gave formal entree to artists of all fields into the research community when he wrote Art Based Research. And in the field of Dance it is Lenore Hervey who has just recently validated the dancer/choreographer as an important researcher. She has in fact challenged movement therapists to remain true to their art form and admonished them to dance, choreograph and move.

The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind™ SM

Movement never lies. It is a barometer telling the state of the soul's weather to all who can read it.
Martha Graham

I have, over the span of 30 years, developed a technique I call *The Thinking Body, the Feeling Mind™SM*. This technique has been influenced by over five decades of my involvement in and practice of dance, movement and performance. Mabel Ellsworth Todd's (1980) idea that the “individual is a totality and cannot be segregated as to intellect, motor and social factors. They are interrelated” (2); and that “Living, the whole body carries its meaning and tells its own story, standing, sitting, walking, awake or asleep” (1), has had a profound impact on my understanding of the centrality of the body in composing thoughts and memory. Essential to my understanding of the body as a totality, is also the idea that the body is both a repository of personal and social knowledge that portrays the human condition. I have learned that the body can be a wonderful resource for useful information pertaining to healing, improving the quality of life and celebrating ourselves in the process. What can movement reveal about us? Can ritualized movement offer the possibility of healing and are words really necessary?

In teaching others about the totality of the self, has *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind™SM* brought participants transformative possibilities for greater awareness of self, for the release from physical and/or emotional pain; has it enhanced creative possibilities, and promoted well-being? The development of *The Thinking Body, the Feeling Mind™SM* has offered insight into these questions and has revealed human information not often shared.

The Thinking Body, the Feeling Mind™SM honors the idea that there are essential principles of human movement. The technique, known as TBFM

hereafter, is a movement-based and breath-based technique. It attempts to purposefully do away with the Cartesian mind/body dichotomy and instead approaches the body, the individual, in her/his totality. The inversion that is referred to in the name of the technique portrays the body as the repository of thought and the mind as the holder of feeling. It implies a dialog between the two.

Throughout this work, I re-search² in a self-reflective manner, the use of *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TM/SM}* to create performances that accompany this text. These performances aid my exploration of how inner emotional landscape influences body movement for those who practice the technique, and those who witness the performances (as viewers). The TBTM has been a useful tool for these therapeutic, creative, and research endeavors.

As a therapeutic technique, it is structured to reveal the body's fundamental problems and issues, as it attempts to help resolve what is revealed through its practice. It aims to replace limitations with possibilities. TBFM also endeavors to teach people to respect and treat the *self* and the *body* not as commodity but as a source and resource that needs tending, nurturing, or will otherwise be used-up. The technique, has over time, like my own life, morphed, transformed, changed, grown, and moved. Jellyfish-like it has expanded, contracted and fused into a mature technique. It attracts a large and extended community of people who practice it. There are many people who have been studying with me for twenty or more years, and so there are an "advanced" core of people who feel they have achieved serious physical expertise and self-understanding through the technique. In one family, I have worked with four generations of women. There are now people participating in the *The Thinking Body, the Feeling Mind^{TM/SM}* in Oregon, Washington, California, Mexico, Belize, Canada, Katmandu, Nepal, and Malaysia.

As a creative technique, *The Thinking Body, the Feeling Mind^{TM/SM}* is an extended thirty-year dance. In fact, it is a piece of extended choreography, a ritual practiced alone, in community and even transferred to audiences on stages. Through my body and created by my body the technique makes possible dance/movement/ritual and informs my art making practice. I have grown with the technique, and so has my art. My body is the medium through which TBFM articulates, and the technique has changed me in the process of articulation, as much as I have changed it.

In the research process, I have used TBFM. I am a dancer, movement is my primary means of knowing and as such it is the way I do research. I move many hours each day. I am committed to the ritualized practice of the technique. It shapes the way I *live*. My ability to create effective movement statements and thus research, hinges on my embodiment of TBFM. I have, during the research process, used dance to provoke reaction and discussion. In many cases, participants/viewers responded by offering movement, drawings, poetry, verbalization, or anything else that felt to them, the important and/or compelling way to respond. I discuss in detail my research outcomes in chapters 3 and 4.

The studio where the technique is practiced daily, attracts really interesting people with whom I would never have had the opportunity to interface without the gift of *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM}*. In my movement therapy/ healing practice and with the passing of years, I believe I have gotten better and better at analyzing, resolving body problems and being an ally for the body and its issues. "Getting better at" has also meant that I am handling tougher, more challenging human conditions.

A forty-year exploration created *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM}* and has provided me with the ongoing ability to heal, create, move, explore, perform, choreograph at sixty years old more effectively than when I was in my twenties. Somewhere in the forty-year process I began to realize that there might be some universality to this approach and its practical applicability that began to work so well for me, even perhaps applicability for non-dancers, movers, some essential universal principles of moving and kinesis for any bipedal, upright, thinking, feeling body.

For thirty years, using *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM}* I have witnessed, participated in, and experienced human change, in many instances very dramatic change, resolution of pain, contact with important Self and Psyche information, integration of experience and self-understanding, and acceleration of the developmental process: artistically, emotionally, physically, spiritually.

Purpose of Study

The research problem I explore throughout this study is how study participants respond to non-verbal expression, movement and the body. How does body movement help participants overcome the perceived boundaries between their minds and bodies? What do they come to understand and learn from body movement experiences? What is the intrinsic value and meaning of pure movement experiences and expression?

In this study I use art-based research methodology to inform my exploration of the body as a primary vehicle for art making, and expression. In particular, I am interested in how movement, dance, and ritual convey their own unique set of meanings, a separate reality from the reality of language and texts. Throughout this study, I used my body to generate and elicit dialog about the importance of movement in human communication. *How does the body tell its story?*

Summary of the Stages of the Project

This arts-based research project began with the Portals Project. What was understood from that project created additional possibilities for understanding how the body tells its story. Six additional phases of interviews, both verbal and non-verbal evolved from Portals. As Jill Green and Susan W. Stinson state, "Rather than starting with a hypothesis, postpositivist researchers tend to first ask broader questions such as "What is going on here, from the perspective of the persons having this experience? What does it mean to them? How does it come to have that meaning? What do their experiences, their meanings, mean to me as a researcher? (1999:94). The material from all of the interview phases was synthesized into two performance pieces: *Wilderness Rituals* and *Ascent-I will not be Sad in this World*. In creating this project I have followed the tenets of post-positive research in dance. "Artistic expressions may help to display participant voices and give shape to the lived experiences of the participants. In this way, the research becomes a kind of expressive art form, one which can be quite compatible with many research questions in dance." (ibid.: 96).

Scope and Delimitations

This work is an arts-based research exploration using the movement and breathing technique I created, *The Thinking Body, the Feeling Mind™SM*. The study also self-reflexively explores the creation and performance of two dance/ritual pieces titled *Portals*, and *Wilderness Rituals*. *Portals* and *Wilderness Rituals* were created/performed during the research process. A third video depicts work created upon the culmination of the formal research. It shows the performance and choreographic integration of the research outcomes. Analysis is expressed as creative work.

Performance theory, an important field in its own right, is not in anyway central to this work, even when performance and creativity are at the core of this research. My research is about lived, primary experience, body memory, movement, and ritual as a means to express healing possibilities for clients, self and audiences. Throughout the research process I endeavored to understand, how, if in any way, my work, the technique, and the performance/ritual I shared with viewers, affected them? I was also interested in the way body movement is understood and integrated by those who witness or participate in the performance ritual.

Methodology

The co-operative inquiry perspective is that research is always personal, political, and spiritual; knowledge is always from a perspective and for a purpose.

Peter Reason

Handbook of Qualitative Research

I conducted the research resulting in this work over a period of three years mainly, but not exclusively, in my Los Angeles, CA³ studio. I also conducted research during an arts-based research colloquium at Vermont College, an arts-based research seminar at Union Institute and University, and during a dancer's intensive at Centrum in Port Townsend, Washington.

The community of people who participated in these projects and who are interested in *The Thinking Body*, *The Feeling Mind*^{TM/SM}, are all shapes, colors, classes and physicalities on the spectrum of human beings. The "interested" include differently-abled, differently-minded and differently spiritual or religious. I work at keeping my studio an inclusive environment where people from five years old to eighty-five years old share group classes, information, and themselves.

My research process was not a linear one. In fact, as is usual for arts-based research, I meandered my way through the process of inquiry. I moved/danced with and to co-collaborators and they moved/danced in reply. I had many conversations and I reflected on the process by creating ritual performances. In his important work on arts-based research, McNiff (1998) reminds us, "Art-based research generally does involve more ambiguity, risk and uneven results in terms of the end product. The final product studies are distinctively individuated expressions, more likely to be different from one another than similar" (38). This work is a reflection of my "'sustained immersion' in the issue being researched" and is a representation of my "'direct, personal encounter' with the objects of our research" (McNiff, 1998:53; cf. Moustakas, 1990:12).

Several kinds of interview formats evolved from each other to help me understand the effects that *The Thinking Body*, *The Feeling Mind*^{TM/SM} has on research participants. Finally I created two dance/performance videos that represent the findings of the research.

Part I: Portals

Portals. *Portals* is a choreographed, danced and videotaped arts-based elicitation instrument, wherein I use TBFM, to encourage dialog about non-verbal communication. I used *Portals* to elicit responses about pure movement versus

movement with “words wrapped around it,” and then to show creatively crafted aesthetic movement. This elicitation tool/art video, challenges the dominance of the worded/verbalized culture in which we live. The piece is an interview tool, after its viewing I ask for responses to the piece. These responses can be verbal, non-verbal, movement based, written or any other way in which viewers feel the need to respond.

Portals is a *movement auto/ethnography*. Auto/ethnography is a concept used by anthropologists to describe the process by which autobiography and ethnography comes together to reveal how the self and social forms are culturally constituted (Reed Danahay, Ed., 1997; Hayano, 1990). Auto/ethnography entails the examination of personal narrative within the context of one’s social/cultural reality. *Portals*, a movement auto/ethnography shares with viewers a personal and social narrative through the action of dance. I framed the performance of *Portals* to elicit responses from the audience about the differences between non-verbal and verbal communication. The piece is an embodied elicitation tool. It is discussed in Chapter 3. The Portals Project opened expressive possibilities for those viewing it. I realize that there was several ways to encourage research participants to tell their own auto/ethnography of their bodies. Using the next phases what developed was the arts-based body-based interview. The interviews consisted of individual, group and self or auto narrative materials. .

Part II: Art-Based/Body Based Interview

Phase I: Questionnaire

I developed and administered a questionnaire with twelve questions⁴. The questions were constructed to offer people the opportunity to be reflective about the meaning of *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind™SM* in their lives. During this part of the research, informed consent and releases were also distributed along with an explanation about the inquiry. Participants were given the option to remain anonymous. Interestingly, most participants, with the exception of two people, decided to “own their own stories” (Patton 1990:411) and experience by allowing their names to be shared in the analysis and dissemination of the work.

The interview questionnaire was intended as a jumping-off point in the exploration of the multi-layered experiences and meanings that result when reflecting about the teachings, therapeutic, healing, and overall benefits obtained from the practice of TBFM. My studio is a community of “movers” rather than “speakers.” Participants come from diverse backgrounds and lifestyles and are, for the most part, not involved in social interaction with one another. The questionnaire was also a way to orient folks who had no previous verbal discussion/dialog with one another, by allowing them an initial period of privacy of thought and reflection before engaging in a public group discussion. Patton, in his “Beyond Standard Interviewing” chapter, discussed the idea that “to include

writing as part of the interview...gives interviewees a chance to think through some things before responding verbally” (1990:396). I put Patton’s recommendation into practice by allowing my informants time for written reflection, prior to a verbal discussion of the issues, which emerged for them throughout the process of completing the questionnaire. Many researchers have suggested the use of multiple interviews to support depth and contextualization (Patton, 1990; Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 1998).

Phase II: Group Interview

The group interview was by invitation and was comprised of a group of thirty self-selected people, who ranged in age between their early 20s and mid-80s, and who had varied levels of knowledge/experience with TBFM. Some of the research participants had participated in TBFM for four weeks, others for five or more years. Given the innovative move toward non-verbal primary experience interactions in interviewing, my decision to employ “traditional” interviewing first proved to be a useful and comfortable jumping-off place into hyper experimentation.

Kvale states that, “interaction among the interview subjects often leads to spontaneous and emotional statements about the topic being discussed” (1996:101). Indeed, the group interview brought people together and supported their listening, responding and bouncing off one another, a circumstance that deepened and made even more human their reactions to the written questions. Sitting as a group inside the studio where the “movement” classes take place, and at the site where most of the visceral primary experiences have taken place and shape, triggered and supported important individual, physical, emotional, and spiritual memories that when shared triggered and supported group memory. It also supported “ah ha” moments that would not have occurred without the gathering as a group, demonstrating the importance of community.

Most importantly, each person could experience each other’s facial, body gestures and energy. The feedback from this group interview and discussion has continued, months after the “formal” discussion was over. People are still engaged in accessing some of the thoughts, feelings, ideas and physical reactions that we delved into during the group interview.

Phase III: Arts-Based/Body-Based Group Interview

I conducted what I have chosen to call an *arts-based/body-based interview*. I invited everyone to “warm up” using *The Thinking Body, the Feeling Mind™SM*. The arts-based/body-based interview refers to a method I created in which I dance my questions to participants and they respond with movement in return. The entire elicitation occurs using dance, rather than word/verbal

communication. The group interview culminated in a community movement experience based on the feelings and ideas that emerged from the verbal group interview. This part of the research was videotaped. The footage from this section alone represents several hours of important human experience available to me for further exploration in future research projects.

Phase IV: Arts-Based/Body-Based Individual Interviews

I asked participants the following question as a guide to our explorations from the arts-based/body-based interview: "Please share with me, the meaning, for you, of the TBFM technique and how it has been incorporated into your body, mind, heart and in your entire life or any piece of that." As a non-verbal method of elicitation, I literally danced my question for the interviewees. After my dance, I asked whether a worded or verbal translation of my movement question was needed, only two respondents out of thirty wanted a verbal translation. Even those who asked for verbal translation danced their responses. There occurred an automatic, surprising and (even for me) uncanny non-verbal understanding for each of us in relation to the other. There are ten recorded hours of video for future research possibilities. The importance of ritual in peoples' lives and ritual's ability to create entrée into altered states of consciousness were some of what emerged time and again from the interviews. I created *Wilderness Rituals* based on the themes that emerged from the research process. I will detail the concept of ritual in chapter two.

Phase V and VI: Visual Documents

Portals, Wilderness Rituals and Ascent-I will Not be Sad in this World

In Art Based Research (1998) McNiff, discusses the need for the production of video to document "how pioneering therapists work" (191). In the field of dance, the use of video to document that that is ephemeral is important because movement dissolves the moment after the movement is performed/carried out. The production of professional quality video demonstrating dance/movement research as it occurs and as an interpretation of data is an important part of this project. Video also has the capacity to show the creative component of the researcher's/artist's embodiment of the research. As a medium for representing research processes and outcomes, video goes beyond verbal/written description of the work, and allows people to see and hear the totality of the research experience.

During this project, I created three videos/performance pieces that represent distinct stages of the research process. *Portals*, which I have described

previously presented viewers with a movement auto/ethnography using TBFM, to elicit responses from viewers about the difference between pure non-worded /movement and verbalized/worded experience and art dance/movement. *Wilderness Rituals* was created during the research process, after I had collected most of the responses from participants. The performance body-art I created in *Wilderness Rituals* was my way of integrating into my body the primary experience of conducting arts-based research for three years. The piece embodies the research I gathered throughout this project. It is the articulation of the many voices and bodies who contributed to my inquiry. Further, in *Wilderness Rituals* I explore ritualistic dimensions of TBFM expressed through dance/movement.

Ascent-I Will Not be Sad in this World, was created after the research was completed. It is indeed the analysis of the data. It is also an example of how TBFM and my creative practice have been influenced by this research. It represents the “post” moment, the after research reality. This piece is a deep inner reflection of what I learned throughout my research. It is also an example of how the research has directly affected, impacted and shaped my craft. Several scholars have commented on the need for art-based therapist/researchers to explore how the research process impacts their personal artistic inquiry and expression (McNiff, 1988, 1992, 1998; Moon, 1994; Politsky, 1995; Allen, 1995). The piece also poses a question, in the language of dance, asking people to reflect on what it is to be human, on our common humanity.

Chapter Outline

In Chapter 2, Review of the Literature, I explore works by arts-based researchers, and authors relevant to this work in the fields of dance ritual and healing. I will place this work within the context of arts-based research and explore how my inquiry into body-art and expression, movement versus verbalization, and *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind*^{TMSM} fit within the larger framework of arts-based research.

Chapter 3 and 4 are formulated as contextual essays. In these chapters I explore the video performances and their existence *as part* of the arts-based research process and *as result* of the research process. Chapter 3 describes the Portals Project. Chapter 4 details how the Portals Project influenced the arts-based/body based interviews, and the place of ritual and the ritualized aesthetic expressions represented through the video performances.

In, Chapter 5, the concluding chapter, I share the results, themes and ideas that emerged from interviews. Moreover, I explain the creation of the stage performance titled *Ascent-I Will Not be Sad in the World*, as it represents my

bodily integration of the research and writing process into my artistic craft.
Directions for future arts-based research are suggested.

¹ Elliot Eisner also published a series of articles spanning 30-years wherein he proposes research methods congruent with artistic inquiries and creation. In 1997, he articulated the idea he called “arts-based research.” (cf Wadsworth Hervey 2000:33).

² Re-search, McNiff states is to ‘search again’ 1998:21.

⁴ Complete questionnaire found in appendix.

Chapter 2: *Review of Literature*

Much of our relating in the world is experienced through our body, yet seldom do we take this as a serious place of study. As dancers and performers we learn to find these places in our bodies and skillfully and artfully learn to expand the knowledge of the data our bodies give us.

Carl Bagley and Mary Beth Cancienne
Dancing the Data

This work was conceived within the parameters of arts-based research, an innovative set of approaches that challenge “standard” academic research methodologies and call for broader, more encompassing ways to carry out and express research outcomes. As is obvious by the number of publications on the topic, the field of arts-based research is fast becoming a popular terrain for the exploration of the artist as researcher and researcher as artist, and advocates the production of work that embraces creativity as part of the inquiry process.

The bibliographic reference list on this topic is substantial. Studies advocating and using arts-based research methodologies have sprung forth in fields such as anthropology, sociology, performance studies, cultural studies, ethnic studies, education, health and healing, and psychology among others. While interesting and relevant work can be found in many of these fields, in this section I explore the work of influential thinkers whose theoretical frameworks are particularly relevant to this study.

In 1934, John Dewey published his seminal work Art as Experience. For Dewey art is “...the greatest intellectual achievement in the history of humanity” (25), this work opened the way for artist/researchers to inquire into the meanings of art and its expressive possibilities. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1964) was critical of the mind/body dualism and asserted the idea of embodiment. For him, the body was central to the way humans organize their world. Augusto Boal (1979) is well known for his Theater of the Oppressed. His idea that emotion should be the shaping force in performance is an important one. Max Van Manen (1984, 1990) has been concerned with the idea of lived experience. For him, lived experience involves “immediate, pre-reflective consciousness of life; a reflexive of self-given awareness, which is, as awareness, unaware of itself” (1990:35). He likens the task of the researcher to that of the artist and says that both have to “construct a possible interpretation of the nature of a certain human experience” (ibid.:41). In Choreographing History (1995) Susan Leigh Foster writes, “The body is never only what we think it is (*dancers pay attention to this difference*)” (4). For her, the human body is both, culturally predetermined and unique. Culturally predetermined because each body belongs to particular cultural milieu and unique because each body has its own skeletal, emotional, psychological way of being in the world.

Lewis Hyde's (1983, 1998) work has explored the lives of creative artists within the confines of a commercial society. He has also examined the role of "trickster" as a cultural worker who enables/promotes cultural flexibility and disruption. Ellen Dissanayake (1995) argues that historically and cross-culturally, art has been a central part of human evolutionary adaptation. For her, art is intrinsically connected to ritual (birth, mortuary and others), as well as to trance.

The performance of ritual has been the preoccupation of many thinkers. One such thinker was Antonin Artaud (1958), who wrote about the "purity" of Balinese theater. He tells us about the "Orientals" superior engagement with reality and what lies beyond reality. The Balinese in his account are masters of the use of extensive "emotional" bodily vocabulary/gesture. Their performances are swift and flawless, deploying only those gestures that are needed and no more. The Balinese, unlike the "Western Other" have instituted "metaphysics of gesture" in their theatrical performances. Artaud keenly observed how spoken/understandable language is transcended in Balinese theater. The Balinese theater demonstrates Artaud's idea of the exorcism, of making the demons "flow." The catharsis of the dance or trance itself is a "cleansing" of the body from the every day evils. Victor Truner (1969) was interested in rituals and rites of passage. For Turner, liminality, the transitional stage between two phases when individuals are "betwixt and between" is a limbo, a period of ambiguity. Liminality characterizes trance, transient moments and rituals. In a 1982 article titled, *Liminality in Balinese Dance*, Marcia Siegel explores the intersection of Balinese trance using Turner's theoretical idea of liminality. "In overt ritual reenactments, trance dances, and masked performances, the dancer enters into a shadowy realm where his or her identity comes off its ordinary moorings and drifts rather perilously between the spirit world and the real world" (85). They are ritual reenactments because no single ritual performance is ever like its predecessor, rather ritual, like dance/movement is always as new, as it is ephemeral.

Performance studies scholars have also explored the social and political dimensions of ritual and theater. What can ritual performances tell us about the world we live in? What is revealed through the enactment of ritual, dance or the stage play, the carnival and the parade? Schechner (1992) asserts that performance is inherently political. The type of performance he discusses is what I call "interventionist," "action-oriented," "political" in nature. He calls it "direct theater." There is also the blurring of boundaries between all of these forms of performance. One does not negate the other; rather, performance is a hybrid space/moment. Schechner points out the dialectic nature of theater. At once serving as a reflexive tool (mirror), and a social critique and commentary, a space for multivocality. He states that there is a difference, between the scripted performance and the improvisational style of direct theater.

Anna Halprin epitomizes the "direct theater" Schechner described (1995, 2000) and also explores movement as ritual and as a healing art. In her work, she incorporates what is happening in the world around her to create movement ritual. Halprin explains that healing and curing are two distinct things. And she is interested in healing. "To heal is to operate in many dimensions simultaneously,

by aiming at attaining a state of emotional, mental, spiritual and physical health.”(1995:28). Halprin has created a number of ritual performances, “Animal Ritual,” “Parades and Changes,” Initiations and Transformations,” “Trance, Dance, Totems,” and “Snake Chant.” In *Community Art as Life Process* (1973), Halprin explains that these performance rituals serve as the conduit to explore and build collective humanity and collective consciousness.

Arts-Based Research

Elliot Eisner (1976, 1981, 1985a, 1985b, 1986b, 1991, 1997), is a major proponent of arts-based research methodologies, and advocates the use of the “self as instrument” and calls for creatively crafted work. Shaun McNiff, (1973, 1974, 1992, 1993, 1998a, 1998b, 2004), is another important figure in arts-based research and in the creative arts therapies. He is interested in fostering understanding of the art making process as therapy. And advocates the inclusion of art making as a powerful research methodology. Stephen Larsen (1976) has written about personal mythology, shamanism and the creative imagination. He is interested in understanding “inner journeys” and how these pave the way for the creative imagination. Clark Moustakas (1990, 1994) is concerned with phenomenological and heuristic research approaches. He promotes research that places the individual researcher at the center of the research process to understand one’s self and the world in which one lives.

Dance is becoming an important part of arts-based research methodologies, however to date there is a dearth of studies that use dance as its central research premise. In Artistic Inquiry in Dance/Movement Therapy, (2002) Lenore Wadsworth Hervey explores “Artistic inquiry’s potential for dance/movement therapy” (3), and offers some ideas of how dance/movement therapists can integrate their “lived” bodily knowledge into their research practice. Carl Bagley and Mary Beth Cancienne’s (2002) Dancing the Data, represents another inroad into artistic educational research and explores new ways to evoke knowing, learning, teaching and the constructions of meaning. Dancing the Data also opens the way for researchers to literally dance their research findings, thereby showing, rather than telling important research methodologies. These works represent some of the most recent and influential explorations integrating artistic inquiry with dance/movement research ¹.

Qualitative research literature has for two decades cursorily mentioned and invited the artistic interpretation of data. Hans George Gadamer has suggested that all attempts at experiential knowing are aesthetically oriented (70). Art as a research activity has remained mostly an imaginative suggestion without form until Shaun McNiff named “Art Based” Research in his book *Art Based Research*. There is a dearth of arts-based research projects to date that are truly representative of research into dance and movement. The newer *Dancing the Data* is a promising and admirable effort, but it does not really *dance* or represent the world of the dancer, choreographer, or movement researcher at the level of either artistry or craft that I would hope to eventually experience as representative of arts-based research in my field. Lenore Hervey (*Artistic Inquiry in Dance/Movement Therapy: Creative Alternatives for Research*) was the first to

advocate the making of Dance and Choreography as Research when she documented the research process leading to Bill T. Jones' piece *Still/Here* (95-109).

Primary Experience

The most valid "literature" in dance, my field of study, is not found in the books that have been written on the subject. Rather, such a body of "literature" is literally found in the physical body of human beings. The dancers themselves and the techniques they have created and handed down to generations after them are the "living literature" of my field. Traditionally literature has referred to the written word, however, in this work "living literature," is used to refer to knowledge that is inscribed on/in the body.

Literature on dance/movement and ritual inevitably looks from the outside into a world that is comprised of *primary experience* in present time. Primary experience refers to experience, which is personal, interior, and lived. Primary experience is experiential and locates the body as the central "site of knowledge" (Cancienne & Snowber, 2003). Literature, or the written renderings in this field can only function as a translation of human experience. As such, these translations are reflections, descriptions or interpretations of *What Is*. Throughout this work, the word translation is used to refer to the act of writing and verbalizing about dance. Dance in itself is its own language, its own set of codes. Once dance is written about or discussed, it becomes a translation of its original version and its original intention. Words, spoken or written, are only representations of a particular dance or ritual enactment, not their substitute. This is because like dance, words, are a set of tools that can only manage to tell so much of any particular story. The attempt to translate, explain or theorize is for me and for many who share my craft and art, second place to the act itself of making dance, whether it be intended for performance, therapeutic or ritual uses.

"*Living*" literature implies that the human body is the holder of important information, and contains its own story. "Because the body is socially constructed, it communicates social practices and cultural meanings through voice, gesture, and movement" (Desmond, 1997; cited in Cancienne & Snowber, 2003:244). Simply, the body is a "living enactment of culture and social beliefs." (ibid., 244).

"Living" Literature: Body Knowledge

Merce Cunningham beautifully illuminates the "living literature" concept when during a 2003 interview he was asked, "Are you a Modernist or a Post-Modernist?" The answer was short and curt: "Neither," and when pressed by the interviewer he simply refused to characterize or to interpret himself or his work. In fact, he refused the dialog (Wolf, 2003:61). Why should he interpret himself? He is an Artist, and his work represents his *art*, not translations of it. Currently and historically, his art is some of the most important living literature of dance.

Similarly, Pina Bausch, this generation's international doyenne of choreography, remarked during an interview, "I keep making, time and again, desperate efforts to dance" (Reynolds and McCormick, 2003:640). And by that

statement she explicitly means, her need to dance as opposed to talking or writing about dance.

What emerged from my reviewing of the literature is my deeply felt conviction and the realization that the human beings, the dancers and movement techniques they have created *are*/represent the most important *body* (quite literally) of literature of our field. The accumulation of learned and researched information is actually accomplished by *doing*, rather than by *reading*. It is indeed from this realization that the two arts-based research² projects, which are part of this work, were born.

True creativity in dance and movement occurs as result of artists and practitioners' high level of independence. We spend myriad hours and years, alone or with other movers in studios "reading" bodies, psyches, and spirits. Many artists, as well as researchers have pointed out the importance of deep reflection, awareness and intuition to "bring meaning to light." Clark Moustakas (1994) wrote:

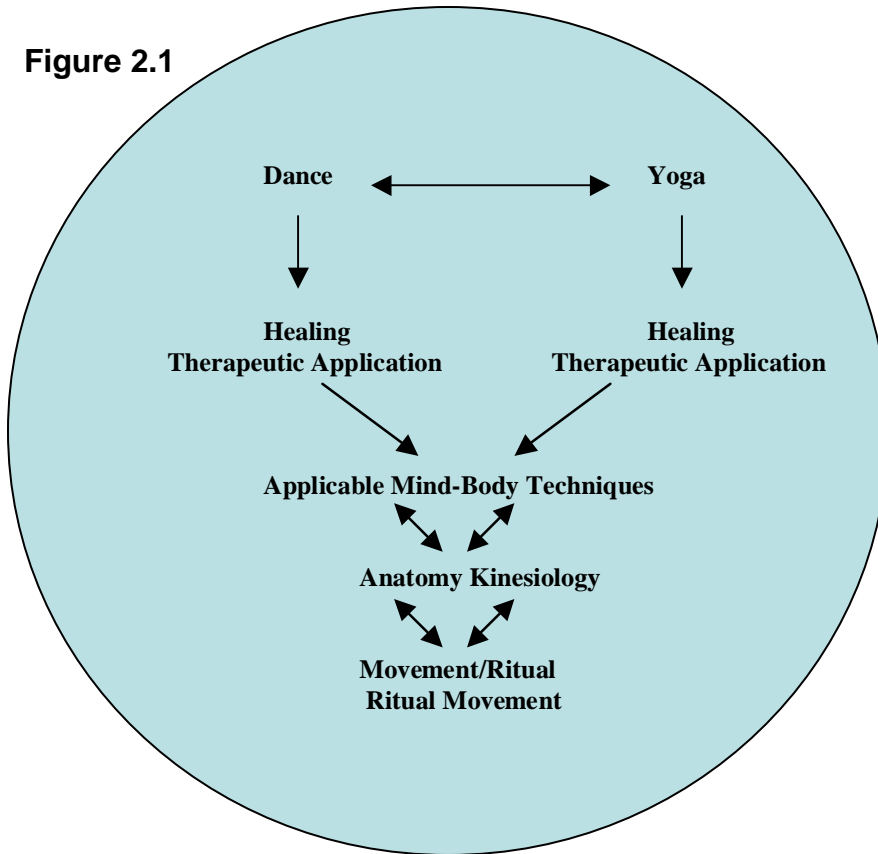
As far back as I can remember I have sought to know the truth of things through my own intuition and perception, learning from my own direct experience and from awareness and reflections that would bring meanings to light. My natural bent was to avoid people who tried to instruct me with their facts and knowings, and to approach things for the first time alone. I have always wanted to encounter life freshly, to allow myself to be immersed in situations in such a way that I could see, really see and know from my own visions and from the images and voices within. When I have been alone I have been able to discern for myself what I am encountering, to explore, to think, to learn and to know (41).

His statement articulates, perhaps inadvertently, the true creative process that renders fresh, non-derivative work. Importantly, his statement validates the idea that intuition, perception, and direct/primary experience are key elements during learning and creative processes.

In the world of dance the willingness to trust the validity of direct/primary experience of the body is at the core of the spirit of arts-based research.

Given that I believe that dancers, movement therapists, arts-based researchers in the field of dance should be dancing/moving, the question of how to make a literature review meaningful and useful arose. As a result, I have chosen to explore some seminal (written) literature about the field, and also work that currently represents the various movement communities, which inform my practice and this work. These practices and their intersections are depicted in figure 2.1. These various communities have influenced the development of *The Thinking Body*, *The Feeling Mind*^{TMSM} the technique that is the basis for my art, craft, and healing practice. These fields represent inter-disciplinarity in that they span the arts, social sciences, and physical sciences.

Figure 2.1



Dancers Tell their Own Story

It is the writings of dancers themselves, talking about themselves, their art, their lifetime of dance-making, and their creative process, that brings us closer to the primary experience of dance. Following, I discuss some of the most important literary works about dancers whose primary experience exemplify independence of spirit and who transformed the dance world in the process.

Isadora Duncan's (1927) My Life is Duncan's autobiographical narrative bringing the reader face to face with the written version of Isadora's inner world. The text travels from Duncan's childhood and brings the reader to some understanding of how movement is linked to the expression of spirit. Duncan freed her self to dance the way she felt. She gave herself permission to be emotionally expressive through dance. In doing so, she transformed dance, as we know it.

Ruth St. Denis' (1939) An Unfinished Life documents her personal life mainly between 1915-1958. Along with Duncan, St. Denis is credited as the second most important influence on modern dance. During her travels to Europe she came into contact with other important artists. Ultimately incorporated into her aesthetic was the dance and drama of Eastern cultures. Her dances reflect the spirituality and inspiration she drew from her travels to the East. St. Denis

influenced many American dancers who later went on to create their own dance companies, one them was Martha Graham.

Agnes de Mille's (1952) Dance to the Piper and Carol Easton's, No Intermissions: The Life of Agnes de Mille (1996), are two important works about de Mille's life in the dance world. de Mille, writes Angela Graham, "continues to inhabit a place between concert dance and popular entertainment. ...due, in part, to her development of a unique choreographic idiom that blended the vocabularies of ballet and folk dance with the psychological and emotional content of modern dance (1997:81). Importantly, these two books on de Mille's life are biographical, and are not critical studies of or about her life. de Mille is the center of the story and it is from that center that her story is told.

Doris Humphrey's (1955) The Art of Making Dances and Days on Earth: The Dance of Doris Humphrey (1988), portray a woman who was "tough and tender, dramatic and aloof, outspoken and subtle, angry and loving in persona, performance and choreography" (Sherman, 1988:434). A student of St. Denis, Humphrey nevertheless carved her own independent path/legacy in modern dance and lived by her dictum that, "modern dance is for those who...believe that art is a revelation of the meaning of life and not an escape from it" (Sherman, 1988:34). She has left an important and inspiring legacy for dancers to learn from.

Martha Graham's (1973), The Notebooks of Martha Graham, comes the closest to really portraying the creative processes of dance. Her journals are full of non-linear, bits and pieces of symbols, imagery, and poetry that attest to the multi-layered thinking and feeling integrated into her body of work.

Cynthia Lyle's (1977), Dancers on Dancing: A Book of Interviews, contains verbal interviews that manage to get closer to dancers' primary experience than those books written by outsiders looking in. This text is particularly important because it offers dancers stories told in their own words. There is, I think, something about the human experience/interchange that mirrors what dance/art is. Written words will only tell so much of any story. During interviews, however the interviewer has access to movement, gesture and body, whereas books contain none of this.

In Dancers on Dancing, (1977), interviewer Cynthia Lyle asked Arthur Mitchell, "Why is dance so important to you?" He responded, "...I was born to dance. I first think physically and *then* I think intellectually. I respond to any kind of movement automatically, and I think that is my natural means of expression...Even before a child is born, when it is still in the womb, it kicks, and kicking is movement." (92). Mitchell eloquently elucidates that movement precedes language, and that primary experience is first and foremost *lived* in the body.

The Modern Dance: Seven Statements of Belief (1965), was first conceived as an interview response to Selma Jeanne Cohen's queries. This text also gives voice to the modern dancers included in its pages. Each choreographer, in varied ways, speaks of their own primary experience. Anna Sokolow says, "Dance is not intellectual. It deals with deep emotion" (30). Some pages later, Erick Hawkins states, "The Western Dance Artist is ready to learn

from the Oriental that his function is to present ideas of enlightenment and in this way to reconfirm the intuitions that each member of the audience has latent within him about how he can mature and fulfill all the possibilities of a complete and meaningful life" (44). "It is the artist's duty to crack the shell and reach the kernel, giving from the inner being to the inner being [i.e., from performer to an audience]" (79), explains Pauline Koner. Lastly, Paul Taylor talking about his dancers says, "[Through dance] we see an individual, and we see what that individual is...a person is going to be revealed" (91-2).

These dancers bear witness to the primacy of movement in human experience and communication. Each understands that primary experience, lived and revealed through movement, is dance's unique language, altogether separate from the verbalized/written experience about dance.

Merce Cunningham is considered one of the most important living choreographers. In his published journal titled Other Animals: Drawings and Journals, (2002), he discusses that he has spent his time "working." For Merce, "Working" translates as making dances. The journal, which includes his drawings and musings, reveal more about Merce and his creative life process than the important and beautifully done book that has been published by Aperture Press titled Merce Cunningham, Fifty Years (1997). Although the latter book places Merce's work in the context of a historic and artistic timeline, it reveals very little about his primary experience. In comparison, his journals are filled with the stuff of primary experience. Images, feelings, personal and universal, non-linear thought are all reflected upon and saved, pieces of which are later used and shaped into dances.

Twyla Tharp's recent publication, The Creative Habit: Learn It and Use It for Life (2003), offers the reader insight pertaining to the creative process. This is, like Merce's journal, a jewel containing invitations into primary experience. Tharp addresses ritual, self-knowledge, the harnessing of memories and the gathering of pieces of the senses to shape artistic statements.

These important works reveal the inner world of dancers themselves. These accounts are important precisely because they are first hand accounts of the dancer's life and the dancer's relationship to and with dance, their own creativity, the social and historical realities of their time. It is important for students of dance not only to witness dancing bodies and incorporate the teachings of "living" literature into their bodies, but also to learn from the life stories told by dancers themselves. For they bring us closer to the primary experience of the dancer.

Dance

Curt Sachs wrote The World History of the Dance in 1933. At the time it was the most complete history of dance as an art form. It is still one of the quintessential texts used and referred to by dance educators and dancers. Companions to Curt Sachs' book are John Martin's (1963) Book of the Dance and The Modern Dance (1965). These are the foundational works placing modern dance in a historic and conceptual framework. Two other works, Elizabeth Kendall's Where She Danced (1979), and Walter Sorrells' The

Dancer's Image (1971), discuss American modern dance and dancers, tells how they were educated, what gave them the courage and the insight to say they had found a new artform and the drive to insist on its ultimate seriousness and acceptance.

Aesthetic, or Modern Dance as it subsequently became known, "...was an original Art, born of a strange blend of naiveté and expertise. Several young women invented it; they were definitely trained in theatrical skills, also held feminist attitudes

but were absolutely untamed in the imagination" (Lylem 1977:*xiii*). Both Sorrell's and Kendall's books are testimony to Moustakas' words regarding the need for artists to use deep reflection, intuition and assertive independence. These are key traits of the fiercely passionate and independent spirit of the artform and the women who chose it.

The six-volume International Encyclopedia of Dance, (1998) has brought into the present Sachs' work. It is the dancer's reference book. It does not, however, tell the reader about the primary experience of dance. One of the most wonderful newer works is No Fixed Point: Dance in the Twentieth Century, (2003). This work is important precisely because the authors, Reynolds and McCormick, have produced a work that is completely unlike a standard reference book. It will be used not just to look things up, but also to access descriptions, portrayals and feelings of the primary experience of dance. It is the book for which the dance community will for generations be most grateful. I can attest to the book's portrayal of primary experience for I was present, during the 1960s, at much of what is described in the book.

As one read about Carolee Schneemann's "Meat Joy," one gets vivid and visceral images of the performance, "...climaxed by a scene in which her group of untrained, semi-nude performers collapsed in an orgiastic heap on a cloth littered with raw fish, sausages and wet paint, while someone carrying a tray of dressed chickens tossed dead flesh upon that of the living" (502). The book's description of the work of choreographers and performers is conveyed in a succinct manner. Yet the work manages to present suggestive writing that gives insight into the primary experience of the events.

An interesting passage in No Fixed Point is the description of the work of Eiko and Koma, their work...

“reflected an Eastern sensibility where the passing of time was for the ages. A husband and wife team they were raised amidst Japan's postwar devastation, witnessing the disruption of their ancient culture as it was forced to adapt to modernizing concepts and Western materialism...Their work was infused with the despair of a ruined nation. Nude or dressed in tatters, employing a gestural spareness and deliberation that slowed time to an eternity, they confronted the harshness of existence as Everyman and Everywoman, at the mercy of cosmic anxiety and the unfathomable forces of nature. They became known for their ability to assume primordial shapes reminiscent of inanimate natural forms and, with nearly imperceptible adjustments, to transform themselves into anthropomorphic

creatures, their nudity partly obscured by mysterious lighting. Often an erotic subtext informed their strange encounters" (615-616).

Here the authors offer a vivid example of how the dancers used movement to convey, express an important set of social, cultural and lived realities. Post-war devastation, modernization, materialism, harshness of existence, and erotics are words to describe some of the major themes Eiko and Koma expressed through/using movement. Movement can portray even the most tragic and complex notions about our shared world. This new text/reference book is important for in it the authors have managed to portray and focus on the *experience* rather than just *documenting* the art of dance.

Embodiment

In his *Sensuous Scholarship* (1997), anthropologist Paul Stoller reminds us that embodiment "is not primarily textual...; rather, it is consumed by a world filled with smells, textures, sights, sounds, and taste, all of which spark cultural memories" (85).

Human beings embody the muscle memory of the dances that makeup our/dancers real "literature." Pearl Lang and Stuart Hodes, who are in their late eighties, are called upon to rehearse and re-member for The Martha Graham Company. Carolyn Brown is present at Merce's rehearsals, and Twyla's original company members participate in "teaching" their roles when older pieces are staged. It is human beings who *are* the true literature, the living literature of dance. In the end dancers pass on to new generations experience that cannot actually or completely be recorded in writings or even on film or video.

One of this generation's most respected modern dance voices, Pina Bausch, refuses to write. She makes dances. Those performances are her/our living literature. Her contribution as collaborator to Pedro Almodovar's film of 2002, *Talk to Her*, represents some of the best of her "literature." Bausch's "literature" is literally an embodied one.

Mind-Body Techniques

The Thinking Body: A Study of the Balancing Forces of Dynamic Man first published in 1929, and reprinted in 1980, by Mabel E. Todd, represents innovative work about "the mechanism of body functions in relation to action" (De Laban, 1969:113). Todd eloquently writes, 'The thinking body...tells its own story,' where 'imagination itself, or the inner image, is a form of physical expression and the motor response is the reflection of it' (ibid.). In 1973, Lulu E. Sweigard published Human Movement Potential: Its Ideokinetic Facilitation, it is an explanation of the teaching philosophy of a dedicated educator. This text documents a lifetime of pioneering work in the field of movement education. For Sweigard, who credits Todd's work as an inspiration, "The idea, the concept of movement, is the voluntary act and the sole voluntary component of all movement. Any further voluntary control only interferes with the process of movement and inhibits rather than promotes efficient performance" (7).

Essentially movement is first pictured or “imagined action,” which is then followed by muscle action (Bernard, 1974:29). Both of these authors believed that visualization is a key element to movement that brain and muscles are in constant conversation with each other, which in turn allows movement to occur.

Irene Dowd, author of Taking Root to Fly: 7 Articles on Functional Anatomy (1995; 3rd printing), remarked during a 1979 interview that:

We are artists first, and our goal is to serve our art. ...Mabel Todd used to say, "The mind is an instrument of thought, not a museum." We are constantly learning. Every dancer, every choreographer, every teacher--all of them have a rich inner knowledge that comes from their experience. They're all scientists, really, because they're testing ideas and bringing them into physical reality. If I don't have anatomy, then I'll have some other information that I will use just as effectively. Rather than asking if I am doing it "right" or "wrong," I can nurture an appetite for all of it. All the muscles are equally popular with me! I love all the muscles, I love all the joints, I love all the spatial dimensions, I love all the possible relationships. I must if I want to serve dance in its fullest potential.

Like Sweigard, Dowd references Todd's innovative ideas. In her statement, the reader is privy to Dowd's strong belief in the inner knowledge that comes from experience we carry on/in our bodies, primary, lived experience.

Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen has published a number of important and pertinent works in the field of dance/movement-therapy. Sensing, Feeling, and Action: The Experiential Anatomy of Body-Mind Centering (1994) offers a practical approach to body-mind centering. Cohen's work advocates the connectedness of mind and body and the body's power for transformative change.

Therapeutic Application of Modern Dance

The movement therapy field that grew out the modern dance art form, believes that the exploration of expressive movement and one's awareness of the body leads to self-knowledge. It leads to “Self-knowledge,” as is attested to in Judith Harris' (2001) Jung and Yoga: The Psyche-Body Connection. Self is written with a *capital "S"* to mean, the world of the transpersonal, a world greater than the individual, more powerful than the ego. It is from combining modern dance and Jungian therapeutic processes that movement therapy was born.

In a 2003 interview I conducted with Pearl Lang, she remembers that Joseph Campbell was one of the key people to whom Martha Graham chose to show her works in progress. It is well known that Joseph Campbell spent much time in Martha Graham's studio. He was married to Jean Erdman, who danced with Martha. During our interview, Pearl Lang commented that there was a definite "exchange" of ideas between Campbell and Graham in lived real time, and that each stimulated the other's work. Lang also speaks of a long chapter in

Martha's choreographic life when she was using what Lang calls "Jungian imagery."

. Mary Starks Whitehouse was the founder of the community of dance/movement therapists involved with Authentic Movement. It is important to notice that in her book, Authentic Movement (1999), she echoes Clark Moustakas:

For me, a theory of what is now called dance therapy came out of years of doing, of learning by action and experiment, rather than thinking, reading or being taught by other people. It came out of taking seriously the questions and needs of people along with what they produced in me...I have to be honest, presenting a polished theoretical model to students interested in dance therapy, without admitting that it is achieved in the first place alone with pain and struggle, may not be true for a second generation but needs to be known (76).

In the preceding statement Mary Starks Whitehouse discusses "primary experience" in the context of movement therapy. And she refers to the need to remain inside of primary experience in creating theory, methodology, and practice. This is how the technique known as *authentic movement* was formed.

Janet Adler and Joan Chodorow are from the generation after Mary Starks Whitehouse. Their essays, along with those of Whitehouse, have been collected and edited by Patrizia Pallaro in Authentic Movement, (1999). Janet Adler asked some important questions: "Are there times when any response, verbal or other, from the witness or mover is unnecessary?...Can this process [moving], without the overlay of Western psychological theory, be in itself a cohesive and sufficient way of knowing?" (76). She goes on to say,

Willing membership just with our minds cannot create the shift in consciousness for which we long. The shift must be an embodied shift. It is in our bodies where the phenomenon of life energy, a physical reality, is directly experienced. One by one, knowing (and knowing implies consciousness), knowing in our bodies that we belong, creates a collective body in which life energy is shared. I imagine the collective body as the energetic consciousness of the earth body, which includes all living beings. It is the body-felt connectedness among people profoundly related to the source of our humanity" (192-3).

For Adler embodied knowledge is fundamental in promoting a shift in ways of knowing. Knowing is centered in the entire body, but she expands her ideas by proposing a collective consciousness, which promotes a common humanity.

Joan Chodorow has said that an "Active imagination has been called 'a dialogue with the gods' (Dallett and Lucas, 1977). Imagination as part of the dance/movement experience can also be understood as "a dialog with the gods". Dance has historically been part of a sacred language, a way of expressing and realizing our connection to the cosmos. "Wherever we humans have withdrawn from a direct experience of our relationship to the universe, there too has the

power of dance diminished" (ibid., 250). This statement indirectly says that we have forgotten to dance and rather have spent time talking, writing, theorizing *about it* (dance), and have forgotten the ritual of movement. Dance Therapy has also forgotten its core principle, to move. Pallaro's Authentic Movement (1999) is a forum for the voices of these important women and their work. But for me this edited volume also revealed some of the reasons that movement therapy is a diminishing community. It has forgotten that the primary experience, the ritual of moving, alone or with others, is the basis of the entire field. In order to validate the field within traditional academics, third generation movement therapists have spent an inordinate amount of time analyzing, explaining, or doing research using social science and therapeutic research methodologies.

I agree with Lenore Hervey (2002), when she writes that "Many dance/movement therapists are not accustomed to thinking about choreography and performance as part of their practice, but many are none-the-less skilled in both or have been at times in their careers...First and foremost, I believe it is essential that [the body of professional dance/movement therapists] maintain a strong connection with our personal and communal dance identities, not only to encourage artistic inquiry, but to insure the continuation of the practice of dance/movement therapy. This could be supported by the requirement of dance classes as part of graduate training and continuing education" (120, 126). Donald Blumenfeld-Jones (1995, 400), a dancer and researcher, has said regarding dance as a medium to present findings "the quality of the dance must be made paramount, which means design and execution must be excellent"(1995:400).

From my perspective, I believe that people involved in movement therapy programs should be committed to movement long before studying movement therapy and entering graduate education. This is because I believe that the lived bodily knowledge of those who have been committed to movement from an early age offers another dimension, to understanding first-hand the principles of movement therapy and movement based research.

Hervey is forthright in her assessment that "...unless there is an internal source of energy and motivation that dance/movement therapists can convey, and a vision that they can stand behind and give form to, efforts to sell dance/movement therapy to others are going to be unimpressive. If the profession can produce research that is vibrant, powerful, meaningful, and communicates the essence of dance/movement therapy, finding a producer and filling the house will become easier" (116-117).

In 1989, Joan Dexter Blackmer published Acrobats of the Gods: Dance and Transformation. Blackmer is a Jungian analyst who studied with Robert Cohan of The Graham Company. This book is important because it focuses on what the movement therapy community has for the most part left out of consideration, mainly that physical training itself: dance, athletics, yoga, the primary experience of movement is labor that gives birth to an enhanced awareness of Self and "...that special alert way of moving which belongs to a dancer. This is a quality animals have naturally, but one which human beings must work diligently to rediscover" (72). Blackmer also speaks of body and spirit and the interconnectedness and relationship between the two. "There is a special

expression of this renewed interest in the training and use of the body, one in which the opposites of body and spirit have not been completely severed"(15). Blackmer's discussion uses freely the concepts "spirit" and "creativity." These are all but missing from the writings of the women who represent the school of "The Authentic Movement." Using imagery the text shows *dancers*, such as Martha, Merce, Nureyev, Judith Jamison, and Matteo Vitucci *dancing*. The work is an important testament to primary experience and, indeed, primary experience that includes high-level dance training as a means to physical and psychic consciousness. Joan Dexter Blackmer is the trained dancer's voice and translator. Similarly another Jungian thinker, Judith Harris, Jung and Yoga: The Psyche-Body Connection, (2001), has given voice and translation to high-level Yoga training. Both of these women have experienced and have come to understand and portray that, in fact, without the *body* there is no *soul* and for some of us, without body knowledge intellectual knowledge is incomplete. The works produced by these women have illuminated my own belief that ritual and primary experience, without explanation, definition or translation is important for use in healing the totality of the body, spirit and mind.

Yoga

Yoga Philosophy of Patanjali and The Upanishads are the ancient writings that have put Yoga in its historic perspective. Yoga Philosophy (in a 1983 edition) outlines the basic practices of Yoga, including its ethical precepts, its movement and breathing techniques, and various styles of meditation. The Upanishads (in a 1983 edition) constitute the philosophical insights of the early sages of India and also document some of the earliest practices of Yoga. The three individuals whose techniques have most influenced modern-day Yoga in the West are: Iyengar; Vishnudevananda's Yoga - Sivananda Yoga; and Sri K. Jois' Ashtanga Yoga. Seminal literature that represents each of these schools of Yoga is B.K.S. Iyengar, Light on Yoga, (1966); Swami Vishnudevananda, The Complete Illustrated Book of Yoga, (1962); Sri K. Jois' Yoga Mala, 1979. Each of these works is a translation of primary experience of techniques that differ but are in fact all grounded in classic Hatha Yoga and due to their antiquity have been much more codified than any modern dance technique. Each work attempts translation using words and photos. No one would, for instance, attempt to teach or to pass modern dance -- say Graham or Cunningham Technique -- on through books or photographic studies. It would be an outrageous and highly ineffective idea.

I participated in Twyla Tharp's pickup company in the 1960's when she experimented with giving her dancers a videotape to learn their roles in her complicated dances. It simply did not work, and she abandoned this experiment that was initially an attempt at efficiency and timesaving. Photos and even videos, which show movement, are still translations of primary experience, and primary experience needs to be passed on/taught through the body. Although the "How to" books on Yoga make up a vast amount of what we can call the Yoga literature, I am not sure that these translations are indeed valuable in passing on the primary experience even of the highly codified, prescriptive and

ancient techniques of Yoga. I wonder if it is part of the Westernization of an Eastern tradition that rationalizes learning primary experience through translations? We are at a crossroads where Yoga teachers can be certified on the Internet with little or no human contact without present-time body-movement instruction. The true living literature of the Iyengar technique is Iyengar himself and the students who have studied directly with him.

And indeed, the seminal books written by each of the Yoga masters all speak about a "teacher" as central to the practice. It is a given in each of these books that Yoga as a technique is both a healing and a spiritual practice accessed through the body. "If we practice the science of yoga, which is useful to the entire human community and which yields happiness both here and hereafter -- if we practice it without fail, we will then attain physical, mental, and spiritual happiness, and our minds will flood toward the Self" (Jois, *xix*).

It is interesting that in yoga the self is also spelled with a capital "S" (Self), exactly like Jung's usage. It is important to acknowledge the universal criss-crossings of physical body movement techniques that are simultaneously healing and spiritual techniques.

In her new book, Dance Was Her Religion: The Spiritual Choreography of Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis and Martha Graham, (2004), Lynn Roseman, a Union graduate writes,

The physical body...is a key that can open doors into the universal rhythms and Cause of all things. The ancient rishis of India knew the body as an externalization of metaphysical truth. Through their relentless investigations into the hidden potentialities within the body, they discovered the science of yoga, the foolproof way to reunite with our Origin. Graham, Duncan, and St. Denis also understood our physical form as something sacred. They recognized it as a temple, divine symbol, and a center for receiving information and communicating ideas. These three women knew it was an instrument worthy of the deepest investigations..." (*xi*).

These women were indeed arts-based researchers whose lifework straddled the worlds of artistic, therapeutic and individual endeavor.

Therapeutic Application of Yoga

In 1931, shortly before his death, Richard Wilhelm presented and translated The Secret of the Golden Flower. Jung hailed it as a link between ancient insights of the East and his own psychological research. Written in the book's Preface,

Through the combined efforts of Wilhelm and Jung we have for the first time a way of understanding and appreciating Eastern wisdom, which satisfies all sides of our minds. It has been taken out of metaphysics and placed in psychological experience...Stripped of its archaic setting, The

Secret of the Golden Flower is the secret of the powers of growth latent in the psyche....

It is of much interest to note that it is Jung who embraces and integrates Eastern Taoist traditions. It is from and through the Jungian community that Dance Therapy emerges and it is contemporarily a Jungian analyst, Judith Harris, who wrote Jung and Yoga: The Psyche-Body Connection (2001).

Another contemporary Western adaptation of Yoga for therapeutic use is found in Rudolph Ballentine's Yoga and Psychotherapy, The Evolution of Consciousness (1976), written in collaboration with Swamis Rama and Ajaja. Charles Bates, Ballentine's colleague and student wrote Ransoming the Mind: An Integration of Yoga and Modern Therapy (1986). Other than these comprehensive books, there is a dearth of actual literature on the use of Yoga as therapy, with the exception of Yoga as body-wellness therapy, as evidenced in the new Yoga Rx: A Step by Step Program to Promote Health, Wellness and Healing for Common Ailments (2002) by Larry Payne and Richard Usatine. The therapeutic literature on Yoga seems to separate mind and body in a uniquely Western way.

There is seemingly no acknowledgment that the body and its refined training have meaningful information for mind or that mind or philosophic endeavors have any influence on the physical body. Hatha Yoga is prescribed for physical symptoms. The philosophic tenets of Yoga are embraced in talk therapy.

Modern dance grew up in the West, was never considered a healing or therapeutic technique until the Jungian community embraced movement and the body as an important form of Self-knowledge and transcendence. Most of the modern movement therapy community is grounded in Jungian theory. Again, Harris' Jung and Yoga: The Psyche-Body Connection, (2001) is one of the few examples of literature that really speaks to the integrated mind/body work of Yoga.

Body movement training with her teacher Vanda Scaravelli, inspired Judith Harris's work. Scaravelli has written Awakening the Spine (1991), one of the most beautiful books on Yoga, complete with many poetic images. Scaravelli wrote her book after a lifetime of participation in the primary experience of Yoga. Judith Harris was inspired to her own written project not as a result of her teacher's book but rather as a result of the body movement training she experienced under Scaravelli.

The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM} blends and cross-pollinates the worlds of art, movement therapy, Yoga therapy, healing and ritual. It does so first and last through a committed connection to the primary human experience of movement.

Body and Movement Techniques

In this section I review some techniques/systems whose focus is on body mechanics and the essential principles of human movement. In 1929, Mabel Ellsworth Todd's book The Thinking Body was embraced by the dance world. It is a classic and profound study of biomechanics, anatomy, physiology and

kinesiology, brought to bear on human movement. It is also one of the most profound studies of the effect of psychological and mental processes on the mechanics of human movement. Todd's The Thinking Body has influenced how movement therapist and dancers, think, teach, and render body movement techniques. It has influenced professional movers and the systems they embrace. It has also influenced techniques that have been created for those who are interested in understanding and making connections to the body-mind continuum. Mabel Ellsworth Todd gave us theory but she left no technique or primary body movement system or "living literature." There are three techniques that came from the same era as The Thinking Body, and because they have living literature they still have large followings of practitioners. These are Pilates, Feldenkrais, and The Alexander Technique. They all have both written and living literature.

Joseph Pilates wrote and produced Return to Life in 1945. I found an original signed copy of this book amongst the personal belongings of Ruth St. Denis at the sale of her estate. I was interested to find reviews of it by both Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis glued to the first page of the inside of this rare book. These reviews attest to the fact that the dance world was interested in the technique that Joseph Pilates was beginning to develop. His seminal book is mostly a photographic progression of the "Contrology" exercises that would become more refined and codified and would ultimately be passed on to generations. The text in the book is merely an adjunct to the attempt to convey body information and instruction through photos about "what" to do and "how" to do it. Indeed, sixty years later, teachers and practitioners of the Pilates Technique rely heavily on images. During this historical moment videotapes and DVD's have become important ways to pass on techniques, such as that of Joseph Pilates.

Pilates, like all body movement techniques, has been passed on through the primary experience of livingthrough body. It is a modern day ritual that people participate in alone, in gyms, or in studios. It is rather less about awareness and more about shaping the body and building muscle-group strength. Ruth St. Denis called it "refashioning," and the technique is very successful in its shape-changing results and in passing primary experience on to many people. The technique, however, puts little focus into integrating the muscle groups to work as a whole system. Although Pilates states, "...in our opinion, it is only through Contrology that this unique trinity of a balanced body, mind, and spirit can ever be attained" (18), however, in this technique there are no direct practices that put focus on mind, emotion or spirit.

Moshe Feldenkrais was a prolific writer, theorist, and a radical thinker. He was more importantly a conscious champion of primary experience and thus living literature. He believed that the most important form of learning is not *verbal* but *experimental, practical, active*. Feldenkrais' writing was actually how he introduced himself to what he later created and called The Feldenkrais Method: a movement-based experimental form of learning, designed to improve all aspects of physical and mental lives. He translated thought into a body technique. In The Potent Self (1985), Feldenkrais says, "...life and movement are practically

the same thing" (71). He believed that movement is the most fundamental fact of life and that movement is thus the most important key to unlocking one's full potential, emotionally and intellectually. He believed that physical movement provides the foundation for understanding the entire human condition.

Feldenkrais was a researcher. He was a living example of Clark Moustakas' statement. Feldenkrais originated his method in the course of working on and with himself. As a young man in Palestine, he hurt a knee on a soccer field and suffered persistent problems, exacerbated by his harrowing escape from Nazi France. Over a period of years he found unique solutions based upon an intensive process of self re-education. At the core of Feldenkrais' discoveries was a process of self-awareness, in particular awareness through the kinesthetic sense of movement. Awareness Through Movement: Easy-to-do Health Exercises to Improve Your Posture, Vision, Imagination, and Personal Awareness (1972), is the Feldenkrais exercise book. The book portrays the exercises using photographs of an articulated wooden human sculpture. The writings and the photographs are insufficient for true understanding of the technique. We are thankfully not left with only this document of the method.

The Feldenkrais Method has serious living literature in the form of friends, followers and, today, training programs that require three years' developmental commitment to a program whose dominant training is body-movement based and passed from human beings on to human beings who become more of the living literature of this technique and the gentleman that created it. Without them, this wonderful and important technique would die on the bookshelf.

F. Matthias Alexander created the Alexander Technique. His most important writing is The Use of the Self (1984). But the Alexander Technique's living literature is Ted Dimon, the current president of The Alexander Society. He has written A Brief History of Mind-Body Techniques (1998), and in the same year The Control of Tension: A New Field for Prevention (1998) and more recently The Undivided Self (1999), and Anatomy of the Moving Body (2001). Alexander, and now Dimon present an approach to the study of physical tension and stress based on kinesthetic awareness and the control of action.

To be complete, a technique of awareness must make it possible to see what one is doing in action, and to gain a control of this activity in the process...to be valid, a technique must identify how the body works in terms which are physiologically sound - that is, based on a practical knowledge of physiology of movement, action, and reaction (1998: 5).

It is interesting that Ted Dimon, who is the living literature of the Alexander Technique, is also one of a group of cutting-edge anatomists and kinesiologists. He is challenging the older theories and mechanical models of the human body. I agree with Alexander and Dimon. An understanding of the science of body is important for human awareness, usage and possibility whether it be artistic, therapeutic or spiritual. Gray's Anatomy, the 38th edition published in 1995, is the bible of human anatomy. The problem for application to Movement, Dance, Life - Primary Experience - is that it was based on knowledge gleaned from cadaver dissection and the theory that the human body is a series of building

blocks. And the study of Kinesiology, human movement in time and space, which is really what Anatomy is, cannot be based on death/dissection information, but must be based on life/systems information.

Anatomy and Kinesiology

For twenty years, beginning in the 1970's, Barham and Wooten's text, Structural Kinesiology (1973), was the resource of all dancers and movement educators. But there was a moment when both the Movement and scientific Kinesiology communities realized that the theory of older Kinesiology texts was out of alignment with the usefulness and application to movement practice. In the 1990's more usable and applicable studies of applied Kinesiology were published. Anatomy of Movement (1993) by Blandine Calais-Germain contains one of the most useful and intelligent recent discussions of applied Kinesiology. More recently Ted Dimon's Anatomy of the Moving Body (2001), actively takes up the consideration that the "building block" notion of the human body in time and space is too limited and is also perhaps a conceptual model that thwarts rather than supports the body's possibilities and movement potential. Some of us believe the human body is a complex suspension system. I am in total conceptual and practical agreement with Dr. Dimon, who, interestingly, is not a mover or dancer.

Liz Koch brought the psoas muscle group into focus for the Anatomy, Kinesiology and Movement world with her Psoas Book (2000). Back pain, misuse of the body, and physical shutdown can be linked to the powerful psoas muscles. From the Yoga world, Anatomy of Hatha Yoga (2002) by H. David Coulter reflects the knowledge of someone who studied yoga before he shaped his written project. It will stand as an important discussion and resource text of anatomy based on Hatha Yoga techniques for decades to come.

It is important to note the progression reflected in the titles and the focus of the more contemporary books. Kinesiology, which is the study of human movement and anatomy is finally viewed through the lens of Movement and Primary Experience. Either the words "moving" or "movement" are found in the titles or the work is centered around Pain, Posture or, in the case of Coulter's book, an entire body movement technique, Hatha Yoga. The focus is on Movement, i.e. primary experiences. We at last understand that we must learn from live moving bodies (primary experience), especially from those people with high-level movement training. We are acknowledging that science has much to learn from the arts. The reverse has always been assumed. David Coulter is an example. An anatomist by training, in his text he tells that he arrived at full understandings of anatomy through the primary experience and the Art of Hatha Yoga. He was able to write his book only after many years of doing Yoga himself.

Gunther von Hagen's project Body Worlds: The Anatomical Exhibition of Real Human Bodies (2004) has been, for me, a phenomenal example of living literature. My experience of this exhibit will be one of the most powerful in a lifetime. The work crosses the worlds of art, science, and spirituality. Visitors to the exhibit became involved in a ritual, which created opportunities for learning in

all of these (and many more) realms. The creators of the exhibition have committed their lives to reinventing the art/craft of dissection using our era's access to chemical plastics in a process they have named "plastination." Body Worlds was inspired by the creator's interest in anatomy. The result was that they were capable of positioning real human bodies in positions of present-time movement, displaying these bodies in action: leaping, swimming, throwing a basketball, playing chess, riding a horse, a bicycle; they accomplished this by using innovative dissection techniques. The exhibit has had some inevitable controversy surrounding it, for it breaks taboos about the way society does/doesn't deal with biology and death. Visiting the exhibit was a ritual and could have brought up anything from horror or anger to grief and depression. Instead, I watched people transition from fascination to awe and into deep respect for what it means to be alive in a body that moves. Many of us, including doctors, artists, scientists, alternative healers, visited the exhibit three or four times as a ritual.

This exhibit, like taking a movement class, attending a live dance performance or a Tibetan Peace Ritual are all examples of living literature in my particular interdisciplinary fields. Body Worlds, an anatomical exhibit of once-live human bodies represents a portrayal of primary experience and also is an important rendering of current anatomy/kinesiology.

...it is especially important that objects be directly understandable without lengthy explanations. The whole-body specimens achieve this most successfully. The intellectual awareness of the visitor is aroused by components of whole-body specimens, such as organs, muscles and bones. Achieving awareness in this way is a greater and more satisfying accomplishment than is the case when studying individual organs or body parts. Seeing a skeleton likewise leads to a greater understanding of the body than does seeing an individual bone (32).

In a most exquisite and literal way the human beings who choose to donate their bodies to the Institution of Plastination are the living literature that will pass important, nonverbal education on to others for generations to come. Like marble statues, they outlast the life of their creators. Like art that is effective, the "moving" bodies elicit deeply felt authentic responses from their audience.

Movement/Ritual

The human body is the sole instrument of dance. Dance is ritual. Dance is the celebration of the human body and the human being, individually and/or communally. Whether practiced on stages, in studios, museums, or in communal gatherings for healing body or spirit, dance is ritual. Here I will reference some cross-cultural and global examples of studies written about movement rituals. I have chosen to review them because they have been most important in the development of my work and thinking on movement/dance: Hanna Judith Lynn's, To Dance is Human (1979), Charlotte J. Frisbie, Ed., Southwestern Indian Ritual Drama (1980), Carl Hammerschlag, The Dancing Healers (1988), Byron Foster,

Heart Drum (1989), Jennifer Owings Dewey, Rattlesnake Dance (1997), Muriel Thayer Painter, A Yaqui Easter (1997), Carol Laderman & Marina Roseman, The Performance of the Performance of Healing (1996). These works explore the inner workings of ritual. Some of these writers have inevitably become involved and embraced into the particular community they have chosen to study. But these studies nonetheless look from the outside in and cannot possibly fully understand the cultural lives of ritual and its practitioners (in its entirety).

I am interested in what I perceive to be (my own and) contemporary society's thorough longing for primary experience rituals. Following, are works that portray the primary experience of ritual in the voices of the creators of the rituals themselves. The people themselves are the current living literature of the particular movement ritual they create.

Liz Lerman's Shall We Dance, is a ritual-making and community-making project that uses large communities of untrained movers in ritual performance on stage. Liz Lerman has won the prestigious MacArthur Grant in 2003 for her important work. In the world of painting and fine art the Zhou Brothers attracted forty artists in 2001 for their movement-painting freedom rituals that played out like performance art and included audience participation. Thousands of people witnessed and participated in the Tibetan Sand Mandala Peace Rituals at the Museum of Art in Los Angeles in 2004. Both the construction and the destruction of the Mandala went on for hours with no words written or otherwise accompanying the ritual. Those of us who attended the Sand Mandala Peace Rituals, along with the monks who rendered the rituals are the embodied living literature of that spiritual ritualistic moment. People go to yoga studios and gyms in huge numbers looking for meaningful movement rituals. And young people participate in the rave scene, a modern-day example of trance dance.

In researching this work, I have reviewed various journals and magazines including *Dance Magazine*, *The Journal of Movement Therapy*, and *The Journal of Art Therapy*. I have found, however, more than the previous mentioned journals, *The Journal of Ritual Studies* publishes research that acknowledges primary experience and action-research. Some of the most diverse examples are, "*Music, Dance and Raving Bodies: Raving as Spirituality in the Central Canadian Rave Scene*" by Melanie Takahashi and Tim Olaveson, 2003; "*Singular Rituals Serve Elders' Apprehension of Personal Health and Well Being*" by Linda Marie Small, 2002; "*The Relaxation Response and Its Possible Corollary in the Shamanic Trance*" by Eugene Taylor, 2002; and "*Masks, Metaphor and Transformation: The Communication of Belief in Ritual Performance*" by Michael S. Merrill 2004. The journal includes articles on art, healing, and education and points out that contemporary ritual exists in all of these realms.

One Man's Journey into Ritual

After a brilliant career in theorizing, writing, lecturing, Bradford Keeney abandoned academia and his clinical therapy practice to immerse himself in cross-cultural shamanic rituals, particularly those of the Bushmen. True

immersion in these rituals, for really useful and meaningful learning that can be passed on to others, necessitates leaving the worded, written world behind, because in that world "talk doesn't always help, but dancing, singing, touching, and transcendent prayer are where the action often takes place" (*Shaman*, xi). *American Shaman*, 2004, by Jeffrey Kottler and Jon Carlson with Bradford Keeney, aptly and hilariously talks about the fallacy, and even the failure, of relying on words and writing in relation to human change and well-being. The entire book is a testimony to the importance of living movement ritual and the human beings, cross-cultural shamans, who are the living literature of important human wisdom. This kind of wisdom is visceral, physical and spiritual, and this book does much to portray the need and reason to step outside of thinking/talking/writing and to return to learning that emanates from dance, spirit, and each other.

For my own work and life, I hope that, unlike Bradford Keeney, the need to abandon "academia" is not a necessary one. Through my work and life, I hope to be part of a brave new world, in which scholarship embraces the wisdom and knowledge of the artist, ritualist, and of the creative process and the artistic product, as living literature and living research. There is much to be gained, learned and found in the work of those of us who are artists, and arts-based researchers.

¹ Other important works about dance/movement and artistic inquiry include the work of Mary Beth Cancienne and Celeste Snowber (2003); Donald S. Blumenfeld-Jones (1995); Donna R. Davenport and Cheryl A. Forbes (1997); Jane C. Desmond, Ed. (1997); Martha Graham, (1991); Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, (1992, 1999); Celeste (Schroeder) Snowber (1997, 1998); Norma Canner (1998); Sondra Horton Fraleigh, (1987); Ellen W. Goellner and Jacqueline Shea Murphy, (1995).

² This is a new field of research and a few varied spellings are currently in use. I am using the spelling "Arts-Based Research" to make it clear that this research embraces all the arts.

Chapter 3: Contextual Essay

The Portals Project

In a world where education is predominantly verbal, highly educated people find it all but impossible to pay serious attention to anything but words and notions. There is always money for, there are always doctorates in, the learned foolery of research into what, for scholars, is the all-important problem: Who influenced whom to say what when? Even in this age of technology, the verbal humanities are honored. The non-verbal humanities, the arts of being directly aware of the given facts of our existence, are almost completely ignored.

--A. Huxley, Doors in the Wall

"...the sense of increase of understanding, of deepened intelligibility resulting from aesthetic experience, has led philosophic theorists to treat Art as a mode of knowledge superior, not only to that of ordinary life, but that of science itself"

--Bella Lewitsky Quoting John Dewey

Introduction

This project addresses the difference and the schism between primary experience and translated experience. The project also attempts to put people back in touch with how to access primary experience and what is important about art and direct awareness for learning, knowing, and developing. The primary experience of dance/movement is the most dominant and important part of this research. As such, it is necessary for everyone reading or participating with the research to watch the videos that accompany the document. The videos depict the embodied approach of this arts-based research.

Please note that throughout this project when the word or concept "healing" occurs, that it refers to a process and practice where the boundaries between the healer, the healed, the witnesses/audience, and the art itself blur into a universal performance of healing.

The *Portals* project explores the differences between a primary or "pure" movement experience and that same experience when it is translated or has "words wrapped around" the movement. It further explores what the differences are between either of those experiences and "true" dance theater with sound and visuals. The research considers and is interested in the difference for *both* the person creating the artistic project and those receiving the experience - the audience. This exploration is grounded in an attempt to help define what Shaun McNiff calls Art Based Research, where both the concept and practice are still in developmental form, particularly in the field of dance/movement.

I am a dancer/performer/choreographer, an educator and a healer/movement therapist. I have dedicated fifty-five years to creating movement rituals, an entire

technique, and have worked to encourage individuals to practice accessing Self through movement. I re-entered academia cautiously, making a commitment to myself, my art form and to a belief that a Ph.D. in dance *should dance*. Further, that it should not deteriorate into an exercise in rationalizing why art and dance in particular is a worthy endeavor in the community of scholarship. In fact, it is a thrilling chapter in the history of both art and academia, for Shaun McNiff and others have opened the way and given formal credence to art and art-making as research (Art Based Research, 1998).

In doing so, we are liberating minds, revolutionizing methods of gathering and interpreting information, elevating and validating the role of the working artist in scholarship, and most importantly expanding possibilities for human understanding. Lenore Hervey has echoed all of this and extended an invitation and inclusion, specifically to choreographers and dancers, by describing and documenting choreography, its process and product, as a research endeavor (Artistic Inquiry in Dance/Movement Therapy, 2000).

This arts-based research project was born from an interest in and an attempt to extend Hervey's contribution to the field of arts based research in dance. Through this project I also aim to participate in shaping what arts-based research is; from my own serious concerns for dance/movement as its own way of learning, experiencing and knowing; and for its healthy existence in academic environments where words, both written and spoken, are the dominant culture, and thus the "upper class" of that society, with all its attendant privilege, power, etc. This arts-based research project is an advocacy project. It is also an attempt to create understanding and to illuminate, for those who do not spend time involved in the creative process *what is important about Art*.

In an attempt to contribute to and expand the scope of arts-based research, I decided to allow the methodology, design, and pedagogy itself to be a creative process, unencumbered by already existing formulae yet faithful to general guidelines. In Chapter 3 I share the etiology and evolution of my approach, the journey toward the design, the design itself, and the results of this arts-based research.

Development of Research Process

I have never *made* Art or Dance. I have placed myself in my studio (or in the wilderness for wilderness rituals) and allowed myself to wander, stumble, thrash, fly and wonder at it all. What was *the dance* was passed through me and revealed through the act of immersing Self in movement, breath and in the present-time moment of physical, emotional, spiritual awareness and being. I have always trusted that process (McNiff, Trust the Process).

Throughout this arts-based research I allowed myself to be immersed in the utter discomfort, a very universal discomfort, frustration, and sometimes, even distaste of the artist, when required to explain, define, or put words to Art. Henri Matisse said, "The only valid thing in Art is the one thing that cannot be explained. To explain away the mystery of a great painting would do irreplaceable harm, for whenever you explain or define something you substitute the explanation or definition for the image of the thing."

I spent movement/studio time wondering about the dichotomies between the lived or primary experience of dance and the worded and written academic world in which I had also immersed myself. Simultaneously, I was asked to arrive with a written paper about “the meaning(s) of my art making practice” for an important Ph.D. seminar. As a dancer and scholar, my authentic response to this assignment was to move/dance. In other words, I could not authentically portray through words the primary experience that *is* my art making practice. I decided to “turn in” a dance instead of an essay (on paper). I tore up seven blank pages. And then I performed the piece. It was a bold exploration. This bold exploration was received with resounding interest and support for the point it made. I intended it less as a political statement, but rather, to make the point that dance is a language of its own. I had unanimous acceptance for my “paper,” profound understanding for the point I was making. It was the most difficult, strange, un-graced dance I had ever created in a lifetime of making dance. I sustained the only serious performance-related injury of my career while presenting it.

Somewhere in this process of stumbling through the wilderness and floating at the outer edges of this query, a generous and wise faculty member, Don Shapiro, suggested that I look at the moment when humans begin to speak. It is at this moment when there is a schism within Self, a schism between lived/primary experience and translated experience. Here may be the schism between body and mind. There are dramatic and profound losses when words are born and we become estranged from primary experience and our important ability to access it. “At first glance language appears to be a straightforward advantage for the augmentation of interpersonal experience...But in fact language is a double-edged sword. It also makes some parts of our experience less shareable with ourselves and with others. It drives a wedge between two simultaneous forms of interpersonal experience: as it is lived and as it is verbally represented (Stern 16).”

I maintain that that loss is not necessary, that it is the artist who can exist in both worlds, who can help connect and reconnect others to the world of primary experience, who can mine this particular source of natural human wealth and information. How then could I portray this information, understanding, and my concern for what I see as the minimization, disinterest and indifference to primary experience that is surely the basis of making and receiving art? I created *Portals* to address these issues. For many, it provides re-entry into the lost practice of primary/lived experience.

The Structure of Portals

Portals is made up of three sections. The first is fifteen minutes of pure movement in silence except for the sound of physical grunts, breath, spit and sweat that comes from the physical labor of passion and angst. The movement material is partly autobiographical, with attention to that which is universal. It is also political, emotional, physical, and sometimes it endeavors to portray the spiritual. The second section is a rerun of the exact same movement with “words wrapped around it.” This second part explains what happened in the first section. During the shaping of the *Portals* project I learned that I could not dance thoroughly or authentically from a “lived” place while trying to speak at the same time. I could not really live, dance and

translate simultaneously. I could make primitive noises and body-based noises, but it was not possible to produce communicative language, as I know it, while moving. Given this, I recorded my own voice and words and danced to them in the second section. Still, I was not able to live inside the moment of embodied experience, for language, my own voice, translations, definitions and concepts actually yanked me away from primary experience. At that point in the process I realized why the piece was not what dance-theater and ritual are truly about. I had initiated the piece knowing that I would "wrap words," sentences, language/ideas around the movement. This presupposes that I was already dwelling in the land of translation. So I added the third section which is an excerpt from a mask-dance drama and ritual that authentically represents my art. This third section, like the first is lived/primary experience.

Portals became a fifty-minute solo that took six months to create and three months to "live inside of," as dancers say. Before the piece begins I explain what I will do and how the three sections follow one another. I ask viewer/participants to try to remain present with me, physically and emotionally, as I move. I also pose the question and ask people to keep in mind, *"What is the difference, for you, between the primary experiences and the translated or worded experience?"*

At the end of the piece everyone is invited to answer or respond in any and all ways they choose, including movement, silence, drawing, speaking, noise-making, anything. At this writing the piece has been performed seven times, for a spectrum of people ranging from those with little art exposure or experience to high-level functioning artists.

Results of Portals Inquiry

The Portals Project has been performed or used in video form in seven different settings: at Vermont College, at Union Institute and University's second Arts-Based Research seminar, two times at my studio in Los Angeles, once for twenty-five students of TBFM, and alternately for the Los Angeles community of professionals, choreographers and educators, at The Bill Evans Dance Intensive, Centrum Arts, Port Townsend, Washington, in a Child Development Master's-level course at SUNY Brockport, New York, and by the world-renowned concert pianist Lorin Hollander during master classes. It will be presented at the November 2006 conference of the Congress of Research in Dance (CORD).

Reactions to the piece are surprising, stunning, and are often passionately intense. Additionally, the Portals Project as a video document has proved to be an effective teaching tool. The piece has stimulated important reflective discussions that go on for months after a showing. It would be impossible to share, within the confines of this document the totality of what we have gleaned through *Portals* but the following is some of what has emerged.

Art, the creative process, is a primary/lived experience. Certainly the making of art *is*, and I believe that most artists hope that the receiver, audience, viewer of a work of art is engaged in primary/lived experience while participating with that, which is made. The intent, phrasing, emotion, even composition, of a piece of choreography does not have a subject or verb, a period at the end of a sentence or thought. The beat of the heart, the rhythm of breath, the cadence of a human being's body physically

lifting and falling, the contraction and release of muscles, the exquisite joy of flying from and falling back to earth are primary/lived events, and it is actually impossible to construct the multi-dimensional layers of primary experience into sentences, paragraphs, words written or spoken. The *Portals* Project is a tough and demanding performance experience, but what is really interesting is that the possibilities for injury are *always* greatest in the worded section because I must work to remain in true lived experience while hearing my own voice. The dis-ease and dis-grace of the worded section prompted the inclusion of the masked dance ritual. No worded, languaged, theoretical experiences went into the making of or go into the performance of this final section. The final section is what dance art, or at least art that is most satisfying, is for me. Now please view The Portals Project video. The video is, of course, only another kind of "translation" of the actual primary experience of the live performance.

It is interesting that the folks who participate immersing themselves in this project, feel that the third section is what speaks to them and moves them most deeply. Responses have been very primary, such as howling, weeping, utter silence or simple, poignant gestures of appreciation. It is very rare for anyone to address the question I pose at the beginning: "*What is the difference, for you, between the primary experiences and the translated or worded experience?*" Instead, for most people the piece seems to function as a portal or opening into accessing primary experience. It evidently gives the viewer/participant permission to delve into their own lived experience and to remain there, both when watching the piece and in responding or replying to it. The worded, sentenced question becomes irrelevant and pales in relationship to the need to express, celebrate, share, participate and remain in primary experience.

Participants have made poetry, intricate paper sculpture, drawings and dances in response. Art is a language of its own and most people respond in the language of art. *The Portals Project* lends support to a new current of thinking: "Art should be taught and experienced in its own tongue, certainly not in a detached and foreign one." (Kimball, *Four Quarters of the Earth*). I whole-heartedly agree with Kimball's statement. Each time the piece has been shared people access and bring to conscious awareness important "Self" information and they are willing to dance it, show it, and shout it. These are cathartic experiences triggered by the piece and its non-verbal statement that primary experience is worthy, useful and important human experience.

After experiencing *Portals* participants no longer want to engage in verbal discussion and it seems like they experience a newfound freedom to "do," rather than to "speak." The piece seems to give access to and permission for expression of important Self-information that would otherwise be ignored. Some of the responses have been dramatic self-realizations and epiphanies, while others are simple but meaningful statements. One woman remarked, "*Thank you for showing me how beautiful I am*" (C. Lossi). Another woman rolled across the entire floor, draped herself in my lap and sobbed. I held her. I was very moved. Something meaningful was happening for her. A deeply important, non-verbal exchange took place between us, witnessed and supported by the rest of the participants. On another occasion, a woman from the audience catapulted herself onto the floor, grabbed the books that I used as props symbolic of the worded experience and smashed them onto the floor. She shouted about the familial and cultural constraints that precluded her from living

out what she perceived to be her “true self.” These kinds of responses support what we know, that primary/lived experience, art, is wonderfully useful in therapeutic, developmental and healing work (McNiff, *Art as Medicine*).

Another thematic group of responses falls into the category of education (both learning and teaching) and curriculum research. They are epitomized by the following message: *"Thank you...for your wonderful presentation at the symposium. I am in a field not related to arts-based research, but the presentation was for me a ... consciousness changing experience because it taught me more about how to approach my own research with openness to the 'essence of the truth in the data' and with more creativity. Thanks again."* (Williams). Each showing of the project produced multiple suggestions that students and faculty of Art and Communication departments, communities exploring inter-disciplinarity, and policy makers inside and outside of academia should experience the piece.

Lastly, but most compelling and deeply satisfying for me personally, is that *The Portals Project* has proven over and over to be a channel into accessing how to approach, enjoy, understand, and embrace the experiences of both making and receiving art. One person said, *"In a short fifty minutes we access aesthetic understanding...the impact is primary...This 'aha' is an opening for new understanding of both self and other, of epistemology, complexity, silence, layering ..."* (Kimball). Another, a scientist who, after experiencing the piece, stated that she would never sit in a dance concert again without "participating." The varying forms of thanks the piece has received remind me that art is a gift, a gift we give ourselves when we make art, a gift we give to others who receive it.

The Portals Project began as an arts-based exploration in the field of Dance and as a celebration of art and dance. It began as an attempt to underscore what is important, for everyone participating, about the *act* of making art. It evolved into a tool for accessing primary/lived experience, for deepening our understanding about our capacity for, and the value of, primary experience that is the stuff of art and the creative process. Society at large and academia in particular do not encourage, foster, nurture, or even offer many experiences in primary/lived experience. That neglect of an important part of human experience distances us from a valuable part of our humanity. Participation in the land of primary/lived experience offers wonderful and expanded possibilities for information that has profound implications for individual self-knowledge, education, aesthetics and healing. Ed Ruscha has said that, "To practice art is to enter into something dubious. Dubious in the sense that either fragments of the universe have fallen at your feet and you must make something of them, or numerous haphazard elements have been given to you by other people called artists and you must now reinterpret them... realize the scope of these thoughts by presenting art simply as a thing to be practiced rather than studied." The use and findings of the Portals Project inspired and created the subsequent project discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Contextual Essay

The Arts-Based/Body-Based Interview

Introduction

What evolved from both the experience and the findings of Portals became the multi-layered arts-based/body based interview. This part of the project once again handled the research problems: How participants respond to non-verbal expressive movement, how body movement helps participants to overcome the perceived boundaries between their minds and their bodies, what the intrinsic value is in pure movement experience and expression and, most importantly, how the body chooses to tell its own story.

I am interested in art and dance in particular. Art, as I have stated previously, is primary experience, dance is quintessentially so. There is a premium on mind over body and words over primary experience. We are constantly compelled to translate primary experience into words and writing.

Throughout this research project, I have explored non-verbal versus verbal experience. In this section, I have done so in the context of asking the participants involved in the breath and body movement technique I have created over the last thirty years what the meaning and effects are on their persons and lives. Therapeutic healing/body movement techniques have much to say about themselves and what they do for the people participating, and many studies have "observed" and analyzed what goes on during these techniques. It seemed important and about time, to give a voice to those participating in these techniques, specifically in the TBFM. I included myself as a participant in the experience. As a committed and interested arts-based researcher I allowed both the process and methodology to create itself as the study unfolded. What ultimately emerged is what I have named the Arts-Based/Body-Based Interview. The focus is again on what we can learn through primary non-verbal experience versus worded or translated experience.

The findings of this phase of the research are represented in The *Wilderness Rituals* video. The video is the artistic interpretation of the data that was gathered through the arts-based/body-based interview. It is my aesthetic expression of what was understood and also what remained mysterious through this process. This project culminating in the *Wilderness Rituals* video and *Ascent-I Will not be Sad in this World*, is the second in a series of ongoing inquiries into the relationship between primary experience, specifically human motion and emotion, and its verbal translation.

The arts-based/body based interview is grounded in qualitative research, but specifically in the dual realms of arts-based research and in-depth interviewing. I layered one upon the other in order to once again explore movement/gesture that is primary experience and its relationship, or lack of relationship, to verbal translation (Lack, "Primary Experience Versus Translated Experience" in *Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism and Practice* 2004). Little or no work has been done in this field, but invitations have been extended. Denzin, in "Interpretive Interactionism," stated that "alternative ways of presenting interpretation must be experimented with, including film, novels, drama and plays, songs, music, poetry, dance, paintings, photography,

sculpture, pottery, tool-making and architecture. In doing so, it opens wider the windows of interpretation that look out into the worlds that have been studied" (*Applied Social Research Methods* 138). And Moustakas wrote: "...the research participants remain close to depictions of their experience, telling their individual stories... The life experience of the researcher and research participants is... a comprehensive story that is portrayed and further elucidated through poems, songs, artworks and other personal documents and creations" (19).

Eisner has actually linked art and the interview when he stated, "Art is a genre that can serve as an inspiration for interview inquiries" (*Enlightened Eye* 106). Eisner has looked at educational practice, research and interview research from the viewpoint of the artist, but no one has looked directly at movement, dance and gesture as *responses* to interview questions. And no one yet has invited co-researchers into a non-verbal interview dialog.

In this study I am interested in the concept of making body-based art as the means of response to the interview, for I am interested in human stories and meanings that are revealed in gesture, body movement, and kinesis. The co-researchers involved in this innovative study also became deeply interested in how the body tells its story.

The history of the interview in human research is well documented, and so are the various ways to "transcribe" those interviews. Often, accounts of the interview experience describe the utter tedium that accompanies the amounts of transcripts and pages that need interpretation to mine the humanity from the words, stacks of papers or audiotapes. This seems to me a digressive path away from the origins of the human beings and their stories. There are also strong admonitions in interview literature to "listen" carefully, let the co-researchers "speak" (Seidman 56). There are no suggestions about watching or looking. There is no focus on body movement or gesture that accompanies even the in-depth interview, and certainly in transcribing interviews all human gesture, whether facial or full-body, is lost. In fact, the "primary experience" of human emotion that creates gesture and motion is lost forever within traditional interview research, particularly in this technological age, where computer analysis is so prevalent. There is a kind of neglect of obvious but meaningful information that portrays the human story. I believe that every individual's story, historically and presently, is embedded in cells, muscles, organs, movement and gesture, and with or without language the body will, in fact, tell its story.

The literature about interviewing invites and encourages the interview researcher to provide an autobiographical context for interest in and inspiration for research (Seidman 25). Auto- biographical information is probably even more necessary when proposing an innovative kind of interview such as this arts-based/body-based interview. Embedded and implied in the following autobiographical discussion is the credibility and validity of my qualifications to embark on research that will provide useful human understanding, possibility and information in my particular artistic medium, dance within arts-based research. It is my passion for human beings, expressive movement, and the years I have dedicated to my field that have helped create the arts-based/body-based interview.

To this end I have carved and sculpted time, space, ideas and through hard physical labor a technique emerged. It is the technique I have shared for forty years

with anyone who is interested. Today the “interested” are all shapes, colors, classes and physicalities on the spectrum of human beings. We work at keeping the studio an inclusive environment where people from five to eighty five years old share group classes, information and themselves. We work at dispensing with classism, sexism, and especially ageism and “looks-ism.” I have in fact created a community and a following that feels like a huge bouquet of wildflowers, rather than dozens of expensive longstem roses that are exactly alike. This is unusual in the world of dance and body movement.

Development of Research

I asked participants to reflect on and respond to the question: "What are the effects of *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind*^{TMSM} a movement technique and ritual on healing, lifestyle, wellness, creativity; and what is the meaning of this technique in your life?"

The ninety to one hundred fifty people per week who attend my studio, the groups and individuals who interface with the technique and me, when I traveled to do workshops, were a wonderful basis for research. There were thirty self-selected participants who participated in this study. I am often awed by the events that transpire within my client hours, my studio or dance communities where I travel to teach. I have had ideas about why the technique works so well, but have never definitively or thoroughly understood why it works so well for so many, although I am both the creator of the Technique and I am given the honor and the focus of having initiated the changes. This has then stimulated, and indeed provoked, this research. In fact, in the field of movement there is little or no information requested or gathered from students, clients, patients themselves about the impact on their persons and lives. I have chosen to pose the interview questions to others and myself, purposefully blurring the boundaries of interviewer and interviewee. I have interviewed groups, individuals and myself in the process. I was interested in aesthetic responses to the interview situation but I remained open to whatever form the research might take. " 'An aesthetic approach to research requires perceiving the research as a work of art in formation. Because the form is not predetermined, artistic inquiry involves the creation of new forms ' (Hervey 86) that help us notice what we have learned not to see" (Eisner 3).

The traditional methodology of interview research tapes oral conversation, transcribes tapes into written texts, and in this decade uses computers to analyze the interviews. The transcription process is a transgression, a transformation of one narrative mode, oral discourse into another narrative mode, written description. It is a distant translation, in which any and all primary experience is lost, including facial or body expression. Nor does the traditional interview give any clues to social or personal interaction of the interview. The traditional interview is a decontextualized and deconstructed experience for all of the participants including, in fact, the creator of the research and the audience reading and receiving the results/information of the efforts of a study. "Sociolinguistics and ethnomethodology have brought the differences between oral and written language into focus (Ong, 1982; Tannen, 1990; Tedlock, 1983)" Kvale writes, "In a historical linguistic study, in particular of Homer's work, Ong

outlines the thought and expression of a primarily oral culture as being close to the human life world, situational, empathetic, participatory, additive, aggregative, agonistic and redundant. In contrast, a written culture is characterized by analytic, abstract, and objectively distanced forms of thought and expression" (Kvale 166-7). If the translation from a verbal culture to a written culture represents "distance," then the leap from body-based primary/lived experience to verbal to written expression represents even greater distance, and indeed a serious loss of an empathetic, participatory, human worldview.

At the beginning of this research, it seemed important simply to give "voice" to some thirty years of ritual movement experience. What actually evolved and emerged from our non-verbal movement-based community, where primary experience is comfortable and accessible as a means of internal (Self) and external (Other) communication is what I am naming the "Body-Based/Art-Based Interview Response." It is an innovative approach to responsiveness, questioning, and even the formal interview experience. It uses body movement, gesture, dance and non-motion/silence as its primary focus, and language or translation only as a sometime background choice. The focus is on primary experience and the value of human expression through non-verbal means.

In creating the arts-based/body-based interview I have accidentally and inadvertently addressed head-on seven of the ten Critiques of Present-day Interview Research outlined in Kvale's *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*:

"Current interview research is *individualistic*, it focuses on the individual and neglects a person's embeddedness in social interactions; *intellectualistic*, it neglects the emotional aspects of knowledge, overlooks empathy as a mode of knowing; *immobile*, the subjects sit and talk, they do not move or act in the world; *cognitivist*, it focuses on thoughts and experiences at the expense of action; *verbalizing*, it makes a fetish of verbal interaction and transcripts, neglects the bodily situatedness of the interview; *arhetorical*, published reports are boring collections of interview quotes, rather than convincing stories; *insignificant*, it produces trivialities, and hardly any new knowledge worth mentioning (292).

In contrast to Kvale's critiques of the "traditional interview," research participants in this study were part of a community dedicated to *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind*^{TMSM} and it is from their conscious awareness of being part of this community that the body based interview, movement "conversations" took place. This art based body based interview engages the entire person, there is no separation between intellect and body because the basic premise of this research is that such a separation is largely artificial. During the arts-based/body-based interview people were in motion, moving and acting on their own behalf. The interview pulls the focus away from thought and into action. Action is the locus of this particular knowledge. Body language, rather than verbal communication is the focus of this interview. I chose to dance the findings of the data. I chose to meld innovative interview methodology with arts-based research, which resulted in *Wilderness Rituals*. *Wilderness Rituals* and *Ascent-I will not be Sad in this*

World, are the embodied analysis of this research. These performances have impacted people's lives in real ways.

Importantly and also inadvertently I created what really matters to me and what Kvale thoughtfully calls "...emancipatory possibilities that research interviews have for getting beyond the surface level of the phenomenon, for going deeper than commonsense and instigating a process of reflection on phenomena studied" (52). In other words, the folks involved in this study are not only emotionally, physically, aesthetically and intellectually "engaged" in their own internal experience; they are also caught up, interested, and remain over time ongoing participants in researching, wondering, and talking about the difference between primary/lived experience and translations of that experience; the difference between making art and the studying or talking about art; the value of primary body-based experience. They are also involved in the analysis because participants view the results they helped create in the form of a performance.

Structure and Results

What follows is the description of a layered, tiered project developed over an extended period of time, that seems to continue ever onward with an energetic life of its own. The questionnaire and the group interview ultimately built the arts-based/body-based interview, which in turn resulted in an aesthetic expression of the cumulative responses to the research question. As stated previously, human movement cannot really be either contained or portrayed on a two-dimensional page. I am committed to accompanying all writing with video translations of the missed present-time experience that dance is! This study, its methodology, and the two videos that are its aesthetic analysis evolved over an extended period of time. There were six phases of this project culminating in two performance videos. The structure and results of each phase are described in the following sections.

Phase I: Questionnaire

In a community that was established as a movement-based, non-verbal community, a questionnaire seemed a respectful and useful way to establish a safe and supportive environment before meeting for a verbal group interview (The Written Interview Questionnaire and release appear in P.D.E. Appendix). We are a community of "movers" coming from diverse backgrounds and lifestyles who are not involved in social interaction. The wonderfully interesting thing that happened as soon as I delivered the questionnaire was that three people came to me to ask if they could make a dance or movement response to the paper I handed them. Two people wanted to respond moving together.

These folks had arrived at the same place along with me, and just about simultaneously. They understood that an arts-based/body-based interview demands evaluation, discussion and reflection that is derived from its own tongue and culture, using a "language" and a "vocabulary" that is its own. The arts-based/body-based interview was in fact born from the tension of attempting to shove primary-level experience into a traditional verbal/written, translated form. I am always reminded that "...the depths and mysteries of creation elude containment." (McNiff *Trust the Process* 5). "Trusting the process, which is the basis of Art Based Research, and accessing the

energies of creative movement is a discipline. I liken it to the practice of sitting meditation ... over a period of time." (McNiff *Trust the Process* 16).

The creative process, and in this instance the creation of a non-verbal arts-based interview, has had many phases, and each phase informed the next, making contributions to the whole. In this context, I wonder if I/we would have arrived at the same place of understanding about the need for a primary arts-based response without the discomfort, dissatisfaction, and inadequacy of the written questionnaire and group verbal interview. So I honor and acknowledge the questionnaire and the themes that emerged from it. It provided self-reflective time for each individual answering it. It provided extreme validation and support for the fundamental principles that have shaped TBFM and for the method/practical application. It provided resource material for inquiries for years to come. There were important themes that emerged as responses to the questionnaire. The following are recurrent statements summarizing participants' responses:

The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM} has provided:

- Dramatic cessation of chronic pain in relatively short periods of time;
- The cessation of depression that (may or may not) be related to pain;
- The revelation that a "gentle" technique could have dramatic results;
- The ability to "look inward;" to refer to the Body/Self for information;
- Feelings of physical, emotional, personal safety;
- Extensions of the Technique's benefits into the rest of life;
- A place "to go" during difficult times;
- A body-movement technique experience that is personalized, applicable to, and adaptable to the individual;
- A Body/Mind connection that is real, not just a concept;
- Mental focus, stress reduction, anxiety reduction;
- Change from the impossible to the possible;
- Self-confidence based on conscious control of emotional/body reactivity;
- Connection to intuitive, insightful self-reflection and usable information;
- Learning that was totally unexpected;
- The challenge of an in-depth technique;
- The ability to learn deeply, not superficially; to do things one never expected to do;
- Knowing about the importance of a relaxation/release component in body, motion, life;
- Interest in the technique over an extended period of time that invites commitment;
- The concept of body as art, instead of the sacrifice of the body to art;
- A belief in process-oriented existence, rather than goal-oriented existence;
- A belief in a self-directed way of living as a participatory event;
- Dramatic changes in attitudes toward aging;
- A gateway to "the collective unconscious;"
- A needed relief from daily verbal input and output;

A sense of mastery and tranquil well-being.

Within the recurrent statements there were also recurring words shared by participants describing Self in relationship to the technique. These words are: *“Expressive, youth, poise, enterprise, self, acceptance, nonviolence, healthful, receptive, responsive, gentleness, able, clarity, strength, confidence, power, calm, optimistic, joy, elation, adaptable, flexible, energy, life-changing, life-saving, understanding, peace, self-esteem, wholeness, freedom, happy, graceful, balance, resourceful, profound, well-being, hope eternal, will, try, feel-good.”* These are a most heartening testimonial to human well-being.

The responses to the written interview questionnaire revealed that I/we have succeeded in sponsoring and manifesting the essential philosophy and principles that stimulated and continue to stimulate the building of *The Thinking Body, The Feeling MindTMSM*. The support for the teaching methods and the technique itself and the individual commitment and connectedness to both were and are overwhelmingly moving.

What was very interesting and unexpected was what was left out of the questionnaire. Question #10 was *“Are there any spiritual/consciousness results from participating in the technique? If so, what are they?”* This question was left blank more than any other, or there were resounding affirmations without the intensive depth or kind of language and information that informed the other questions. Since I am so deeply interested in body movement's relationship to Spirit, I was also very interested in understanding why this particular question and its answers stood apart from the rest. I waited to see what would be revealed in the other layers of the arts-based/body-based interview.

Phase II: Group Interview

The videotaped documentation of this part of the arts-based/body-based interview began with this phase of the research. The footage from this section alone represents over three hours of important human experience that I will need to explore more in depth in the future. During the group interview people shared many wonderful stories. Participants shared intimate stories about Self-discovery based on the technique. One person said, “I am not graceful or athletic, but I came here to participate in the technique and now I feel that I move well. I never thought of myself or my body as something wonderful until I practiced the technique.”

Some of the interesting themes that emerged from the group interview that were not as obvious or available from the previous questionnaire were:

- The importance of space and place; the feeling and ambiance of the studio itself;

- The importance of quiet, non-verbal hours spent doing the technique;

- The interconnectedness, closeness to and care for each other, even though no time, words, activities are shared other than the ritual of taking/doing a body-movement class;

- The importance of a Technique grounded in science, kinesiology, anatomy, that takes people beyond science and into that that

- is spiritual;
- The importance of a safe, supportive environment;
- The importance of promoting diversity of religion or non-religion;
- The importance of a technique that promotes spiritual, philosophical or transcendent ways of being without dictating the process and the content, rather individuals arrive at their own connectivity to spirit;
- The importance of a technique that embraces all ages, body types, ethnicities, in sum, everyone;

Towards the end of the third hour several people spoke in depth about spiritual consciousness, paranormal experiences or altered states of consciousness (ASC) accessed during or after practicing *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM}*. People spoke of the loss of a sense of real time and the expansion and contraction of time. Roger Walsh has written that, "There is significant evidence that altered states may represent a core experiential component of religious and mystical traditions and that practices such as meditation and yoga may induce specific classes of ASC" (Walsh, 1993:739). Adrian Parker, in his 1975 States of mind: ESP and altered states of consciousness defined ASC as "any state of mind that differs markedly enough from that which we associate with our normal waking selves" (Parker, 1975:8).

The questions that emerged for me as a result of listening to the group interview discussion included the following. How is identity shaped by the body's limitations and/or possibilities? Why does this kind of Technique precipitate in some of us what appears to be Altered States of Consciousness (ASC)?

"The scholarly conversation and research concerning ASC is distinguished by engaged interdisciplinary speculation concerning its biological and psychological determinants, manifestations and meaning. Studies have demonstrated the phenomenological differences between pathological mental states ... and ASC in shamanic practice (Noill 1983), and have exhaustively revealed the so-called drivers of ASC: dancing (including masking), chanting, music, yogic and other forms of meditation, breath work, pharmacological substances, and near-death experiences, to mention those more commonly cited (Prattis 1997; Winkelman 1986; Tart 1983; Harner 1973; Kalweit 1988; Grof 1998; Eliade 1974)" (Merrill "Masks, Metaphor and Transformation" *Journal of Ritual Studies* 23). Other questions emerged that I plan to explore in subsequent research projects. Some of these questions include: Is ASC the kind of primary experience that is not conducive to verbal or written description? What exactly is it about *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM}* that creates wholeness for people and is this connection a part of altered states of consciousness?

Phase III: Arts-Based/Body-Based Group Interview

During the arts-based/body-based group interview I invited everyone to "warm up" using *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM}* and to participate in a non-verbal expressive group response to the Question posed and the discussion we had had. During this section we created/experienced a group response to the meaning of movement in these peoples' lives and the meaning of movement in relation to one another. One person began alone and each person participating joined the movement experience when they were moved to do so. Reflected and embodied in this

experience and in the many hours of video footage is a reiteration of what the verbal group interview revealed: that a group improvised movement ritual connects people to Self, each other and the community. The non-verbal group movement experience however, created heightened sensibilities and sensitivity, visually, kinetically, aesthetically probably because language is missing. The connections people were making through movement are deepened and heightened. The experience and the video footage reflect a dedicated and focused intent to contact, reach out and physically touch each other. There were reports by participants that commonplace time and space seemed to change and reshape itself (ASC). There were several requests to make this non-verbal group experience an ongoing practice, and long after the event people wrapped words around the experience like "deeply gratifying, connective, comforting" and "comfortable." Directly after this primary experience people chose not to talk much and seemed to prefer silence to translations that would interrupt the extended feeling of the experience.

Phase IV: Arts-Based/Body-Based Individual Interview

The individual arts-based/body-based interview represents the essence of the arts-based/body-based interview method. There are over ten hours of video footage that document this phase. As interviewer I created a piece of movement and gesture symbolizing the following statement and question:

"Thank you for being willing and receptive to gather yourself together with me. The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM} is a teaching technique that we have gifted to thousands of people. Some of you have been involved for so long that you have seen the Technique morph and change through the years. Will you tell me, please, the meaning for you of this technique in your body, mind, heart in your entire life or any piece of that. And I thank you ahead of time."

I danced this to each interviewee. I asked each person whether they wanted a verbal translation of my statement/question. Only two did, but everyone "answered" with movement responses. There was an automatic, surprising and (even for me) uncanny non-verbal understanding for each of us, the interviewer and the respondent. After each non-verbal interview we sat with one another to verbalize and translate the experience. What we recorded and what is depicted in the many hours of video footage are strong, deeply felt emotions that go along with accessing and participating in primary experience. Some people made dances, impressive pieces of choreography and improvisation. These are representations of untrained spontaneous demonstrations of passionate creativity. There were also, as with the other interviews, indications that for many the Technique creates access to ASC. I have given each co-researcher the role of being their own interpreter for this interview. I am interested in empowering co-researchers, making them full and equal participants in the process. In doing so, I believe more in-depth, authentic human information was revealed and will always be.

Phase V: Portals

I performed *Portals*, the arts-based research performance piece that you are able to view. The piece can be viewed as an example of "Autoethnography" (Hayano 15). Autoethnography describes studies in which the anthropologist study/research

their own cultures. (In their extensive review, Ellis and Bochner focus on studying one's own culture and oneself as part of that culture to illuminate a way of life [Denzin & Lincoln *Handbook of Qualitative Research* 733-68]). I chose to study my own culture within the studio and the broader cultural community of dancers and movers.

I framed the performance as an interview and asked for responses to the piece. There was no verbalized question; it was instead embodied and implicit within the performance piece. The videographers have captured the participants' initial reactions as the piece is being presented, but the dominant footage from this phase documents the responses when the piece is finished. There were and continue to be openings and demonstrations of emotion and spirit beyond the realm of everyday common social behavior: K.B. who is a CPA kissed the walls and the floor of the studio space when the piece was presented; A.F.S., my mentor, advisor and friend, was spontaneously moved to create a choreography of the moment, one so moving that it continues to be talked about. We were all suspended in time and space. M.R., who had been silent throughout the afternoon, accessed important information about childhood abuse a week after the performance and was willing to talk about it in her next movement therapy session.

Eventually there will be a video that will depict some or all of this. I hope it will exist as a first example of what I have named The arts-based/body-based interview.

The goodness and most compelling part of this endeavor were the utter and total humanity and passion of it all. Connecting to primary body-based experience deepened our humanity. This study has demonstrated that that connection is useful for making further connections to Self, Others, Community, Spirit, and for creating general wholeness of Being. Witness this story sent to me six months after participation with this Interview project. It is Jan Zeitlin's story, whose generous permission I have to use her name and writing here:

"As a response I embark on the following inquest into talk therapy and movement therapies which I have experienced in my own life. I will do my best to recall feelings from fourteen years ago. My father and mother both became ill with cancer at the same time, their diagnosis being just two months apart. I came quite undone. This was my initiation into the grief of having loved ones with serious illnesses. [], my husband, and [], my best friend coerced me, to put it mildly, into seeking a therapist and, eventually, I began to see a Jungian therapist...My past experience seeing therapists was minimal. In my early teens my family sought help and all together we did a family group therapy to help sort out my brother's drug addictions and our family dynamic. We were disappointed and didn't continue with the doctor. Perhaps if we had stayed with the process longer it may have been beneficial, but all in all it seemed useless...

[] had often described her process with this therapist as greatly enriching, meaningful, fascinating and very helpful to her. My experience was not so positive. Actually now that I think about it I think I went to a sensitive and highly qualified therapist at the right time, but she was the wrong therapist for my needs. My problem was specific. I was extremely grieved, worried about the mortality of both my mother and my father. I had never faced anything so serious in my life. The gist of my problem took precedence for a short while as I "talked" it out but then I became entrenched in talking about so many other things... Interestingly, what was redeeming

about my therapy sessions was what I did after each session, which was to go to the Self Realization Fellowship Lake Shrine. My therapist was in Pacific Palisades so it was just a few minutes drive to the SRF. I would sit by the waters edge, meditate and think and dream and watch the patterns the breezes blew upon the lake and the swaying of the reeds and water lilies. How beautiful the swans gliding on the lake, and how cute the turtles looked lying on the sun warmed rocks. SRF was always one of my favorite places. My mother took my brothers and me there often as little children and I in turn took my four little children there many times. We always loved everything - the beautiful circular walkway around the glistening lake, the graceful swans, huge multi-colored carp, all the little docks and bridges, the windmill, soaring fountain, the floating lotuses, and most of all, Gandhi's ashes! SRF is truly a hermitage for the weary in a busy city.

"... Now Linda, all of this has led up to what I really wish to tell you. Toward the end of all these therapy sessions I came to your studio and did a private yoga class. I had been attending group classes but this one on one with you would be special. A private session with you was costly and the thought to do this with you on a regular basis never entered my mind. To spend about the same amount weekly with a psychotherapist seemed acceptable and necessary and therefore affordable. How wrong I was! I remember that 'moving' and 'movement' session with you as joyous, interesting, transcendent, elevating me to a higher plane. It was transformative, honestly. Moving through the body... is a powerful tool and we've always done an incredible dance together.

I never told you this, but I always wanted to. During that private, while doing a fishtail, I had a big revelation. This may sound silly but here it is: When I was a baby, my mother had this blue plastic diaper changing pad. On it were printed little naked babies floating on clouds. I was entranced with this image of floating on clouds. My mom used the same changing pad for my baby brothers so it was around for years and I had a terrible longing to float on clouds and would repeatedly ask my mother if one could float on clouds, (I guess somewhat like Jesus walking on water.) She would answer 'No, a cloud was just vapors and could not possibly hold anyone up - one would just fall through.' I was disappointed and secretly held out hopes to be able to one day

float on a cloud. My first clue to this being possible should have dawned on me when in high school - at Palisades High - when I would lie on my back on the grassy quad at lunch time, close my eyes and float away ecstatically, and wonder why this felt so good. Little did I know then that I was doing Yoga - corpse pose. In that moment doing a fishtail³ in my private class with you, I achieved the sensation of being able to float on a cloud! I was weightless - elated, I had realized an exalted state! Compare this to endless talk about my problems and I will choose the mysteries gladly. I remember leaving your studio feeling I had experienced a great gift. You had lifted my burden of sorrow. You shifted my attention to an all together different place, giving me an experience of my larger self, not the little me that I would verbalize with my therapist as I talked endlessly on and on. Your teaching, attention, kindness, interest were so greatly appreciated. I am so glad to have this opportunity to express my gratitude to you Linda. I consider you my life long teacher and deep friend...

"P.S. One last thought - swinging in parks was another way to soften suffering at that time- comforting to sway to and fro of course like being rocked in someone's arms - also like the initial head movements "the lifts with the twists" at the beginning of class in The Thinking Body The Feeling Mind and the shifting side to side in embryo pose."

This story conveys that verbal communication did not heal or help in her attempt to cope with suffering. Through life's dance and our willing participation in this research, we came to understand what Jeffrey Kottler portrays about his "colleague" and mentor the Bushman Shaman that "He clearly believed that the most important thing in life was the mystery that surrounds us. Rather than trying to clear up uncertainty and ambiguity, he wished to increase the awe and wonder around him...He believed that life's problems were far too complex and multidimensional to ever comprehend. And besides, even if such understanding were possible, what good would that do?" "...Instead of talking to people about their problems, they were deliberately *not* talking and, instead, were prescribing rituals that made little sense...they were actually helping their clients embrace greater mystery" ("Bringing the Mystery Back Home" *Psychotherapy Networker* 56).

Phase VI: Self Interview, Wilderness Rituals

During the structured body based, art-based interview project that I have just described, I simultaneously directed the same questions toward myself that were directed toward the people in our movement community. My own immersion in both this inquiry and the ritual of *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM}* seemed essential if I were going to be a part of the ritual and not an outside observer of the experience. "It is the archetype of art therapy that emanates through us when we live the discipline and establish a camaraderie with our patients and images." (McNiff, 1992: 39-43). I have known and trusted that it is my own immersion in *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM}* that supports and allows what goodness is possible for me as a teacher, therapist, performance artist. "My experience indicates that personal artistic expression by the art therapist furthers the creative energy of the studio. The soul benefits from both therapists' and patients' involvement in expression" (McNiff, 1992: 41).

It is also ongoing immersion in both the technique and ritual of *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM}* that supports and allows my ongoing relationship with my art form ritual/dance/choreography. In fact, it is through this research that I have come to see that the making of art is indeed a "Self-interview" a dialog with one's emotional, physical, psychic and spiritual Self.

Body, Mind and Spirit are the basic resources of what I do and make, the paint and brushes of my art form. Maintaining a continuous and conscious dialog with body and spirit is necessary, particularly when a sixty-year-old body still chooses the kind of rigors this art demands. Through this inquiry, I have come to understand that my lifelong work, Masking, a transformational art form is really an arts-based/body-based interview that happens in past, present and future non-verbal time. The creative process of discovering the personas embodied in the masks, giving them life, and the dances that are their attendant narratives begin with non-verbal Interview. Kvale has described the interviewer as a "traveler on a journey that leads to a tale to be told upon

returning home" (4). I would describe my own arts-based/body-based interview as a journey, both inward and outward, with an intent or focus. I would describe it as a hunt for information psychic, emotional, imaginary, physical; a hunt for wholeness. Like the real-world hunts of primitive peoples, there are physical rituals performed in conjunction with the hunt.

National Geographic recently ran a picture article of the Barabaig of Tanzania, whose elephant and lion hunts with single spears are conducted in strict secrecy. The preparations for the hunt involve men doing inversion postures - perfectly aligned headstands which are described as part of a battery of exercises to hone strength and readiness for the arduous pursuit ("Hunting for Glory" July, 2004 81). *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM}* is my/our version of preparation and ritual for the pursuit of tackling life and art and everything in between. *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM}* makes possible in reality what would only remain imaginative without it. *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM}* and the art that we generated during this study using the technique give entry into psychic, spiritual and physical realms that would not be accessed otherwise.

Because of this study I became consciously aware of pieces of my own artistic process. The uncountable hours I have spent in my studio donning, for instance, the Consciousness Mask that was handmade, sent across oceans and gifted to me by the world-renowned Balinese maskmaker I.B. Anom, while I wait to "hear from" or "see into" or "feel" movement from the Mask itself and sometimes the hands that made it - this is a Self-interview that goes way beyond Self, a non-verbal interview that crosses time, space, culture, consciousness. An Interview with an artifact, the African antelope bite-plate mask that you will see depicted in the *Wilderness Rituals* video, becomes a magical experience that could not have occurred without *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM}*. The rigors of holding a mask with solid wooden antelope horns in one's teeth at six thousand feet above sea level, on hands and knees in rough terrain in ninety-degree weather could/would not be possible without daily technique and ritual. In fact I believe it would never have occurred to me, nor would I ever have attempted this kind of journey, hunt, experiment, without non-verbally "listening" to the mask itself. The primary experience of its smell, taste (because of the bite plate) and feel triggered an unfolding of non-verbal questions and answers about who, how, where the mask was once used, and what it now intended me to "know." This in turn catapulted me into the wilderness, naked with only mule deer as audience. While it is true that the wild exposed place/space and the contextualized creative experience brought much to bear on this ritual, it is the magic, liminality, and somatic/psychic manifestation of altered consciousness that becomes possible in the shaping and dancing of these rituals.

Like many of the other participants in *The Thinking Body, The Feeling MindTM SM*, I have evidently learned how to access entry into ASC, and the creative process of shaping mask-dance ritual actually requires that access. The performance of these rituals most often holds one suspended under ASC during and for some time after the performance. "The conditions under which *persona* and identity become aroused to a heightened awareness of and enfoldment with the collective psyche constitute a transformation of consciousness referred to earlier as alternate or altered states of

consciousness (ASC). Characterized by 'perceptual changes in all sensory areas, intense and often unusual emotions, and profound alterations in the thought processes,' such states provide information and insights that can clarify or intensify emotional, psychological, philosophical and spiritual issues that remain confused or unresolved in normal functioning consciousness (Grof 1998:7)." (Merrill "Masks, Metaphor and Transformation" 23)

Interviews are people's stories: "The world is made up of stories, not of atoms" (M. Rukeyser). Access to our own "stories" and the willingness to share them creates a sacred relationship with both Self and others. Primary body, based experience puts and keeps us in accessible touch with "stories" that are often lost in the everyday world of words. The arts-based/body-based interview became not merely a vehicle for gathering information but, more importantly, a technique for mining human information that would usually be lost in the world of worded lives. (*Please watch the video, Wilderness Rituals.*) *Wilderness Rituals* is the Primary Lived Experience that aesthetically expresses the findings of the arts-based/body-based interview.

Findings

Wilderness Rituals and *Ascent-I Will not be Sad in this World*, as I have previously discussed, are the artistic and aesthetically embodied rendering of the stories I have gathered throughout this research process. They are the aesthetic analysis that could not have been created without this research. In other words, both *Wilderness Rituals* and *Ascent-I Will not be Sad in this World* are a direct result of this project. These are pieces in which I combine the magical and the real. Two conflicting perspectives characterize magic realism: one is the rational view of reality, the other the acceptance of the supernatural (Chanady, 1985). The fantastic and unexplained is fused with the real. Artistically and theoretically *Wilderness Rituals* and *Ascent* are informed by magic realism, in which I meld the very real human themes that emerged from this research with the fantastic. I explore the outer edges of what it means to be human, as I simultaneously cross evolutionary time and space. These works are not faithful to reality, but rather blur the boundaries between fantasy, magic and what it means to be human. A woman in her twenties, who after viewing *Ascent-I will not be Sad in this World* revealed that she was at a cross-roads, a turning point in her life, she was assessing whether she had the strength and fortitude to pursue a career as a dancer and artist. After viewing the piece, she recited a poem to me and said that the performance/ritual had given her courage to continue.

I have used the arts-based/body-based interview to understand how *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM}* creates access to discovery, possibility, wholeness, creativity and connectedness to Self and Others through continual ritualized exploration of body and breath. Doors open to the essential Self and to the possibility of bridging the gaps between Self and others and then the sacred becomes possible. The others I speak of include animals and my connectivity to Mother Earth. The Technique uses the essential human components of life, breath and movement to explore that. It uses the same essential connections to create the possibility of stepping outside of "normal states of consciousness," to move and breath into transcendence.

My path and the path of those who study with me is *The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM}*. The journey and the process is the same as the Bushman's healing rituals, Sufi or Garafuna Trance Dance, Hasidic ecstatic prayers, the Barabaig's preparatory hunt exercises or the Dancing Curandero Healers. What I found is that we are all involved in healing Self and each other, *different paths, same journey*, into the mystery of what it is to be human. In this complex day and age there is human longing and need to remain connected to primary body-based experience that in turn connects us to human ritual and art that in turn connects us to magic and mystery that sustain human spirit. Please watch *Ascent-I Will not be Sad in this World*. It is the embodied movement statement of the previous words.

³ A fishtail is a technically very difficult and high-level handstand.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

I am alive with images and ideas, struck with the wonder of passionately discovering that the only way I can truly come to know things and people is to go out to them, to return again and again to them, to immerse myself completely in what is there before me, look, see, listen, hear, touch, from many angles and perspectives and vantage points, each time freshly so that there will be continual openings and learnings that will connect with each other and with prior perceptions, understandings and future possibilities. In other words, I must immerse myself totally and completely in my world, take in what is offered without bias or prejudice. I must pause and consider what my own life is and means, in conscious awareness, in thought, in reflections.

Clark Moustakas

...fiercely generating this vision, I shall dance!

Chod Practice of Machig Labron, 11th through 12th century

And I also shall dance and I did dance throughout the entire project. I rendered art as methodology, analysis and findings. This project, like Clark Moustakas mentions in the epiphany, results from my deep and passionate immersion in dance as a research process. Shaun McNiff wrote that, “art-based research may sometimes encourage immersion in the uncertainties of experience, ‘finding’ a personally fulfilling path of inquiry, and the emergence of understanding through an often unpredictable process of exploration” (15). The arts-based research journey allowed me to wander down pathways that opened Self, and others, senses and body to meaningful learning and information, which would not have otherwise emerged.

I am the living literature of the The Thinking Body, The Feeling Mind^{TMSM}. I have passed the technique on through body movement rituals to three generations of people who are also the living literature of the Technique and the body ceremony that we practice. Without its daily practice I would not have embarked on this research project. The research project explored the differences between primary experience, art and verbal, written and translated experience. The project has also looked at the feasibility of translating art into worded experience and the reverse, worded experience into Art. I have asked what happens with these transpositions. I have also asked for the first time, the community of practitioners I work with to join me in reflecting on the effects and possibilities of the technique. Both of these components have successfully gifted the audience or interviewees a journey into primary experience, and both have

asked what that experience is about and whether it is useful. The overwhelming response in all its simplicity is that primary experience is important because it accesses that which words, written or spoken cannot.

The unique contribution that I have made through this project is that I have put into practice a methodology, analysis and findings that bring home the value of the lived experience for the most part unmediated by words. That is a very basic but important contribution to arts-based research, for art is based on primary experience and the rituals that surround it are the earliest form of human wisdom. I have proposed and brought to fruition a multi-layered project in dance/movement that exists as a precedent for others shaping future arts-based dance research. Since this research, almost magically, and even when I do not ask for responses, audiences and viewers continue to be moved to share their thoughts about the performances. My research contributions are the dances I make. These dances stand-alone and are on going research. As such there are no conclusions. In other words, the dances that have resulted from this work continue to be used and shown even without my presence. I continue to receive feedback about the power and ability of primary experience depicted in the dances/videos. I continue to move people to reflect on the importance of primary experience.

I am grateful that this research has gained the attention and respect of Shaun McNiff and Lenore Hervey, for they are the current shapers of possibility for artists and dancers in arts-based research. Allegra Fuller Snyder has called *Portals*, an important work and has been instrumental in suggesting the project to the Congress of Research on Dance where it will be presented in November 2006. Lenore Hervey has asked for my thoughts and involvement in her second arts-based research book. I see a myriad of future possibilities for myself or anyone interested in arts-based research using dance/movement. I am interested in exploring the relationship between altered states of consciousness, liminality/trance and art making, particularly in dance/movement. There are other research possibilities based on this initial study that can further the dialog and inquiry about the relationship of primary experience to any kind of translated experience and I am encouraging others to explore those possibilities. I have already contributed some of this research to the *Journal of Pedagogy, Pluralism and Practice*. I was the only contributor from the world of dance and was not on faculty somewhere in academia. This gives testimony to the importance of the artist as scholar and the scholar as artist. In many ways, I have embodied the trickster persona working at the margins of academia and within the center of art, to disrupt, and promote flexibility in the way research is conceptualized and carried out. Lewis Hyde has written about trickster, that

At first, then, tricksters create separation, setting others at odds or placing boundary markers in new and unusual places. Initially, they are the non-domesticated *artus*-workers who make or remake the articulated world. Once that work is done, and once they have made a place for themselves, they may settle down to be the more domestic figures who keep things lively through a kind of behavior

we call mischief. Mischief always holds the seeds of more dangerous

disruption. Just as any animal is at risk for having pores in its body and joints between its bones, so any cosmos is at risk for having even a domesticated *artus*-worker around. If there are historical moments during which large changes are in the offing, it may be exactly the otherwise benign *artus*-worker who brings them (1998:262).

I originally approached academia as an ambassador, knowing and understanding that my body, the human body, with the art form that is produced by the body, dance, is an important site for research. I am that person Lenore Hervey has said is lacking in arts-based research, the dancer/choreographer who is willing and still is passionate about making art. I have become, through this research project, less an ambassador and more of a translator, for I have been capable of portraying, through this research, the importance of art to the verbal/lettered community and the importance of verbalization to the art community. Part of my contribution is who I have become through this research process. I am two individuals existing simultaneously, artist and scholar. But the artist, however, can never be excised from the pursuit of scholarship, for without my artistic persona these projects and contributions could not have happened.

My personal creativity and artistic processes were fueled by the expression of others. The results were *Wilderness Rituals* and *Ascent-I Will not be Sad in this World*. I believe in using the primary experience of dance for an “over-riding spiritual goal of repairing personal and global environments that have been damaged by pain and misfortune. The repair is achieved through the poetic fires of creative transformation. These alchemies are forever characterized by uncertainty and a faith that the process of creation will carry us through difficult situations” (McNiff, 1998:35).

Ascent-I Will not be Sad in this World is a work choreographed and performed at the end of my dissertation research. It is a piece in which I gave myself permission to push the edges of the reality of the previous two pieces (*Portals* and *Wilderness Rituals*). It was also a way to deal with the personal trauma of the death of my life-partner. In *Ascent* I dance/reveal my angst, sadness and horror and I find my way through it and beyond. Each time I dance it, I heal myself and some of the audience/others. The three years of immersion in this arts-based research project put me in contact with profound moments of compassion for others, myself and what it means to be human.

Further, *Ascent*, “illustrates how the process of inquiry can further the effectiveness of professional practice” (ibid. 36). For me, professional practice is the making of art and a commitment to my movement therapy practice and community. *Ascent* combines and stages the worlds of art and movement therapy, functioning together. Many people who have watched the performance report that it is a gift because it speaks to, for and about them. I successfully dance some universally shared human emotions about life, death and spirit.

D.Z. Levine, was a stranger who accidentally wandered into a dance concert in Port Townsend and saw a performance of *Ascent*. I returned home to

find an email from this person who at the time was a stranger to me. In his email he explained that something about the dance precipitated a deep connection and understanding about himself. He shared that he had lived through two of the toughest years in his life, when he accidentally stumbled into the dance concert and was stunned when he realized that *Ascent* transformed some of his suffering. Six months later he re-choreographed his life selling his house, pulling up roots, and traveling to Africa to work as a medical doctor in an area where there is a tradition of men's dance. *Ascent* offered him courage to take action, to make changes and to take interest in being alive. Throughout the research process I came to know that audiences support and give permission to each other, themselves and to me, to reveal deep emotional content that seems universally shared. I dance differently when I perform than I did before this research and I create different kinds of dances.

Some important things happened through this research process. For some people I danced meaningful information that in turn inspired them to dance. I believe that there is a poetic basis for research activity and like Ellen Levine in *Tending the Fire* (1995), that there is the "hope that personal artistic inquiry stimulates others to create" (McNiff, 1998:35). I also danced meaningful statements and people were moved to re-choreograph their lives and to make meaningful changes. I danced inner emotions for people who do not dance and the effect was liberating for them and for me. All of this was done without "worded" experience. It appears that words and ideas interrupt the opportunity to feel the information accessed through primary experience. Our reliance on the mind to tell us about Self, often blocks the body's ability to render important and useful information about Self. Dance is a statement to an audience that quickens and *moves* and has cellular physical effects that written or spoken language does not. Bodies witness bodies, emotions witness emotions with the immediacy of living.

The three performance pieces that are the core of this project have addressed what dance is and why it is important in the worlds of scholarship, education, and healing. The project has also put a focus onto who the artist is and why the artist is important in the land of scholarship. I have gathered people together to make, watch, and participate in movement rituals. The work has provided learning and knowing beyond my individual world. It seems to touch the cultural universality of the moment for many. I have also contributed the idea that research in dance/movement is in and of itself a living ritual project.

Inasmuch as it is a living process there are really no conclusions. My life *is* Dance/Movement, the living, breathing, on-going research ritual. I believe that we are in a chapter of human history where we are in need of a panhuman narrative to relate to and with one another to join each other in creating a global community. For me the narrative and hope for understanding and healing is embodied in the most fundamental human experience of Body, Movement and Breath, all life is dependent upon and all humans share these.

I have found through my work in art/dance, and it has been illuminated through this study, that borders, ideologies, differences, arbitrary definitions

dissolve when people and animals remove language in order to move and breathe, individually and together.

Separateness is replaced by Connection

Fragmentation is replaced by Wholeness

Fundamentalism is replaced by Expansive Interpretation

Contentiousness is replaced by Cooperation
with Self, Others, Life.

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