

Embodied Continuity: Weaving the Body Into a Web of Artistry and Ethnography

by

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ABSTRACT

Embodied Continuity documents the methodology of Entangled/Embraced, a dance performance piece presented December, 2011 and created as an artistic translation of research conducted January-May, 2011 in the states of Karnataka and Kerala, South India. Focused on the sciences of Ayurveda, Kalaripayattu and yoga, this research stems from an interest in body-mind connectivity, body-mind-environment continuity, embodied epistemology and the implications of ethnography within artistic practice. The document begins with a theoretical grounding covering established research on theories of embodiment; ethnographic methodologies framing research conducted in South India including sensory ethnography, performance ethnography and autoethnography; and an explanation of the sciences of Ayurveda, Kalaripayattu and yoga with a descriptive slant that emphasizes concepts of embodiment and body-mind-environment continuity uniquely inherent to these sciences. Following the theoretical grounding, the document provides an account of methods used in translating theoretical concepts and experiences emerging from research in India into the creation of the Entangled/Embraced dance work. Using dancer and audience member participation to inspire emergent meanings and maintain ethnographic consciousness, Embodied Continuity demonstrates how concepts inspiring research interests, along with ideas emerging from within research experiences, in addition to philosophical standpoints embedded in the ethnographic methodologies chosen to conduct research, weave into the entire project of Entangled/Embraced to unite the phases of research and performance, ethnography and artistry.

DEDICATION

To all of my family - Sunrises and sunsets are beautiful because I see you in them.

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A Woven Account of Embodied Continuity synthesizes my creative interests circling around themes of embodied knowledge and experience, and the involvement of socially constructed phenomena, such as movement meaning in determining one's embodied identity. This literary account also documents a choreographic work presented fall 2011 that channeled my research into a dance performance with the abbreviated title Entangled/Embraced. I have used the process of writing Embodied Continuity as a method of further development in the form of reflective analysis leading evermore to the emergence of new meanings. Returning from five-months of field research in 2011, conducted in various regions of South India, I intend to tie together ideas of body-mind connectivity, self-environment continuity, dance practice and ethnography integration, and the scientific philosophies of Ayurveda, an Indian-originated system of health and medicine; Kalaripayattu, a martial art indigenous to India's southern state of Kerala; and yoga.

My creative interests in the context of my role as a dancer, movement artist, and dance-maker build upon many foundational ideas that I have organized into the following four areas 1) Body-Mind Connectivity: Kinesthesia and Embodiment at the Root of Epistemology, 2) The Body and Ethnography: Sensory Ethnography and the Interchange of Artistic Practice and Ethnography, 3) South Indian Sciences and Philosophies of Embodiment: Ayurveda, Yoga and Kalaripayattu. Each part includes important contextual information that shaped my creative process. By chunking the material into four sections, which are actually discrete chapters, I hope to facilitate the reader's understanding of relatively complex concepts. Additionally, I weave these ideas together with personal references as well as continually demonstrate ways by which the various concepts intersect.

I begin by examining my own theories of body-mind connectivity as they receive support from researchers who have investigated somatics and scientific rationales that

reinforce the possibility of a mind that infuses the body rather than a mind that exists solely in the brain. My interests in body-mind connectivity expand to consider a deep personal interest in the continuity that individuals experience with their environment on material, psychological and social levels. While providing personal experiences of body-mind-environment continuity, I also use the richly expressive philosophies and writings of cultural ecologist, David Abram to help support my ideas. Furthering this support, I draw upon anthropologist, Sarah Pink's notion of sensory ethnography within which definitions of place and emplacement emerge as entangled and created by a co-dependency between individuals and the environment in which they find themselves.

This background, which focuses on core ideas of body-mind connectivity and self-environment continuity, expands to the next chapter in which I explore the suggestion that artistic practice, in this case the practice of dance-making, relates intimately with the practice of ethnography. In the context of embodied experience and participation, dance and ethnography may be considered integrated and inseparable disciplines. This proposition is with the inclusion of Sally Ann Ness' analysis of how learning choreographic phenomena relates to ethnography in that the performer's embodiment of the unfamiliar mirrors the ethnographers embodiment of an unfamiliar way of life. Her research demonstrates the relationships between dance practice and ethnography through descriptions of various ethnographic strata. Primarily, those descriptions focus on Sarah Pink's description of sensory ethnography – a self-reflexive discipline that merges ideas of embodiment and self-environment continuity. The secondary focus is on performance ethnography and auto-ethnography, with the example of choreographer Ralph Lemon's work of compiling his field notes into a book titled *Tree* and continuing to create a dance work related to his ethnographic findings.

The concluding chapter of foundational ideas describes the scientific philosophies of Ayurveda, Kalaripayattu and Yoga. This research is designed to utilize descriptions as representations of my field research. I also intend to use them as excellent examples of philosophies that attend to body-mind connectivity and expand to suggest continuous interrelationships between the body, the mind, energy and spirituality.

The methodology section of this research provides insight into how I approached the creative translation and inevitable transformation of foundational concepts and personal experience into a thesis performance project. Comprised into two chapters, 1) Entangled/Embraced: Building A Dance Using A Methodology Of Translation And Transformation and 2) Thematic Concepts For Experimentation, describe how the knowledge gained from studying the philosophies of Ayurveda, Yoga and Kalaripayattu was used as inspirational material to design activities that generate movement. Furthermore, the interrelationship of dance practice and ethnography to construct a place of participation, co-presence, co-creativity, and sensory stimulation for both performers and audience members will be implemented in future inquiries.

The work's value lies in its ability to unite academic and artistic realms by revealing one artist's method of creatively examining, organizing and representing through artistic means information conventionally designated to more scholarly fields of study such as classical ethnography, cultural studies, and alternative medicine. Fortunately, this work offers credibility to artistic, practice-based research, particularly information gained through experiences of the body. The intent of my investigation was to create new possibilities to consider regarding how ethnographic studies can be conducted and represented, offering the suggestion that experiences and expressions of and about the body should be valid sources of data and representation. Finally, the inquiry formed a creative depiction of information

about South Indian cultural practices, by recognizing that ethnographic discovery and representation pose a reflexive viewpoint, notwithstanding the necessity of accepting and embracing the (inter)subjectivity of the ethnographic researcher.

Chapter 2

BODY-MIND CONNECTIVITY: KINESTHESIS AND EMBODIMENT AT THE ROOT OF EPISTEMOLOGY

As a dance artist, I am interested in how the entire human experience of learning, being and communicating happens through the body. Everything we know depends upon sensing, perceiving and interacting with our environment, an engagement with a stream of information from the external world that passes into our consciousness through the body and that requires attention to lived bodily experience as a gateway to learn about our material and social habitat. We understand that the bark of a certain tree is hard and rough because we see it with our eyes and we feel it with our fingers. When we go places, our body transports us or we must find a way to take it with us. We understand the weather according to the temperature the environment produces in our body. Our body tells us when we should sit, when we are sitting, or when we need sleep.

Body-mind connectivity suggests the integration of mind and body where individuals engage in epistemological, or learning, processes that take place through the incorporation of one's entire being, including one's physical experience. The body sets the groundwork for epistemological processes because an individual's evolution of understanding always occurs within his or her physical presence, a first-person setting that informs a learner's concept of situatedness and generates kinesthetic experiences that influence how and what the learner comes to assimilate as knowledge. This does not mean that the body plays a background role to support or supplement cognitive processes. Instead, an individual's cognition and processes of learning rely on the mind's interrelation and co-dependency with a body that provides a direct source of knowledge as that individual utilizes kinesthetic and sensory experiences to perceive his or her environment. Throughout the entire span of the

Entangled/Embraced project, from conducting research in India to the rehearsal process and performance of the dance work, theories of embodiment and body-mind connectivity exist as root concepts integral to central themes of my artistic methodology such as participation, co-creative construction of knowledge and body-mind-environment interdependency. Chapter One begins with theoretical grounding provided by established researchers whose work substantiates body-mind connectivity and continuity between self and environment. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the relevance of these topics within the methodology of choreographing Entangled/Embraced.

Embodiment

Over the past two decades, a great deal of attention has been given to the body and to the term *embodiment*. Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, renowned movement researcher, explains embodiment in terms of an infant who, after some time of waving its hand over its face, “Another sense opens up that this hand is *me*...Embodiment is, in a way, a separating out. It’s feeling the force that is in this body” (1993 p. 63). I agree that living as an embodied being includes recognizing the self as a more than just having a body, but experiencing the body as an integrated component of the self – this hand is me, this foot is me, the way I move is me.

Proponents of embodiment reject the conventional western viewpoints of a separate mind and body where the mind exists only in a brain that performs a dominating control over the body. Rather, researchers of embodiment suggest an immersed and integrated mind and body where the mind runs throughout the body and matter and energy become more unified. Betty Block and Judith Lee Kissell suggest, “Embodied knowing is the ability to interact with a thought or an experience holistically that involves the integrated power network of the total person. The integrated power network includes neural elements,

efforts, memory, language, perception and attunement and are found integrated throughout the body, not just in the brain” (2001, p. 6). Quoting pioneer movement scientist Ida Rolf, Lorenzo Gold explains that the human structure consists of “the physical person, but also the psychological personality” (1992, p. 34). Our psychological component, who we believe ourselves to be, manifests itself clearly in the body in the form of posture, movement and body language. How we walk, how we hold a glass of juice, how we sit, how we respond to loud noises, how we make love, and so on represent the expression of our mind through the body. Then, why isn’t the mind located throughout the body rather than centered only in the brain? Some believe that even memories can be stored in various parts of the body. Think of sucking a lemon. Can you not taste the sharp sourness and feel the clenching response in your jaw muscle? When I think of hugging my father, my arms and chest understand and literally feel the warmth and comfort of his supportive embrace.

Somatics

The term *somatics*, first coined and developed by Thomas Hanna, can be defined as a field of study that looks at the “first-person perception of the body...when an individual observes himself or herself from the viewpoint of his or her own proprioceptive sense” (Dyer, 2009, p. 61). In other words, people experience soma when we experience the world through the medium of our own selves as bodies, including the activity of sensing and perceiving our situation in space and surrounding environment through the body-mind. Laban-Bartenieff movement analyst and somatic movement therapist, Becky Dyer uses the example of shrinking with shame or rising with courage to explain how inner attitudes are initiated and experienced through the body (ibid). Individuals’ thoughts, feelings and bodies logistically engage in expression; we cannot completely separate the mind from the body

because what we think and feel manifests itself throughout our whole body rather than simply at the brain.

Seeing and Feeling: Intrinsic of Sensing and Extrinsic of Seeing

In the field of dance, artists/researchers have created an art of investigating and developing the continuum of what Dyer labels, the *intrinsic of sensing* and the *extrinsic of seeing* (ibid). During moments of intrinsic sensing, movers literally, physically sense and perceive what is happening in and to the body. The notion of extrinsic seeing cannot be defined as an activity of the eyes; rather we engage in extrinsic seeing when our mind's eye witnesses what our body doing. For example, if one thinks of lengthening her spine, she can both physically perceive the elongation of her vertebral column, but somehow, she can also *see* this lengthening happening inside the body and through space. She sees this lengthening in the brain, in the conventional location of the mind behind the eyes, yet she can also see this lengthening happen *at the site of action* – at the vertebral column and surrounding tissues as well as space into which the lengthening vertebral column moves. During moments of integrated consciousness, we simultaneously engage in the intrinsic of sensing and extrinsic of seeing (ibid). Of course, the shifting continuum and then integration of intrinsic sensing and extrinsic sensing is not limited to dancing and dancers. We carry out these activities of embodied understanding of our situation at all times, whether consciously or unconsciously.

Movement: The First Sensory Modality

While the body serves as a major source of knowledge for self discovery and development, movement of the body serves as human beings' first and foremost perception, placing movement and bodily perception as our primary mode of learning, before we begin to learn through our exteroceptors, the sensory nerves responsible for the senses of touch, taste, sight, smell, and sound. Cohen (1993) provides fascinating scientific evidence of

movement as a first perception, in that the fetus' first nerves to myelinate (develop a fatty, protective covering) are the vestibular nerves. The vestibular system includes proprioceptors and kinesthetic receptors – special nerve receptors in the bones, joints, ligaments, muscles and fascia that explain the position of the body in space. Also included in the vestibular system are the interoceptors, which explain the location and activity of the organs, glands, vessels, and nerves. Lastly, the vestibular system includes the vestibular mechanism located in the inner ear and which receives information from the proprioceptors, kinesthetic receptors, interoceptors, gravity, space, and time to synthesize where the body is and what it is doing at any given moment (Cohen, 1993). The fact that vestibular nerves myelinate first indicates these nerves as most essential for survival while supporting the theory of movement as a primary perception in utero.

The Sense Of Touch: Tactile Stimulation As Growth Initiator.

In conjunction with movement as a primary perception, Cohen (1993) explains touch as another critical, early sensory modality that establishes a baseline for future perception and motor development. Touch receptors around an infant's mouth begin developing before other touch receptors, encouraging a sensitivity related to survival as the infant uses his or her mouth to search for its mother's breast and to suck and swallow (ibid). Interestingly, movement of the head initiated from the mouth relates intimately to the vestibular mechanism in the inner ear (ibid). Before reaching for an object in space, the infant first reaches towards this object with his or her mouth, creating a kinetic chain with touch receptors of the mouth that serve as initiators of movement (ibid). Imagine an infant reaching for a toy. Although the infant touches the toy first with his hand, his intentions reside in bringing the toy to his mouth – a sensory organ that has already begun to reach for the toy and inspired kinetic pathways and information leading to his ability to reach with his

arm and hand. Touch and movement pair firmly in utero, as the fetus lives within the steady pressure of its watery encasing, nudges against the firmness of the womb and receives translations of the mother's movement. In fact, Cohen offers an astonishing personal story of her own process of giving birth when, after complete dilation of her cervix, her child could not flex its head properly to move into the birth canal. Proceeding on hands and knees, Cohen explains how she "started initiating from inside of my uterus, at the point above the cervix" not necessarily in an attempt to push or move the baby, but to provide tactile sensation that could stimulate movement of the head necessary for the process of birth (ibid, p. 12). The presence of touch after birth can prove crucial to stimulating basic reflexes and patterns that initiate more gross motor movement. Although an infant arrives with the capability of acting out reflexes on its own, how the baby is handled after birth can affect its ability to successfully find and employ these basic reflexes, while certain touching actions can stimulate the infant to move into basic reflexes (ibid). In *A Natural History of the Senses*, Diane Ackerman describes her remarkable opportunity to massage prematurely born babies living in hospital incubators (1990). Since the skin and the nervous system both develop from the same outer layer of embryonic tissue, the ectoderm (Cohen, 1993), it is not surprising that studies link successful infant development with tactile stimulation. Ackerman explains that massaged babies become more active, alert, responsive and aware of their surroundings and they gain weight as much as 50% faster than unmassaged babies (1990). The presence of touch and its physical benefits also evoke psychological effects – massaged babies cry less and tend to display more consistent emotions, as opposed to unmassaged babies who might cry one minute and sleep soundly the next (ibid). Somewhat cruel studies at the University of Wisconsin prove the importance of touch for the psychological and physical development of adolescent monkeys (ibid). In cases where young monkeys could

see, smell and hear their mothers, but not touch them, they developed serious behavior problems such as persistent crying, helplessness, and frantic pacing (ibid). The young monkeys who experienced short-term touch deprivation developed helplessly clingy relationships where they continuously grasped onto one another (ibid). Those who experienced long-term touch deprivation became violent adolescents and adults who could not develop relationships with other monkeys (ibid). Studies at the University of Colorado School of Medicine show that young monkeys deprived of touch may have returned to normal behavior upon their reunion with their mother; however, physical distresses such as susceptibility to disease continued throughout the remainder of their lives (ibid).

Embodied Epistemology.

The importance of movement perception and tactile stimulation as primary modes of learning for the infant does not stop throughout growth and development into adulthood. We continue to use movement and touch not only to understand ourselves, but also the world. Jaana Parviainen states, “Through our kinaesthetic consciousness we constitute ourselves as epistemological subjects” (2002, p. 14). Despite a western emphasis on the five senses of sight, smell, taste, sound, and touch, human beings constantly learn about the world through bodily sensations and how we must move in order to interact with external objects. When we stand on a hill, do we not learn of our situation on a hill along with the properties of a hill according to changes in how we experience gravity? When we sit in a chair, do we not learn about the chair’s shape, purpose, and stability according to how we must move and shape our bodies in relation to it? Furthering the notion of kinesthetic consciousness to serve as an epistemological source of knowledge, I question how we understand our environment through identifying surrounding materials with internal physical sensations: I understand and respond to a cascading water fountain according to the

wetness inside of my mouth and the full, heaviness of my bladder; the structure of a concrete building resonates differently in my bones than in my muscles; the awareness of my own visceral organs evokes feelings biological community when I walk among other humans and animate beings. This mode of experiential learning through the living body precedes and underwrites all other modes of cognition and we must recognize learning as more than a cognitive process of the brain, or even of a mind rooted in the brain. Rather, to gain a conscious awareness of how we come to know, we must become conscious of kinesthetic and experiential perceptions that happen through the body as sources of knowledge, while also developing sensitivity to the workings of the mind throughout the entire living organism.

Social constructions of embodied knowledge. Complicating the notion of movement as the first perception and the genesis of cognition lies the social construction of movement meaning. While we can clearly recognize that the meanings of gestures and body attitudes arise from social transmissions of knowledge and are shared among individuals within a cultural group, research also suggests that social influence reaches even deeper into biological processes of human motor development. Not only do people learn from society the meanings of movement, we need other humans in order learn how to move at all. Carol-Lynne Moore and Kaoru Yamamoto (1988) explain how, unlike other animals, the human brain triples in size during the first year after birth. Contrary to other animals, the parts of the human brain and central nervous system that control voluntary movement develop *after* birth (Moore and Yamamoto, 1988). While animals enter the world with a neuronally hard-wired, instinctual knowledge of how to move, humans arrive with only basic reflexes that predispose us to the capacity to eventually move as a human (ibid). When it comes to knowing how to move and to the meanings we attach to movement, the human infant's

brain exists as socially malleable and almost literally shaped by members of the individual's social group. Using basic reflex patterns as initiators, humans imitate members of our own species as we rely on provided movement examples and tactile stimulation (ibid). This behavior does not suggest that the influence of society on motor skills and movement meanings results in individuals who do not live as subjective beings incapable of learning and making meaning for themselves. Rather, it is difficult to deny the embodied intersubjectivity of individuals as we guide each other along the path of learning to become human.

Continuity

I might synthesize these ideas to suggest the definition of embodiment as the lived acknowledgement of body and mind unity; it is also the awareness of kinesthetic consciousness as a source of knowledge and the recognition of motor skills and movement meaning as socially inscribed knowledge. At this juncture, I am inclined to mention my interest in continuity – the integration of an individual with his or her environment. On a hot sunny day, as I stand in direct light, learning about the heat of the sun as it passes through my sensory-alive perception, I find I am not only becoming warmer by physically invoking the heat of the sun, but the knowledge of what I feel, where I am, and who I am becomes influenced by my perceptions – I feel brighter, more optimistic and energized. What separates me from the rays of the sun? I do not intend to go so far as to suggest that I am the sun or its rays; however, I physically and psychologically invoke the sun, meaning that a thread of continuity runs between the sun and myself, making my identity in this moment partially dependent on the qualities of warm, bright, yellow sun. Whether or not we prefer our environment, we always live as involved within and affected by it. This continuity between self and environment also happens socially. When I experience the warm rays of the sun, this experience ensues within me, it belongs to me and it is me; however, whenever I

begin to objectively identify the qualities of the sun and the feelings they produce, I pull from information taught to me by members of the human race – the definition of ‘warm’ for instance. Through constant interaction and exchange with humans and media, new definitions arise in terms of what I believe to know. If what I know arrives from the social world, where do I separate my fellow humans from myself?

Body-mind-environment connectivity. A significant topic of interest to me as I create dance works involves a profound sense of continuity that I feel with my surroundings. We are continuous with our environment. As we breathe, we inhale air from a source that we consider to be external to ourselves; a source that we might call the world, the earth or the universe. This air gushes into our lungs and oxygen penetrates our lung tissue, our blood vessels and our blood to eventually permeate every single living cell in our body. The cells metabolize this oxygen and turn it into life-energy. In this sense we have become our external environment and our external environment has become us. A similar process happens with food. As we release air from our lungs and excrement from our digestive system, the world then receives transformed molecules, chemicals and nutrients for its own use. Our skin works like a fabric of interchange with the environment – a large, stretchy, protective coating that absorbs chemicals from external gases and liquids while also excreting effusive by-products of internal functions. These physical interchanges represent the most simple, basic and obvious processes of continuity that we have with the earth; however, with a closer look I can see that as my skin renews itself, the dust of my matter becomes distributed throughout my house. Dirt from all over town has accumulated on the soles of my feet and has become trapped in my hair and embedded into my pores. Am I somehow living in the corners of my house and on the dusty tops of high shelves? If I carry dirt from the road on my person, am I somehow momentarily composed of my environment? If I spit

on the ground and my DNA splats there as I walk away, does something of the intelligence that creates my configuration evaporate into space and eventually rise to join cloud formations? If through respiration, consummation and daily interaction I literally become the environment and if throughout my daily life, the environment becomes me, then boundaries between the world and the material of my being also become less distinct.

On a more subtle level, we can see this continuity in terms of the shifts, changes and moods of our minds along with the transformations and definitions of our identity.

Whatever happens to our environment or whatever our environment is doing always influences our mind, how we feel and the flavor of thoughts that rise in our consciousness. As I sit here on the porch, I can look out to the open fields that lead to the skirts of a wild forest beyond the backyard of my parents' home. The brightness of the sun bouncing off the leaves of the trees, the vastness of the open space, the eminent blue of the sky, the fluttering of birds who whiffle and disappear into the breezy tall grasses, all produce a certain state of mind – energetic contentment and spreading thoughts that reflect the widening of the space confronting me. Out of the corner of my eye, I see a wasp. This feeling of dissipation and open awareness gains a new component – a sharp edge somewhere, a streak of adrenaline kick buzzing on the corner of my conscious enjoyment of happy sun and playful dreams. I imagine if it were raining, my state of mind might feel less effusive and warm but more calm, silent and cool. In his book, *Becoming Animal* David Abram writes about the continuity of the earth and the human mind. He describes the different states of mind that people experience when withheld inside of different environments such as a dense forest versus an open clearing (2010). In a particular situation, Abram describes a story of when walking through the woods he sees a deer. As he stands perfectly still and quiet, he looks at the deer and realizes suddenly, in one glimpse, that the deer has vanished. He did not hear or see the deer

vanish, but somehow it managed to escape from his vision. Abram further explains how similar this material, direct, physical experience, this actual event, reflects so clearly the way thoughts come and go. Abram writes the following:

But it was odd how familiar that fleeting encounter felt to me on that day. It seemed the precise image, once again, of a certain style of thought, a living metaphor for the way the mind moves. How many times has it happened, in the course of going about my work, that a potent thought will make itself felt at the edge of my awareness – an insight whose rightness I can sense even before I know its content – yet when I turn to fix my attention upon it, I find that it has already vanished, leaving only a vague flavor or trace (p. 117)?

In addition, Abram explains this connectivity between humans' minds and our environment as a stronger connection and a deeper continuity than simply a reflection. For years, humans have questioned, 'what is the mind and what is consciousness?' Therefore, Abram's idea that addresses these questions is quite poignant:

It was not just the resonant metaphors offered by stones and grasses and muscled creatures, but also the rightness, somehow, of recognizing mind as a broad landscape within which I was wandering, a deep field with its near aspects and its distances, its moods shifting like the weather... There seemed something more than metaphoric here, something strangely right about this resonance between thought and the earthly terrain... As though the leap and vanish of deer into the forest or these other movements of shadows and grass and rain were not merely metaphors but part of the very constitution of mind, of its real structure and architecture... What if mind is not ours, but is Earth's? What if mind, rightly understood, is not a special property

of humankind, but is rather a property of the Earth itself—a power in which we are carnally immersed?...What if there is, yes, a quality of inwardness to the mind, not because the mind is located inside us (inside our body or brain), but because we are situated, bodily, inside it—because our lives and our thoughts unfold in the depths of a mind that is not really ours, but is rather the Earth’s? What if like the hunkered owl, and the spruce bending above it, and the beetle staggering from needle to needle on that branch, we all partake of the wide intelligence of this world—because we’re materially participant, with our actions and our passions, in the broad psyche of this sphere? (pp. 122-123)

Some are bewildered by and grateful for Abram’s suggestion that perhaps our mind isn’t distinctly and exclusively our own, but instead a manifestation and possession of the earth or even of the universe. Not only does Abram’s idea suggest the dialogue, continuity and integration of our mind with the Earth mind but it recognizes that the material body, as integrated with a material environment, serves as a purposeful, active, necessary and irrefutable component and equal partner of the enfolded mind. On a similar note, yoga and Ayurveda possess as their purpose a drive to recognize this continuity between the self and the universe. A classic definition of yoga states, “to be one with the divine” (Desikachar, 1995 p. 6). The practitioner of yoga intends to realize that he or she is not a mind nor an ego, but rather something at one with or completely immersed within a supreme consciousness or intelligence. While through the practice of yoga we bring attention to, refine and harmonize our physical, subtle (energetic/mental), and causal (soul) bodies, we ultimately seek to harmonize the physical, subtle and causal bodies in order to transcend these bodies and reach enlightenment through the recognition of ourselves not as an identity or ego but as a shard of supreme consciousness. (Nataraj, lecture May 18, 2011). Although

Ayurveda represents a system of psychological, physical, and somatic health and medicine, it exists as a tool to assist in creating a healthy condition of being necessary for the process of attaining enlightenment. *Moksha*, or enlightenment, happens when *Atman*, the soul of the practitioner, unifies with *Brahma*, the universal soul or supreme consciousness (Nataraj, 2011).

Emplacement, definitions of place, and interdependency. Discussions of the continuity of beings with their environment should not, and Abram (2010) would agree, imply that places and people do not have particular identities, special or personal flavors of being, or individual subjective experiences. Abram suggests that different places signify different states of the earth mind, that “each region—each topography, each uniquely patterned ecosystem—has its own *particular* awareness, its unique *style* of intelligence...The air of the coastal northwest of North America, infused with salt spray and the tang of spruce, cedar, and fir needles, tastes and feels different from the air shimmering in the heat of the southwest desert (2010, p. 132, original italics).” In attending to subjective experience and individual identity, Abram’s perspective includes both the inherent uniqueness of the individual along with the influence that his or her unique environment might have over personal development:

Each atmosphere imparts its vibrance to those who partake of it...Each place, that is to say, is a unique state of mind, and the many powers that constitute and dwell within that locale—the spiders and the tree frogs no less than the humans—all participate in, and partake of, the particular mind of the place...It is only as palpable bodies that we participate in the immersive mind of this planet, and as your body is different from mine in so many ways, and as our limbs and senses are so curiously

different from those of the pileated woodpecker or the praying mantis, just so are our insights and desires richly different from one another (2010 pp. 126, 132-133). Abram's descriptions of the uniqueness of place and identity clearly and beautifully articulate an integration and connection of the self with the environment. While we enter our lives as solitary, distinct individuals, we also interact with and become infused by the unique qualities and realities of our environment.

The idea of continuity between self and environment also asserts social and ethnographic implications. In *Doing Sensory Ethnography*, Sarah Pink discusses definitions of place and the co-dependency of self and environment (2010). Further articulating ideas of space, place, and time, Pink draws upon the ideas of Edward Casey who designates perception as primary, leading to the conception that to understand 'place' requires *being* in a place. For this reason, Casey concludes that a person conceives of space and time according to the place of his or her experience – conceptions of space and time emerge from conceptions and experiences of place (Pink, 2010). If understanding place requires perception, an activity of the senses, or the being in a place, then “*lived bodies belong to places and help to constitute them*’ and *‘places belong to lived bodies and depend on them*” thus making lived bodies and places interdependent and intersubjective concepts (Pink, 2010, p. 30 original italics).

Pink also draws upon Tim Ingold's notion of place as an entanglement or meshwork of occurrences and lifepaths. Ingold suggests that places are constructed from movement, questioning the existence of a place without it being something we go to and from (Pink, 2010). If places can be considered an entanglement of intersections and lifepaths, then again, conceptions of place are dependent upon its current residents and residents cannot dislocate themselves from their current place.

The concepts of body-mind-environment continuity tie intimately with processes of defining place. Continuity creates an interdependency between one's self and one's environment. We are physically continuous with our environment through breath, consumption, death and regeneration; we are psychologically interdependent with our environment because, as Abram (2010) suggests, our environment influences our moods and informs how we define ourselves. Embedded in learning processes we engage in an interactive and reciprocal definition of self and place – definitions of self reflect how we define and experience our environmental surroundings while, simultaneously, how we come to define a place depends not only on our self-sourced interpretations and descriptions, but we help to create place through interactive presence. Emerging from this reciprocal, interactive relationship that we share with our environment, we find an inherently participatory nature to learning and being. At the source of this continuity and participation lies embodiment, a recognition of our existence and evolutions of knowing as involving our entire living, breathing, sensuous selves.

The notion that living and learning takes place as a fully-embodied, interactive conversation with an environment with which we share continuity and co-creativity serves as a foundation to my methodology throughout the entire project of *Entangled/Embraced*, inspiring my interests and choices during the project's research phase in India and extending into the project's transformation into a performance piece. During my time in India, I sought to come to an understanding of the lives of my cultural hosts through a method of embodied participation with an attention to the kinesthetic and sensory experiences at the source of learning and ways of knowing. Furthermore, our embodied participation with an environment within which we are kinesthetically and sensorially intertwined and emplaced represents a predominant theme helping to merge ethnographic implications into my artistic

methodology. Chapter Two outlines the ethnographic theories that both informed my methodological interests and choices while in India and that provide inspirational ideas for my emphasis on concepts of participation and emplacement in creating Entangled/Embraced.

Chapter 3

THE BODY AND ETHNOGRAPHY: SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY AND THE INTERCHANGE OF ETHNOGRAPHY AND ARTISTIC PRACTICE

Sensory Ethnography.

With a foundational belief and understanding of the body as the primary site of experiencing, knowing and communicating, then the senses also serve as primary faculties of interaction and integration with the world. In *Doing Sensory Ethnography* Sarah Pink (2009) calls for an ethnographic mindset and methodology that considers at its root the multisensoriality of experience, perception, knowing, and practice. Pink sets this multisensoriality as integral to the lives of people who serve as research participants as well as the lives and practice of ethnographers.

At the root of sensory ethnography lies participant observation, an ethnographic method of participating in and learning to do the activities that research subjects undertake (Pink, 2009). Although participant observation implies and uses the senses in an obvious way, Pink suggests that we “rethink ethnography to explicitly *account for* the senses (2009, p. 10, original italics). With consideration to the notion that knowing is “engaged, active and ‘experiential’” (qualities that refer to the use of the body), Pink comes to the conclusion that the experience of knowing and coming to know involves participation and practice, therefore “to ‘know’ as others do, we need to engage in practices with them, making participation central to this task (p. 34).” The sensory ethnographer uses participant observation with attention to the senses in order to perceive and understand through embodiment how people learn and know.

In appointing emplacement as a central concern for ethnographers, Pink (2009) defines emplacement as a sensuous interrelationship of mind, body, and environment where,

in all situations, humans experience and know through a body that serves as an agent of perception, interaction and construction of place. Pink states, “both ethnographers and participants in ethnographic research are emplaced in social sensory and material contexts, characterized by, and productive of, particular power configurations that they experience through their whole bodies and that are constantly changing” (p. 33). In attending to emplacement, ethnographers also attend to their sensorial engagement with the surroundings and practices that they share with research participants. Furthermore, an ethnographer’s recognition of emplacement brings attention to how researchers are entangled and co-present in the places of their research subjects while also participatory in creating these environments. Pink emphasizes that an attention to emplacement can heighten and deepen previous concepts of a simple “mix of participation and observation” to redefine ethnography as participatory and “framed with ideas of learning as embodied, emplaced, sensorial and empathetic” (2009, p. 63).

As Pink reviews the variety of standards and definitions of both classical and contemporary ethnography, she insists that, “ethnography is a reflexive and experiential process” (2009, p. 8). Sensory ethnography requires self-reflexivity in which the researcher must examine his or her own subjective and intersubjective understanding of the senses. Pink points out three methodological steps as necessary components for sensory ethnography:

1. The researcher must refer to his or her own “developing understanding of local sensory categories and meanings, how these are constituted, how they operate in everyday life, and the wider political and power configurations with which they are entangled (p. 56).”

2. In attuning to the concepts of sensoria of the local field of research, the sensory ethnographer must address his or her own sensory subjectivity, that is, the researcher's own culturally specific methods of categorizing and experiencing the senses, especially in terms of how the researcher's sensorial concepts differ from those of the research participants.
3. Lastly, with consideration to how "self-identities are continuously reconstituted" according to shifts in emplacement and "relations with others and our material/sensory environments," the researcher must attend to how his or her sensorial concepts change and how the researcher comes to new personal and ethnographic conclusions according to intersubjective, "social and embodied encounters and negotiations with others (pp. 53, 56).

In summary, the sensory ethnographer looks first at the sensory concepts of research participants, then at his or her own sensory concepts and how they compare to those of research participants, and lastly how his or her sensory concepts change along with how new ethnographic conclusions are generated in response to relationships with research participants, encounters with their sensorial concepts, and immersion into the environment of the field.

Pink (2009) describes her use of this triple-step, self-reflexive methodology in a study of how others use the senses to determine states of laundry cleanliness or filth. Pink also explains how this study brought her to new revelations about her own domestic laundry practices and beliefs. Interestingly, Pink makes clear the researcher need not deconstruct his or her subjective sensorial concepts *before* embarking upon an ethnographic project; rather, Pink favors the relationally developed self-awareness generated during the process as the

researcher begins to use his or her own sensory concepts as bases of comparison and values that change.

I am reminded of my experience in Kerala, India of living at an ayurvedic hospital and institution where medicated oil seemed to completely permeate the lives of any residents or visitors. Immersed within this environment where the prevalence of medicated oil provided a sensory experience suffusing a way of life, Pink's (2009) triple-fold process of coming to new sensory understanding became apparent in my own experiential learning process. I became transfixed by my massage teacher's aptitude and expertise when working with the oil as she gently and thickly lapped the oil into her fingers to maneuver and spread the oil with a supple and generous touch onto a patient's body. She had an amazing ability to sleekly and elegantly slide left-over or excessive oil back into the oil vessel, an activity that I found quite difficult despite its seeming ease. As a westerner accustomed more to lotion or cream and to soft massage beds with clean and sterile linens, I became hyper-aware of the unctuous and lubricating layers of oil necessary for ayurvedic massage, the sheen of the oil-soaked, wooden massage table, the glide of bare feet as they spread dropped oil over the hospital floor, and the luster and glow of my teacher's well-oiled and pliant skin. Although my experience of oil until then might have classified it as something lovely but messy, to be used with caution and containment, I found that medicated oil literally permeated the homes, activities and livelihood of the family of ayurvedic practitioners residing at and running this ayurvedic hospital – whether they were making the oil, applying the oil on a patient, selling the oil, carrying residual oil on their skin or clothes, cleaning oil-soaked towels and bandages, or living in a home where oil had saturated the floors and walls. The warm, herbal smell of the oil lingered in our clothes, in living areas, in our hair and on our skin. My relationship and conception of medicated oil began to change – I learned how to

apply more oil during ayurvedic massage (my lack of oil exposure seemed to predispose me to applying scanty, unsubstantial oil proportions), I spent hours stirring oil as I infused it with herbal drugs, I began to apply the oil onto myself, I became more comfortable with the concept of a shared oil vessel that may contain swirls of excess oil harvested from the bodies of previous patients, and I cared less about oil stains on my clothes (inevitable as the stains were, my mind began to relax into enjoying the consequences of an oil-soaked lifestyle). My personality and disposition became one of ease and fluidity. The rich nourishment of the oil helped me to harbor moods of benevolence, compassion and generosity. This sensual encounter with ayurvedic medicated oil and the people who work with it pointed out my culturally-specific sensory conceptions of oil as well as the sensory conceptions of my research participants. Throughout the process, I witnessed my ideas and even my identity shift according to intersubjective relationships and engagements with research subjects and their practices.

Pink's suggestion of an ethnographic approach that utilizes participant observation with a specific attention to the senses provided the framework for the methodological approach I assumed while in India. When interacting with members of my host culture, I investigated ways in which the sensoriality of experience emerged within the practices that I encountered. At times, I acquired ethnographic data sourced directly from sensory experiences arising within my own engagements and embodied participation. Other times, concepts of sensory knowing or experiences of sensation were provided to me through verbal accounts such as stories or instructions on how to complete a task.

Additionally, philosophies presented within Pink's organization of a sensory ethnography expanded into my interests and intentions when choreographing *Entangled/Embraced*. Just as the multisensoriality of experience provided the focus of my

attention in India, I also sought to orchestrate an opportunity for audience members to become enmeshed in a sensory surrounding where they might engage in processes of self-emplacement with a keen awareness of their own sensory and embodied faculties of learning and knowing. For example, my choice to construct a clothesline installation encompassing the entire Entangled/Embraced performance space and surrounding participants of the event represents a theme carried from an aspect of Indian life that occurred to me as intensely sensorial, while it also serves as an idea designed to create a deeply sensorial environment and experience for audience members and dancers. The ideas and intentions behind the clothesline installation are further detailed in Chapter 5.

Sensory imagination. With consideration towards imagination as a type of fuel for action, Pink suggests that ethnographers attend to the role of imagination in everyday place-making practices (2010). Pink draws upon the ideas of Arjun Appadurai to explain the difference between fantasy as “divorced from projects and actions” and imagination as an initiator of action (2010, p. 39). An example of how imagination plays a role in our everyday lives might be how we know we need bread for dinner and we imagine that the grocery store exists in the same place on that same road and that it definitely has the bread we need. In fact, we do not know for sure that this grocery store still sits where we imagine it to be – it might have closed down or burnt up in fire, and if we do find it there we may arrive to discover that the bread we envisioned on the shelf does not exist where we thought it did. The point of Pink’s interest in imagination lies in that because of an imagined idea (where we can find bread) we not only come to construct a place (the store on this road with bread on that shelf) we also become prompted into the action traveling to the store and searching for bread. Recall the role of emplacement – our embodied experience and construction of place, and the role of participation – “our sensorial and material engagement with the

environment” (Pink, 2009, p. 34). Imagination plays a vital and integrative part in how we come to know and construct our environment (emplacement) along with how and when we choose to take action (participation).

Pink argues against imagination as merely an act of cognition and suggests imagination as an embodied and emplaced practice “carried out in relation to the multisensoriality of our actual social and material relations” (2009, p. 39). Pink quotes Vincent Crapanzano in an effort to rethink imagination as something that can occur in musical terms, or in tactile, gustatory and proprioceptive terms, or in combinations of all of these. Pink describes sensory memory as imagination invoked by sensorial surroundings that can lead to action. Quoting Nadia Seremataki, Pink explains, “The sensory landscape and its meaning-endowed objects bear within them emotional and historical sedimentation that can provoke and ignite gestures, discourses and acts” (2010, p. 38). While these sensory memories are embodied recollections that have been invoked by sensory stimulation and at the same time are experienced in and through the body, sensory memories do not remain as repetitions but as imaginations that bring the past into the present to transform and reconstitute notions of place. Again, the clothesline installation represents a component of *Entangled/Embraced* that exemplifies the interplay of sensory experience and imagination. Specific examples of audience members who share memories invoked by the clothesline are detailed in chapter six; however, it may prove relevant to note that, surrounded by and enmeshed within a webbing of clothing close enough for physical encounters and charged with a sensory interplay of color, rhythm and space, the clothesline encouraged audience members to both recall their own memories associated with hanging lines of laundry and to construct meanings about the clothesline sourced from personal and imaginative interpretations.

Dance and Ethnography.

Artistic practice is at once personal and universal. It involves the creative re-ordering of ideas and material according to the subjective experience of an artist who undoubtedly lives his or her life intersubjectively and continuously with a social, substantial and energetic environment. In this sense, artistic practices and productions already investigate, reflect, and document cultural and social values and can thus be considered ethnographic. If ethnographic research, in the context of embodied participation and practice, produces new knowledge and encourages shifts in self-awareness and identity, can ethnography then be considered an artistic practice?

Consider the possibility of a practice that integrates ethnography and artistic practice, such as the artistic practice of dance-making. Being a dance artist of any genre involves investigations into and representations of cultural values as they are expressed through movement or recorded through theoretical and scientific notions about the body. A dance artist might focus his or her interests on personal inquiry, social inquiry, or inquiry into the body language of familiar or unfamiliar cultural systems. In all cases, making dance happen through choreography, improvisation, or performance involves attending to cultural notions of movement meaning, where 'movement' may be symbolic or functional. Especially when considering the influence of society on how humans learn to move and understand movement meaning, dance can be described as ethnographic at its very root. Sally Ann Ness explains how "choreographic phenomena" possesses the power to vividly open and reveal dimensions of human experience with accelerated ease of representation when compared to other forms of symbolic action (1992, p. 5). Ness describes choreographic phenomena as "the dynamic mentality of one's neuromusculature" where, in order to skillfully and artfully

acquire a choreographed movement, an unfamiliar neuromuscular pattern, an artist must open his or her mind to startling insights into who they actually are (p. 5). In this sense, the art of choreography investigates knowledge held within the body and represents this knowledge in the form of choreographic phenomena. Knowledge held within the body poses ethnographic implications because knowledge that becomes acquired in the body results from an individual's emplacement in a social environment that influences his or her beliefs about movement (and, in recalling Moore and Yamamoto, his or her ability to move). Ness clarifies how learning the unfamiliar movements of people with whom you do not share knowledge directly relates to the ethnographic practice of learning how to perform a cultural role. Focusing her argument on her situation as a "performing student of choreographic phenomena" who learns choreographic dance movements in a country other than her own, Ness' process of learning an unfamiliar movement mirrors the process of "mastering an unfamiliar way of moving through life" (p. 11). While Ness concentrates on the dance practice of mastering choreographed movement, my study expands to include the dance maker in all contexts, including the dance maker as choreographer, improviser, and performer. Whether the dance artist attends to one's own self, one's own culture, or a culture s/he visits, dancers and ethnographers both seek to understand and represent the beliefs and behavior of a group of people.

Performance Ethnography.

According to Ronald Pelias, "Performance ethnography takes as its working premise that a theatrical representation of what one discovers through participant observation fieldwork provides a vibrant and textured rendering of cultural others. Performance for the performance ethnographer is typically understood as an aesthetic act within a theatrical tradition" (2007). Ethnography of performance "examines cultural performances as objects

of investigation” during ethnographic research as opposed to performance ethnography (Pelias, 2007). Performance ethnography differs from conventional ethnography due to its mode of representation as a theatrical presentation. In examining performance ethnography, the limitations of the creative, artistic and performative components to the ethnographer’s mode of representation are questioned. Therefore it is important to examine the entire process of ethnography as an act of performance and artistry. This suggestion receives support from Jane Bacon who encourages readers to consider Richard Schechner’s notion of ‘performative thinking,’ that is, an expanded definition of performance that spans a broad spectrum “from performing arts to rituals, sports, and everyday behavior” (Pelias, 2007). If performance can include the myriad and seemingly unending ways that humans do what we do, or engage in practice, then we can draw a link between artistic practice and ethnographic research. Bacon suggests that, “What is helpful to remember is that ‘in the field’ people are in the world of ‘action’ or doing” (2000, p. 218). Ethnographic research, especially but not limited to when it involves participant observation, along with ethnographic modes of representation and artistic creativity all possess at their root “a process of data gathering that could be said to be both scientific and artistic” (ibid). Typically, artists will convey that an artistic product exists as more than the bounded final entity of the product itself; rather, it includes and is composed of the entire project from whence it arises. Regardless of the mode of representation, the bulk of an ethnographic study exists as the participatory, practice-based research performed during the data-gathering process, ensuring that ethnographic studies are acts of creativity and artists who engage in any kind of practice that examines cultural and social situations can consider themselves ethnographers in some capacity.

Autoethnography and Immersive Ethnography.

In opposition to classical ethnography, contemporary ethnography admits to the foregrounding of the researcher and his or her subjective interpretation, experience, understanding and representation of ethnographic data. While several disciplines of ethnography address the issue of researcher subjectivity and his or her involvement in ethnographic data, autoethnography and Della Pollock's notion of immersive ethnography deal with these questions most directly. Autoethnography "seeks to experience, reflect on, and represent through evocation the relationship among self and culture, individual and collective experience," weaving together personal narrative and sociocultural exploration (Jones, 2007).

Choreographer and writer Ralph Lemon presents an inspiring example of autoethnography (and performance ethnography) in his book *Tree*, a journal-like account of his travels to India, China and other eastern countries that eventually serves as inspiration for a choreographic project. Lemon clearly communicates how his trip to India serves as a place for him to reveal both himself in contrast with and immersed within a new sociocultural context. He presents his findings only through the revelation of his own experience. The poetic style of Lemon's narrative creates a kind of texture and flow that helps communicate a sense of how he experiences time in both the context of his surroundings and his own thoughts. The rhythm of how he writes seems to reflect a cadence of interaction between his surroundings, how he perceives them, and how he perceives his own self/thoughts. Within this first person, journal-like explanation, we can see Pollock's notion of an immersive ethnography where "the self-subject of the researcher is immersed in the cosubject, entangled with, even ravished by the cocreative process" (2004, p. 326). Lemon's combined use of autoethnography and immersive ethnography creates a lovely pattern of the individual emerging to the surface versus totally lost within - "Me and a little

brown boy like I was, in another country, riding a single camel inside of nothing but white dunes, sun, he singing songs in his desert language, me singing the Temptations..." (2004, p. 26). In this statement, Lemon defines himself, both alone and in comparison to the little boy, while also expressing a complete wandering immersion into his environment.

What I find very interesting about Lemon's way of working involves what seems like a complete enmeshing of ethnography and artistic practice. He makes an artistic practice out of witnessing/experiencing another culture while witnessing/experiencing himself in it. Even his ethnographic documentation happens through an artistic practice of textual and pictorial creativity. Throughout his experiential research process, Lemon performed the artistic practice of writing and drawing. The book *Tree* performs as an object of ethnographic documentation. Finally, Lemon carries on this practice-based, autoethnographic process through the creation and performance of a choreographic work that investigates and presents his experiences.

Within the content of Lemon's writing, it is easy to become consumed with how he relates his embodied experience of India through a trailing motif of how he witnessed and experienced vulnerable, damaged, and spilled flesh and viscera:

...a dead boy lying in the middle of the road, with most of his head missing...a dead camel on the road, giant entrails exposed, like black hoses...a beautiful leopard cat limping onto the road...I shit in sand...When a camel runs it tries to break the rider's pelvic crest...camels farting...walking walking walking...Raj would touch various parts of his torso and lips...A man's sternum will not burn and is thrown into the Ganga. A woman's pelvic bone will not burn and is thrown into the Ganga...The face eventually fries, turns a true shiny black for only a moment and quickly exposes a brief whit[e] skull that too disappears. Human flesh, burning inside massive pieces

of wood, smells like fleeting barbecued meat...a mass of standing bodies...bodies in every conceivable traveling, waiting position, soiled heat and no light...my body flushing black water... (2004, pp. 26-31).

This way of relating the experience of the body supports my own developing idea of an embodied ethnography that recognizes data in either the researcher's own embodied experience or the embodied communications of the subject.

Ralph Lemon's creation of his book *Tree* that both documents and processes his ethnographic methodology through an artistic medium in addition to his culminating choreographic work, exemplifies the possibility of considering the similarities between and possible amalgamation of an artistic practice such as dance-making and ethnography. My intentions throughout my entire project of conducting research in India and translating this research into a performance work, lived within the endeavor to explore the possibility of considering my artistic process as inherently and implicitly ethnographic. This merging of ethnographic and artistic methodology becomes evident in the theme of embodied participation informing both my choices of attention and involvement during research in India as well as my choice to emphasize audience and dancer participation in the Entangled/Embraced rehearsal process and performance. In this sense, not only did the theme of creativity through participation serve as a connecting concept uniting the entire process of Entangled/Embraced as an ethnographic and artistic process, but it also honored the involvement and co-creative capacities of all participants to transform concepts and situations offered to them, and to generate the material and meaning of the work through their own imaginative, inventive and emplaced self engagement.

We do not share this co-creative, interdependent relationship with our material environment alone, but with our social environment as well. I might suggest that the

collaborative method humans use not only in assigning meaning to movement, but in gaining the motor abilities to know how to move at all, represents an underlying structure for the inherently human nature of socially constructing knowledge in all other contexts. Interestingly, despite the sense of commonality felt when members of a social or cultural group reach an agreement of meaning or accept a shared knowledge, each individual's experience of that knowledge or meaning remains completely subjective and intimately personal. The following sections on common knowledge, discursive consciousness and public processes of creativity provide a sociological perspective for considering creative participation in co-constructing knowledge with the social environment that we emplace ourselves within.

Common Knowledge

At the basis of my artistic inquiries exists the idea of common knowledge – the operational knowledge that we use most of the time without awareness of it, and with similar understanding as our fellow humans. For example, we all know that we walk on the sidewalk, the sidewalk is hard and made of concrete, and we make contact with the sidewalk using the soles of our feet. With further research I have learned that in sociology the idea of common knowledge can be compared to Schutz's definition of a common *stock of knowledge* – recipes or conceptions of our environment that categorize objects into types of things, such as cars, trees, nature, technology, animals, humans, insects, etc. (Wallace and Wolf, 1990). Giddens refers to Schutz's term as *mutual knowledge* incorporated in everyday behavior and encounters (ibid).

Although we share knowledge and assume that we all know certain things, I am most inspired by how our experience of this knowledge happens on a very subjective level. For example, the associations we make and the memories we have in reference to the definition

of a sidewalk exist as personal, intimate, and unique. Yet, it seems that in public places we agree that the sidewalk can be defined as a hard material designated as the proper area for pedestrians to walk upon. So, what information can we define as shared knowledge? Even if we act according to this agreed upon concept of sidewalk, where lies the truth in shared knowledge if we all relate to this shared concept in subjective, uniquely experiential way? Can an arts practice in the context of dance making and movement investigation find the manifestation of this shared knowledge while also revealing the less disclosed, personal and deep-seated nature of how we experience our social and material environment?

Discursive consciousness and ethnomethodology. Giddens describes his notion of mutual knowledge as lying outside of *discursive consciousness*, that is, behavior and decisions that we are self-conscious of (Wallace and Wolf, 1990). Wallace and Wolf agree that the knowledge that we experience self-consciously represents only a minute amount of knowledge that we use to operate while we take for granted and automatically use an enormous amount of Schutz's *stock of knowledge* or Giddens' *mutual knowledge*. Wallace and Wolf go on to explain Garfinkle's origination of *ethnomethodology*, a theory that strives to make problematic the taken for granted, commonsense, everyday activity of reality. Simultaneously, ethnomethodologists study how groups of people make sense of their world by invoking "certain taken-for-granted rules about behavior with which they interpret an interaction situation and make it meaningful" (ibid p. 262).

A desire to investigate this taken for granted, common stock of knowledge held a prominent role in my decision to visit India. Often, the taken for granted rules of behavior and interaction associated with common knowledge or shared meaning become engrained into people's sense of normativity, inciting public performances derived from tacit decisions of interaction. Living in a world of unfamiliarity magnified the assumptions of common

knowledge of the people around me. Although I could easily distinguish that my cultural hosts acted according to shared rules and behaviors, I could not always decipher the shared agreement, or purpose for these actions and behaviors. As an outsider with minimal exposure to assumed behaviors and proceedings of my host cultures, I possessed the advantage of recognizing and considering the magnitude of beliefs and actions that often go unnoticed due to their absorption into cultural members' sense of normativity. This ethnomethodological concept of problematizing taken-for-granted common knowledge proposed situations of extreme discomfort when I breached concepts of normativity by failing to know the rules of a situation or by asking about ways of behaving that seemed obvious to everyone else. Simultaneously, the exposure of common knowledge that evokes particular behaviors of interaction in order to construct or reinforce shared meaning provided a great deal of thrill and excitement, for the knowledge that humans have agreed to share, or believe to have agreed to share, hold major influence in how we choose to shape our lives.

Public processes of creativity. As members of a place, whether public or private, we possess a role in creating what happens in that place at all given moments. For this reason, we live as constantly creative beings that own the responsibility of helping to create the world as we know it. In situations of public place-making, how often do we become aware of and appreciate the amount of creativity that happens in order to create the situation, ever-changing as it may be? As we walk along the sidewalk, not only do we contribute to creating place by our very presence, but we also sustain social creative establishments while also recreating them in new ways. We maintain the social creation of the meaning of the sidewalk as a platform to walk upon, yet as individuals with idiosyncratic and unique manners of walking and performing, establish this meaning in a slightly new way.

All the while, our presence and individuality characterizing our contribution to establishing this meaning of a sidewalk, helps to create a situation that has never happened in exactly the same way. Our decision to walk on the sidewalk, while it serves some personal purpose in the drive of creating our own life, is also dictated by our role as a sustainer, creator, and re-creator of a social construction of meaning.

As audience members entered into the world of Entangled/Embraced, they became immersed and involved in a situation that brings attention to their role as participants in a process of defining themselves and the setting within which they are emplaced. Many of the emerging choices of action and behavior available in a typical performance setting, such as finding an open seat and remaining there while the performance is in progress, no longer emerged as available options. For this reason, rather than relying on a normalized mode of behavior established by the shared knowledge of how to conduct oneself at a performance event, audience members received an opportunity to become hyper-aware of their own creative capacity to co-construct the setting they emplaced themselves within, simply through choices of interaction, such as where to stand, what to look at, who to talk to and so on. In this way, I hoped to encourage audience members not only to investigate the many aspects of shared understanding that often become absorbed into the realm of tacit knowing outside of discursive consciousness, but also to recognize the value of their personal perspective and unique expression necessary to the construction of shared understanding and to the creative actualization of the Entangled/Embraced event.

Chapter 4

SOUTH INDIAN SCIENCES AND PHILOSOPHIES OF EMBODIMENT:

AYURVEDA, KALARIPAYATTU AND YOGA

Chapter Three provides an overview of Ayurveda, Kalaripayattu and yoga, sciences that mark the focal point of my interests in traveling and researching in South India. My interest in these sciences develops from a fascination with how the philosophies inherent to them approach the human being as holistically composed of interwoven and interactive physical, energetic, psychological and spiritual components. The following sections introduce some of the concepts I garnered from these philosophies, such as the concepts of energy, doshas, pratyahara and breath, that I used as inspirational guidance for choreographing entangled/Embraced. While Appendix B expands to include more detailed information about these philosophies, specifically about Ayurveda, chapter four offers an explanation that provides a contextual understanding for further discussion in the methodological account of Chapter Four.

Ayurveda, Kalaripayattu, and yoga propose theories of anatomy and psychology that offer interesting and fascinating ways of considering body, mind and environment connectivity. The philosophies and practices of Ayurveda, Kalaripayattu, and yoga offer the possibility that a person does not just have a physical body and/or a thinking mind. Instead, the body and mind are parts of an integrated system containing interwoven physical substances, energetic forces, intelligence, and consciousness. It is fascinating that anatomical theories of Ayurveda, yoga, and Kalaripayattu include more than definitions and categories of tissue composition and organ function; they expand to include the energetic animation of physical and physiological compositions along with the individual's anatomy as a cosmically situated being. My teacher of Ayurveda, Dr. Lal Krishnan at Dhanwantari Ayurveda

Academy in Kerala, India, explained that western medicine studies life at the micro-logical level, breaking pieces down as far as possible into molecules, atoms and quarks, while traditional health systems in India study life at the macro-logical level, examining the entire universe to understand the composition and nature of the human being (Personal communication, April 5, 2011).

Ayurveda.

Ayurveda defines a science of health and medicine originating from the Himalayan Belt, developed throughout the subcontinent known today as India, and dating back to 1500 BC during the Vedic period of civilization (Tiwari, 1995). While the principles and practices of Ayurveda can be scientifically justified, their essence and way of understanding human physical and psychological health can be described as holistic, natural, and unified with the material and forces of the earth and universe. Ayurveda as a simultaneously ancient, traditional, contemporary and developing science provides incredibly interesting ideas about the constitution of the human being as a fully embodied life form, homologous with the earth, and complete with an integrated soul, mind, and physical body.

Ayurveda and human-environment continuity. Ayurveda's root theory accepts the human being as integrated with the environment; therefore, all the truths of the human psycho-physical system can be realized by recognizing the realities of our worldly and celestial habitat (Krishnan, 2011). The electrical flash of a bolt of lightning can be found in the neural synapses of our very own brain as they initiate electrical impulses that travel along the nervous system throughout the entire body. Rivers gush along earthen channels delivering nutrients and gouging away new territory, just as the bloodstream inside a human body carries sustenance and cleanses the entire system. Just as fire alchemizes all that lays in its path into a new substance, the fires of our digestive system metabolize nutrients into

flesh. The marrow-filled porousness of our bones echoes the trunk of a living tree filled with sap that, upon death, becomes hollow and full of spatial chambers. The electrons circling the billions of nuclei inside each atom that comprises our body, clearly resembles the revolution of planets around the sun in our celestial dwelling.

Ayurvedic philosophy aligns nicely with David Abram's notion of continuity between our embodied mind and the earthly, enfolding mind in its insistence that we cannot deny our bodies as a product of our natural world just as we cannot separate our minds from our earthly habitat. Ayurveda also takes into account that, just like our earth situated in the solar system, our lives have phases, seasons, changes, variations, and ages (Krishnan, 2011). Similar to seasonal rotation or to cycles of birth, growth, fertility and decline, Ayurveda recognizes and seeks to work with the theory of three qualities of reality – *Sattvas* or Creation, *Ragas* or Protection, and *Tamas* or Destruction (ibid). Sometimes, an amalgamation of swirling forces beyond our control develops into bouts of stormy mental rages. Other days, our thoughts may be bright and clear, dark and foggy or wild with electric epiphanies.

Mythological history and ultimate purpose. Many aspects of Ayurveda's mythological history and core purposes suggest unique ways of understanding the body, the senses, and knowledge as integrated in a way that includes but also surpasses basic mental functioning to encompass spiritual knowledge and enlightenment. A major premise of Ayurveda attends to the multi-millennia humankind quest to understand ultimate truth. The term *Darshana* refers to ways of knowing that help the seeker gain the knowledge of the universe, of the mind, of the soul and of enlightenment (Krishnan, 2011). *Darshana* translates literally as "eyes" or "vision;" however, *Darshana* also refers to a way of understanding that helps the practitioner uncover truths that cannot be attained by the physical senses alone (ibid). It is interesting that the notion of *Darshana* simultaneously

accepts the limits of physicality in spiritual pursuits, while also linking physical body parts and their actions as metaphorical necessities. Where do the physical body and the spiritual body separate? Can we imagine any kind of knowledge or existence, regardless of its spiritual or astral potency, without using the body as a basis? Does the term Darshana suggest that the embodied knowledge of “vision” serves as a foundation for “spiritual vision?”

According to Dr. Lal Krishnan, the *Asthika Darshana*, which follows the Vedic scripts and believes in the existence of god, promotes the god Dhanvantari as the divine healer and bringer of Ayurvedic knowledge. In order to reveal Lord Dhanvantari, the gods and demons of the celestial world had to churn him out of a great milky sea. Not only did Dhanvantari emerge from the nourishing secretions of a female body, but the churning of the sea required extreme physical labor as the gods and demons coiled a snake around a hill in the milky-ocean’s center and pulled the snake back and forth (Krishnan, personal communication, April 5, 2011). Even in the celestial world, the body and its abilities are sacred necessities that must be addressed and included in order to bring forth divine healing.

Pink details the significance of an ethnographer’s search to understand how his or her research subjects conceive of the senses (2002). Not all groups of people who share meaning maintain the same perspective of how the physical senses should be defined and used. In the West, we tend to recognize the five senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch as physical faculties that grant us the ability to understand our situational environment and to enjoy or dislike that with which we have come into contact. While Ayurveda recognizes the same five senses, it perceives sensory information as a stepping stone on the path toward *moksha*, or salvation (Krishnan, 2011). *Indriyas* or sensory organs perceive their associated *indriyarthas*, or sensory objects – the ears perceive sound, the skin perceives touch, the eyes perceive light, the tongue perceives taste, and the nose perceives smell (ibid). Using

the sense organs and the senses, the mind, or *manas*, comes to acquire knowledge. The ultimate beneficiary of this knowledge is *Atman* or the soul. Ayurveda's ultimate purpose seeks to create the physically, mentally, and spiritually healthy conditions necessary for the aspirant to attain moksha, when the personal Atman of the human being merges with *Brahma* the universal soul or ultimate consciousness (ibid). The senses and sense organs play a key factor in assisting the mind with attaining the proper and correct knowledge necessary to send the soul away from ignorance and towards ultimate truth.

Ayurvedic anatomy. *The five bodies.* According to Ayurveda, humans possess five bodies that range from dense and overt to subtle and effervescent (Krishnan, 2011). In conventional western thought, we generally believe that we have one body and one mind. Ayurveda considers five strata believed to make up the entire human being as a physical, energetic, psychological, and spiritually composed organism. These strata, while they range in material tangibility to more seemingly ethereal and energetic, are all necessary, integrated and expressed through both physical and mental activities (ibid). Most interestingly, the five bodies each receive the term 'body,' suggesting a lack of hierarchy between the physical, mental, and spiritual components of a person, and supplying the human being's physical counterpart with the same label as his or her intellectual and energetic counterparts.

The Annamaya body. The first layer of the material self, the physical body, is called *Annamaya*. Built from the materials of the earth, the Annamaya body receives sustenance from the earthly materials of food and water (Tiwari, 1995). According to Tiwari, cosmic memory, or infinite knowledge lives and continues to become refined by the DNA, or genetic code of all life-forms. Tapping into the continuity between the Annamaya, or physical body, and the material inhabitants of the earth creates "cosmic communion" when "each cell recalls its cognition from the beginning of life" (ibid, p. 15). Although all

inhabitants, animate or idle, contain cosmic memory, food and water especially serve as sources for humans to understand infinite knowledge, or in other words, to attain moksha. Within each grain of rice, harvested leaf or plucked fruit resides the timeless cosmic intelligence of birth, growth and destruction (ibid). The first step on a quest towards moksha involves finding and understanding the unification and continuity of our Annamaya body with that of the earth and universe. Often termed ‘the food body,’ the Annamaya body is:

...the most tangible form connecting us to universal consciousness...Unless we are able to use our holy vision and see the matter-body as densely packed energy, we will not be able to shed our delusion of body/consciousness alienation (ibid, p. 17).

The Pranamaya body. The Annamaya body becomes enlivened by the kinetic forces of the *Pranamaya* body, our energetic life-force (ibid). Slightly more subtle than the Annamaya body, the *Pranamaya* body consists of all forms of movement – from the respiration of the lungs, the pumping of the heart and blood, the travelling communication of brain and nerve cells, and the evolving process of learning new information (ibid). The *Pranamaya* body does not differentiate between mental energy and physical energy. Associated with Vata (air and space), the *Pranamaya* body contains all kinetic qualities and actions of liveliness (ibid).

The Manomaya body. *Manomaya*, or the mind body, governs the forces of self-construction (ibid). Although Annamaya provides the life-force or energetic principle behind mental activities, *Manomaya* is “the basis of the will and the architect of desires” (ibid, p. 19). Associated with the fire dosha, *Manomaya* transmutes information into knowledge, building an individual who can “perceive in terms of ideas, vision, and imagination (ibid, p. 19).” Recall that along the action chain towards moksha, the mind (*manas*) perceives information from the senses and translates this information into useful knowledge for the soul (*Atman*). In Ayurvedic terms, the fire of the mind transmutes information into conscious knowledge

and being (ibid). All that we claim to know or who we claim to be comprises our Manomaya body.

The Vignamaya body. The form of intelligence that does not exist according to ego-driven, emotional, or self-constructive aptitudes constructs the *Vignanamaya* body (ibid). The intelligence body manifests itself in all three realms of physicality, mentality, and spirituality. Examples of the Vignanamaya body, or the intelligence body, include the wisdom of each single cell in the human body to carry out its specific functions, despite its genetic content that includes the DNA code for the entire organism. While Vignanamaya provides the intelligence that feeds the creation of a zygote from a sperm and ovum, it also teaches the zygote how to grow into an embryo, become born into infancy, and how to grow and function beyond birth. Moments of intuitive clarity reveal Vignanamaya and we tap into Vignanamaya when we feel peaceful and unified with the intelligent, natural order of the universe (ibid).

The Anandamaya body. Ayurveda describes the five bodies as existing as layered sheaths. Our outermost sheath, *Anandamaya* exists as pure consciousness, with “no attributes, no modification, and no differentiation. It is beyond the grasp even of intelligence. Because it is spatially limitless, all is dissolved into it, the source of all sources (ibid, p. 21).” Already unified with Brahma, the Anandamaya body has reached moksha, or enlightenment, waiting for the human to realize its existence. According to Tiwari, “When the four bodies are in excellent health, they dissolve within this consciousness...the complete fullness of being (ibid, p. 21).”

I find Ayurveda’s five body theory interesting because it does not limit the individual to a mind and/or a body. Although it makes distinctions between the body and the mind, it takes into account the intermingling of all counterparts and the necessity for continuity. For

example, Vignanamaya, or the intelligence body manifests itself in mental awareness and in physical awareness (such as cellular memory). If pranamaya, the energetic body, animates the body and the mind, then can it not also serve as binding energy that interlaces the two? Do we not need a body to construct our own ideas of who we are and what we believe?

Therefore, where do the boundaries exist between Annamaya, our physical body, and Manomaya, our mind body?

Elements and doshas. While contemporary western allopathic medicine divides the physical from the mental and rationalizes human anatomy into systems of tissue and function (eg. The muscular, circulatory, digestive, and skeletal systems, etc.), Ayurveda organizes the matter and energy of the body into elements, doshas, and dhatus (Krishnan 2011).

Elements. Ayurveda accepts that the elements of water, earth, fire, air, and space exist as the building blocks of our universal habitat and thus our material body (Tiwari, 1995). We find the element of water in both the flowing rivers and estuaries of the earth and in our blood stream. The density of earth can be found in the soil and in our muscles. While we can find fire as its own entity, the fire of the sun provides heat and the fire in our digestive system alchemizes food into energy. Air abides within the chambers of our homes just as the air in our digestive system receives support from the hollow tunnel-spaces of the intestines.

Doshas. Giving animation to these elements, the doshas of *Vata* or air, *Pitta* or fire, and *Kapha* or water, enliven our substance and put it into action (Tiwari, 1995). The elements of air, fire and water should not be confused with the doshas of Vata, Pitta and Kapha. While the elements can be described as physically tangible, material substances, the doshas prevail as *forces* (ibid). We can experience the doshas but we cannot see the doshas directly; we can only see how the doshas affect the elements or the qualities that they produce in the

body and the environment (Krishnan, 2011). The doshas resonate within both the physical and psychological nature of the human, recognizing and reflecting reciprocity between the body and the mind – the shape and expressions of the body will often be reflected in personality and attitude. Doshas manifest themselves in the material of the earth and in the more subtle composition of climate just as they affect the physicality of the body as well as the realms of feelings, interests, and personalities.

Vata dosha. Vata, or air and its supporting subdosha of space, produces movement (ibid). The vata dosha is divided into five airs known as *prana*, *udana*, *samana*, *apana*, and *vyana* (Tiwari, 1995). Although the five airs of vata exist all throughout the entire body, each air possesses a seat or area where it predominately exists. Prana vata, situated in the heart, brain, face and chest, represents the life-force of the individual, encouraging inhalation and exhalation, and inspiring wisdom and knowledge (ibid). Udana vata represents the number of breaths that an individual is predestined to respire and flows upward through the lungs, throat and nose, giving vocal power and strengthening memory and intellect (ibid). Usually, individuals with high vata disposition possess special singing talents or on the other hand they may possess speech impairment. The third air, samana, flows through the intestinal tract to fan the fires of digestion, move food nutrients through the process of assimilation, discharges food waste into the colon. Samana fosters mental and spiritual assimilation, clarity, alertness and equilibrium (ibid). Apana vata, situated in the organs of pelvic region and the colon, provides the downward force needed to expel feces, urine, menstrual blood, semen, and the fetus during childbirth (ibid). Just as apana vata helps to release waste material from the physical body, it supports psychological feelings of freedom, lightness and release (ibid). Finally, vyana, the fifth air of vata breezes through the circulatory channels of the blood stream, assisting in the transport of nutrition throughout the body, sending sweat

from the glands to the skin, controlling blinking and yawning, and encouraging an attitude of accommodation, compassion and allowance (ibid).

Vata produces the qualities of mobility, coolness, hardness, dryness, brittleness, dullness, lightness, irregularity, variability, and painfulness (Tiwari, 1995; Krishnan, 2011). A person with a strong vata predisposition usually exhibits developed and complex intellectual abilities. Because vata resonates as the force of air and space, the two most subtle elements, Ayurvedic theory suggests that vata-inclined individuals possess an innate capability of understanding the most subtle and hard to grasp aspects of reality and ethereality (Tiwari, 1995). Individuals who possess a vata-predominant body-type bear long, thin limbs and flexible joints, faint body hair, dry skin, and small eyes (Tiwari, 1995; Krishnan, 2011). Always on the move, vata types have a quick metabolism, they are thin and they seldom gain weight (Tiwari, 1995). Highly inquisitive, vata types constantly jump from one place to the next in order to change their situation and gain new information (Krishnan, 2011). When moving, high potency vata individuals have a talent for speed but may be disadvantaged in terms of steadiness and stamina (Tiwari, 1995). The individual with high vata potency will be quick to gain sexual arousal and perform hastily in bed (Krishnan, 2011). The vata-prone female will experience irregular menstrual cycles with scanty, brownish flow alongside pain and anxiety (Tiwari, 1995; Krishnan, 2011). When vata becomes too dominating, the individual may become twitchy, restless, indecisive, and paranoid (Tiwari, 1995; Krishnan, 2011). An imbalanced apana vata may lead to constipation and hard stools (Tiwari, 1995).

Pitta dosha. The five fires of pitta are *pachaka*, *ranjaka*, *sadhaka*, *alochaka*, and *bhrajaka* (Tiwari, 1995; Krishnan, 2011). Pachaka resides in the stomach, duodenum and small intestine where it provides the digestive and dissolving forces to separate nutrients and waste from food (Tiwari, 1995). This separating quality of panchaka resonates psychologically as

the fire of mental assimilation and discrimination (ibid). Situated in the liver, spleen and stomach, ranjaka pitta controls blood formation and feelings of general well-being (ibid). The third fire, sadhaka, resides in the heart and supports memory strength, self-esteem, enthusiasm and inspiration (ibid). Alochaka pitta registers light as it animates the sense of sight from its seat inside of the pupils. This fire of sight also registers as the fire of inner vision, intuition, clarity, alertness, and accommodation (ibid). Lastly, bhrajaka, the fifth fire, exists in the skin, absorbing moisture from external sources, maintaining normal body temperature, and supplying color and glow to the skin. A healthy bhrajaka pitta encourages feelings of beauty and radiance (ibid).

Pitta can be described as hot, unctuous, penetrating, oily, intense, pungent, smelly, fluid, sour, and clear (Tiwari, 1995; Krishnan, 2011). Individuals predisposed to high pitta potency tend towards leadership, adventure and ambitious lifestyles (Tiwari, 1995; Krishnan, 2011). While they may exhibit a penetrating and intense personality, the intensity of alochaka pitta in the pupils grants pitta-types with clear and penetrating gazes, usually with light colored hazel, green or blue eyes (Tiwari, 1995). The pitta body-type usually consists of a medium, athletic build, red or yellow skin hues, freckles, reddish or blonde hair, strong body odor, excessive sweat production, and regular and copious amounts of urine and feces evacuation (Tiwari, 1995; Krishnan, 2011). Those with high pitta dosha can move fast, steady and fervently; however, pitta types lack stamina and endurance and can become easily overheated in physical exertion (Tiwari, 1995; Dr. Krishnan, 4/3/11). Females with a high pitta dosha usually attain menstruation a few days early and experience consistent, excessive and bright red flow accompanied by irritability and anger (Krishnan, 2011). Passionate, clever and active, the pitta-type individual may be prone to fiery violent dreams, excessive determination, irritability, greed, ego obsession, and anger (Tiwari, 1995; Krishnan, 2011).

While pitta-types make great leaders, an overabundance of pitta can encourage arrogance and insensitivity for others (Tiwari, 2011). While the fiery passion of high pitta-potency can manifest as sexual fervor and talent, pitta-types must constantly secure that their aggressive tendencies do not register them as self-involved lovers (ibid). With a strong personal ambition, pitta-types tend to maintain friendships on the basis of need (Krishnan, 2011). If kept in check, the pitta dosha can encourage the development of initiative, efficiency, accuracy, and vivaciousness (Tiwari, 1995; Krishnan, 2011).

Kapha dosha. Kapha divides into the five waters *kledaka*, *avalambaka*, *bodhaka*, *tarpaka*, and *sleshaka*. Kledaka, originates in the stomach and produces a moist, foamy liquid that aids in digestion (Tiwari, 1995). Kledaka kapha inspires fluid interaction with the world and coalesces the thinking faculties (ibid). The coolness of the second water, avalambaka, flows in the heart and provides lubricating plasma and insulation. Psychologically, avalambaka reveals and encourages attitudes of maternal embrace and protection (ibid). The third water of kapha, Bodhaka, lies at the root of the tongue and throat and provides the perception of taste (Krishnan, personal communication April 3, 2011). Bodhaka governs the impulse of quantitative consumption of food or sensory stimulation (ibid). Tarpaka, the fifth water of kapha, is situated in the head. Tarpaka Kapha calms and clears the sense organs, encouraging a proper and vital fulfillment of senses (Tiwari, 1995; Krishnan, personal communication 2011). The last water of kapha, sleshaka, promotes the production of synovial fluid in the joints, ensuring smooth and lubricated operation of the joints and full-body cohesion (Tiwari, 1995). The unctuous quality that sleshaka provides to the joints also resonates as fluidity and ease of the mind (ibid).

The kapha dosha produces qualities that can be described as cool, heavy, thick, slow, lethargic, nourishing, supporting, stout, dense, soft, oily, pale, and smooth (Tiwari, 1995;

Krishnan, 2011). A kapha body-type will be large and fleshy with well-developed muscles (Tiwari, 1995). The insulating and nourishing nature of kapha will encourage a layer of fat around the entire body, resulting in ease of weight gain and proneness to obesity (ibid). Kapha-types have thick, curly hair, abundant eyelashes and body hair, and thick, soft, pale, and oily skin (Tiwari, 1995; Krishnan 2011). Females with high kapha content will often have delayed menstruation with scanty, mucous-heavy flow and little psychological disturbance (Tiwari, 1995; Krishnan, 2011). Although slow to attain sexual interest, kapha-types represent the most romantic, sensual, and fertile individuals who possess the talent to both please their partners while also enjoying their own prowess (Tiwari, 1995; Krishnan, 2011). The individual with a propensity towards kapha will have large, sensual, loving eyes that reflect a nourishing, supportive and sweet character (Tiwari, 1995; Dr. Krishnan, 2011). When kapha-types move, they exhibit graceful fluidity, slow and steady rhythms, and strong physical power. An over-abundance of kapha will result in possessiveness, obsession, and attachment (Tiwari, 1995). The stability and density of the kapha dosha can sometimes encourage the kapha-prone individual to become stubborn and narrow-minded, while the lethargic qualities of kapha can encourage neglect and forgetfulness. When the kapha dosha is in balance, the individual will approach others with a calm, nurturing, and maternal attitude and he or she will be physically strong with great reservoirs of stamina (ibid).

Prakruti. At the moment of conception, a human being receives a *prakruti*, or a unique physical and psychological constitution based on karmic memory and doshic potencies (Krishnan, 2011). Although we may be influenced by our environment, society and culture, our personal *prakruti* remains constant throughout an entire life span (Tiwari, 1995). Although each individual experiences all three doshas, we each have a constitutional nature that allows for the domination of one or a combination of doshas (ibid). Most people exhibit

a dominating combination of two doshas, such as pitta-kapha or vata-pitta. Interestingly, Ayurveda makes it clear that the prakruti of the individual includes both physical and psychological developments. The doshas which enliven the human being do not discriminate between the mind and the body, therefore Ayurvedic medicine considers both physicality and personality, designing treatment that addresses each patient on an individual, holistic basis (Krishnan, 2011).

Srotas and nadis. Ayurvedic anatomical theory proposes that the movement of nutrition through the body as well as the movement of waste disposal happens through a complex series of channels called *srotas* and *nadis* (Tiwari, 1995). Interestingly, the *srotas* and *nadis* provide passageways not only for the material transportation of substances, such as blood, food, urine, and electricity, but also passageways for the doshas, thoughts, feelings, and sensory information. In fact, Ayurvedic theory includes that many *nadis* located throughout the body transport psychic energy and *prana* (or energetic life-force) (ibid). The blockage of a *srota* or *nadi* results in both a physical ailment and a psychological disturbance (Krishnan, 2011). The practice of acupuncture relates to Ayurveda within the topic of *srotas* and *nadis* – both systems of health explain body-wide passageways that support the movement of material and energy, where manipulating the channels through the manipulation of the body can have physical, energetic or psychological effects.

The concept of *srotas* and *nadis* is also present in yogic philosophy. In both Ayurveda and yoga, the recognition of passageways throughout the body that transport both physiological materials as well as energetic and psychological forces implies that the mind exists throughout the body rather than simply in the brain, and that situations of the body can effect states of the mind and states of mind can manifest in physical disease.

Yoga. In the following explanation of yogic concepts of mind and body, this research emphasizes a specific understanding of Sivananda Yoga, a style of yoga practiced and propagated by Swami Sivananda Saraswati (1887-1963) and his disciple Swami Satyananda Saraswati (1923-2009). Because the practice of yoga encompasses a vast variety of styles and beliefs, it is important to note that aside from brief references to Kundalini yoga, this research primarily derives from the Sivananda Yoga Vendanta school of thought that I encountered when living and studying at Dhanwantari Ashram in Neyyar Dam, Kerala, in 2011.

The three bodies. Similar to Ayurveda, yoga conceives of the entire human as possessing multiple ‘bodies.’ While the conception of ‘the three bodies’ implies a distinction between the physical body and the mind, yogic philosophy recognizes a flowing integration between the three bodies and yogic practice seeks to harmonize the three bodies in order to transcend them to reach enlightenment.

The Physical Body can be seen and touched – the substance and material of a person (Nataraj, 2011). The Astral Body, also known as the Subtle Body or Pranic Body, includes the energy of a human being along with his or her mind (ibid). Our thoughts, emotions, concepts of self, and overall life force belong to the Astral Body (ibid). Considering that the life-force of an individual and his or her mind both inhabit the Astral body, then we can ask whether or not yoga distinguishes a difference between the mind and that which encourages the heart to beat, presses blood through the arteries of the big toe, and grows anew after injury. Lastly, the Causal Body, or the soul, represents the essence of an individual (ibid). A person’s karma, or the previous experience of his or her past lives, provides each individual with a unique Causal Body (ibid).

While the stratification of the physical, mental, and spiritual bodies obviously denotes that yoga proposes a difference between the body, mind and spirit, the practice of yoga implies that physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of a human being possess fluid and inarticulate boundaries. Yoga practitioners perform postures that simultaneously benefit the physical body and the mind (Nataraj, 2011). This simultaneous benefit not only occurs in yoga, but in other forms as exercise as well – the physical activities of dancing, walking, swimming, running, and cycling, often result in feelings of joy and an uplifted mental state. If working with physicality can affect the mind, then where does the body end and the mind begin? Yogic philosophy states that the practice of physical posture also affects the Causal Body, or the soul, in that it creates experiences of joy, contentment and inner wisdom that serve as positive karmic material (ibid). *Bhakti* yoga, one of the four paths of yoga recognized by the Sivananda Yoga philosophy, involves performing acts of devotion, prostration, and gratitude, usually in the form of long-term singing or repetitive mantra chanting (ibid). Interestingly, the practice of *Bhakti* yoga (and all forms of yoga), attends to cultivating and harmonizing an individual through embodied behavior. The *Bhakti* yogi surrenders his or her soul to Brahman through devoting mental and physical energy towards singing songs of praise or chanting mantras of peace for long periods of time (ibid). While distinction exists between body, mind and spirit, the practice of yoga, regardless of path, involves finding a fluid integration of the Physical, Astral, and Causal Bodies along with recognizing embodied activity as a necessary foundation for enlightenment.

Pranayama. In a translation from Sanskrit to English, *prana* means life-force and *yama* means control or liberation. The practice of pranayama involves exercises in breathing and breath retention with the intent to gain access to and control of prana. The logic behind pranayama begins with oxygen. Because oxygen serves as the human being's primary source

of energy, deepening and controlling oxygen metabolism can help one gain a stronger sense of his or her Astral, or pranic body (Nataraj, 2011). As breath becomes the energy of physiological and psychological functions, then controlling the breath leads to controlling the mind (ibid). Holding the breath stills and focuses prana while pressure of breath retention cleanses the physical and energetic nadis of the body so that prana can move throughout the body more efficiently (ibid). Apparent in the philosophy of pranayama, is the close interrelation of body and mind, where the physical act of breathing creates a link to the psychological activity of the mind. The pranic life force enlivens all three bodies of the human – physical, energetic and causal; however, only through an attention to the interplay of these bodies can the human being grow into a more deeply conscious, holistically aware person.

Mantras and mudras. According to Swami Sivananda, practicing kirtan – singing the Lord’s name through long-term chanting – poses the “easiest, surest, and safest way for attaining God (*Kirtan*, 2011).” In Kundalini yoga, a *mantra* – a set of sounds, usually a combination of Sanskrit words – represents a sound originating from infinity (Khalsa, 2007). The sound of the mantra is not exactly the mantra, it is a manifestation of an energetic law of nature through sound (ibid). A mantra is a ‘mind-wave’ or projection of the mind and at the same time the unstruck, echo of the sound from its infinite origin (ibid). Rehearsing a mantra at once unifies the practitioner’s mind with infinite consciousness, calming mental flurry and simultaneously focusing and expanding consciousness (ibid). Interestingly, the Sanskrit words of various mantras deliberately require the singer to strike reflex points on the tongue and in the mouth, stimulating glandular activity and provoking the physical and subtle nadis of the body (ibid). The activities of mantra recitation and singing kirtan propose a practice that unifies mind, body and spirit and recognizes that an action of the body also

means an action of the mind and spirit, proposing that all of these components can work together and influence one another.

In Ayurveda, the hands are determined as ‘organs of action,’ parts of the body responsible for helping the mind gain knowledge through the senses (Krishnan, 2011). The practice of Yoga also recognizes the functionality of the hand and maps out certain reflex points in the hand that correspond to certain areas of the body and brain (Khalsa, 2007). By arranging the hands in specific positions, the yogi can “effectively talk to the body and mind” (ibid). Although the term *mudra* encompasses full-body shapes and positions, generally, mudras are shapes of the hand used in yogic practice and meditation that encourage energetic conservation and awareness. In Kundalini Yoga, the Gyan Mudra – formed by touching the tip of the index finger to the thumb – stimulates knowledge, ability, receptivity and calmness (ibid). Also in terms of Kundalini Yoga, the thumbs represent the ego and the base of the thumb, or the ‘venus mound’ holds the energy of sensuality and sexuality (ibid). Interlacing the fingers and using one thumb to press the venus mound and the other thumb to press the webbing between index finger and thumb, creates a connection between the positive and negative sides of the Venus mound on each hand and channels sexual energy (ibid). Mudras provide interesting material for considering mind-body connectivity because practicing mudra positions means recognizing a direct relationship between the body and the mind where physical stimulation results in mental stimulation.

Yoga and the senses. Yoga shares with Ayurveda a recognition of five elements and a specific association between an element and its corresponding sensory perception. Also in relation to Ayurveda, yoga recognizes the five exteroceptive senses as modalities of the mind that acquire knowledge in the process towards enlightenment (Nataraj, 2011). Yoga and Ayurveda arrange the elements and their corresponding sensory perception in order from

the most gross and tangible to the most subtle and ethereal (ibid). The sense of smell corresponds to the most corporeal of elements, earth (ibid). As rivers and underground water tables carry currents of nutrition, yoga places our liquid faculty of taste as associated with water (ibid). Because the eyes register light in order to see, the sense of sight requires the element of fire (ibid). The breeze on our skin informs our association of air with touch (ibid). Then, finally, the most subtle element of space encompasses sound waves that travel and expand from their source (ibid).

Kalaripayattu. The origins of Kalaripayattu tie intimately with the origins of Ayurveda and yoga, therefore, these sciences share many theories. The account that I give of Kalaripayattu results from conversations with my teacher, Guru Lakshmanan Gurukkal. These findings do not reflect the beliefs and practices of all Kalaripayattu practitioners and temples.

Kalaripayattu's theory of anatomy holds true to Ayurveda's theory of the five bodies with the human being possessing material and energetic sheaths comprised of Annamaya or physical body, Pranamaya or energetic body, Manomaya or mind body, Vignanamaya or intelligence body, and Anandamaya or consciousness body (Lakshmanan, 2011). According Lakshmanan Gurukkal and to Dr. Krishnan, Kalaripayattu holds the aim of enlightenment as its central purpose. The practice of Kalaripayattu serves to align and harmonize the physical and mental faculties in such a way to obliterate any voids between thought and action (Krishnan, 2011).

Pratyahara. Kalaripayattu shares with yoga the philosophy of *Ashtanga*, an eight-fold methodical system of attitudes and actions (Lakshmanan, 2011; Nataraj, 2011). The theory of Ashtanga, as relayed by Lakshmanan Gurukkal proposes the practices of *Asana* – physical exercise, *Pranayama* – breath awareness and control, *Yama* – moral living, *Niyama* –

self-study and purification, *Pratyahara* – sensory withdrawal, *Dharana* – one-pointed focus, *Dhyana* – meditative concentration on internal energy, and *Samadhi* – trance (Desikachar, 1995, Lakshmanan, 2011). Of particular significance to the choreography of Entangled/Embraced, lies the explanation of pratyahara as defined by Guru Lakshmanan. The yogic concept of pratyahara refers to a method conducted in meditation that entails a withdrawal of the senses (Desikachar, 1195). Although yoga does not propose that a practitioner live a life devoid of sensory stimulation, yoga proposes that in order to enjoy the senses more fully, the practitioner must obtain the ability to direct the senses rather than remaining under the control of the sensory pleasure (ibid). In yoga, the practice of pratyahara helps the practitioner to obtain a state of concentrated focus where one’s mind and attention no longer remain at the whim of all external stimulation, drawn to and distracted by beautiful objects, enticing smells, captivating sounds (ibid). In this way, the yogi can begin to invest in the true purpose of meditation, that of focusing inward, consciously attending to one’s self. The Kalaripayattu practice of pratyahara holds a similar intention to that of yoga; however, Guru Lakshmanan explained pratyahara in terms of a Kalaripayattu trainee’s process or evolution from seeking external energy to sourcing internal energy. In the Kalaripayattu practitioner’s path toward enlightenment, his or her attention begins to shift from an outward focus on his or her environment, to an inward focus on his or her self (Lakshmanan, 2011). Rather than seeking energy from external sources, the practitioner begins to find energy from internal sources found within one’s self. Similarly, the practitioner will find that his or her experience of energy will change from an outward expression to an inward reception (ibid). Chapter Five provides a methodological explanation of how the Kalaripayattu concept of pratyahara was experimentally incorporated into the choreographic process of Entangled/Embraced.

Siva-Shakti tantric theory. Lakshmanan Gurukkal also includes in his explanation of Kalaripayattu spiritual theory the notion of tantric practices in the context of *Siva-Shakti* unification (Siva pronounced *shiva*). In the case of Siva-Shakti tantric theory, *Siva* represents an all-encompassing consciousness that is nameless and formless while *Shakti* represents the energetic, creative principle of the universe that continues to express itself (ibid). Siva and Shakti unite to form a continuous infusion of creative energy with the formless infinite where, at the center lies the *bhindu*, a point of static trance that a practitioner can reach through meditation (ibid). Interestingly, within the theory of Siva-Shakti unification, we can see evidence of the necessity of the body. For example, the center of the palm of the hand represents a metaphorical location of an individual's *bhindu* (ibid). Furthermore, Siva receives the male sex while Shakti receives the female sex, implying that to visualize these ideas practitioners need the body as a relative point of understanding. I also find it interesting that an extreme physical practice such as Kalaripayattu can serve as a method for obtaining trance, as if intense athleticism combined with a focused, embodied mind can assist a practitioner in obtaining supreme, trance-like spiritual awareness.

Expanding from the first four chapters, the following chapters of Embodied Continuity provide a methodological account of how theories of embodiment and body-mind connectivity, body-mind-environment continuity, sensory ethnography and embodied emplacement, and common knowledge as well as philosophical concepts found in Ayurveda, yoga and Kalaripayattu, were incorporated into an artistic exploration culminating in the performance event of Entangled/Embraced. Furthermore, the following chapters demonstrate how the entire project of Entangled/Embraced, from research in India to the creation and performance of a dance work, uses audience and dancer participation to tie

together both concepts and practices deriving from both phases of the project and to unite my chosen artistic and ethnographic methodologies.

Chapter 5

ENTANGLED/EMBRACED: BUILDING A DANCE USING A METHODOLOGY OF TRANSLATION AND TRANSFORMATION

As a synthesis of my research in South India, I choreographed a forty-minute dance work with four dancers that interweaves personal experiences and knowledge gained during my stay in India with the innately creative aspects and contributions of dancers and audience members. Concepts inherent to Ayurveda, Kalaripayattu and yoga provided inspiration for artistic exploration, evolving into new ideas within new contexts created from the contributions of participating dancers and audience members as they relate to ideas of embodiment, dance as embodied ethnography, self-environment continuity.

Ethnographic Consciousness

When choreographing *Entangled/Embraced*, my desire lived in the dream to orchestrate a process that provided not only an outlet for me to creatively channel my experiences and new knowledge gained in India, but also an opportunity for dancers and audience members to encounter and even create for themselves experiences inspired by the practical and philosophical concepts inherent to Kalaripayattu, Ayurveda and yoga. These intentions are underwritten with challenges associated with using experiences deriving from both my own sources and knowledge belonging to other individuals and their respective cultures. Using what I had experienced and learned in South India presented problems (opportunities) to deeply consider my methods and intentions in terms of unethical self-projection – experiences that I deem invaluable have lesser bearing on the lives and identities of the people to whom I share and describe them. Creating a performance work inspired from the philosophies and practices deeply rooted into the spiritual life of people who allowed me into their culture as a participating visitor rather than a member proposes the

necessity of considering the ethnographic and artist ethics associated with cultural appropriation. From the outset of the process of choreographing a dance piece, I asked myself, 'How do I go about asking dancers and audience members to share a journey with me without unconsciously requesting they assume my journey over their own? How do I create a dance inspired from concepts deeply and intimately rooted into the spiritual beliefs and practices of a group of people whom these concepts were born from and belong to?' The questions of whether or not the thematic content of any form of art can arise as separately or exclusively sourced from the experiences of its maker probably represents a topic of deeper philosophical discussion; however, in point I hoped to utilize the creation of Entangled/Embraced as an exploration into how all participants involved in the work, including dancers, audience members and myself, collaboratively create the work's content and meaning.

Guiding concepts for new creative contexts. In the context of creating Entangled/Embraced, I did not feel my place rested in trying to educate anyone about Ayurveda, Kalaripayattu or yoga, nor to ask participants, including dancers and audience members to exactly understand and embody my personal experiences in South India. Instead, I hoped to provide opportunities for participants to encounter the essence of the sciences of Ayurveda, Kalaripayattu and yoga, and then, create their own meanings out of the material and situation offered to them. Through telling participating dancers stories about my experience, as well as through explaining my understanding of the philosophies of Ayurveda, Kalaripayattu and yoga, I asked the dancers to consider some of the ideas and concepts I had encountered or inherited as a backdrop for activities designed to generate movement and thematic material; however, the true nature of the work asks only for inspiration from these guiding concepts. In the process of directing the choreography of

Entangled/Embraced, my interests turn towards the possibility of a synthesis of experience where the interpretation and imagination of dancers transforms the concepts I offer into an artistic practice and performance fulfilled by the creative capacity of these dancers – my fellow makers. To lift the philosophies and practices out of their cultural and spiritual context and attempt to re-create them in their original form within a new context did not feel like an ethical ethnographic or artistic practice; instead, to let them live in their original form in their original lands with the people who originated them, yet allow them to inspire something new and relative to the context of new participants and creators, granted both original practitioners and current practitioners the respect and honor due to their inherent creative forces.

An effort to maintain ethnographic consciousness by allowing experiences and philosophies gleaned from my time in India to inspire a dance work becomes apparent in the participatory role given to dancers and audience members during the work's rehearsal process and performances. I placed high priority upon and appreciation for movement generated by dancers as well as dancer's feedback and descriptions of how they experienced activities with which I asked them to experiment. Rather than teaching them specific movements that I had learned while training in India, I provided them with my interpretation of the concepts behind those specific movements, then asked them to create their own movement that fits their personal psycho-physical, spiritual beliefs and interpretations. The work of each dancer and her valuable account of the meanings she forms throughout experimentation provide the true flesh, form, life and reality of the overall existence of Entangled/Embraced.

Another example lies in my creative choices stemming from how I experienced the constant presence of clotheslines and by-hand laundering in India. Rather than attempting to

create a clothesline scene for audience members to see, or a clothesline world that might make audience members feel as though they had stepped into India, instead I chose to create a clothesline world that might appear more neutral and open to interpretation. For example, one audience member, with a wide sweeping gaze explains his sense of memory evoked by the clotheslines by explaining how he felt lost in colorful flashes of time spent in his childhood bedroom, building a fort out of his sheets and garments. Another woman merrily rested on her back under a piece of gently swaying green fabric. “It’s so beautiful from this angle!” she giggles. Following her bubbling expression, she explains how she came to know that fabric looks beautiful when viewed from underneath – as a small child she had accompanied her grandmother in the chore of hanging laundry outside to dry. Allowing the clothesline to fit the context of its host culture by placing western styled clothes and parcels of fabric, I hoped to allow the audience members to construct for themselves the qualities and location of the place they inhabited and the associations they made between the clothesline and their own personal lives and individual histories.

The Clothesline

The *Entangled/Embraced* clothesline installation consisted of hundreds of articles of various colored clothing and segments of fabric, suspended from nine lines of wire spanning from various points of the performance space. Each line traversed a long pathway across the room, the shortest line reaching 20 feet and the longest line reaching over 60 feet. Usually each line connected points of oppositional height range (floor to ceiling or balcony railing to floor, etc.) although two lines remained positioned overhead, stretching from ceiling to balcony railing or balcony railing to a high door hinge. In addition, the unique architecture of the performance space provided two more opportunities to hang lines from lowered ceiling edges created by the technician’s booth that dropped down from the ceiling close to the

performance-space entrance. As audience members stepped into the world of Entangled/Embraced, they entered into this clothesline installation that surrounded them from many angles, immersing them within the performance and in the same space as the dancers.

Inspirations and emergent meanings. While in India, it became vividly clear in the cities where I lived for longer periods and in the places I visited on short-term basis, that washing and hanging laundry played an unmistakably realistic role in the life of people who lived in these locations. Every house or living complex portrayed lines of clothing hanging to dry either on a rooftop terrace or within the bounds of balconies and porches. The colorful sight of hanging laundry reflecting both the work of daily life and the state of the weather as it either hung heavy or whipped with the breeze, represented a strong image within the urban landscape. In communities based along natural waterways, such as Hampi, a town situated along the Tungabhadra River in the state of Karnataka, laundry washing took place at the water's edge. The method of drying laundry by laying garments flat on top of stone structures built adjacent to the river, created a place saturated with water sun and humidity. Imagine: Standing at the edge of hill that cuts down into a river valley, you look up-stream to gather the site of long swaths of deep red, orange, blue, yellow and purple ribbons of fabric floating and fluttering in the water current, tethered to the hands of women standing knee deep in the river. Mirroring the streaming saris in the water, several open-faced stone structures running toward the river's source in the horizon provide large pads for multi-colored patches of fabric lying like puzzle pieces under the sun. The glare of sunshine and dense humidity help you to believe that you can actually see the damp heat sucking up towards the bright sky, enveloping you in a world of wetness inside your water-logged anatomy and condensing upon your outer layer of skin, already moist with sweat. The

fertility delivered by the river has resulted in rich-green tall grass pastures and islands of mud and foliage contained within the bounds of hard, smooth and big boulders. Other than the sound of birds and daytime chatter, you hear the splat and slap of wet cloth against rock as working arms and hands kneed, press, hit and squeeze out soapy water against a river-side stone.

The scene of laundry washing in Hampi represents a more isolated event that I experienced while traveling in Karnataka. A more prevalent account of laundry practices would include the presence of washing and hanging clothing in the urban settings of Bangalore and Calicut. In these places, from practically any angle – on the ground looking up, on a balcony looking out, or on a terrace spanning across the undulating canopy of rooftops, balconies and trees – one could almost always see a few lines of colorful linens speaking of those elemental aspects of our natural world that we can feel – wind and heat – yet we cannot see – air and evaporation.

Accounting for interpretations. Although washing and hanging by myself characterized most of my laundry time in India, it did become a bonding group activity in Calicut when my fellow Kalaripayattu initiates and I faced the necessity of cleaning our sweat and mud soaked training garb at least every other day. Through these instances I gained a sense of how members of my host culture experienced laundry practices – at times playful, difficult but never exactly dreadful, and certainly accepted and assumed without complaint... indeed, the acceptance of laundry work became keenly obvious when for a period of time that I became particularly busy with Ayurvedic practice, my comrades in Kalaripayattu training elected themselves to the task of washing and hanging my laundry with theirs.

I must emphasize the situatedness of how I describe the laundry practices that I witnessed and participated in. The greater portion of meaning and developing symbolism

that began to define the lens through which I envisioned, observed and practiced laundry, expanded from my own ontology, my existing beliefs about the purposes of clothes and the meanings behind their associated practices. The group-bonding events, such as washing with fellow Kalaripayattu trainees, rank seldom in comparison to the number of times spent alone attempting to hand-wash and hang my clothes or watching from a distance as practiced members of my host culture completed their laundry work with skill and seeming ease. Furthermore, while I often spoke with my peers about the nearly impossible physical strength necessary to hand-wash clothes, my attempts to gain inside experiential information (and tips that might make the task easier) yielded some insight statements declaring the necessity of a washing stone or the willingness to beat the dirt out of my clothes by slapping them forcefully against a hard surface. While the more direct data obtained through participant observation, observation from afar and interviews certainly influence and play a role in the development of meaning leading to thematic concepts of Entangled/Embraced, the primary methods I used to come to an understanding of laundry practices in South India dwell within my own experiences, feelings and intuition. For these reasons, rather than appointing an ontology to my host culture, I must claim as my own the symbolism I found within the creative act of washing and hanging laundry.

My own ontology. Emerging from the daily experience of by-hand washing and hanging, a field of symbolism manifested into a meaning that harnessed the singularity of individual human experience within the embracing realm of social community and the all-encompassing extent of the natural universe. Considering the powerful role of one's attire in creating an expressive sense of identity, hanging my clothes on the roof granted a safe and normative opportunity to pin up bits of my personal, intimate life in a highly visible area. Because everyone participated in this colorful exposure, it felt to me like contributing to a

social conversation, a vulnerable language conveying the shared truth that we all participate in the collective choice to wear clothes. Through the medium of clothing, we relish in the bonding group act of co-constructing the meaning of clothing, spinning out trends of patterns and styles according to what we agree is beautiful, appropriate and functional. At the same time, clothes make an immediate statement of individuality as we make choices according to a subjective experience that has led us to the evolving moment of a personal belief system. This harnessing of opposites, the individual tied within the group, emerges in the categorical meanings we assign to clothes. By wearing certain kinds of clothes we align with a group of people who wear similar clothes to ours; when we see someone and recognize a certain kind of clothing – a uniform, robe, rag, a plainly-patterned dress or an elaborate sari – we place that person into a group that in turn takes its place in society – a police officer, a religious leader, a victim of poverty, a working housewife, a woman of distinction, and so on. Joining the collective choice to wear clothes carries with it one's personal beliefs and practices that determine and reflect the individual's belief in the group concept of acceptable contributions to the creative game of wearing clothes and the individual makes his or her contribution accordingly. Whether one decides to conform to or rebel against the group concept of acceptable contributions– for example by washing frequently to present a contribution of cleanliness or by wearing dirty clothes to make a statement about lifestyle or belief – the practice of wearing clothes epitomizes the phenomenon of juxtaposing, yet integrated singular individuals and collective construction of meaning.

The experience of a clothesline. When trying my hand at hanging my own clothes, I found myself captivated by the sensory experience of wet fabric draping heavily over my wrists and forearms that eventually became dry fabric curling and lapping over my shoulders

as if imparting a special language devoted to the simple delights of existence. When either hanging or disassembling my clothes on the line, I believed my act creative in constructing a small tapestry-world of dormant identity and pleasant appreciation. While the clothesline hung on the rooftop terrace, expressing its many colors and patterns for all the world to see, my perspective was up-close, intimate and immersed. I did not, however, feel alone and private in my experience. On the contrary, I felt participatory in a community-wide activity that, as an unending necessity to the daily life of all community members, represented a tradition that provided an unspoken yet highly expressive mode of commonality.

Touch and entanglement. My time in South India can be described as embraced by human presence. Indeed, every public place that I traveled to involved being completely surrounded by a huge population so that to the front, back and sides of my being, people were always present. Squeezing into the city together meant standing a lot closer, sitting a lot closer, walking a lot closer, and driving a lot closer. This surrounding of humans encouraged me to feel embraced by body heat and humanity, almost as though the energetic charges of those around me provided a cushion of support. I found this embrace symbolically reflected in the instances when, after hand-washing my clothing, I hung my garments to dry, standing between the colorful rows of half-concealing tapestries of fabric brushing my skin in its dialogue with wind and space. Not only did the activity of washing and hanging clothes provide an opportunity to participate in Sarah Pink's notion of participant observation with attention to the senses – in this case, the sense of physical exertion when wringing out the clothes, the wet splashes of soapy water merging with an overall sweaty dampness produced from the heat of the day, the smell of clean clothes that had baked in the sun and absorbed daily odors from local kitchen fires, burning trash, and vehicle exhaust – but, in addition, washing and hanging clothes provided an opportunity to practice a necessity common to

everyone around me. While the practice of washing and hanging clothes drew me into a group commonality, the life-size, eye-level images became extremely evocative of the feeling of being embraced by humans. My clothes joined the line with the clothes of my companions, creating a symbolic curtain of energetic presence, as if the life-force, stamina and vitality of my fellow clothes-hangers lingered in the tissues of fabric whipping in the wind.

This awareness of a constantly active, alive and embracing throng of human life that I can associate with the sensations arising from washing and hanging laundry, reminds me of Sarah Pink's discussion of emplacement, where definitions of place depend upon an entanglement of lifepaths and places share an interdependence with lived bodies (2010). In choreographing *Entangled/Embraced*, I intended to explore Pink's concept of sensorial place-making by constructing a meandering and winding line of hanging clothes through which the audience must walk, stand or sit when watching the work. With the fabric hanging close enough to brush against audience members' bodies, I hoped to provide an opportunity for audience members to walk into a world where they might employ the sense of touch to create a personal meaning for this "clothesline world" place. Additionally, I hoped the clothesline installation might encourage audience members to feel a sense of comfort and connectivity – rather than walking into an open room where their presence is transparent and vulnerable, they entered a world where they may choose places to conceal or show themselves, a place where their own clothed bodies might receive commiseration from artifacts of clothing already existing in that world, a commiseration that might encourage audience members to recognize, value and unabashedly employ their own irreplaceable process of creativity in co-constructing the world of the dance work they found themselves interdependently entangled within.

Lines of continuity. In designing the clothesline installation of Entangled/Embraced, I intended to create an all-encompassing structure that inspired all participants, dancers and audience members alike, to feel immersed within and woven together through lines of commonality and continuity of humanity. Upon stepping into the clothesline world of Entangled/Embraced, I hoped the installation might cultivate within participants a feeling of envelopment in a webbing that not only tied together the space, creating a cohesion of place, but also led audience members to one another like woven pathways of connectivity.

On these webs of connectivity, participants find clothes – symbols and relics of human commonality and shared understanding. Because we all wear clothes, we all participate in the socially creative decision to wear clothes. Not only do we participate in the social agreement that humans must wear clothes, but the kinds of clothes we wear tie us into a more complex agreement on what certain kinds of clothes mean and the socio-economic and cultural stratifications and labels to which we ascribe ourselves, either by choice or by force. Although sometimes the social agreement to wear clothes represents a manifestation of political and economic violence and oppression, and other times our choice of clothing represents an opportunity for liberation through creative expression; in all cases, almost all members of the human race and most certainly all participants of the Entangled/Embraced performance, share in the experience of wearing clothes. I hoped that by creating a performance project where participants co-existed in a world tied together by a webbing of clothing might highlight the shared experience and sense of co-creativity and commonality that we find in the choice to wear clothes.

Interestingly, the socially integrated practice of wearing clothes is not limited to the public sphere. Choices and experiences of clothing represent a very intimate and private

component of human beings' processes of developing personal identity. In the seclusion of our homes and closets we address ourselves in the nakedness of who we are and the costumes of who we believe ourselves to be. We choose our clothes not only for their function, but also according to our inner and often undisclosed moods, desires and intentions. When we change our clothes, we inform and construct our identity, effecting tiny transformations from an executor of one function to another or from one feeling to another, such as when we change clothes to shift ourselves from sleeping to exercising, from working to cooking, from feeling frumpy to feeling attractive, from feeling exclusive to feeling socially open. The practice of wearing clothes resonate with humans on both a private, individual level and on a socially integrated and public level; clothes have a way of weaving together our sensitive private selves with our gregarious, public selves... much like the practice of hanging clothes on a line – not only do the hanging clothes echo the private act of removing and washing them, all articles hang together regardless of the privacy of their purpose, undergarments and outer garments mingle and run together on the same line, under the same sun and within the same sight of the public world. In this sense, I hoped that constructing an all-encompassing clothesline that tied together the space of Entangled/Embraced might also unite participants' sense of private inner experiences of creativity with social processes of creativity. In this way, participants might also recognize the value of their own individual experience and personal interpretations in helping to create the public realm in which they participate.

Chapter 6

THEMATIC CONCEPTS FOR EXPERIMENTATION

Interconnecting movement.

When studying Kalaripayattu, Ayurveda and yoga in Kerala, I found that for these sciences, movement represents a sacred activity and moving in certain ways serves to create a link or portal of communication between the human and the divine. For example, when stepping onto the training ground, or *kalari* floor, practitioners land first with the right foot before the left. Before advancing into the kalari space, practitioners use the right hand to touch the floor, then touch their own forehead and heart center to address and conciliate the goddesses of earth and knowledge. At the commencement and culmination of each Kalaripayattu training session, students engage in an elaborate and physically demanding ritual of addressing and propitiating the *pothara*, a shrine of seven ascending steps that represent the union of Siva and Shakti (Lakshmanan, 2011). When learning to conduct an Ayurvedic massage, my teacher instructed me in a ritual of pouring a puddle of medicated oil into the pool-like indentation of a patient's lower back and proceed to use my right hand to complete three rounds of dipping my fingertips into the puddle to call on Brahma, then touching the middle of the patient's back to call upon Vishnu, proceeding further up the spine to touch the back of the neck to call upon Siva, and then touching my own forehead to salute Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge. This ritual ties the Ayurvedic panchakarma therapist into a web of spiritual agreement that unifies her own intentions with that of the divine (Krishnan, Personal communication, April 5, 2011). In yoga, the physical postures themselves serve to harmonize the practitioner's physical, mental and spiritual bodies, a method that utilizes physical experience and action as a route towards unlocking a greater consciousness, a clarified understanding of living truth. All human cultural knowledge

systems, including those that *seem* less colorful and ornate as Hindu cultures, reflect embodied symbolism, using the body as a key of unification between the self and the more ethereal presence of the spiritual world. Imagine someone standing on the edge of a cliff and overlooking a vast panorama of lush mountain ranges, valleys and rainbow-sparkling waterfalls. The person's arms extend from side to side, high into the air as if his or her fingers might conduct electric energy from the spiritual world that he or she feels enlivened by and brimming with when confronted by this amalgamation of intelligently charged natural phenomena. Believers of Catholicism trace the shapes of a cross over their face and chests while Christian Baptists are known to throw their hands high into the air when singing gospel music.

In acts of acknowledging a desire for or an awareness of unification with a divine spiritual force, humans turn to physicality and embodiment to seek out and express experiences and communion with the spiritual consciousness of their understanding. I am fascinated by the explicit and full physical involvement that Kalaripayattu, Ayurveda and yoga practitioners immerse themselves within as a method of joining into the realm of the spiritual divine. When choreographing *Entangled/Embraced*, I labeled this concept of sacred movement that serves as an act of unification or as a portal of communication junctioning the self with the divine *interconnecting movement*. While ceremonial, traditional and ritualistic movement practices of South Indian philosophies represent inspirations for this idea, I did not plan to use specific movements that I witnessed or practiced in India. Stripping these movements from their cultural context feels to me like stealing a piece of spiritual creativity from individuals whom not only originated the movements, but for whom the movements play a deeply incorporated role of spiritual meaning and identity. Instead, my methodology formed a structure around an interest in transposing over the idea of

interconnecting movement to the context of the dancers who participate in the creation and performance of the work.

Interconnecting movement – methods of incorporation. I incorporated interconnecting movement by asking dancers to consider the concept of movement as prayer, or a method of communicating with their own personal symbols or images regarded as spiritually sacred. To assist with the visualization of this idea, I invited dancers to bring an object that each individual associates with her spiritual beliefs. Each dancer then generated a movement phrase that they felt embodied this prayerful connection to their personal concepts of divine symbols or images. I was curious to see how individual dancers create movements that they believe address feelings of ethereal sanctity or personal beliefs they spiritually sense in the space or in their own thoughts and bodies. What kinds of actions do these dancers employ? What qualities do they express? What ideas do they focus on – personal, religious, emotional, social, etc.? Eventually, these movement phrases became material incorporated throughout the performance of Entangled/Embraced. Sometimes each dancer's phrase remained whole, intact and performed just as the dancer created. Other times, bits and pieces were performed with variations such as changes in speed or repetition.

Along with my dancers, I participated in creating interconnecting movement as well. Together, we investigated the differences between making our own ritualized movement versus learning that of someone else. I call into remembrance Sally Ann Ness' description of learning the choreographic phenomena of another person as a process of ethnography in that it coaxes the performing dancer into unfamiliar 'mentalities of neuromusculature' and encourages the dancer to question ideas of self-identity. In the process of learning the personally and intimately conceived phrases of interconnecting movements of other people, we explored various experiences of self-expression, displacement of participant comfort

levels, revelations of new imaginative visions, and influential suggestions of belief and identity.

Transposing philosophical ideas.

When choreographing *Entangled/Embraced*, I introduced Ayurvedic, Yogic, and Kalaripayattu philosophies to my dancers with the intention of using these concepts as structural inspiration for activities designed for the generation of movement material and to initiate further explorations into thematic and compositional possibilities. Although I did not expect participants to completely endorse these philosophies, I was interested in how they may imagine and embody these concepts within the context of their own experiences and consciousness. A list of exemplary questions that informed my methodology at the outset of the choreographic process includes: How might a dancer envision Ayurveda's Intelligence Body? What images and sounds come to mind? Where in the body might the notion of the Intelligence body resonate? How might a dancer choose to move as if guided by or lost within the Intelligence Body? Would the qualities of his or her movement be big and expansive, more subtle, undulating, liquid and flowing, clearly designed and executed, or indirect as though diffused in space? When looking at the Saptadhatu theory of Ayurveda and Kalaripayattu, how might a group of dancers abstractly portray this chronological system of tissue development? For example, how might a dancer move as if guided by the Rasa Dhatu – the cool, clear, kapha-associated plasma in the blood vessels – and then give rise to movement inspired by the red component of the blood stream – the hot, pitta-governed Rhakta Dhatu?

Many questions emerged as guiding curiosities; however, the actual philosophies incorporated into the *Entangled/Embraced* methodology included the Kalaripayattu concept of *pratyahara*, the yogic concept of breath, Ayurveda's notion of doshas, Pink's

notion of sensory imagination, Garfinkel's development of ethnomethodology combined with social construction of knowledge, and concepts related to energetic reality that I found in India combined with Abram's discussion of energetic language.

Pratyahara and breath. After explaining Pratyahara to my dancers I asked them to create a movement phrase with specific attention to moments of external, outwardly directed action and moments of internally directed action. In Laban/Bartenieff terms, external or *expressive* movement always pairs with internal, *recuperative* movement in a continuous wheel of *expression/recuperation* (Hackney, 2001). Once each dancer solidified the expressive and recuperative actions of her phrase, I asked dancers to help clarify the journey from outer, externally seeking and expressively motivated intention to inwardly-sourcing and wisdom-motivated intention by integrating their breath patterns, voices and an evolving movement quality illustrating my Gurukkal's description of the inward turning process of pratyahara that has the power to transform the energy-expending, flailing-for-knowledge student into an energetically abundant and spiritually fulfilled student with easy and focused control.

Using breath as a kind of material for conscious incorporation also created a correlation to the yogic concept of prana, that is, the subtle, energetic body or life force of a human that can be accessed and enriched by conscious breathing. In this sense, I hoped to experiment with using the concepts of pratyahara and prana within the context of generating movement in the dance studio as participants attempted to form a movement phrase that embodies the process of coming to understand power and life as an energetic force not found out in one's external environment but from within one's own inner consciousness.

My original plan for depicting an abstract embodiment of pratyahara consisted of a series of repeating the same movement phrase, evolving with each repetition from externally-emphasized movement combined with exhalations and voice to internally-focused

movement emphasizing recuperation and inhalations with then without voice. The series of repetitions first form as an energetically-building pattern of:

Round	Sound: Breath and/or Voice	Emphasized Movements	Movement Qualities
1	Exhalation	Outwardly-directed,	expressive
2	Exhalation with voice	Outwardly-directed,	expressive; building intensity, traveling, aggressive
3	Exhalation with voice	Outwardly-directed,	expressive high intensity, traveling, out-of-control, aggressive.
3	Inhalation with voice	Inwardly-directed,	Calm, internally focused
2	Inhalation with voice	Inwardly-directed,	Increasingly calm, slowing, recuperative
1	Inhalation	Inwardly directed,	Resolved, relieved, pacified, fulfilled, at ease, receptive to inner self and experiences

After dancers practiced and performed this pattern in rehearsal, I found that completing the pattern by using the same movement phrase for each round resulted in quite

an extended process that presented very powerful moments but, in its entirety, was difficult to follow in order to recognize the intended pattern emerging with each repetition.

Furthermore, the wide range of sound available for experimentation, especially as they correlated to a wide range of movements available within the phrase material, began to evoke a myriad of other less developed and thus less apposite themes, such as comical, childish, and sexual.

While single rounds of each repetition did deserve a role in the work, in order to evoke more explicitly the evolution of an experience of pratyahara, I chose to pull single movements from the phrase to repeat many times through a development of the previously designed pratyahara pattern. Each dancer, receiving a moment to perform alone, executed a single expressive movement over and over. In order to perform any single movement repeatedly, the expression of the movement must include a moment of recuperation.

Beginning with an emphasis on the expressive, outwardly-directed portion of the movement, dancers reinforced this emphasis with a quiet exhale that built in intensity to a much more audible and frantic exhale with voice. After a strong climax, the dancer incorporated an emphasis on the recuperative portion of the movement using a strong inhale with voice.

Eventually, the emphasis on the expressive portion of the movement, along with any use of exhalations or exhaled voice dropped out completely. The recuperative movement began to evolve so that the dancer uses a more calm inhale with a softening of movement quality.

Finally, dancers' once frantic and externally emphasized movements and breath culminated with a soft movement quality and sense of relief with each inhale. By extracting a single movement action from the pratyahara phrases originally generated by dancers and then asking dancers to repeat the movement action many times while gradually fulfilling the

pratyahara pattern, a much more specific and clear manifestation emerged depicting an embodiment of how a human experience of pratyahara might feel in a short amount of time.

Doshas. To transpose the Ayurvedic philosophical concept of Doshas, I did not believe it necessary to directly communicate about doshas or attempt to educate audiences about the concept of doshas so that they might know the definition of the word dosha and ways that each dosha emerged during the Entangled/Embraced performance. After all, Ayurveda refers to doshas as forces that give rise to qualities, not the actual material that exhibits the qualities (Tiwari, 1995). To use the example of a river, the water in a river takes form as the element of water; however, the force of kapha, or the water dosha, gives rise to the qualities found in the water element – coolness, fluidity, nourishment, power through calm adaptation or through rushing and overwhelming.

Incorporating doshas using intuitive allowance. This subtle, yet vividly present work of doshas guided my choice to create moments and moods within Entangled/Embraced when doshic forces manifest themselves clearly without the need for description or definition. Furthermore, I believed my place as a choreographer did not carry the task of assuming the role of Ayurvedic teacher or educational practitioner. Instead, I believed an ethical approach to incorporating into my artistry a concept originating from cultures that I may visit but cannot claim to belong within, involved creating an opportunity for participants to come to know doshic forces through a vivid, personal experience with them where these experiences can be defined by the context of place and individual dancers and audience members. Indeed, to experience the enlivening force of doshas, regardless of how we define their energetic presences, means to consciously sense that which stirs an individual's emotion, spirit, memory, imagination and wonder.

Doshas play their role in every aspect of the universe – they give rise to the qualities of any material however dense, animate or inanimate it may be. Because of the ever-present expression of doshic force, I knew that with minimal effort, each dosha will manifest itself. For example, each dancer possesses her own prakruti that inevitably shows through in every aspect of her personality, choices of movement and styles of communication. While one dancer may express an affinity for kapha by creating very fluid, circular movement and contributing and interacting with the group using a calm and kind demeanor, another dancer may provide a bright, charismatic mood using eager and wilder movement indicative of a prakruti dominated by a strong pitta, or fire dosha. For this reason, incorporating the Ayurvedic concept of doshas into Entangled/Embraced required intuition and the simplicity of allowing the energetic forces of the doshas to reveal themselves through the personality and participation of each dancer.

Incorporating doshas using sounds and pacing. In addition to incorporating the concept of doshas into Entangled/Embraced by using a method of intuitive allowance, I also chose to utilize artistic elements of Entangled/Embraced production such as sound and choices of energy level and pacing. Working with Bill Swayze, the Senior Instructional Specialist and Accompanist Manager at Arizona State University, I assembled an original soundscore composed from sound clips sampled from free and non-copyright-protected websites that offer user-provided recordings. I designed this soundscore to help create a mood or sense of place that communicates the qualities manifested by each dosha. For example, a three-minute high-pitched ring echoed throughout the room to conjure a contemplative awareness of space, the element associated with the vata, or air dosha. The sound of rain calls to mind a sense of kapha, or the water dosha. The physical and emotional climax of the work built into the sound of fire, creating that wild, frenzy and transformative quality of the pitta dosha.

Physical Touch And Tactile Stimulation.

A supremely lucid and rich outcome of my experiences in India weaves together processes of re-learning the meanings behind physical touch in social situations, re-arranging personal space boundaries, re-constituting my comfort level with nudity and touching nude bodies, and finding exposure to new forms of tactile stimulation.

While spending time in India, I recurrently found myself in semi-private social settings such as a small group of friends spending time in a house or room where participants expressed friendship through increased physical contact. Even in more public social situations, I experienced women expressing support and affection for me by touching my stomach and buttocks or by holding my hand on the street. In the privacy of home, arranged upon cushions on the floor, I experienced my friends lying in my lap, curling around my back, or intertwining my feet and legs with their own. I cannot say whether this behavior represents a cultural phenomenon of South India because I was not privy to multiple groups or multiple socially intimate situations; however, I can state that the particular group that I spent a great deal of casual time with practiced increased physical contact and this posed for me a new, unfamiliar experience where I needed to investigate the meanings I associated with touch and the ideas I had developed in terms of appropriate forms of friendly touch and personal space barriers.

Furthering these delves into unfamiliar physical contact, when studying Ayurvedic massage, I found myself confronted with learning how to be present in the room with an undressing patient and how to approach touching a patient's nude body, including regions considered inappropriate in western massage such as the buttocks, pelvis, inner thighs, armpits, stomach, and breasts. I had to simultaneously break down preconceived ideas about touching someone's body, remain open to new beliefs about nudity and maintain an

appropriate kind of sensitivity to the patient as an individual. Interestingly, the unfolding of this process took place through the embodied practice of actually doing it, of being in the room and completing the massage.

In creating *Entangled/Embraced*, I proposed to my dancers the challenging task of investigating and attempting to alter preconceived ideas behind the meaning of touch and physical intimacy. Together, we explored how meanings behind touch and physical contact become deconstructed and evolved through practice. While I did not intend to request participants to engage in overtly sexual behaviors – after all, I am pulling from friendship- and mentorship-based situations – I devised activities that encouraged dancers to confront personal barriers associated with human touch and comfort levels in situations of physical intimacy. In addition, these activities sought to explore how, through practice and collaborative mutual shaping, meanings behind touch and physical contact change over time.

Activity one – Associated and unassociated meanings of touch. The first interactive activity that I devised in an effort to explore meanings the dancers and I associate with various forms of physical contact involved partnerships where Partner A approaches and touches Partner B. First Partner B verbally describes the way she interprets the meaning of the touch, such as gentle, friendly, caring, violent, like an angry lover, like a child and so on. After verbally describing the associated meaning of the touch, Partner B describes the touch in ways that she believes completely unassociated with the form of touch offered by Partner A. For example, a gentle touch might receive the description “hateful” or “harmful.” Upon asking dancers to try to believe the unassociated meanings, they reported feelings of strangeness and sometimes guilt, as if they felt manipulative or somehow at fault for misconstruing and especially for not truly knowing the intentions behind Partner A’s choices of physical contact.

Building dancers' awareness of touch with audience members. This activity of exploring and upending the associations we make about forms of touch served as an activity for generating ideas rather than a generator of usable dance material; however, the value of this activity solidified in its effect of building a foundational undercurrent of dancers' awareness when audience members joined the Entangled/Embraced performance space. While dancers received little instruction in terms of whether or not to touch audience members or how to touch them, performing in a space completely inhabited by and shared with audience members inevitably presented the possibility of physical contact. Touch between dancers and audience members took place both accidentally and purposefully depending on audience members' and dancers' choices of location and decisions of interaction. Dancers, as the creative leaders in the social structure suddenly faced questions of how to interact with audience members, including opportunities to investigate ways of responding to physical encounters or the possibility of physical encounters. Having spent time in rehearsal exploring personal interpretations and assumptions embedded within the individual process of determining the meanings of touch, dancers felt sensitized to the delicacy and complexity of physical contact. With this more vivid awareness, dancers felt more prepared to encounter the inevitable situation of coming into contact with audience members. In the midst of unlimited, sometimes fun, other times confusing, occasionally indecipherable and often embarrassingly pleasurable interpretations of meaning arising in moments of human touch, dancers' knowledge of their own assumptions combined with their attunement to their own processes of interpretation and habitual reactions, developed their capability to respond to touch with audience members with embodied suggestions of camaraderie, easing of tension and mutual physical recognizance.

In many ways, these moments of physical interaction between dancers and audience members served as beautifully telling and tender aspects defining the work. When watching one performance, I witnessed a beautiful moment when a dancer moved into a position on the floor near a young man who sat resting his torso on the palm of his hand. As the dancer landed in a lying position, she found the back of her hand had settled upon his. Both participants exhibited a moment of recognition, a hesitation that stirs me to wonder if perhaps they both are silently questioning the meaning held within the touch and how to respond. The dancer lingered for an instant, offering a moment dedicated to the beauty and non-hostility available in touch between two strangers. The young man smiled after the dancer reinforced the moment of physical contact by briefly sweeping her hand across his as she left his side and moved into the next moment of the performance.

Audience members' choices of physical contact. The dancers did not harbor full responsibility for creating meanings embedded into moments of physical contact with audience members. Indeed, audience members also possessed the ability to choose moments and meanings of physical contact, especially because they inhabited the performance space and faced decisions of whether to remain in close proximity to dancers or to relocate if dancers came nearby. At the end of one performance, an audience member sat leaning against the wall specifically spotlighted and choreographed into the work as a final point before the darkness that traditionally marks the culmination of a theatrical performance piece. As the dancers moved closer and closer, it became clear that the gentleman had opted to remain in his chosen viewpoint and allow dancers to make contact. This gentleman's choice created a touching final and lasting image that depicted him as an upright bookend supporting the four dancers who piled against one another and against the wall. The image that solidified just before the final blackout served as an exquisite reminder of my experiences in India

when I faced internal questions of meanings behind and appropriate forms of touch as I found my new friends propping themselves against me or lounging in my lap. While I cannot assume to know the inner experiences of Entangled/Embraced audience members and dancers during moments of physical contact, nor did I attempt to specifically re-create events I experienced in India, these situations of dancer-audience physical contact certainly evoked the co-creative process and shared splendor involved with humans' experience of touching one another.

Activity two – Humans touching, a process of reaching mutual

understanding. For all humans, the experience of touching another person, regardless of the familiarity or newness of relationship, is felt through a shared journey of collaboratively negotiating mutual understanding. Whether touch is violently inflicted or lovingly offered, and whether one initiates or receives touch, people who engage in touching one another simultaneously embark upon a process of questioning and deciding the meaning of touch, experiencing how this touch holistically affects the self and choosing a responsive reaction. To explore the mutual journey people experience when held in the magical grasp of physical contact, I asked dancers to come into contact with one another in a way that feels strange, unnatural and non-pedestrian, and then to travel around the space maintaining this form of contact. The unfamiliar and non-normative arrangement of physical contact helped to bring to the surface dancers' thresholds of comfort during physical contact – personal space barriers often honored so diligently that choices made in an effort to sustain them become automatic and tacit (and of course, often for good reason); however, the aspect of this activity that emerged as truly captivating revealed itself in how the meaning and form of the physical contact changed as dancers dynamically adapted to the task of traveling while touching. Although I cannot claim to know the inner journey of each dancer, nor would it

make sense to believe that dancers sharing a partnership felt and thought the same impressions, I can unmistakably claim through observation that the partnerships' task of traveling together in the midst of unfamiliar physical contact took the form of an evolving and embodied process of asking, defining, negotiating and re-defining. For example, two dancers might begin with a serious intention and a confused, yet determined motivation with experimental and awkward methods. Together, they find a rhythm and cohesion that works and the prior seriousness evolves into the joy of success and of discovering a flowing, interdependent pattern. The strangeness of their task and its unfamiliar organization of movement inevitably introduce a physical fatigue and disperse of concentration. The dancers begin to fall out of sync with one another, only to find this physical relationship and its collaborative modalities surprisingly new, not the same awkwardness they encountered when their journey commenced. Eventually, their physical cohesion falls apart, their mental assumptions of how the shared task might take place breaks away, their emotional response arrives totally unexpected and they collapse upon one another in laughter.

For me, observing this process meant witnessing an event that heightened the tiny transformations humans experience every day as we engage in the journey of touch. When watching both partnerships complete the task of contorting into an awkward, shared shape and maintaining this shared shape while traveling through space, it becomes clear to me that the dancers' purpose in their task remains mysterious and subtle, as if they know that their partnership might yield a specific outcome, but the outcome did not matter over the process. It seems that their evolving relationship embraces a paradox – the vulnerability, physical discomfort and the strangeness of their situation and intentions simultaneously cultivate compassion and humanity. Traversing space and negotiating objects within a shared physical

and emotional discomfort, partnerships in this strange situation of touch build empathy and commonality, a mutual camaraderie of embodied “figuring out” how to make the task work.

Activity three – Active and passive partnerships. A third method I employed to investigate dancers’ barriers of comfort with touch, along with processes of coming to an interdependent process of embodied understanding through touch, again involved partnerships utilizing an active role and a passive role. This activity begins with Partner A finding various ways to move Partner B who remains as completely passive as possible. Gradually, Partner A employs more than the use of her hands to re-position and relocate Partner B. Eventually, the physical contact between Partner A and Partner B becomes incredibly intimate and complex as Partner A uses various parts of her own body that in pedestrian situations may not generally receive a useful association for manipulating the body of another person. Partner A might use her shoulder, her stomach, elbow, head, or another part of her body to re-position Partner B. Occasionally, if Partner A strives to avoid using her extremities, such as her hands and feet, she can find herself digging her torso up under her passive partner, rolling underneath to use her entire body to move Partner B into a new position. Given Partner B’s complete passivity, Partner A might find herself using unfamiliar methods and parts of her own body to support and cradle Partner B from flailing, falling or landing in a physically harmful position.

An evolution of understanding through touch. For both partners, not only did the unfamiliarity of non-normative forms of touch highlight the various meanings embedded within acts of touching, but similar to the traveling duets, this activity revealed a process, an emergent methodology between each partnership, sometimes joyful and sometimes frightening and frustrating, devoted to embodied understanding through touch. This process of coming to an embodied mutual understanding through physical contact revealed many

moments of enjoyment and physical euphoria, similar to the euphoria of receiving a massage; however, it also unmasked a great deal of fear, frustration and working through conflicts as partnerships embraced a task wrought with mutual concern for safety and a necessity of transforming fear of one's own body and that of another person.

Processes of conflict resolution in Active/Passive partnerships. Among the two partnerships formed to explore the idea of active/passive roles with the active partner gradually incorporating parts of her entire body as manipulative surfaces to move the passive partner, I found it interesting to note that the pair of dancers who attempted the task with more daring and commitment, also encountered stronger conflicts that resulted in more firm negotiation and a deeper necessity for resolution. What seemed apparent in this dynamic partnership, I might describe as a juxtaposition of personalities – one dancer committed to the risk and playfulness of utter passivity, and the other intensely committed to a caring and supportive relationship. When the dancer who possessed the talent of truly and completely fulfilling the task of remaining passive, the caring partner sometimes felt overwhelmed by the responsibility imposed upon her. Although for the majority of the time, this partnership worked well and produced intriguing physical collaborations – the willingness of the passive partner allowed her to follow through with her caring partner's initiations with complete abandon, bringing about very risky and playfully unexpected movements. At the same time, the deep care the initiator expressed in her intentions and choices helped to set up successfully safe opportunities for these unexpected moments of surprise. Like all relationships in any context, both extremes of intention created friction when they didn't match up smoothly. For example, when the passive partner, in her unreservedly relaxed state of embodiment would not catch herself before landing in the occasional physically unsound position, the caring partner became frustrated with her passive partner. The caring partner

confided with me that she could not understand how her passive partner could give in so earnestly to the whims and possible misdoing of another person. The confusion and transparency of conflict occasionally misfired even further when the passive partner carried out her active partner's choices of movement initiation to the point of landing in a position that might harm not only herself, but also her concerned partner.

The process of reaching resolution in this partnership developed through verbal discussions and through physical messages as well. The caring active partner occasionally stopped or expressed her frustration with slightly more aggressive initiations or with nudges and light shoves to let her passive partner know she was not comfortable with some of the choices and outcomes that were emerging within their collaboration. Most interesting about the unfolding of this activity was the emerging embodied process of coming to a mutual understanding of meaning when humans touch one another. Especially given the challenge that this activity proposed in asking dancers to encounter their comfort levels by engaging in physical contact that inevitably required a great deal of close and unfamiliar contact, moments of collaborative success and conflict became very transparent along with dancers' process of using physical contact to investigate and reach an evolving understanding of collaborative methods and emergent experiences and meanings.

Tactile stimulation. During my time in India, alongside inquiries into unfamiliar experiences of touch and physical contact, I found exposure to new forms of tactile stimulation – the tactile articulation between my body and my environment. Life at Hindustan Kalari Sangam presented the possibility of remaining barefoot as an appropriate and nearly unavoidable option. Spending most of my time barefoot opened a new awareness to my environment – the texture of rocks and brick pathways, the coolness of the kalari foundation, the heat of the sun-blasted terrace, and the smooth slickness of the Ayurvedic

hospital's floor where generations of dropped oil created a sense of walking upon a surface permeated with rich nourishment and ancient wisdom. In treating physical injuries of the muscles, bones and joints, Ayurveda employs the use of egg white mixed with a medicinal herb paste and soaked into a cloth wrap. Mixing the egg white and medicinal paste with a mortar and pestle and dipping the cloth wrap into the slimy concoction allowed me to playfully negotiate the gooey, sticky, and stubborn qualities of egg on my hands. During Kalaripayattu training, the layer of medicated oil applied all over my body became mixed with sweat as I learned to continue working with completely drenched clothing clinging to my skin. Eating with my fingers not only granted insights into the texture and temperature of food, it also allowed me to feel the shape and density of my fingers in my mouth while re-learning the hand-mouth coordination that in western terms should be limited to childhood.

A sensorial entrancement. Interestingly, my interest in using a theme of sensorial experience along with Pink's concepts of sensory ethnography, met with an issue associated with a particular requirement set for the preservation of the performance space floor. Because the floor of the performance space could be punctured or scratched by pedestrian shoes, audience members attending the show were asked to remove their shoes before entering the performance event. This requirement initially seemed like an unnecessary challenge that might promote audience members' feelings of discomfort upon entering the performance; however, the challenge became an opportunity when I realized the value of asking audience members to join the event with a higher level of sensory awareness gained through walking without shoes. Furthermore, I hoped that audience members might feel a stronger sense of creative presence and commonality with dancers who also performed with bare feet. In an attempt to accentuate the possibility of inviting members to raise their levels of sensoriality and awareness of creative commonality with dancers by removing their shoes,

I pieced together a large entrance rug constructed from sewn together bits of fabric. This entrance rug proposed multiple surfaces of various textures including thick and fuzzy, thin and silky, rough and wooly, grainy, soft, smooth, leathery, and so on. In forming audience members' first introduction to the work by constructing an entrance into the space that might offer a sensory experience, I hoped to help audience members open their sensory modalities and willingly invest in their own sensory imagination as necessary to the performance. Furthermore, I hoped to let audience members know that upon entering the Entangled/Embraced event, each individual's presence in its whole embodied, sensorial being is invited, appreciated, needed and accepted.

Common knowledge and discursive consciousness. When choreographing Entangled/Embraced, to incorporate concepts related to the social and embodied construction of knowledge, I drew upon dancer and audience participation and their inevitable role as co-creators throughout Entangled/Embraced's developmental process and performance. Dancer and audience member participation provided an invaluable service in assisting me to explore through practice the theoretical concepts of common knowledge and Garfinkel's ethnomethodology, Lincoln and Guba's description of multiple realities, and Pink's concept of sensory ethnography and sensory imagination.

Audience members' creativity in presence and meaning. In usual performance events, audience members have become accustomed to creating the world of the seating area, across from and facing the performance area. Although this role often receives the adjective "passive" in its description, audience members at any event play a very creative part in a performance, the part of co-constructor of what happens in the audience and at the show at large, as well as co-creators of the meaning of the work. Despite this very active and inevitable role in creating the definition of an event, this co-construction of reality has

become routine and normalized. When we attend a performance event, under typical circumstances, we have become accustomed to the task of finding open seats, sitting, listening, watching, stepping out for fresh air during intermission, conversing with friends during the times when the stage curtain has closed, and so on. The situations we find ourselves in as audience members have become routinized and normalized to the point that many of our options and choices lay outside of Giddens's notion of discursive consciousness; we do not consider them beyond their functionality and we attend a performance to witness the genius of another person imbued with creativity, all the while giving little thought to our own contributions to the inherently creative act of co-constructing the reality we build ourselves into as audience members (Wallace and Wolf, 1990).

Without discrediting the value of a typical theatrical arrangement that separates the creative "performance" from the passive "audience," in designing *Entangled/Embraced*, I hoped to shed light on human beings' constantly creative nature and how as individuals, all members of a situation participate in the social construction of knowledge and reality. By bringing audience members into the same space as the dancers, I hoped to provide an opportunity for attendants to recognize themselves as creative participants rather than passive spectators. In this non-normative situation, I intended to de-normalize audience members' list of options and choices of where to go and whether or not to sit, how to sit, how to stand, whether or not to lie down and whether or not to move to a new location to see better or to avoid direct interaction with dancers. Rather than following a standard process of entering a theatre and finding a seat, audience members were not sure exactly what to do or where to go, so their choices of action had to be weighed as carefully as an artist's choices in the midst of creative action. I hoped that by becoming hyper-aware of their choices, audience members might become hyper-aware of their processes of identifying

themselves and how this identity-defining process plays a valuable role in constructing the event of a performance. For example, in a post-performance interview with an audience member, he reported that he wasn't really sure whether to sit or stand, but he came to conclusion, "I'm already standing, so I'll just stand" (date). Furthermore, having attended the Entangled/Embraced performance with a friend he explained that standing near his friend represented a major factor in his choices of where to locate himself to watch the dance work. Although this decision may seem passive, as though this audience member relied upon existing conditions and other people to direct his choices, the fact remains that he experienced an awareness of his choices and these choices of interaction prove valuable to his presence in creating the place of the Entangled/Embraced event. While some audience members chose a more visible presence by walking around and inhabiting more central areas of the space, even members who chose to remain peripheral by sitting against the wall had to see this choice as an option and then actually decide to commit to their preferred creative contribution – "I can go here or there...which will I choose? ...I will be someone who sits against the wall..." For some audience members, this public process of creative input encouraged feelings of discomfort; for other audience members, the situation offered an opportunity to reveal their presence with enthusiasm and playfulness. In all cases, my ultimate hope existed as an intention to support audience members, communicate to them the value of their presence and highlight each individual's inevitable and incredibly special contribution he or she makes to the creation of the work.

Indeed, the ownership and meaning of a work of art cannot alone be attributed to the artist who originates the work; those who witness the work also create a meaning about the work, yet we easily forget the importance and validity that each individual audience member's meaning plays in creating this work. So often, audience members leave a work of

post-modern performance art replying that they have no idea what meaning the artist meant to convey. Those unsure members who are not too shy might share their interpretation yet follow it with the disclaimer, “but... I think that’s probably way off from the real meaning.” Only a small percentage of audience members leave a non-narrative performance work trusting that they interpreted the artist’s meaning with accuracy, or believing that their interpretation is truly meaningful and correct, regardless of its apparent or absent synonymy with the artist’s intentions. I hoped that by highlighting audience members’ inherent creativity in their choices of presence and location might help to embody and bring to everyone’s awareness each person’s value in creating the meaning of the work. By receiving ownership of their personal choice of presence and location, audience members might more easily recognize the role of valid ownership they play by creating a personal meaning associated with their experience of the Entangled/Embraced performance.

Dancers’ experimentation with common knowledge. When living in India, the knowledge common to my new companions regarding the most simple of assumptions, attitudes, interpretations and behaviors remained hidden to my consciousness. I spent a great deal of time simply watching for signs to let me know the character of events, possible realities around me and appropriate forms of reaction and behavior. In fact, after some months, I found myself often exhausted by this task and a bit weary of constantly attempting to figure out what was going on and how I should participate in a situation. This kind of deciphering and negotiating a reaction takes place as a social task, one of knowing how to complete a simple activity such as crossing the street, and sometimes how to participate in a more complex and sacred event such as a wedding or religious ritual. The vast amount of common knowledge that guides the majority of human beings’ choices of social interaction becomes highly transparent to an individual who has not spent a lifetime acquiring this

knowledge that lies outside of discursive consciousness. While I could understand the range of shared assumptions that I did not have immediate access to without keen and long-term observation, I could not always rationally decipher the actual form of knowing and its deeper meaning. This lack of knowing emerged with great intensity when members of my host culture asked me to participate in sacred events, a request that insisted I watch and mimic other participants with the most keen accuracy I could muster. While I only hoped I mimicked the actions and behaviors of those before me with some accuracy, I still had minimal knowledge and experience of the purpose behind the actions that I was silently instructed to complete. Sometimes, I felt highly honored to have been invited to participate in an event, but I questioned whether the members of my host culture really understood the extent to which I found myself lost in a realm of knowledge and assumed behaviors that lie completely outside of my common knowledge. Generally, I believe members of my host cultures approached my non-knowing and possible, sometimes frequent, mistakes with sincere understanding and patience; however, the aspect that I found most notable about these situations, emerged as the method of embodied instruction that host members utilized to show me how to participate with them, indeed highlighting the embodied method that we almost always utilize in coming to a socially-shared concept of common knowledge.

To offer the concept of common knowledge to dancers participating in the choreography of *Entangled/Embraced*, I devised an exploratory activity that I hoped touched upon my experience in India of entering into a culture where the vastness of common knowledge becomes transparent when the rules, assumptions and meanings based within this shared knowledge remain hidden. This activity involved asking one dancer to step out of the room while the remaining three dancers decide upon a shared topic of great importance around which they collaboratively construct a group ritual. The outside dancer

then joins the group, making an effort to follow along with the group's ritual, attempting to watch, mimic and learn the ritual proceedings and perhaps come to an idea of the meaning behind the ritual and its chosen gestures and embodied prayers.

We explored this activity twice, each time with a different dancer volunteering to stand out of the process of creating a common knowledge of shared beliefs and rituals. After these two attempts at the activity, I asked dancers to share how they experienced the task within the role they had chosen. Many of the dancers' explanations revealed inner experiences that seemed to echo not only some of my own experiences of entering new cultures in India, but the experience anyone might have upon entering into a situation where the individual must learn the invisible realm of common knowledge made evident through practices and behaviors but not necessarily explained through verbal instructions. For example, one dancer who entered into the ritual as an outsider revealed that while she felt very reliant on others, she surprised herself at the speed of which she learned the unfamiliar phrase material of the ritual. The second dancer to blindly enter into the realm of common knowledge known only to her fellow dancers described the activity as difficult, going on to explain that she felt hyperaware of details and that she did not want the members to stop practicing the ritual because she really wanted to understand and perform the movement as clearly as everyone else.

The movement ritual that the dancers devised together as a collaboratively devised practice embodying a shared agreement on the importance of a particular topic provided a rich resource for movement material that we directly inserted into the Entangled/Embraced choreography, especially during sections when all dancers performed in unison or as a cohesive group. Just as important, however, this activity of investigating experiences of knowing and not-knowing the realm of common knowledge served as a rehearsal practice

raising awareness for possible experiences of audience members whom, upon entering the performance space where the dancers have been busy working as creative leaders building the place of the performance, also enter into a world where they witness and participate in new concepts of common knowledge. When dancers who played the role of cultural insider in the activity of creating a common knowledge movement ritual reported their experiences upon inviting the outside dancer to participate in attempting to learn and practice the shared ritual, they explained thoughts and feelings very necessary to consider when the joining participant becomes audience members rather than another dancer. For example, one dancer explained that, at first, she felt protective of the ritual she helped to create when the outside dancer joined in to learn and participate. Another dancer recognized a shift in her intentions when practicing the shared ritual, from a purpose of creating and sharing, to a purpose of showing and performing. With an awareness of these more subtle aspects involved in processes of sharing common knowledge with a group or, conversely, joining a group to learn the often hidden components and meanings embedded within common knowledge, equipped dancers with an important sensitivity to the possibilities of audience members' experiences when joining the performance space as participants and co-creators rather than as outside onlookers.

Energy. In approaching the concept of energy as theoretical material to inform and inspire the creation of a performance, I drew from my understanding or interpretation of how the people I encountered in Karnataka and Kerala define 'energy' and engage in various practices accordingly. It seemed clear, if put into my own terms, that to the people with whom I gained direct information from, energy exists as a real, tangible, nearly material component of the universe. Energy can affect and be affected by the contents of the

universe, including humans and our ability to willfully direct or manipulate the nature, potency and impact of energy.

In coming to this understanding of energy as quite real, interactive and of even deeper significance, a powerful current crucial to spirituality, I glean my theories from specific statements and instructions offered by participants in the field. An example that illustrates concepts of energy that I encountered while in India can be illustrated by two opportunities to visit Hindu temples, once with a friend and once with a teacher, both whom provided their own thoughts related to energy either directly or indirectly. When visiting Suryanarayana Swami Temple in Bangalore, Karnataka, my Marathi (from the state of Maharashtra) friend looks at the bronze, glittering and flower-adorned statues illuminated in the dark by candlelight, stating with an awe seemingly equal to mine, “it seems as if they are moving on their own.” Seeking more explanation about this comment, I borrow it from my friend and make the same statement to my teacher two months later, when visiting a temple in Kerala. She explains that the mysterious movement that animates the deities results from the energy of the prayers that the temple visitors impart to them.

Energetic Language. Abram provides a perspective that addresses the tangibility of energy in his beautifully written explanations of the intelligence inherent in all things, and how this intelligence manifests itself in each animate or inanimate being’s form of expressive language. Using the examples of an ecosystem and the components of that ecosystem such as air or trees, Abram explains the intelligence of things by stating, “each region—each topography, each uniquely patterned ecosystem—has its own *particular* awareness, its unique *style* of intelligence...The air of the coastal northwest of North America, infused with salt spray and the tang of spruce, cedar, and fir needles, tastes and feels different from the air shimmering in the heat of the southwest desert” (2010, p. 132, original italics). Abram goes

on to describe the expression of this intelligence as “the speech of things,” a communication beyond and more comprehensive than the definition of verbal dictations typically assigned to the term language (2010, p. 159). I find his explanation agreeable and beautifully written as he explains,

...language is less a human possession than it is a property of the animate earth itself, an expressive, telluric power in which we, along with coyotes and the crickets, all participate...nor is the power restricted solely to animals. The whispered hush of the uncut grasses at dawn, the plaintive moans of trunks rubbing against one another in the deep woods, or the laughter of birch leaves as the wind gusts through their branches all bear a thicket of many-layered meanings for those who carefully listen (2010, p. 171).

Indeed, language does not always manifest itself in words or even sound. The rhythm and shape of a creature, being, lifeform or object speak its very unique presence, the language of its presence allows us to discern it, to describe it to feel it. Abram explains to converse with the world using what I term this energetic language happens through perception –

...what is *perception* if not the experience of this gregarious, communicative power of things, wherein even ostensibly “inert” objects radiate out of themselves, conveying their shapes hues and rhythms to other beings, and to us, influencing and informing our breathing bodies though we stand far apart from those things? Not just animals and plants, then, but tumbling waterfalls and dry riverbeds, gusts of wind, compost piles and cumulus clouds, freshly painted houses...rusting automobiles, feathers, granitic cliffs and grains of sand, tax forms...shed antlers, diamonds and daikon radishes, are all expressive, sometimes eloquent and hence participatory in language (Abram, 2010, p. 172).

Although Abram may not use the word energy to correlate with how he considers the language of expression and perception, I think of the term language as a manifestation of that most mysterious, unexplainable phenomenon of existence, this energy that ignites life, makes things grow, manipulates us and allows us to will it into action through our own embodied inclinations. Humans have come to agree in both eastern and western sciences that energy can only be transformed, not created nor destroyed, thus the source of this energy cannot be known, yet each thing in the world expresses this untraceable motivation using its own dialect of demonstrative language, according to its own inherent and evocative nature. For example, we may think that a tsunami possesses its own malicious intentions and plunges over towns, people and lands accordingly; however, a giant wave only bursts forth with its colossal liquid language because it has been possessed by energy, perhaps the same energy that activated a dormant tectonic plate deep and faraway under the ocean floor, inciting the deep land into the action that we call an earthquake. The enlivened lands vibrate when fulfilled with this mysterious energy that then transfers into a vibration of water. The water, according to its own structure and qualities, expresses the energetic vibration in tiny waves that build into big waves, and eventually, a tsunami. All of these elements involved in the tsunami speak in their own tongue, always inspired by the primordial energy that makes them present, whether that energy visits and inhabits these elements in smaller, more subtle amounts, or if this energy has somehow converged en masse, gathering and bursting forth with incredible expression.

Energetic language – a dialect of embodiment. To engage in the language of energetic presence requires the recognition of embodiment, our perceptive faculties situated in kinesthetic empathy and our expressive faculties in every moment, every big or small gesture, indeed, every inch and moment of presence. Abram (2010) supports this notion as he

elaborates on personal accounts of his travels in nature, when stumbling upon creatures in the wild, communication of his intentions of peace or survival require a language of completely awake, sensorial awareness. To participate in the language of energetic presence, Abram discovered in his expeditions of communion with nature,

It was a dimension of expressive meanings that were felt directly by the body, a realm within which the body *itself* speaks – by the tonality and rhythm of its sounds, by its gestures, even by the expressive potency of its poise...To the fully embodied animal *any* movement might be a gesture, and *any* sound might be a voice, a meaningful utterance of the world. And hence, to my own creaturely flesh, as well, everything speaks! (2010, p. 176)

To become conscious of our own existence means to know our embodied interdependence with the world around us and the modality of this knowing, this perceptive and expressive energetic language, is felt and enacted through a sense of full embodiment, sensorial emplacement and kinesthetic commiseration.

Incorporating the concept of energy into Entangled/Embraced. In attempting to incorporate the concept of energetic language and its embodied dialect into the choreography of Entangled/Embraced, I asked dancers to communicate with garments on the clothesline, objects in the room and with each other using kinesthetically empathetic, embodied interpretations, expressions and dialogues. Explaining this concept of energetic language and then asking my dancers to engage in communication on the energetic level proved difficult, perhaps because an understanding and dialect for this kind of active and embodied consciousness remains highly individualized. How we experience the sentience and communicative presence of the world around us and ourselves within it, often remains a very silent, felt experience, as Abram explains, an embodied and particular understanding

and engagement. When discussing this concept with dancers, they often reported that they were not sure about the purpose and meaning behind the activities I asked them to do. Again, verbal language emerged as inadequate, as a tangle of word-based meanings had to be deciphered when terms such as embodiment and energy receive various definitions, usually unique to the experience of the person attempting to pinpoint in words such an ephemeral recognition. Some thoughts and questions that I sought to explore included: How can dancers use movement to emphasize energy as a force acting upon a thing as opposed to an action inspired by the thing itself? How do the shapes, rhythm, and presence of the materials on the clothesline represent the manifestation of the garments' energetic language and how can dancers embody a kind of communication with this manifestation on the energetic level? How can dancers use an embodied, energetic communication with one another to bring awareness to the subtle and less acknowledged energetic language that all humans engage in speaking not only with one another, but also with our surrounding world of both animate and inanimate beings and objects? How is it that humans and other animate beings, such as animals and insects, not only become enlivened by the mysterious energy that expresses itself through the language of expression and perception, but are capable of choosing when and how to wield this energy and use it to interact with the world around us according to our own personal drives and inclinations?

Activity one – responding to the energetic language of the clothesline. To begin an exploration into the concept of energetic language, I asked dancers to look closely at the garments and fabric hanging on one particular strand of the clothesline, and to see each piece of material as communicative, as interactive with other objects around it such as the wire it hangs upon, gravity, air drafts, and as expressive of an energetic language spoken through its own dialect of rhythmic folds, vibrating colors, texture of weave, sound of pattern, and the singing

lightness or moaning heaviness of its drape. I then asked dancers to allow this energetic language to inspire a response, a way of moving that embodies how the energetic language affects each dancer kinesthetically. For example, upon witnessing the rhythm created by the rolling folds of hanging skirt, I might feel as though the energetic language of the skirt speaks beyond the material, radiates out to say something I can hear not with my ears, but with my entire body. The rolling folds of the skirt speak loudly enough to encourage me to move my body in a sideways undulation, as if I were a seaweed on the ocean floor speaking the language of energy causing the waves of water to move my own presence into a soft, repetitive ruffle.

This activity proved difficult at first, as it became clear that my explanations of the concept of energetic language had led dancers to an understanding that aligned more with an idea of embodying the garments of the clothesline by “being like” the garments, a kind of pretend invocation of the shapes and colors of the garments that resulted in the dancers seemingly attempting to “look like” the materials on the clothesline. My intentions and interests sought a different approach that aligned more with the idea of dancers engaging in energetic communication by allowing themselves to be affected by and responsive to the energetic language of the garments on the clothesline as opposed to trying to harbor and repeat that language. I hoped to explore the concept of energy as something more tangible and effective, similar to the concept of energy that I found during my time in India where my teacher explains the energy of prayer so real and effective that it can animate the sculptures upon which the prayers are focused into a kind of movement that can be felt and seen with one’s deeper, more keen sense of vision. I sought to explore the possibility of recognizing how the energetic language of beings and objects in the world affect humans as

emplaced and interdependent beings who possess the capability of engaging in this energetic communication using our own responsive and creative dialects.

Activity two – energetic sending and responding. In an effort to clarify these interests in energetic language as an expressive manifestation capable of influencing human experience and decisions in tangible, real ways, I turned the focus on the energetic language of so-called inanimate objects on the clothesline to that of the animate world, the dancers themselves. I asked dancers to take turns playing a role of energy sender, using movement to provide an energetic impulse that travels through space to inspire the other dancers to respond. This activity works much like wind or water, as if the energetic sender's movement creates a gust of wind or a wave of water that blows or carries the energetic responders along in the same trajectory of the motion. To clarify this intent on sending and responding energy, which seemed a bit dispersed and vague when immediately attempted over long distances of space, I asked dancers to begin very close together. The energy sender first begins with small movements that incite smaller responses, as if the energy responders follow upon small waves of pranic energy cultivated and expressed by the energy sender. As the movements of the energy sender grow in size, the energy responders travel backwards while simultaneously allowing the increasing potency and magnitude of the energy traveling across larger amounts of space to inspire more vigorous and powerful responses. Finally, to help tie in concepts explored earlier in the rehearsal process and already incorporated into the choreography of *Entangled/Embraced*, such as Kalaripayattu's notion of *pratyahara* and the Yogic theory of *prana* and breath, I asked the energy sender to experiment with exhaling as she sends energy while the energy responders inhale as they move in response to the arrival of the projected energy. Interestingly, adding breath to this exploration helped to refine the activity because it brought dancers to a more keen awareness of their own rhythms of energetic language

expressed through the cycle of rising and falling found within their own breath pattern. While using breath in the activity of energy sending and responding worked well when dancers communicated in close proximity, the energy responders reported that once they had traveled some distance from the energy sender, the previously comfortable inhale during response evolved so that it felt more kinesthetically accurate to exhale during responding. What became evident in the reported experience of the energy responders, is that they found themselves able to understand and communicate with the energetic language offered by the energy sender, while simultaneously maintaining an awareness of their own energetic language felt and expressed through their inherent pattern of breathing – once they had traveled some distance from the energy receiver, the time needed for the wave of energy to travel across the greater distance, exceeded the time responders needed to take an inhale, resulting in responders' desire to exhale when moved by the great wave of energy. Furthermore, as waves of energy dispatched by the energy sender necessarily became larger and more robust in order to cover more spatial ground, energy responders needed to match the magnitude of the energy overtaking them, cultivating a need to exhale and, in a sense, join forces with the overwhelming dialect they found themselves engulfed within.

Directing energy. The human being dialect of engaging in energetic language proposes interesting and mysterious characteristics in the form of intention and choice. Although on the more subtle, intuitive levels of consciousness we constantly participate in a complex, multi-layered, interdependent and fully embodied practice of perceiving, reacting and remaining influenced by all aspects of our surroundings, we also possess the potential to engage in dialogues of energetic language on a cognizant and intentional level.

Influenced. In all planes of consciousness and at any keenness or depth of awareness, energetic language moves us. Energetic language affects us and brings us into life physically,

emotionally and spiritually. We use our bodies to gravitate toward things that interest us and that we interact with; some things in our environment, both animate and inanimate objects, nature, people and things, stir us into emotionally charged states of mind such as excitement, wonder, and love; our deep, inner growth and wisdom evolve from momentous experiences imprinted into the core of who we come to know ourselves to be. Our continuous interaction with our environment influences who we are and what we do in any given moment, an open interface that not only establishes a nature of interdependency to knowing and being, but also reveals for certain an inherent and inescapable condition of living under the influence of energetic language. While the ocean becomes possessed by a mass of energy and expresses this enthrallment with the language of waves, humans also live under the influence of primordial energy that moves into physiological functions and actions of doing.

Influencing. Sometimes our language of energy expression remains commonplace, undetected and outside of observation while other times we act with more acute awareness of the events, situations, expressions of language guiding our actions. Interestingly, we do not simply live as merely maneuvered or reactionary beings; the twist inherent in the human capacity of engaging in energetic language involves the ability to choose our expressions and interactions, and the power to harness energy and consciously wield it into a form of language that we, as individuals, believe best expresses our inner intentions. This ability manifests itself most obviously through physical movements. If energy cannot be created nor destroyed, only transformed, then the choice to move one's body represents evidence of a person's ability to choose when and how his or her potential energy transforms into kinetic energy. Although the question of whether so-called inanimate life-forms or objects possess this same capability of choice remains a valuable and necessary inquiry, I can only surmise that I cannot know this answer, nor would I dare to assume that the capacity of choosing

when and how to direct the transformation of energy exists as an aptitude exclusive to humans or animate creatures. On a more certain note however, I might conclude by suggesting that, just as each thing in the universe expresses energy using a dialect or style of language constructed by and reflective of its own inherent nature and composition, humans, on both micro and macro levels, also engage in energetic language with specific and apposite characteristics, including the characteristic ability to garner and direct energy.

Activity three – Transforming and building energy. As audience members entered the world of Entangled/Embraced, their capacity for directing energy becomes more obvious in each person's choices of where to locate themselves and how to contribute to what happens by looking at or touching the clothesline, interacting with dancers, talking to friends or strangers, walking back out, and so on. Just as audience members' states of mind, recognition of options and choices of action emerge and change as they engage in perceiving the language of interaction, each audience member plays a role in shaping the dialect and tongue of that language by their own individual dialects of presence and choices of expressive action. Although I did not intend to guide audience members into a realization defined specifically in my chosen terms of "participation in energetic language," I believed it necessary to open the performance with an immediate stirring up of energetic language, an activity involving dancers promptly and compellingly illustrating their capacities for willingly transforming their own inner energy, a physical venture designed to harness, charge and manipulate the energetic language of the entire Entangled/Embraced event.

The first few minutes of Entangled/Embraced consisted of a pre-show exploration, a transition into a formal commencement and an initial section of intense physical exertion. As audience members stepped into the performance space of Entangled/Embraced, dancers engaged in an improvisational score consisting of three options of interaction:

1. Casually converse with audience members. Each dancer asks individuals or groups to join her on a walk. When walking with audience members, dancers allow audience members to initiate a topic of discussion or to choose to walk without speaking. Audience member sets the pacing and dialect of language of interaction.
2. Invite audience members to hang their jackets, scarves and other winter wear along the clothesline.
3. Improvise using movement along the perimeter wall. Pay attention to other dancers and use other dancers' movement to inspire improvisation.

In this pre-show improvisation, dancers chose to engage in any option at any time, according to their own sense of purpose and intuition.

Within the first option, I intended to establish a relationship between audience members and dancers so that audience members might gain a sense of association and belonging to the space and to the work. With this initial interrelation between dancers and audience members, I sought to encourage audience members to immediately recognize their own creative capacity as tantamount to that of the dancers. By joining audience members in the process of using interaction to establish themselves in the social and environmental place of the Entangled/Embraced, dancers leveled the playing field of artistry. Dancers, as creative leaders, expressed creativity by engaging in the activities of audience members and by symbolically suggesting embodied equality and commonality via the request to walk in partnership. By designing a reciprocal initiation of interaction, where audience members not only step into the world of the dancers but dancers also step into the world of audience members, perhaps audience members might recognize themselves as creative collaborators who help to shape the unfolding language of the Entangled/Embraced reality through their own unique and necessary dialects of interaction.

Secondly, dancers invited audience members to actively contribute to the clothesline installation by hanging their own garments on the line. Not only might an act of adding to the clothesline bring audience members closer to the installation, helping them feel more comfortable standing near and negotiating their movement through the lines, but it also symbolizes creative contribution through embodied action. Each garment of clothing speaks a language of material presence through its dialect of color, patterns, textures and folds; the energetic language of the clothesline also references the invisible, yet clearly materializing stories of historical fashion trends, the matching of style and function, the intermingling of cultural aesthetics, the residual sense of ownership and identity that arouses one to wonder who might have worn this garment. Because humans often pursue the expression of their personal dialect of language through our choices of clothing, when an audience member places his or her own garments on the clothesline installation, the energetic language of material, identity and stories imparted unto this person's attire also brim to the surface of awareness. In this way, an audience member makes a statement within the language of energetic communication materialized by the clothesline installation. Furthermore, this statement uses the clothesline's faculty of connectivity. As audience members offered items of their own personal dialect and expression, these articles of clothing tied audience members into the web of connectivity and continuity, creating symbolic beacons conveying the Entangled/Embraced energetic language of interaction and reciprocal creativity.

The third option within the opening improvisation correlates with Entangled/Embraced's formal opening after the introductory ceremony traditional to performance events, when the artistic director of the work directly addresses the entire group of audience members to inaugurate the beginning of the work, provide announcements and express gratitude for audience members' attendance. As the event

transitions into its formal beginning, all four dancers begin to use only the third improvisation option of dancing against the wall along the perimeter of the room at various and shifting degrees of distance from one another, meanwhile continuing to use other dancers' movement to inform their own movement explorations. In addition to improvising against the wall, the dancers all traveled in the same direction, tracing the far edges of the performance space. Maintaining awareness of group cohesion, the dancers begin to simultaneously increase the vigor of their movements and the speed of their traveling until the demands of this building intensity require that their movements progress into an all out run encircling the performance space. Punctuating this surge of surrounding rush of energy, dancers collided into the walls and collapsed together for a moment of complete passivity, a time when the intensity of their ability to transform potential energy into kinetic energy becomes vividly heightened by the clarity of their exhaustion and heavy breathing required for such intense energetic work.

By beginning the Entangled/Embraced performance with an immediate build of dynamism encompassing the entire room, I hoped to develop an energetic charge, a gathering of forces roping together the extremities of place and harnessing the inclusion of all participants present in its construction. The dancers' task of consciously converting and directing their own personal energy into a vigorous physical expression produced an effect not only within the heat of their own bodies and the focusing of their own minds. Because of the interdependent and social nature of all participants in constructing knowledge and engaging in the energetic language of a situation, this rising accumulation and articulation of energy influenced the prevailing mood of the entire room. Just as the ocean swells into a tsunami as it is possessed and motivated by energy from an underground earthquake, the entire place of Entangled/Embraced and its inhabiting place-makers were drawn into the

amassing energy elevating by dancers' energetic motivations; just as we stand in front of the ocean to find ourselves under the spell of a great body of water's language of rhythmic waves and vastness of breadth, this opening transformation served to initiate audience members into the energetic language of Entangled/Embraced. When the dancers collided into the walls to melt together in a pile of passivity and recuperation, not only did the heaving of their respiration echo their previous work of energy transformation, but their sudden stillness served as a drastic measure of comparative difference to their earlier physical exertion allowing a moment for this energy to resonate through the room with its own presence and language. The dancers' work of transforming potential energy into kinetic energy served as an effective dialect for directing the energetic language of the entire room and for uniting participating members into heightened awareness of their communal and co-constructive language of interaction and interdependent experience.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION:

SOURCING DANCERS AND LOOKING TO EMERGENT MEANINGS

Participation of Dancers.

A solid analysis for weighing the outcomes of success, surprise and lessons learned during the rehearsal process and performance of Entangled/Embraced must certainly begin with the overwhelming gift of participation offered by four incredible, intelligent dancing women. The Entangled/Embraced dance work substantiated into a rather immense production, especially given the challenging and disorienting elements of working with a massive installation and inviting audience members into the performance space. Furthermore, my request for dancers' full creative participation in generating new contextual insights and investing in activities designed to approach concepts often associated with intimate spheres of beliefs, personal boundaries and senses of identity, progressively reinforced the tremendous breadth of demand placed upon them. With participation and recognition of dancers' inevitable creative contribution as a foundational and structural constituent integrated into the process of building a dance performance work, the content of Entangled/Embraced became a comprehensive work involving the minds, creative processes, inquiries, discussions, and discoveries of all participants. As director of the work, I held a solid role as initiator of ideas and overall compositional organizer; however, the dancers' work of interpreting and transforming my ideas into their own embodied concepts serve to flesh out the true spirit and integrity of the Entangled/Embraced work. Throughout the rehearsal process, although the concepts we explored may have initiated from my own experiences and knowledge, the real work of the dance lived through dancers' verbal explanations of how they relate to these concepts, the idiosyncratic choices they make when

experimenting inside activities that explore these concepts, and then, their feedback on their personal experiences and discoveries when engaging in these exploratory activities. Despite my preparedness and desire for dancers' ability to contribute to and even re-shape the concepts offered to them, I found myself deeply appreciative of the opportunity to work with these four dancing women. Through their own sophisticated and eloquent faculties of creativity, the dancers served as generators of rich movement material and brilliant embodied ideas crucial to *Entangled/Embraced*'s successful development into an evocative and complex work of art.

Improvisational format. During the conceptual phases of *Entangled/Embraced*, when envisioning the dance I aspired to create, I imagined a fully choreographed performance with the majority, if not the entirety, of each component of the piece taking place in a format of well-rehearsed and specifically constructed compositional choices. After the first few rehearsal sessions, I found myself surprised at my preliminary visions of a work fixed upon definitive outcomes and possibilities, especially given my desire to explore such variable and inclusionary themes of audience and dancer participation, social constructions of knowledge, intersubjective experience and creativity, energetic language, and so on. When working with dancers during the rehearsal process, witnessing the value and abundance of intelligent inventiveness offered by dancers in the midst of exploration helped me to realize the significance of incorporating opportunities for dancers to utilize their inherent and deserving power of choice not only in rehearsal, but in performance as well. For this reason, *Entangled/Embraced* assumed an improvisational format with a score, or a list of sections, that allowed for variations to occur according to both dancers and audience members' decisions of action and interaction.

Topics of Unexpected Emergence

Four dancers. At the outset of choreographing *Entangled/Embraced*, I imagined a group of at least six dancers, if not ten or twelve. Because of the large size of the performance space and pre-rehearsal plans to construct a clothesline installation running through the space that might, by design, impede audience members' sightlines as they traversed throughout various places within the installation, it seemed necessary to have a large group of dancers to ensure that the entire performance space gains coverage and every audience member feels included in the work. Despite having only garnered interest from four dancers, it became clear that a small group of dancers could not only accomplish the tasks of covering space and accessing as many audience members as possible, but a small group of dancers helped to create a sense of intimacy among all participants as well as a sense of mystery and surprise. At each of the three performances of *Entangled/Embraced*, the number of audience members ranged from 100-150 attendants. With so many audience members in the performance space, I believe a large group of dancers might have generated a more chaotic and overwhelming event. Having a small number of dancers in comparison to the large size of the space and installation, actually seemed to help focus and manage the energy level of the work. Furthermore, with only four dancers, it occurred to me that an opportunity existed for audience members to develop a more personal relationship with dancers. The scenario of a small group of dancers allowed the possibility for audience members to recognize each individual dancer and to feel accessed by each dancer, rather than any dancer, on a more intimate and familiar level.

Four women. During the pre-rehearsal phase of *Entangled/Embraced*, when imagining a future performance, not only did I envision a larger group of dancers, but I also envisioned some of these dancers as men. Unlike my preliminary preferences for a large

group of dancers, my considerations toward the gender of dancers emerged as more passive and less particular. When communicating with possible dancers about joining the work, I spoke with some men and some women; however, I did not believe it necessary to maintain specific concern for ensuring both men and women participated as dancers in Entangled/Embraced. Fortunately, the outcome of dancers who are women proved just as surprisingly beneficial as the outcome of a small group of dancers in that it helped to create a feminine atmosphere for Entangled/Embraced which, in turn, offered interesting and unexpected creative challenges to consider.

Describing how Entangled/Embraced demonstrated a nature of femininity can become a complex discussion, especially given the subjective way individuals interpret, define and express concepts of gender. Furthermore, to discuss the feminine character of Entangled/Embraced should not suggest that the work would or could not be described as feminine if some or all of the dancers were men. For this reason, I find it difficult to present specific examples in terms of movement material or personality attributes exhibited by the dancers – I believe it a dire assumption to describe the qualities of movement or creative choices generated by Entangled/Embraced dancers as precisely feminine when dancers who are men possess the capacity to carry out the same movement qualities and make similar creative choices. I can, however, rely on the actuality that all dancers participating in Entangled/Embraced presented themselves as women and as the creative leaders of the Entangled/Embraced creation and performance, imparted to the work a character of womanhood and femininity. In conjunction to the leading role of women in creating and performing Entangled/Embraced, it occurred to me as the clothesline installation began to reach its full construction, that the majority of clothes I had chosen, apart from a small

percentage, represented articles that, in general terms, illustrated styles typically assigned to the feminine gender.

Interestingly, I did not recognize this emerging facet of Entangled/Embraced until late in the choreographic process, very near to the work's premier. Although I considered the possibility that I had neglected to consider a very important aspect of a performance work, I also surmised that if the question of gender had not emerged throughout the development of Entangled/Embraced, then perhaps the development of femininity characterizing the work remained appropriate. I came to the conclusion that perhaps the strong role played by women, including myself, in the conceptual development and performance of Entangled/Embraced, should maintain an accepted and incorporated presence in the qualities and characterization of the overall work.

Further Questions: Implicating the Role of Dance and Dancers in Ethnography

The methodological inquiries and processes of research of the entire Entangled/Embraced project leads to further implications and questions about the role of dance and dancers in ethnography. At the heart of this research exists the recognition that kinesthetic perceptions and embodied experience exist at the heart of human processes of learning and knowing. Expanding from this central concentration, further inquiries emerge that question how individuals and groups of people can reach deeper understandings of one another if the senses of kinesthesia and embodied experience as modalities of acquiring and harboring knowledge are given equal, if not primary value to already accepted and established sensory faculties. How might an ethnographic methodology begin to explore embodiment in a much more direct and deeply intrinsic way using an approach that attempts to come to understanding of how people experience learning and knowing from within intrinsic psycho-physical, kinesthetic perceptions?

I believe people who engage in dance practice offer an insightful and beneficial perspective to the field of ethnography because dancers represent a group of people who have spent time cultivating an awareness of kinesthesia and embodied experience as a primary sensory faculty. Many dancers exist as highly sensorial, embodied learners and knowers. With this orientation, dancers can offer the sensitivity they have garnered in coming to a deeper understanding of their own embodied knowledge to research projects that seek mutual human understanding, regardless of their function as researcher or research participant (roles that become interchangeable in qualitative research).

Pedagogical Endeavors

While the discussion of Entangled/Embraced has centered on its converging role in research and artistry, I hope to use the explorations and discoveries of Entangled/Embraced to benefit and help shape my pedagogical philosophy and methodology as well. The experiences and perspectives garnered in Entangled/Embraced, especially in terms of embodied participation through emplacement and co-creative process of constructing knowledge, have helped to cultivate a pedagogical stance that encourages students' cultural consciousness. As an educator in any classroom format, practical or theoretical, I emphasize the importance of asking students to look deeply into movement meaning and personal proficiencies for particular styles, actions and qualities of movement. I challenge students to consider the assumptions and associations they make when observing movement and to simultaneously investigate what their own physical movement tendencies say about beliefs and experiences, or how beliefs and experiences have manifested into movement tendencies. Above all, Entangled/Embraced has provided an opportunity for me to explore and practice a co-creative mindset that recognizes teaching and learning as two-sided, where all

participants engage in a complex process of mutual sharing, understanding and construction of new knowledge.

Ending Discussion: Emerging

In conducting the project of Entangled/Embraced, my hopes lie in distinguishing its methodological character as one that takes to heart the experience of all the people involved. Through each phase of research, including time spent in India and time spent choreographing Entangled/Embraced, I sought to use the project as a means of becoming more practiced at maintaining mindfulness of the subjective perspective of all participants, including myself, and to utilize the subjectivity that emerges in qualitative research not as a problem to be solved but as an eloquent precipitator of human communication and valuable artistic expression. Rather than creating a representational product by attempting to present research data in a non-relative situational context, I sought to use data as a seed of inspiration for new discoveries to take place within their own relative context. In this way, my endeavors exist in a desire to cultivate an artistic process and product inclusive of all participants' creative capacity to offer irreplaceable, evolving and emergent meanings.

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APPENDIX A

PERSONAL FOUNDATIONS FOR OBSERVING, EXPERIENCING AND

LEARNING MOVEMENT: BARTENIEFF FUNDAMENTALS

Currently I draw from Irmgard Bartenieff's development of movement Fundamentals as a resource to observe movement. I use the Bartenieff Fundamentals system to observe my own movement while I am doing it or when I am re-collecting it, as well as a method of observing, learning, and understanding the movement of other people.

In the field of dance Ms. Bartenieff receives credit for bringing the full-body component to Rudolf von Laban's groundbreaking methods of observing and recording movement, consecutively referred to as Laban Movement Analysis and Laban Notation. Bartenieff investigated and developed Fundamental Patterns of Total Body Connectivity, patterns of movement that humans learn as physically developing infants and that we, in turn, use throughout our lifetime to execute movement (Hackney, 2002). Underpinning and providing central support for the six patterns of connectivity lie the principles of Bartenieff Fundamentals (ibid). Combined, the Bartenieff Fundamentals can be defined as "an approach to basic body training that deals with patterning connections in the body according to principles of efficient movement functioning within a context which encourages personal expression and full psychophysical involvement (ibid, p. 31)." While Bartenieff developed 12 principles of Bartenieff Fundamentals, I outline a few of them, giving specific attention to Fundamental Patterns of Total Body Connectivity and using examples of Kalaripayattu movement actions and sets of movement actions as well as examples from pedestrian and sports-based movement.

Principles of Bartenieff Fundamentals.

Principal one – Total Body Connectivity. The first principle of Bartenieff Fundamentals recognizes Total Body Connectivity, not to be confused with *Patterns of Total Body Connectivity* (ibid). According to the principle of Total Body Connectivity, all body parts relate to one another and all movements, large or small, involve the entire body (ibid). It may

seem as though I am typing with only my fingers; however, as I sit in front of my computer, in order to press the least bit of force into the keys, I must simultaneously allow my weight to drop into my sitting position and press against my chair (and in succession, the earth) in order to stabilize my spine, torso and shoulders in an upright position that makes typing a possibility.

Due to the principle of Total Body Connectivity, changes can be viewed as large or small, physically, psychologically and expressively because they affect the entire body (ibid). If I am sitting with my hands palm down on my knees, but then I turn one palm upwards, the entire shape, personal feeling and expressive meaning of my whole embodied presence changes. Although interpretations and experiences vary from person to person, I might say that with both palms down, the posture felt and looked stoic, firm, even and secure. With one palm facing up, this posture becomes more open, giving, or questioning.

Principle three – Grounding. The principle of Grounding states, “The earth provides support, a ground for being and moving. Human beings move in relationship to the earth and to gravity (ibid, p. 41).” The earth’s gravity grants us the ability to sense our weighted mass and to move. Only through yielding weight into the earth and having this weight met by the support of gravity, are we able push into the earth in order to move (ibid). The simple act sitting and standing makes evident the principle of grounding – to sit, I must find a delicate balance between yielding my weight into earth’s gravity while also opposing earth’s gravity to avoid complete collapse; to stand, I must let my weight yield into earth as it pours through the soles of my feet and only through this yielding can I then push into the support of the earth in order to stand. Sitting or standing requires an attention to and manipulation of where my weight is distributed (on my rear or on my feet), in other words, I

must work with gravity and grounding as I negotiate where and when to yield into earth or push against Earth's support.

Principle five – Intent. All movement exhibits the principle of Intent. According to Hackney, “The inner intent of each unique human being influences how his/her body moves and patterns movement (ibid p. 43).” Although we may not be conscious of our inner intent or attitude, our intentions always determine the quality and appearance of movement. An individual's intent manifests singularly or simultaneously within the areas of Body, Effort, Shape, or Space.

Areas of the intent principle. Body. At the body-level, intent involves “clarifying where in the body movement initiates and how movement sequences through the body parts to complete the phrase (ibid, p. 43).” *Kalaripayattu*, a martial art that originated in southern India, provides an example of body-intent, as a practitioner shifts backwards from *Ashwa Vadivu*, or a long-gaited forward lunge with hands on the ground, to standing. The practitioner must initiate from the top of head to roll through the spine, reach the torso upwards through space with an open and protruded chest, and then shift his or her weight backwards from the hands and front leg, through the central pelvic area and onto the back foot. This clarification of initiation from the crown and movement sequencing through the spine, torso and pelvis provides a very basic example of body intent.

Effort. An Effort intention reveals “an inner mood, a feeling, or making a dynamic statement in movement (ibid, p. 43).” Shifting from *Ashwa Vadivu* to standing with an open chest communicates confidence, robustness and an open and powerful heart. The decision for the *Kalaripayattu* practitioner to shift backwards when faced in battle reveals an intention of composure, patience, fortitude and self-control while a shift forward might suggest aggression or charge.

Shape. An intent in Shape includes, “forming the body to reveal a particular ‘shape’...changing the form of the body to bring about a specific type of relationship to other people or the environment,... or reveal an investment in the process of shape change (ibid, p. 43).” During the shift from Ashwa Vadivu to standing, the Kalaripayattu practitioner places special emphasis on the shape and shape change of the spine. While Kalaripayattu draws heavily from movements and qualities of animal and natural forms, this particular shift of weight that initiates from the extension of the crown of the head and emphasizes a rolling, energetic sequencing of movement down the spine creates the dynamic shape of a snake while evoking the curving, fluid and elusive properties of nature.

Space. Lastly, a Space intention includes, “moving in order to go in a particular direction...or moving to reveal an approach to the kinesphere (ibid, p. 43).” Approaches to kinesphere include: peripheral – relating to the outermost edges of space that the extremities can reach; central – relating to central line of gravity; and transverse – cutting or sweeping from peripheral through the central and back out to peripheral (ibid). During the shift from Ashwa Vadivu to standing, as the practitioner shifts onto his or her back leg, he or she simultaneously circles the right hand around the head, crossing it first to the left side of the head and then circling the hand around the back of the head, to the right side and then to the heart center where it joins the left hand in a crisscross shape over the chest. The initiation with an extension of the head through space reveals a peripheral approach to kinesphere while the shift from a widened, spread posture to a more contained, centrally aligned posture communicates a relation to the central kinesphere. The circle of the right hand around the head almost reveals a transverse approach because the hand travels from the periphery to cut across the central line of gravity; however, because the hand finishes by

hunkering in towards the central line of gravity rather than radiating back out to the periphery, the movement of the hand reveals a relationship to the central kinesphere.

Principle seven: Inner-Outer. The principle of Inner-Outer attends to our psychophysical connection with environment and to the meaningfulness of movement. Hackney describes how “Inner impulses are expressed in outer form. Involvement in the outer world in turn influences inner experience” (2002, p. 44). Similar to the principle of Intent, where inner attitudes govern the qualities and appearance of movement, Inner-Outer addresses how inner experiences undoubtedly express themselves through outer expressions of movement. For example, at a dinner party where one might feel socially awkward, it is likely that he or she will take tense, shallow breaths and tighten her muscles in a protective stance. During sexual excitation we reveal our inner feelings and desires through a vast spectrum of movements such as heavy breathing, alternate muscle tension and relaxation or through the closing our eyes. In both cases, not only do our inner feelings become evident through outward expression, but also our inner feelings are influenced by our outer environment – the social scene at the party or the presence of a sexual partner. Furthermore, outward expressions of movement can influence and change inner feelings (Hackney, 2002). Ritualistic movements such as folding hands in prayer or bowing forward in reverence often trigger changes in psychological states of mind. As one fold’s his or her hands in prayer, he or she may experience a metamorphosed feeling of ease upon assuming the position to communicate with the divine; or, as one bows to the divine he or she might begin to feel a sense of ease in surrender. While inner attitudes manifest themselves in outer expression, outer expressions and surrounding environments can also influence inner attitudes.

Principle Nine: Stability-Mobility. The principle of Stability-Mobility explains the continuously interactive communication of body parts or movements that stabilize to

support moving actions or that move to accomplish a particular goal. Both stable and mobile movements interact and join forces to accomplish a goal. For example, stable movements can communicate in dual directions through any pattern of total body connectivity – the core can stabilize to mobilize distal appendages, as when sitting in a chair and reaching out with the arms and hands; or the arms and hands can stabilize to mobilize the core as when initiating a handstand; the tail can stabilize to mobilize the head, as when sitting in a chair and throwing back the head in laughter, or vice versa when initiating a headstand; one half of the body can stabilize to mobilize the other half of the body as when attempting to walk homolaterally by stepping and reaching forward with both right leg and arm, or when walking in typical cross-lateral fashion by stabilizing with the right leg and mobilizing the left leg, requiring one to reach forward with the left arm and shoulder.

Principle eleven: Phrasing. Phrasing closely relates to the idiosyncratic rhythms of one's particular way of moving. Hackney (2002) explains that movement happens in phrases that include a preparation, initiation, main action and conclusion. Where one emphasizes a movement within these steps of phrasing characterizes his movement quality and can influence the success of his muscular coordination. For example, a volleyball player who wants to pass the ball by 'bumping' it with her forearms, may need to emphasize an a strong, grounded preparation, an easy initiation, and a smooth main action, with a quick recuperation to prepare for future action if necessary; however, a player who wants to spike the ball over the net will need to have a clear and swift preparation and initiation, but she will need to blast through the main action in order to blow the ball with more speed beyond the reaction time of opponents. According to Hackney, the entire course of the movement depends upon the preparation and initiation phases of the movement's phrasing. In the

example of the volleyball players, only with a strong and appropriate preparation and initiation can the players assert upon the ball their desired inner intentions.

Patterns Of Total Body Connectivity.

The developed human organism moves according to an inherent set of movement sequence and connective patterns (ibid). These patterns of connectivity begin with an infant's more primitive and early postural reflexes, righting reactions and equilibrium responses (ibid). Out of these primitive reflexes, throughout the first years of life, arise Patterns of Total Body Connectivity, "habitual firings of muscular pathways" or "basic patterns of gross body function and an ability to deal with the demand of gravity" (ibid, p. 42). Humans possess and move according to six Patterns of Total Body Connectivity: Breath, Core-Distal Connectivity, Head-Tail Connectivity, Upper-Lower Connectivity, Body-Half Connectivity, and Cross-Lateral Connectivity (ibid). These neuromuscular connections, or Developmental Patterns, have been key influences to my own process of observing movement and learning movement, especially when learning new movement forms such as Kalaripayattu and Yoga.

Breath. The primal pattern of Breath serves as a pattern for pure consciousness. Through Breath, we understand ourselves as alive and unified with the universe. We inhale the universe into ourselves and we release ourselves back to the universe. The rhythm of respiration serves as the most vital and core function of the living organism, a rhythm that begins in the womb when a fetus is unified with its mother (ibid). Hackney brilliantly describes the living organism's history with respiration – "Our cells respire even within the womb, before our lungs develop and call for air. We have an active relationship within us that brings life and nourishment from our mother, and takes away waste in basic pattern: Cellular Respiration—Cellular Breathing. When we are born, the cellular breath of life

coming through the blood [of our mother], is fed by lung respiration, nourishment from the world mother, and the rhythm continues (ibid, p. 51).”

States or changes in consciousness, thoughts and feelings can be influenced by or reflective of breath (ibid). When we find ourselves comfortable, we breathe with ease and fullness; during discomfort, our breath becomes tense and shallow. We can take a deep breath or a relieving sigh when we need to clear our mind or let go of stress. According to yoga, the activity of breathing unifies us with *prana*, the energy of consciousness or the breath of life. Pranayama, exercises that bring awareness to breath, simultaneously energize, pressurize and cleanse the prana channels inside of the human body. According to yoga, by learning to control the breath, the yogi learns to control his or her own pranic life force (Nataraj, 2011). Both prana and mind exist within the astral or energetic body, thus working with prana influences the workings of the mind (ibid).

Breath serves as the ground-base, fundamental developmental pattern out of which the next five patterns arise (Hackney, 2002). Because “breath is a physiological support for all life processes and, hence, all movement (ibid, p. 41).” Breath provides a baseline of flow and inner shaping of growing and shrinking that supports all movement. Furthermore, as the activity of lung respiration expands up and down, forward and backward, and side to side, breath introduces the living organism to three-dimensional space, the field within which we move and operate (ibid).

Core-distal connectivity. The three-dimensional growing and shrinking in space during breath gives way to more full-bodied radiation into and away from the core, located near the navel center (ibid). While breath connectivity encourages continuity with the universe, Core-Distal Connectivity allows us to recognize our physical selves as an entire unit, complete with a center and with distal ends, and as an individual unit separate from its

surroundings (ibid). Hackney describes the activities of Core-Distal Connectivity as “like a star, pulsating and emitting energy from the center to move the distal ends, or bringing energy and sensory awareness from the ends of the extremities back into the center (ibid, p. 68).” Through gaining the understanding of our central core and radiating extremities, we learn the limits of our kinesphere, where we end and the rest of the world begins (ibid). Furthermore, our understanding of integration with our universe becomes more individuated – our basis of breath unification with our environment receives the addition of sensory engagement, interaction and communication of our bodies with our surroundings. We use the physical fundamental of Core-Distal Connectivity to psychologically know “where we are—what is ‘me’ and what is ‘not me’ (ibid, p. 68).”

While learning Kalaripayattu, the pattern of Core-Distal Connectivity served as a major physical organizer and mode of physical and psychological expression. The movements of Kalaripayattu involve a constant interchange of outwardly radiating limb and extremity movements that sweep the practitioner’s furthest edges of his or her kinesphere, with inwardly pulling, almost sucking movements that return the limbs to the core. When practicing the *kettukari*, or long wooden staff weapon, the practitioner must deeply bend his or her knees to lower the core towards the floor, reach the head and torso forward to extend away from the core and thus extend the *kettukari* as a natural extension of the limbs. As the practitioner maintains this squatted position with the torso and head extremity extended as far forward as possible, he or she must also move through space in defense and attack. This moving position that both hunkers down and extends into space ensures the necessity of a strong core that can hold together and control all limbs, especially when posed with the added challenges of manipulating a long staff that proposes a lengthening of the upper limbs along with a release in the hip joints that allows the legs to

travel. Indeed, my *gurukkal*, or teacher, often firmly pressed his core and encouraged its significance for power, support and initiation. During movement phrases of god and goddess salutation, the Kalaripayattu practitioner extends his or her right hand from the core, straight into the air over the head and then circles it forward and touch the ground, then the forehead, then the heart. This salutation communicates the desire to pull energy from deep inside our sources of strength and allow it to radiate into our surrounding environment. Furthermore, we use our distal ends to express respect for powerful external aspects of our environment while invoking those aspects into our minds and hearts through the medium of sensual touch. During the practice of movement in any system of training or ritualized movement, whether consciously or unconsciously we use the Core-Distal Pattern as both a tool for physical organization and for psychological expressions of the individual who remains connected and integrated with the universe.

Head-tail connectivity. During the development of Head-Tail Connectivity, the human being recognizes and utilizes the relationship between the cranium at the top of the spine and tailbone at the bottom of the spine (Hackney, 2002). With the spine serving as central column of connection and support, all movements of the spine affect the entire body and any body movements affect the spine, thus “the concept that head and tail are in a constant and always changing interactive relationship is often the single most important realization that a student of movement can have (ibid, p. 87).” Indeed, understanding the relationship of head and tail can provide a mover with significant access to central support and expressivity.

The development of Head-Tail Connectivity signifies individuation, the realization of uniqueness and individuality. Psychologically and socially, Head-Tail Connectivity reveals at the spinal level our habitual stance toward the world, or Body Attitude (ibid). Hackney goes

on to give the examples of how our society might perceive someone with drooping shoulders as “unmotivated,” or how someone with pushed back tail as “flirtatious (ibid, p. 85).” Although Kalaripayattu represents a full-bodied practice, my gurukkal often stated that Kalaripayattu “works with the spine.” Furthermore, inside of Kalaripayattu class, expressions of the spine signify very sacred acts of communication with the divine while an awareness of Head-Tail Connectivity proves functionally useful. The ritual salutation of gods and goddesses includes the repetitive practice of facing a Shiva/Shakti altar and while maintaining the position of arms folded in prayer position held in front of the face, the practitioner arches the spine as far back as possible and circles his or her head towards the right while folding at the knees to end in an upright squatted position with the back arched and chest and face open towards the altar. The spine executes its full range of capabilities including arching, rounding, and lateral flexing, and twisting. The initial arching of the back suggests strength and grace, while the circle to the right that causes the back to twist and round suggests humility and attendance to personal, internal powers. The final hunkered position with an arched back denotes a sturdiness and directness necessary for proving heroic in the face of the divine.

Throughout this sequence, an awareness of the relationship between head and tail proves necessary for the practitioner to successfully execute the intended movement. While the head mobilizes through space, the tail as located nearest to core, provides less-mobile stability. Furthermore, as the head circles towards the floor, the tail must help leverage the weight of the head by dropping towards the floor at the same time. To circle the head to the floor while allowing the tail to fly to the ceiling inevitably results in a face-crash; however, allowing the tail to drop into the gravity along with the head helped to balance the torso and stabilize the center well enough to support freedom of the head to move through space.

Upper-lower connectivity. Finding Upper-Lower Connectivity means learning how to differentiate and utilize the specific capabilities of the upper and lower body (ibid). Generally, the human being uses the lower body to create upper body support and full-body locomotion while commissioning the upper body for the purposes of interacting with the world (ibid). In some cases these roles may be reversed, such as in quadrupedal movement (when the hands or arms transfer body weight as in cartwheels), or when during the use of upper body mechanisms for locomotion such as crutches or wheelchairs (ibid). While Upper-Lower Connectivity requires differentiation, Hackney states, “The creative challenge is to give each the needed movement experiences so that each develops specific skills fully and in collaboration with each other—without having differentiation come to mean total isolation (ibid, p. 112).” In order to utilize Upper-Lower Connectivity, the human being must draw upon previously developed skills of Breath, Core-Distal Connectivity and Head-Tail Connectivity to find an ebbing/flowing and growing/shrinking relationship through the center of the body between upper and lower.

The flowing relationship between upper and lower exists as a kinetic chain of *yield and push to reach and pull*. Generally, the lower body yields and pushes into gravity to transfer energy into locomotion. The upper body receives this initial transfer of energy to reach and pull into space. When walking, we yield the weight of body into one foot and then push away with this foot to propel the body diagonally forward through space. If we hunker down with the upper body and resist the need to reach and pull, our walking would at least seem constipated or we may not accomplish the task of walking forward at all. The kinetic pattern of *yield and push to reach and pull* can happen in both directions – from lower to upper as in standing or from upper to lower as when pushing ourselves out of bed.

Psychologically, Upper-Lower Connectivity signifies our functional and expressive ability to “take a stand” or push our presence into the world and accomplish tasks (ibid, my quotations). We learn to push ourselves towards goals or items that we want and we learn to push ourselves away from ideas, people or items that we do not want.

Body-half connectivity. Once Upper-Lower patterns of connectivity have established kinetic chains of integrated yield and push to reach and pull, these patterns begin to take sides. According to Hackney, Body-Half Connectivity allows the human being to stabilize one side of the body in order to mobilize the other (ibid). We learn how to hold things with one hand while manipulating with the other. Psychologically, Body-Half Connectivity allows us to recognize dualities – right and left, hot and cold, light and dark, rational and creative, etc. (ibid). During the development of Body-Half Connectivity, the toddler begins to establish a dominant side to become a “righty or a “lefty (ibid, p. 165).”

When practicing Kalaripayattu, Body-Half Connectivity became necessary when turning to change facing. As the practitioner steps forward with the right leg while reaching the right fist and elbow forward simultaneously, he or she then stabilizes the entire right side of the body to use it as a pivot point in order to swivel the left side around to face the opposite direction.

Cross-lateral connectivity. Throughout developmental progression we follow a sequence of recognizing a basic and unified existence and rhythm through Breath, finding our extremities in relation to a center in Core-Distal Connectivity, recognizing our own individuality through spinal awareness in Head-Tail Connectivity, asserting ourselves upwards and retreating downwards in Upper-Lower Connectivity, and gaining the ability to choose and decide or understand two sides in Body-Half Connectivity. The development and use of Cross-Lateral Connectivity represents the synthesis and zenith of complex and

integrated movement patterns. The pattern of Cross-lateral Connectivity utilizes diagonal pathways through the center and finds connections between body quadrants (Hackney, 2002). Through Cross-Lateral Connectivity, we can play around with moving forward and back, up and down, and right and left all at once. The baseball pitch represents a series of complex movements that utilize deep Cross-Lateral Connectivity. Not only can we see a diagonal connection during the pitcher's initial wind-up as he hunkers down on the back leg while pulling the front leg across the body towards the opposite, throwing shoulder – when the pitcher hurls the front leg down and forward he simultaneously reaches the opposite throwing arm up and back. When the forward leg presses into the ground (yield and push), the pitcher's acquired energy ripples cross-laterally from the foot and diagonally across the core and torso to blast through the throwing shoulder, arm and hand.

APPENDIX B

FURTHER EXPLANATION OF AYURVEDIC ANATOMY:

SAPHADHATU THEORY

Dhatus

Appendix B provides further information about Ayurvedic philosophies of anatomy, namely Saptadhatu theory that delineates the construction of the physical body through the assimilation of food nutrients. According to Saptadhatu Theory (Sapta-seven and dhatu-tissue), these elements and forces combine in various ways to form the tissues *Rasa* – nutritional substance, *Rakta* – blood, *Mamsa* – muscle, *Medas* – fat, *Asthi* – bone, *Majja* – bone marrow, and *Shukra* – sperm and ova (ibid). While each dhatu is comprised of all elements and affected by all doshas, specific elements and doshas primarily dominate the composition of each dhatu (ibid). Throughout the growth of the body as a constantly renewing organism, the dhatus are fed by the previous dhatu in order of most gross to most subtle; the food we intake becomes converted into nutrition that continues to support the chronological development of the seven tissues beginning with *rasa* (the most gross) and ending with *shukra* (the most subtle) (Tiwari, 1995; Krishnan, 2011). The conversion of food into tissues also produces *upadhatus*, or secondary substances, and *malas*, or waste products (Krishnan, 2011).

Rasa Dhatu.

The *rasa* dhatu represents the first derivative of food after digestion, the first substance of nutrition (ibid). *Rasa* exists as plasma as it travels throughout the bloodstream to provide nutrients to the entire body. With its fluid, nourishing, cool and wet qualities, *rasa* is associated with the element of water and the *kapha* dosha (Tiwari, 1995). The *upadhatus* of *rasa* are menstrual blood and breast milk while the *mala* of *Rasa* is mucous (Krishnan, 2011).

Rakta Dhatu.

Rasa continues the developmental process by feeding rakta, the sweet, salty and red component of the blood stream. The rakta dhatu, associated with fire and pitta, maintains skin complexion, strengthens muscle tissue, and produces growth or waste of the other dhatus (ibid). Tendons, ligaments and blood vessels result as the upadhatus of rakta while bile represents the mala of rakta (ibid).

Mamsa Dhatu.

Comprised of the earth element and associated with the kapha dosha, the mamsa dhatu represents the tissue of the muscles (ibid). The upadhatu that results from the development of mamsa is skin while the malas of mamsa development are known as 'kha' the hollow spaces in the ears, nostrils, mouth, and genitals (ibid).

Medas Dhatu.

After the nourishment of the bodily mass of mamsa, the nutrients of sustenance become further refined into medas, or fat tissue and lubrication substances (ibid). Associated with water, earth and kapha, the meda dhatu represents synovial fluid in the joints, fat around the organs, and the insulating fatty covering of the body (ibid). The upadhatus of medas are the connective and fasciae tissues surrounding all internal parts of the body. Sweat represents the mala of medas (ibid).

Asthi Dhatu.

Through further refinement, the meda dhatu feeds the development of asthi, or bone (ibid). The lightness and hollowness of bone reveal its composition of space and air and its association with the vata dosha (ibid). While teeth are considered the upadhatu of asthi, hair and nails represent the malas of asthi (ibid).

Majja Dhatu.

The meda dhatu both supports and gives way to the majja dhatu, or bone marrow (ibid). The soft and unctuous majja dhatu is made of the water element and is mainly affected by the kapha dosha (ibid). The development of majja dhatu produces body hair as an upadhatu, whereas facial skin secretions such as ear wax and conjunctive discharge result as the malas of the majja dhatu (ibid).

Atarva/Shuckra Dhatu.

Finally, the most refined and subtle dhatu is atarva/shukra, ovum and sperm respectively (Tiwari, 1995). Viscous, sweet and liquid in nature, artava/shukra is associated with water and kapha and is sometimes referred to as 'refined water' (ibid). While atarva/shukra, as the most refined form of nutrition, does not produce a waste product, atarva/shukra does produce the upadhatu of ojas, or the individual's luster, glow, joy and life-force (Krishnan, 2011).

