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Dancing with complexity: Fear and trembling

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ABSTRACT

Movement improvisation is a transformational practice that offers embodied understanding of complex living systems and how we function with and in them. This paper argues that ensemble movement improvisation destabilizes the conceptual dualism between mind and body, and provides the opportunity to develop our capacities for responding to complexity, the unforeseen and the unfamiliar with increased agility, ease, creativity and cooperation. This paper argues that these are the kinds of capacities needed for systemic health across all human ecologies today.

Both Albert Einstein and Gregory Bateson agree: the mind that created the problems we are facing is not the same mind that can solve them.

(See: Viereck 1929; Bateson 2000, p. xii)[i].

Introduction

Movement improvisation is an embodied, transformational practice that can aid in understanding and navigating within complex systems and relationships. When practiced in groups, movement improvisation can help develop the capacity to respond to complexity with increased awareness, creativity, co-ordination, and cooperation. These are among the kinds of 'complex and collaborative competencies' that Professor in Transformative Inquiry and jazz improviser Alfonso Montuori says are needed today (2014, p. 20), particularly in

relation to *systemic health*: the healthy functioning across scaled ecologies, from the individual to the social to the planetary.

Group movement improvisation is a spontaneous activity of co-creation with broad scope and range. It can rely on predetermined elements, such as specific rules, movements, pathways or themes, or it can be extremely open-ended with only minimal predefined conditions, such as the duration or location of the performance or activity (Hasan & Kayle 2021, p. 1). Where philosopher Ali Hasan and dance artist Jennifer Kayle use the term Ensemble Dance Improvisation (EDI), I propose using *ensemble movement improvisation* to allow for expansion beyond formal or traditional conceptions of dance.

Ensemble movement improvisation is a form of *mindful movement* (Eddy 2016), another term chosen for its inclusiveness, embracing not only contemporary somatics but all practices that unite mindful awareness and the moving body. Mindful movement could include dance, performance arts, the martial and energetic arts, yoga, and even healing or shamanic practices that waken awareness to one's inner experience, particularly in relation to the larger world that experience is nested within. One could reasonably argue that all movement activities can be performed and experienced mindfully and therefore might be included in this category. It could also be argued that many of them can be practiced *without* the interoceptive and kinaesthetic 'interplay between perceptual body states and cognitive appraisal of those body states' (Gibson 2019, p. 3) that seems to be included in many of the general understandings of mindfulness. Improvisation, however, challenges us to be present in the action of the moment.

Because ensemble movement improvisation is based on our full-bodied being in dynamic relationship with others while situated in context, it has the

capacity to extend the practice of mindful movement to include the other and the environment in dynamic interrelation. This type of practice offers powerful ways to establish and affirm, in the flesh, an ontology of mind that embraces integrated, interrelated, inter-dependent and dynamic wholeness. Wholeness, in this sense, is not only *saine* ('healthy' in French), but also provides access to information we need to navigate the challenges of co-existence in the twenty-first century in ways that support life and honour our highest potential as intelligent, sentient and social beings living with/in the larger shared world.

The proposition here is that mindful movement is one of the critical tech-nologies needed in these 'liquid times' (Montuori, 2014, p. 1), and that ensemble movement improvisation is worthy of particular attention because it offers the opportunity to experientially study, research and explore complex relationships and ecologies, and how we function with and in them. From the perspective of a lifelong movement practitioner, this kind of knowledge established through practice can be, and often is naturally transferred beyond the movement or performance arena to other domains of our lives.

Le Problématique[ii]

In the industrialized northern hemisphere, devaluation of the body and, for some, fear of its "felt" ways of being and knowing have been driving behaviours that are destructive to species survival. In this world, an endemic and often unconscious response to existential discomfort has been to disconnect from it. Johann Hari in his research on addiction in the United States says 'we have created a society where a significant number of our fellow citizens cannot bear to be present in their lives' (2015a). This great unease is evident with record levels of psycho-emotional and

behavioural challenges, including anxiety, depression, addiction, suicide, and violence (Brown, 2010), and these do not appear to be diminishing as old systems break down and new challenges come to the fore.

R.D. Laing described disembodiment as a state where 'the body is felt more as one object among other objects in the world than as the core of the individual's own being,' and saw it as a pathological problem (cited in Sheets-Johnstone, 2018, p. 9). Dance expert, phenomenologist and philosopher Maxine Sheets-Johnstone sees disembodiment also as a *social* pathology, where the body is experienced more as an object than 'as an animate form of life integrally bound to other forms of animate life,' including our own 'common creaturehood and common humanity' (2018, p. 9).

While there are a myriad of ways to dissociate from the body, sociologist Brené Brown points out that we cannot disconnect from feelings selectively, and that it is only through felt experience and the emotions that we come to care, connect and feel a sense of belonging, the very things which Brown says, 'give purpose and meaning in our lives' (2010). This dissociation from our bodies creates a *double bind*, a situation in which 'no matter what a person does, he can't win' (Bateson, 2000, p. 201). It is a situation with contradictory directives, and by responding in one way (numbing, ignoring or otherwise disconnecting from disturbing feelings), we fail in the other (retaining a sense of belonging and purpose in being alive). Anthropologist, psychologist and cyberneticist Gregory Bateson identified double bind situations among the root causes of schizophrenia (from the Greek *skhizein*, 'to split,' and *phren*, 'mind') (Moradian 2018, p. 15; Eddy & Moradian 2018, p. 1794). It would be simplistic, however, to say that detachment is 'bad' and attachment is 'good.' There is an

appropriate time and place for connection, for disconnection, and varying degrees between. In living systems, a complex and dynamic balance is always at play.

When I left the United States over 20 years ago, I was perplexed by the violence there and wanted to understand what lay at its roots. After six years in India in search of an experiential and practical understanding of *ahimsa* (non-violence or non-harm); only after peeling back the layers of thought, feeling, and sense that drove my own behaviour, did I find that fear was often the underlying culprit. Over the next ten years as I developed a movement-theatre work called *Medusa: The Birth of a Monster,* I explored what it might be that we are so afraid of. My conclusion was that among the most deeply embedded and unconscious of our fears is fear of the unknown.

Fear of the unknown is often expressed as deep-seated resistance to change, or a relentless effort to define, organize, predict, control or even ignore the reality of the world around us. According to economist John Maynard Keynes, the creation of the 'religions, rituals, rules, networks, and conventions of society,' are driven by people's search for courage 'in face of the unknown and unknowable' (cited in Skidelsky, 2010, p. xix; Moradian 2018, p. 11; Eddy & Moradian 2018, p. 1794). Human systems, institutions, modes of education and behaviours continue to be driven by the idea that we can understand, predict and control the natural world as if it were an object apart. Within this framework, fear has been used as a compelling force for control, political persuasion and economic gain (Curtis, 2012), and while many have profited from this, in the larger perspective it is clear that healthier approaches which recognize the interconnectedness of complex living systems are called for. Life is inherently and unavoidably an excursion into the unknown, yet the human brain

'craves certainty' (Montuori, 2003, p.4). It can be difficult to enjoy the absurdity of this paradox, however, when we are wracked with fear. Environmental educator David Orr lucidly notes that not knowing is 'an inescapable part of the human condition' (1991, p. 52). In ensemble movement improvisation, like life, uncertainty is certain to arise and, as movement expert Merry Lynn Morris puts it, control 'is the *last* thing you can count on' (Morris 2021).

Fear and Trembling

The devaluation of and dissociation from the body, its feedback, and its knowing are expressions of the greater dis-ease between humankind and nature itself. Cultural ecologist and philosopher David Abram reminds us that the body, like nature, is a wild place, 'not out of control, but out of *our* control…' He goes on to say that '[W]ildness is what we are made of, and we cannot escape it' (2010).

Embodied being is an interwoven whole that includes the physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and the 'glandular'[iii] (Tharp, 2018). The glands, as part of the endocrine system, secrete hormones that travel through the bloodstream where they can 'potentially affect each of the trillions of cells in the body' (Sapolsky, 2017, p. 707). The endocrine system controls metabolism, sexual function, mood and emotions, among other things. These drive human behaviour in ways that are often perceived as irrational, or out of control. And while humans have the remarkable ability to create real and astonishing wonders, to envision ideals, and progress toward an ever-advancing conception of perfection, the human condition remains entrenched in the raw animal drives of nature, impermanence and decay. Much of the dis-ease, anguish, self-hate and existential grief humans are prone to stem from this seemingly un-reconcilable contradiction between creature and idea, (or, one might

say, 'ideal'). This is another paradox worthy of note because, like our need for certainty, it is a foundational construct of the human condition.

The idea that the universe, including nature and the human body, 'is nothing more than a machine' and that it can be understood by reducing it to its 'component parts' was a conceptual paradigm born with the scientific revolution during the 16th and 17th centuries. The idea that the scientist must be the detached, unemotional and objective observer of their object of study was instilled at this time (Sagan & Feldman, 2018, p. 13-4). We know that living systems – *organisms* – are different than mechanical systems, yet we still tend to treat our selves, our bodies, one another, and everything in our living world as insentient objects. This is not only a rejection of our felt experience, it is a denial of and violence against our living nature. I see this disconnect from life and from our animate being as a type of petrification.

Fear and stress, as we know, can trigger the *fight-flight-freeze* response which bypasses cortical parts of the brain where decision-making happens, connecting directly to the limbic system, one of the earliest parts of the brain to have developed in human evolution (Minton & Faber, 2016; Sapolsky, 2017). The limbic system is designed to react instantly, rather than consider expansively. In an emergency, this type of reaction is appropriate and necessary for self-preservation. As a default mode of operation, however, it can become debilitating not only in terms of health and behaviour, but also in terms of possibility. The more often synaptic patterns fire together, the stronger those connections and patterns become. As these patterns become more entrenched over time, alternate possibilities become less evident, and less likely. Repeated patterns become patterned responses that bypass

conscious awareness or choice making: they become habits. Even good habits that are useful and constructive at one point in time can become counter-productive or destructive in another context or time.

Creating New Patterns

In movement improvisation, particularly in groups, the mover is constantly confronted with the unknown and 'unforeseeable' (in Latin, *improvisus*), which challenges the mover to stay awake, receptive and responsive to the ever-shifting moment. While improvisation formats can follow specific directives or be extremely open, one general rule applies: respond to what arises with '*Yes, and…'* (as opposed to *'Yes, but…'* or *'No, and…'*). This can be far from easy, for example, when another mover licks your face or the soft flesh inside the fold of your elbow. The body instinctively recoils.

Like many choreographers, I use somatic improvisational exploration as an integral part of my creative practice. This process has served to unknot complex tangles of emotion, sensation, thought, idea, and memory, and bring them to conscious yet wordless levels of awareness where they reveal themselves through images, metaphors and understanding. There is much I do not really know until I allow it to move me and shape me. For example, I did not understand the profound sadness I felt in the natural process of growing up and leaving home until I allowed this feeling to move me physically through the studio, eventually plunging myself full-bodied into an imagined grave, desperately trying to suck the past through my gut into the physical present. This was not a thought, an idea or a previsioned image. It was a felt sense that gathered deep in my belly and extended out through my body in motion. In my experience, this profound bodily engagement that moves as it informs is where we can fathom some of

our deepest knowing; where we can listen, taste, sense and follow the wisdom that resides within our bodies, in our organs, joints, bones, tissues and cells.

At its best, ensemble movement improvisation can be experienced as an encounter with one another from a state of presence and 'heightened awareness' (Moradian 2020, 54-55), which offers an opportunity to practice responding to the constant shifting of – and between – self and other; of – and between – interior and exterior landscapes. Improvisational movement practices habituate the practitioner to a process of interweaving self, other and environment in relational conversation, play, and problem solving. (This is not always explicitly conscious.) Choreographer, scholar and improvisation expert Kent De Spain reminds us that group improvisation also explores and exposes power relations, intentions, and underlying assumptions. 'Allowing other-ness to disrupt our current conceptions and practices means seeing our own inherent biases and opening out to the limitations of dominant forms' (De Spain 2021).

As we improvise together we develop an animal-like awareness of the physical other in motion, honing our awareness into the visceral immediacy of temperatures, humidities, pulsations, weight, sounds, scents and textures. We reveal to ourselves and to one another how we feel in this moment, where we find support for our movement, and how we move. Is the weight of the body arrested in the shoulders, the jaw, the belly, the hips, or does it flow through the fascia, muscles and bones to the feet so we feel the shared earth beneath one another? From where is the breath initiating, how is it flowing, where is it blocked, and how does it change as we move? And how does all of this shift as we 'dance' with one another? What retreats, what yields, what engages before we are conscious of it,

before we have the time to school our bodies to our will?

Merry Lynn Morris says that improvisation is ‘all about vulnerability,’ (2021), even though this may not be explicit, taught or even valued. We learn and practice how to lead and follow, take risks, relinquish fear, and work with whatever arises. She says, ‘You have to let go of part of your ownership, your sense of what you think will happen.’ While we sense our ‘instincts, intuitions and intentionality’, she adds, you cannot know what will happen. And, she says, it becomes experientially obvious just how interdependent we are, affecting and affected by one another (2021).

Another critical feature of ensemble movement improvisation is that it puts us in direct contact with our senses through their use. This includes senses that have not yet been named or identified, such as the ability to sense the intent of another mover (which can be very useful in avoiding that unwelcome lick), or the opening and folding of space as a group morphs its form and focus. Whether performed for others or for ourselves, the space where we practice movement improvisation is ground-shifting terrain where we experience, explore and imagine at least to the edges, if not beyond the ‘patterns of our minds’ (Arendt, 1958, p. 286-287).

Practicing encountering the unknown does not make the unknown familiar, but it can help to make the *state* of not knowing more familiar. It does not alter the process of change, but it can decalcify our resistance to it, disrupt habitual responses, and nourish our ability to respond creatively as we viscerally experience discomfort, uncertainty, and what Montuori refers to as ambiguity. In this way, movement improvisers can become highly attuned to the many threads at play in the ‘body-blended’ (Morris 2021) moment, and to the interdependent ecologies of self, other

and, as Abram puts it, *more-than-other* (1997). Over time, for many of us, this space of not knowing becomes a welcome invitation to reconceive our understandings of self and other, to participate in the creative process of becoming, and to explore, query, play, discover and invent – together.

Ambiguity

Creative people tend to share certain characteristics: they share an outlook that accepts and incorporates complexity, independent judgment, and both receptive and integrative capacities. They have the strength to stay open to input that can challenge and destabilize their assumptions, ways of thinking and functioning. They seek out partnerships, can link ideas together through synthesis, and discover ways of bringing together diverse ideas and elements (Montuori, 1992, p. 197). But tolerance for ambiguity seems to be an essential characteristic shared by creative individuals, and an ability to either suppress or manage anxiety seems to be a significant factor.

> Ambiguity creates a kind of inner tension which demands resolution. Avoiding this tension, this oscillation, and falling back on predetermined answers is the mark of a closed human system; a willingness to explore the ambiguity, attempt a synthesis or simply allowing oneself to live with it and struggling for integration on a daily basis reflects a creative attitude. (Montuori, 1992, p. 197)

One of the greatest gifts of improvisation is that it teaches us to hold the question and live the question of possibility in an extended state of uncertainty, with an expanded openness. Montuori points to the powerful role fear plays in creating what he calls ‘authoritarian dominators’ who are compelled to ‘decide immediately – without thought’ (1992, p. 206). This can relate to patterns of functioning within us, as well as patterns of relation between us. He adds that by maintaining and perpetuating

patterns of domination ‘we are keeping a fear based system in place which prevents creativity from blossoming’ (1992, p. 206).

Barbara Dilley, a pioneer in improvisation who danced with Merce Cunningham in the 1960s and The Grand Union in the 1970s, refers to the space of not knowing as a gap, with few reference points. This causes panic for some, she says, and a state of utter bliss for others. Dilley describes this space as an open, potentially shamanic dimension with ‘an energetic response and an energetic presence available at all times’. She finds that improvisation is ‘about how one actually lives awake in the environment that you find yourself in’ (cited in De Spain, 2014, p. 82-3).

Simone Forti participated in improvisation and ritual dance with Anna Halprin in California in the 1950s before moving to New York where she also danced with Cunningham, whose collaborations explored the role of chance in dance and performance. Another inspirational pioneer in the field of movement improvisation, Forti talks about the ability to be aware of and influenced by whatever it is we are focusing on, and ‘everything else’ too. ‘I sometimes think you almost have to make some new connections between right brain and left brain, or between front brain and movement centres,’ she observed (cited in De Spain, 2014, p. 56).

Kent de Spain likens improvisation to meditation, and finds ‘that improvisation can develop a capacity to be both attached and detached at the same time, which can be used to manage “emotional content”’ (in Moradian 2018, p. 22; De Spain 2014, p. 145). He finds ‘There are places that we can go in improvisation that are not in the realm of the conscious mind’. He also points out that ‘not all attention is in the mind (at least not the ‘mind’ as traditionally understood)’ (2014, p. 167).

Improvisation, like ancient and

indigenous wisdom and movement practices, helps us understand experientially that we participate in 'bringing forth a world' (Maturana & Varela, 1998). According to De Spain, 'There might be no human activity that more thoroughly destabilizes the classic mind/body dualism' than movement improvisation (2014, p. 53). Its nonverbal aspect allows for ambiguous and complex states that verbalisation might 'collapse into defined categories'. The linguistic mind, like the tracking and intentional mind, is simply too slow to keep pace with the body-mind in motion (p. 57-8).

Mindful movers embrace layers of awareness that inform creativity, understanding, insight and even wisdom. In my recent research, while I was not surprised that 88% of the 97 movement expert survey participants were aware of their emotions while moving, I *was* surprised that almost all of them – 94% – noted being aware of 'insights, intuitions, or revelations while engaged in their movement form or practice'. Many described Aha! moments or creative insights concerning self-knowledge, relationships, 'the nature of reality,' purpose, or an awareness of information coming from 'a source of wisdom not located in the sphere of me or mine' (Moradian 2020, p. 62). Over time, these types of awareness expand, stretching into territory that becomes difficult, if not impossible, to capture in language. Perhaps language is simply too coarse or too static to translate our bodies' rich intelligence and 'thinking' processes.

Practice

Movement improvisation is not just about meeting or functioning in the midst of the unknown, but also about *how* we meet the unknown, and how we function in its midst. Life itself is the most evident improvisational practice available to us, yet it can feel overwhelming and the stakes

can be too high to relax or ‘go with the flow.’ Improvising together offers a space to practice dealing with the entanglements and synergies of our interdependence, and can be a powerful tool to both ‘explore the limits of self’, and ‘to encounter and respond to the disruptive influence of the other’ (De Spain 2021). As we continue to explore these types of complexities, we may find that the only way to really understand it is to stop trying to grasp it. Because the living systems we are a part of are constantly in motion, we come to understand this complexity more intimately by dancing with it.

Morris, who was trained in classical dance and works with both differently-abled and normatively-abled dancers, finds that working with disabled dancers has opened up for her a ‘broader pallet’ of ‘what the dancing body might look like and what it might do’ (2019). She says that the values inherent in improvisation ‘make it conducive to many types of bodies, and broader ways of thinking’. Her focus is on relations, creativity and artistic voice rather than on replicating codified or idealized forms and patterns of movement, which might explain why differently-abled dancers often use movement improvisation as a foundational ‘go to’ (2021).

Michael Kliën, another movement artist and educator, explores socio-politically engaged choreography (sometimes called ‘social choreography’). His score for *Parliament* sets in motion a particularly interesting piece of improvised choreography, which I’ve had the good fortune to be able to participate in. One primary directive I recall was ‘Do not have ideas’. I spent a good thirty minutes in a state of apparent non-movement trying to distinguish the fleshy impetus of movement from the thoughts and ideas that almost immediately latched onto them. By the time I was finally moving, my sensitivity was intensely heightened. At the time I was having difficulty walking due to a series of

injuries, so every cell and pore of my skin was on high alert, sensing for the intentions and energies driving the other bodies through space, assessing whether or not their level of awareness might include space for my body's fragility. I was also sussing out groups engaging in movement conversations which explored material that piqued my curiosity. This was 'felt thinking', not explicit, and only semi-conscious at the time.

One of the most powerful memories I have from this experience was breathing quietly, shoulder to shoulder with another dancer, sensing our sensing, our breath, heat and hearts. It seemed to me that we resided within one another. For a good ten minutes we were the same breath, though I could not tell whether we were even touching one another physically. Perhaps this is the 'blended body' that Morris speaks of, where the boundaries between self and other are fluid, shared and energetically blended (Morris 2021).

Opening to embodied aspects of 'inter-being' (Morris 2021) is opening to life itself, and to life's ongoing processes of feeling, change and transformation. We never know what we will encounter in the other or in our world, and this can be outright petrifying. Time and care are needed to sense and feel, but also to temper and grow our capacity to deal with the unfamiliar. Improvising together in movement offers a potent way to give ourselves the time and space needed to practice dancing with discomfort, the unknown, unforeseen, disruptive, un-certain, ambiguous, contradictory, and sometimes overwhelmingly complex. Perhaps this might all be considered preparation for those critical moments in life when we need to remain open and responsive to uncomfortable experiences. The way in which we respond to these moments plays a decisive role in the way our lives unfold together.

We are formed and informed by our

practices. Our practices and our habits establish patterns of thinking, doing, being and inter-being in the world, and these patterns seep into our lives. For example, practicing stepping to the side to avoid a down-slicing sword in the martial arts helped me identify my habit of meeting everything head-on, and offered a new option in real-life situations of conflict. Each approach or form we practice has its particular areas of research and focus. The principles and strategies at play in any model or framework (like a particular movement practice) can have potent ramifications for how we see and under-stand our world, our role in it, and the possibilities available. Somatic approaches suggest that humans develop, learn and evolve through movement, particularly as we interact with one another and with our world (Eddy, 2016; Sheets Johnstone 1999). Current neuroscience indicates that 'new information, new experiences, and changes in the environment develop new brain networks' (Minton & Faber, 2016, p. 37), which supports this idea.

Conclusion

Consciousness without connection to our felt and lived experiences has little to do with the kind of wholeness that affirms life. While *cognition* is common to all life, with or without a nervous system (Margulis cited in Feldman 2018), correlating with the processes of life (Capra 2019) and the effective actions that enable an organism's survival (Maturana & Varela 1998, p. 29-30), *consciousness* is an organism's experience of mind and sense of itself as 'I,' which many believe arises through language (Maturana & Varela 1998, p. 231-223). Both consciousness and cognition are called for today. It's as though we need mindfulness *beyond* the mind as we know it.

At this moment in time, as human activity and behaviour drive climate change, species extinction, social injustice,

unrest, and unprecedented levels of anxiety, desperation and despair, our survival as individuals, communities, and as a sentient and conscious social species requires opening our awareness to include all of the information – all of the feedback – that our moving, breathing bodies offer us as we engage with one another with/in our surrounding environments. As our foundational values, beliefs and under-standings shift, 'we have the chance to open our eyes and our hearts to the joys and pains of people whose experiences are unlike our own' (De Spain 2021). De Spain reminds us that while improvisation has 'emerged from the margins in many ways,' and challenges established ideas about what is interesting, important or valuable, even the foundations of ensemble movement improvisation must be challenged for 'remnants of racism, misogyny, colonialism, and ableism' (De Spain 2021), along with other values and assumptions that do not serve the emerging paradigm, nor our evolution. As one wave of pioneers in dance improvisation age and pass on, De Spain reminds us of the opportunity for new voices, new theories and new practices to emerge.

In today's fast-paced and unpredictable world, life demands every capacity we have access to, and the ability to know when each is called for. In ensemble movement improvisation we are confronted with one another, with our world, and with our patterns, habits, and assumptions. But we can be confronted in a way that invites us to play with and explore new ways of responding and engaging from a place that supports and embraces our deep and diverse wholeness. In the relatively safe space of practice, our embodied response of '*Yes, and…'* yanks us out of the habitual into the immediacy and vitality of the present moment, and into a vast field of new and unforeseen possibility. In ensemble

movement improvisation this *'Yes, and…'* stretches us beyond the confines of our current patterns of thinking, being, doing or even practice, and challenges us to challenge ourselves to live awake within the ever-shifting moment -- to continue to imagine anew. As De Spain puts it, 'improvisation is one of the ultimate expressions of individual and collaborative exploration of the now' (2021).

To dance with life and all its inherent complexity responsibly, creatively and constructively demands the reintegration of body-mind-heart-and-soul as an integral and interrelated part of our larger world, at every level, so we might know and understand consciously or otherwise our 'radical and irreducible pluralism' (Abram, 2010a, p. 126). Re-integration of the body-mind within and as a part of our living, animate and shared world is not a 'new' ontology of mind, nor is it a 'new' epistemology. It is not a new idea or a new way of being. It is simply reclamation of a way that has been lost in the flourishing of the dominant paradigm of separation, set in motion millennia ago with the introduction of agriculture (Sapolsky 2017, p. 326-7; Maturana & Verden-Zöller 2008; Moradian 2020, p. 29). This return to wholeness is a re-gathering of the many fragments we have dissected ourselves into, weaving them back together and gently, insistently, blowing breath, life and movement back into our selves, and through our selves and our interactions, back into the animate and interdependent worlds we are a part of. It is simply a necessary and fundamental step in bringing ourselves back to life.

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Ruairí Donovan (seated) and Ann Moradian (standing) in Michael Kliën's 'Parliament,' RICEAN School of Dance, RICE on Hydra, Greece 2016. Photo (c) Kleopatra Haritou.

[i] Original quotations:

Einstein: *"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them"* (cited in Viereck, 1929).

Bateson: *"Ecological health continues to elude us – and perhaps indeed depends upon the reconstruction of patterns of thought"* (Bateson, 2000, p. xii).

[ii] French: *Le Problématique* might be translated as 'the central problem,' and replaces the 'research question' traditional in research coming out of the United States.