

Re-membering our 'other than human' relations: Eco-somatic (danced) activations of skin and land

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Abstract:

In this paper the intuitive moving body becomes a site of radical knowledge and environmental activism. This work is eco-somatic and eco-graphic. It is playful, non-confrontational, communal and dialogic. It is literally a practice in thinking through the skin and a process of *re-membering* our vegetal, forest dwelling and aquatic origins. An embodied “intuitive ethnographic research methodology” (East, 2022), where the senses are activated in a spontaneous investigation of the environment, is discussed. The accompanying performative practice draws upon theoretical and philosophical concepts from the biological, zoological, botanical, somatic sciences and arts. To offer a deep understanding of the process, this article outlines an eco-somatic movement improvisation workshop with prompts, supporting notes, discussion topics and ethical considerations.

Introduction

This study centres around an invitation to participate in a symposium on ecologically conscious artistic practices and the ways that the arts might contribute to issues around environmental disconnection. The conference, titled Contaminationsⁱ was held in Bratislava, Slovakia, from the 12th to 15th of June 2025. It was part of the international art and research project Nature of Us, realized in partnership with organizations from Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland.

The aim of the conference was “to connect science with art and to map new performative practices in relation to climate change and nature-related themes ... to collectively draw attention to environmental issues and challenges, to share artistic and non-artistic practices that are related to them and to contaminate each other” (Contaminations Symposium printed statement, <https://plast.dance>). I use the term

contaminations, therefore, both as irony and defiance and in support of the original kaupapa, the underpinning mission of the conference – held in a part of the world that has experienced the ravages of war, political instability and ecological disaster.

In this regard, I suggested that my workshop was also about a positive “contamination” of performative practice – a reciprocal contamination of our skinbodies and the earth’s skin to foster a sense of “re-connection”, care and concern for the planet. I described the theme of the eco-somatic workshop/conversation as being about *remembering*, or *re-membering* – a putting back together, and a tracing back through our evolutionary past to empathically perform the present/future. It was about re-connection with self, others and all that came before and that still resides within our genetic memory.

The conversational approach used in the narrative reflects the informal and communal nature of the conference. I began the talk as we do in Aotearoa, New Zealand, by greeting the local Danube River, surrounding mountains, the venue and my hosts before introducing myself, my origins and work. “Let me ‘contaminate’ you with my story,” I began.

I described my rural upbringing surrounded by farm animals, of climbing trees and peering at insects in the grass. I outlined my adult years of study, travel, parenthood, as university dance educator and choreographer of more than 25 eco-political dance works with my company, Origins Dance Theatre, from 1980. It was a re-membering of the ways that my past experiences had informed my present thinking (see East, 2011). Finally, I explained the eco-political themes of my dance work and my more recent eco-somatic research and performance interests.

As I have mentioned, the underpinning theme of my presentation in Bratislava, was *re-membering* – that we are part of and not separate from a whole biospheric system. I hoped to demonstrate that embodied practices that encourage a sensory tuning in through the skin to one’s environment and its inhabitants can expand our understanding of, and empathy for, others and the wider world. As Haldrop, Samson and Laurien (2022) have attested, the senses are a way of experiencing that is shared with the non-human, and these sensory encounters allow a more embodied way of relating to and understanding others.

This work is grounded in the underlying principles of ecological holism that espouses notions of inter relationship; inter-connection; co-operation; diversity; intuition, spontaneity, or spontaneous adaptation and transformation (East, 2011). The more recent area of eco-somatics sees body and world as part of the same organic entity, continuously

influencing and shaping each other. Eco-somatic practices bring together the environmental sciences, indigenous knowledge systems, the somatic sciences (holistic body as experienced from within) and creative performance. Importantly, there is an ethical component of care and responsibility associated with eco-somatic practices.

As dance artists and eco-somatic performers engaged in spontaneous eco-graphicⁱⁱ movement research and situated performance improvisation, these principles of interconnectedness, inter-relationship and intuition can lead to participatory activities, such as surface-sensing or “grazing” (my term), accumulating information from the environment (as in Gibson’s “ambulatory perception” [1979]). We move through the landscape absorbing, inter-twining, supporting, matching or simply being present together with others. The art of attentive stillness – of allowing one’s breath to slow down and one’s body to settle in place, one’s focus to cycle inwards and outwards, may also be considered as a form of activism and connection.

Cognitive biologist Francisco Varela (2000) coined the term “nowness”ⁱⁱⁱ, of simply attending to/being in the moment. This state may be practiced in meditation and also in danced/somatic improvisation. Being *fully present* in a place means tuning in to the micro and macro visual and sensory aspects of one’s surroundings. This becomes an *in-dwelling* as opposed to an objective viewing. It means engaging a “participatory consciousness” of “being with” rather than merely “looking at” (Heshusius, 1995) and adopting other-than-human perspectives and expression. These intuitive danced activities are at once human, animalistic and plant-like. They become a *soft form of radical intervention or contamination* – highly eco-political in their intention, yet playful and interactive in/with and as nature.

Methodology: Intuitive ethnography (East, 2022)

From a research perspective I employ an intuitive ethnographic methodology or *intuitive ethnography* (East, 2022). As a form of ethnography, it is both methodology and method. In other words, it has a sound theoretical basis in ecological and somatic theory and philosophy. However, in its application it is practical, experiential, often non-verbal and reliant on the entire gamut of sensory perception and intuitive movement in order to reveal embedded information of a site or amongst a group or community. As has been mentioned, an eco-somatic movement exploration, by experienced dance artist researchers, may also be considered political activism – as physical improvisational performative non-violent

intervention, or as intuitive research in a particular place that may support other modes of historical, political or environmental research. The following are some of the tenets of such a research method.

Intuitive ethnography is a practice in being totally present and alive to one's surroundings and oneself; it requires complete attention to the moment, to every detail large and small. The procedure involves intuitively pursuing a course of non-planned spontaneous action with no pre-determined time frame. Blom and Chaplin (1988) refer to "an organic emerging strategy that takes us forward in time yet only becomes articulated as we move" (p. 7). The exploration involves a total "somatic" engagement that is often at a core level of consciousness (Damasio, 1999) but is simultaneously highly conscious/aware. The process is highly self- and co-reflexive despite largely involving non-verbal sensory processes. Post-performance analysis of filmed activity and spontaneous written, poetic reflection form part of the data set. (The method shares commonalities with Sarah Pink's [2015] sensory ethnography in that all the senses are activated as one spontaneously navigates their environment). However, during the performed data collection, in intuitive ethnography, the primary dance researcher may utilize related metaphors or imagery as prompts, or as a type of structure or categorizing in the field (or in the moment). They may also allow a historical knowledge of place and their own memories to contaminate their present action.

This form of research method is empathic since there is an intimate engagement with the place and all that resides there. For La Mothe, "to empathize is to move with" (2018, p.137).

Intuitive ethnography is "alert to the community body" (Kasai, 1999, p. 228–241). Intuitive ethnography suspends judgement. Instead, we pay attention to the mind of the dance (Fraleigh, 2018). It recognizes the historical, archaeological, geological and cultural aspects of place.

The performative engagement may be witnessed by a viewer, and new video-graphic technologies and analysis have a functional place in intuitive ethnography as a concise way of recording and reviewing the intuitive moment. Written, graphic and verbal recall offers multi-textural, at times poetically rich, description of inner sensations and psycho-somatic *re-membering* by individual artists. (For more on this see Tilley, 2022, Chapter 20.)

Re-membering our vegetal relations

When we search our plant consciousness via intuitive dance we tap into daily and seasonal rhythms inherited from our plant relations. We tune into “time without a finite term, without spacings, ruptures or terminations; time passing as continuous flow” (Marder, 2013, p. 108). As dancers we are inspired by the patterns of shapes and forms, the variations within a single species, and particularly, the inter-species relationships, the co-dependencies, that enable fertilization; the spreading of pollen and seeds and the rhizomal mitochondrial exchange between root systems and fungi. These phenomena of the natural world provide metaphors and imagery for action. We become a forest of diverse yet interconnected improvising dancers. In the studio our individual actions and conversations pollinate others, seeding new ideas for dance.

In his book *The Expressive Forest: Essays on the Arts and Ecology of Oceania*, ecologist, pianist and writer Denys Trussell (2008) suggested that trees, as conscious sentient beings, are themselves expressive and that what they express is simply *the essence of themselves*, in other words, their *presence*. They have, he suggests, “a form of enigmatic language – a visual and sensory language of gesture, colour, scent and shape – much like the art of abstract dance” (p. 34). We dance this form language (Spirn, 1998), its stillness’s, interactive movement – metaphors of rhizomal connection and *re-member*.

In my chapter “The Vegetal Body” (East, 2021) in *Body and Awareness*, I describe an international *Plantbodybeing* workshop series undertaken in the United States, Italy and Czechia (2019) as endeavouring to create a metaphorical bridge between vegetal and human worlds – a bridge between knowing and not needing to know, between vibrating stillness and vigorous searching towards the light. As modern humans we often forget to honour these interdependencies between humans and non-humans. We forget to mind our relations (Sewell, 1999). This is part of a necessary *re-membering* of our integral role in the living ecological system that must be kept in balance if we are all to flourish and survive with food for the table, clean water to drink and oxygen to breathe.

Re-membering our ‘inner fish’^{iv}

Every aspect of our human bodily structure and function may be traced back at least 380 million years to various amphibian fish who had developed bony fins capable of maneuvering their bodies across mud flats. As archaeologist Neil Shubin (2009) explains, “The earliest creature to have the bones of our upper arm, our forearm, even our wrist and palm, also

had scales and fin webbing. That creature was a fish” (p. 41). Shubin describes how “our bipedal pattern of walking, uses the movements of our hips, knees, ankles and foot bones to propel us forward in an upright stance ... our legs do not project sideways like those of a crocodile, amphibian or fish” (p. 43). Changes in our hip joint, pelvis and upper leg supported an upright posture. Feet and hands became adapted for climbing and gripping as eyes moved from the top of the head to the side, then the front. This provided us with more insight through a longer range of seeing. In other words, our evolved and evolving anatomical structure, and every aspect of our capacity, may be traced back to the earliest fish, animal and plant DNA (Irigaray & Marder, 2016; Shubin, 2009). We explore these movement possibilities in the eco-somatic dance workshop as we *re-member* our direct connections with these ancient species still residing alongside us.

In our very southern South Pacific island home, we have ample opportunity to engage with mammalian land/sea creatures. To lie as and with sealions on the beach in southern Aotearoa New Zealand turned out to be a profound learning experience in unthinking and empathy for my community dance students as the sound of sea and wind filled our senses. In a more recent community performance on the beach of Ōtepoti, Dunedin, 20 women enacted the return of the breeding female pākake (sealions) to the local area led by Dr. Carol Brown (2025). As a wetsuit wearing participant, I witnessed the effect that this ritualistic performance had on both the performers and the gathered crowd. The unspoken message was of the need, as human members of the natural ecology, to honour and protect our pākake whānau (relations).

Tragically, around the same time there was a reported slaughtering of a pākake mother and pup some kilometres to the south of Ōtepoti. Human arrogance and unbridled aggression can surely be avoided with more holistic education programmes that foster empathy and care for the other species amongst whom we reside.

Eco-graphies of protest

There have been and continue to be powerful eco-graphies (environmental performative acts) of protest against human activities such as mining, whaling and the ruthless felling of native forests. One of the most significant of these protests was the peaceful tree hugging (Chipko) action by village women of the Western Himalayas in the 1970s^v, inspired by Gandhi's philosophies of peaceful resistance and leading to many such similar protests around the world. Around this time my company, Origins Dance Theatre, performed a series

of works protesting deforestation in a concert called *Masque for a Forest* (1981) in collaboration with Native Forest Action Council (NFAC). I described one of the dances as follows:

When the curtain rose on *Waiting Trees*, seven dancers were hovering half crouched and on tip-toes, our arms bent and poised, like spiders waiting for prey, or those waiting trees ... The rest of the dance was a cacophony of sound and action reminiscent of a live and diverse forest population. The main instrument for this final section was a high-pitched Chinese sewona (clarinet) that was set on fire by musician Bruce Robertson and played as flames poured out of its metal end.



Figure 1: East *Being as Tree in the sacred forest*, Meghalaya (2018). Photo: Barbara Snook.



Figure 2: *Waiting Trees* in the concert *Masque for a Forest* (East, 1981). Photo: John Miller.

Skinbody re-members

As we shape and re-shape ourselves to fit each landscape (or skinscape) we encounter, our protective skin stretches, adjusts accordingly and re-members. In a recent ethnographic project filmed on Wellers Rock (Te Umu Kurī/Dog Oven) in the Otago Harbour, five dancers intuitively responded to the place's history as the first whaling and sealing station established in 1831. Our bodies flinched as we hauled ourselves over the jagged rock mound as those tohorā (whales) would have experienced.



Figure 3 & 4: Video stills from 'Tohorā' (2022) with permission: Videographer James Risby; Director Ali East.

As I suggest in my chapter “Skinbody and Skin of the Earth” in *Geographies of Us* (East, 2024), the act of bringing one’s skin into direct contact with the skin of the earth may also be seen as politicised action. Where bodies are concerned the view is never neutral or without story and every story involves a body. Bodies lying on bare earth may signify our closeness to animate nature or bring to mind scenes of death and destruction, as opposed to scenes of bathing beauties at the beach, which make another kind of bodily statement. As we witness the Palestinian people crouching, huddling together on the ground or jostling in a food line, we read displacement and despair in each visual media account highlighting a people’s plight.

As eco-somatic dancers, sliding, rolling, crawling and slithering becomes part of our evolutionary dance of *re-membering* and empathic re-creation. Our skin collects information as it marks a surface. We mark the territory as we track/interpret the marks of others, just as all wild animals do. Our habitual movement habits identify us to others and reinforce our own sense of self. In an improvisational dance performance, we can build on these movement patterns as an interactive community of individual performance artists. In the process we are practicing *communitas*, empathic co-operation and free will. We learn to tune in to others while attending to our own intuitive movement patterns and pathways. We *re-member* who we are in relation to others.

I return now to the practical component of my conference contribution, offered for participants as an example of one of the ways that the ideas discussed thus far might be practiced as positive “contamination”.

The workshop – An eco-somatic guided improvisation of re-membering

Let us begin by walking or drifting through the space, becoming aware of the community of other bodies moving, floating, drifting around us. We are *re-membering* our earliest creaturely relations – jellyfish, dependent on the sea currents for movement and food. Let your drifting body tilt and rotate, move in all directions – no front or back, up and down yet; no intentions, plans or self-consciousness – dependent on external forces to move.

Prompt: Allow a coming into appearance and then a dissolving or merging into the group as you interweave.

Can you form a pod or nucleus and move as a single unit through the space? (There is safety in this – become a big fish as you move together.) Then break apart and become stationary but continue to reach and bend like our sea anemone relations.

Prompt: Find a place to stand (on dry land now) and let your feet grow roots (negative gravitropism). Let the top of your head open upwards to the light, your body open outwards to the world (positive gravitropism).

Note: Within a plant's cellular chemical makeup is the ability to move in both gravitational directions. Positive gravitropism enables growth upwards while negative gravitropism enables root growth downwards into the soil.

I am going to use a New Zealand Māori term – *tūrangawaewae*. This is your place of belonging and beginning. The place where your feet (*waewae*) are metaphorically woven into the soil, where your placenta, your *whenua* was buried (*whenua* is the Māori term for both earth and placenta). Do you have a memory of this place of your cultural, family roots? If not then allow it to be *here*.

This is the beginning of our human *re-membering* of place/time – its smell, colour, landscape, familiar faces. Allow this re-membering to re-shape your movement.

Prompt: We can practice *cellular listening, breathing and responding*. Can you allow yourself to breathe, not just in your chest, but through all of your skin – the soles of your feet, top of your head and all the way down your spine? This is what I call “tree breathing”. Let this breathing move you in all directions – and even finally move you from your spot.

(Michael Marder suggests that we become a conduit for air – letting it flow through us and out into the world.)

Let your breathing feet move you and your breathing hands reach outwards and down, your breathing spine twist and turn. As you move from all parts of your body let your perceiving be from all of your skin surface so that you move backwards as well as forward, sideways downward along in a rhizomal inter-weaving path. Move together in the spaces between this human forest we are creating.

Follow your nose, your back; try not to consciously plot a direction. Let your *seeing* be from everywhere in your body. A pathway might take you down to the ground to roll or crawl, then back up again. Search for ways to make contact through your entire skinbody with your surroundings. Allow this to become a surface-sensing and spiraling along the ground, walls, nearby trees, another's skin etc. You are like a bean tendril searching, climbing, clinging, joining and spiraling. Use this spiraling to curl inwards and then unwind suddenly as would a seed pod opening and dispersing its seeds.

You have also become part of the landscape, the topography that invites you to move around, over and under, wherever your intuitive pathway weaves, and others weave and flow over or around you. Can you find another body to pass around, over, under, through?

Prompt: Consider, for a moment, your discreet skinbody. Skin is not simply a fleshy container or a marker of ethnic identity, it is our means of connection with others and the world (East, 2024).

Prompt: Allow your skinbody to morph and change. What does it feel like to move as worm or starfish, lizard, or fish? What happens when we move our eyes to the top of our head or to the sides?

Note: As artists we can shape and re-shape our skinbody. Allow an imaginal *transfiguring* of form – a dynamic expression of self/other.

Prompt: As you shape and re-shape allow a *re-membering* of your evolutionary past – before arms, legs perhaps. Or *re-member* a previously entrained action or favorite move from your recent past as child or athlete/dancer.

We can tune in to another's action as animal, respond with intention, match, change, contrast, guided by our own intuition.

Action: Can you move with another body in a supportive “tactile, kinaesthetic matching”? (Fraleigh’s term) (East, 2015)). Or “move with the bodily organization of your partner ... follow[ing] a path of least resistance through patience and not fixing”?^{vi} Communication with another person might be a brush, a visual or aural cue, a matching. Allow an empathic re-grouping and intra-action.

Note: In his book *Cognition in the Wild*, Edwin Hutchins (1995) describes cognitive activity in context – in dynamic process, of which an individual is only part. Instead, Hutchins outlines a cultural or community cognition that is different from that of an individual.

Prompt: Pathways intertwine like a rhizomal root system, creating visual shapes in space, feeding, informing each other in a complex communication network.

Note: A tree is also not passive but always searching beyond itself in a non-egotistical reaching, re-shaping, searching for light, water, sustenance. It’s a conversation; it’s survival; it’s inter-subjective (part of the earth, and the rest of the forest).

Action: In groups of three, practice “tree reaching”, supporting one person in reaching beyond their ability to maintain balance – in “tree language” the analysis of a constant striving for light and nourishment; in human terms, a fearless seeking towards fulfilment and recognition of the communal body.

Pause and let the memory of all your moving settle into stillness.

Just *be present* in this moment now (lie, sit or stand). No-mind. Just breathe, interoceptors and exteroceptors (internal sensations and external stimuli) activated.

Possibly move outside. Find a forest or other natural setting and begin: Allow a new kind of grazing, and perceiving. Adopt a kinaesthetic seeing as sensing, feeling, touching. Notice both the very tiny objects and organisms along with, and within, the big overall spatial realm, its surfaces and textures. Notice what your eye is drawn to; notice any memories that this seeing generates. Every cell contains a memory of where we have come from, what we did yesterday. *Re-member*.

Note: In Gibson’s (1979) “ambulatory perception” we move, graze through the landscape absorbing nourishment and information through the skin, each of which stimulates some deep reflective memory (perhaps of texture, moisture, light, shade).

Note: Phenomenologist Maxine Sheets Johnstone (2009) explains that “surface sensitivity is the way creatures have made their way from the very beginning, knowing the world through proprioceptive touch and movement” (p. 140).

Prompt: Pause periodically to let your consciousness dissolve into the surroundings. Dwelling *in* rather than gazing *at*. Heshusius (1995) describes adopting a participatory consciousness of “being with”.

Note: Anthropologist David Howes (2005) warns of “tactile disengagement” in today’s urban environments. He suggests that “having ones ‘ear to the ground’, paying attention to the state of the planet through our skin [registering its droughts, global warming, plagues], may now be a matter of life and death” (p. 29).

We acknowledge that our skin is layered and porous as the earth’s skin and that the structure and function of our skin and that of the earth may be seen as similar.

Note: In a 1950s geography textbook titled *The Skin of the Earth*, Austin Miller (1964)^{vii} used a direct analogy of the anatomy and physiology of the earth’s living skin: “Meteorological charts and maps show the physiological state of the skin of the earth, its temperature, its moisture, and the circulation of air and water” (p. 5). In fact, there are real similarities of structure and function between the human skin and the earth. Both exist as layers through which circulate vessels, nerves, and roots which transport nourishment and record sensation via hair or vegetal structures on the surface.

Prompt: We and the world are shaped and re-shaped each moment by our actions and interactions in an ongoing dance. We shape and re-shape ourselves and the world in a continually evolving dance with others, each moment making and unmaking itself (Barbaras, 2002).

Note: There is no wrong turn in nature, only a response and transformation.

Prompt: Organism and environment enfold into each other in the fundamental circularity that is life (Varela et al., 2000).

Prompt: Find a way to end your shared dance. Come back to a still place with your partners, of being present to self and the world of others. Remember, there is no real ending to this dance that is life.



Figure 5: Contaminations Re-membering workshop. Bratislava, 2025. Ali East video still.

These simple and playful practices and positive *contaminations* as dance artists and somatic practitioners become a form of peaceful activism as we draw inspiration from cognitive and biological scientists. They offer one contribution towards an evolving intra-relational empathic human consciousness. There are, however, a few ethical considerations pertaining to the facilitating of this kind of positive active “contamination” that will be outlined in the following section.

Framing an eco-somatic movement workshop

How do we frame our workshop? How do we make explicit, and model, the workshop intention? How do we hold the space, allowing that there is the possibility for change or transformation? How do we respect diversity and invite others’ ideas? How do we encourage creativity and intuition? How do we practice a participatory consciousness? How might the practice contribute to a re-thinking of an ethics of care – both for participants’ individual needs and vulnerabilities and for the natural environment.^{viii}

While a discussion of these questions cannot be developed here, they are included as provocations for future facilitators. Other broader topics formed the basis of a final discussion following the workshop.

The conversation/discussion

- q. How can the somatic arts and sciences work together to help change attitudes towards environmental degradation?
- q. What are your thoughts regarding this form of inter-disciplinary eco-somatic research and pedagogy?

Conclusion

In keeping with the original purpose of this presentation, this paper outlines the theoretical and practical basis for an eco-somatic movement workshop on the theme of *re-membering* our other than human relations. Embodied practices that encourage a sensory tuning in through the skin to one's environment and its inhabitants can expand our understanding of, and empathy for, others and the wider world.

Our highly visible abstract human dancerly gestures and sensory encounters often imitate those of other species or happen as eco-political activation or protest (such as the Chipko tree hugging action). They may be both felt and read by the viewer in ways that create a more direct somatic response than that of the spoken word. Similarly, Marder in Irigary & Marder (2016) speaking of the visually expressive nature of plants, suggests that “gestures are more loyal to the sense of language than words: They ... create jointures, *articuli*, that are as much spatial as they are semantic” (p. 193, italics in original). In line with the conference theme *Contaminations*, these workshop and performance provocations offer a possible means of activism that is highly visible, creative, informed by scientific research and supports a peaceful collaborative and communal response to the environmental issues that we face today.

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Endnotes

ⁱ The *Contaminations Symposium* is part of the international art and research project *Nature of Us*, realized in partnership with organizations from Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland. Its aim is to connect science with art and to map new performative practices in relation to climate change and nature-related themes ... to collectively draw attention to environmental issues and challenges, to share artistic and non-artistic practices that are related to them and to contaminate each other. *Contaminations* seeks to sit alongside available registers of knowledge from the Western sciences, backed by data and research, and creative, imaginative and artistic projects that are linked together by a desire to make visible and accessible this crisis we are living together. The conference asks: How do we respond to inaction in conservation and, at worst, destruction of resources and biodiversity by power structures? *Contaminations* wants to stir up mutual contamination in an effort to initiate a world that has not yet been, has not yet come into being, that we can imagine and collaborate to create."

The curatorial team of the symposium consists of dramaturge Maja Hriešik, dancer Eva Priečková and dramaturge Milo Juráni. plast.dance <https://plast.dance> › [podujatie.php](https://plast.dance).

ⁱⁱ Ecography is my term for performed eco-somatic improvised dance.

ⁱⁱⁱ Nowness is a term coined by Francisco Varela (1999). He states, "Now is not a temporal location for it has a lived quality as well: it is a space we dwell in, rather than a point where an object passes transitorily." p.119. Varela, F. & Shear, J. (1999, new edition 2002) *The View from Within: First-person approaches to consciousness*. UK Imprint Academic.

^{iv} The term "inner fish" is borrowed from Neil Shubin (2008, 2009) *Your Inner Fish*. London, Penguin Books Group.

^v The Chipko Movement began in 1973 in the Himalayan region of Uttarakhand (then part of Uttar Pradesh) as a response to the increasing deforestation caused by government-backed logging operations. The term "Chipko" means "to hug" in Hindi, reflecting the protesters' primary tactic of embracing trees to prevent them from being cut down. Written by Melissa Petruzzello, Fact-checked by the editors of Encyclopedia. Last updated: Oct. 11, 2025.

^{vi} Sondra Fraleigh, *Moving consciously: Somatic transformations through dance, yoga, and touch*. University of Illinois Press, 2015, p. 35.

^{vii} A. Austin Miller, *The skin of the earth*, 2nd ed., Methuen, 1964, p. 5. See also Matthew A. Bowker et al., Biocrusts: The living skin of the earth. *Plant and Soil*, 429(1) (2018/08/01 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11104-018-3735-1>, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11104-018-3735-1>.

^{viii} Adapted from *Ethics of facilitation of outdoor experiences*. (Refer to: David Key - ecoself.net).