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M y own experience with embodied living began early in life. My Scandinavian parents believed that children ought to be outside all day, all year long, even in New Jersey. My mother taught her children to dive into icy waters after a torrid sauna, pronouncing that these steamy, frigid rituals lent themselves to vigor and resistance to all disease. Aligning myself with my mother's motives, I wrote my dissertation in the 1970s at a picnic table on the porch in the winter in Nebraska because outside my writing became more vivid and detailed.

Similarly, when I began to study Celtic mythology in the 1990s, the most enriching aspect of my "studies" was traveling to Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, walking hundreds of miles until my body and psyche seemed to sense what had happened in these lands long ago. "Taken by the current of meandering days and chance happenings, my body finds a slower, easier pace. Sometimes skipping, sometimes with a prompting air, I walk lightly—each step like touching a piano key with a rose to play, a sense to sound. In nimble gestures the earth and I seem on one dance: landscape sashaying toward me step upon step, the hills and valleys beckoning and nodding to me even as I walk toward them. I slip into a contented rhythm that even my thoughts and emotions cannot ignore" (Anderson, 1998a, p. 3).

These inward gleanings allowed me to read the myths anew with a seeming insider's understanding. Such an embodied way of being in the world is key to understanding what embodied writing claims to do in the set and science of gathering and analyzing data and presenting findings (Anderson, 2001). In asking researchers and participants to be fully present and report what is occurring in the moment in their bodies, embodied writing requires an attunement to living in the present moment, however frightening the prospect. As a research technique, embodied writing allows researchers to collect and analyze data close to the raw, lived experience itself, and encourages readers to relive the writer's experience as though it were their own by way of sympathetic resonance with the writings (Anderson, 1998b, 2000).

Embodied writing seeks to bring the finely textured experience of the human body back to research praxis and writing. Rich subjective experiences known only to the individual, including sensual, visceral, proprioceptive, kinesthetic, and intra-psychic observations, are actively reported and presented. In augmenting conventional third-person data, objective data with bodily descriptions written from the inside out, embodied writing seeks to bring the fuller understanding of the human experience to the conduct of research.

Jay Dufrechou (personal communication, July 11, 2001) writes of his experience using embodied writing in research:

"The discipline of embodied writing tends to put the researcher in touch with the creativity of the body... seen[ingly] to magnify the contents or results of research. It is not simply that embodied writing allows a more effective communication of results that would have existed anyway. Rather, the use of this form of research has everything to do with what is learned and understood... [T]he form of the research aligns with the product of research. Particularly concerning transpersonal topics, the research and the experience tend to converge..."

Because embodied writing tries to make present the experience in the
writer while writing and in the reader while reading. I am not so much going to tell you about embodied writing, but I will do it as I go along. Rather than pointing with words as though from a distance, I will write from this full-bodied perspective from the inside out as I can, even in the didactic sections to follow. Much of this article contains examples from doctoral students at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology who have used embodied writing for studying spiritual and transpersonal topics from an embodied perspective. Our collaboration in developing and using embodied writing began in 1996 and continues to the present. Many of the procedures described below are now well honed.

Enlivening Literature Reviews with Embodied Writing

In using embodied writing, researchers invariably give personal accounts of the origins of their research topic. Usually in the literature review, they provide an embodied description of a pivotal life experience that promoted their interest in the topic. In a dissertation on transformative experiences in sailing, Rosalee Kuhn (2001) describes her own encounters with life and death while sailing the open seas on the sailing vessel True of Life. In an ongoing study on embodied reading, Robert Walker describes his own experience of reading Satprem’s book on Sri Aurobindo, Adventure in Consistency, and suddenly feeling as though Aurobindo was speaking directly to him: “My head and mind feels as if it is being electrified, expanding outward with my mind. For a moment, I feel a strange sense of calm followed by a surge of joy never before experienced. . . . Reading will never be the same” (p. 20). In an ongoing study of mountain climbing and mystical experiences, Richard Hill (2005) portrays aspects of his own experience in high-altitude climbing to introduce his research topic. In a dissertation on investigating the experience of grief, weeping, and other deep emotions in response to nature, Jay Durechou (2001) describes his own experience of truly “bearing” the rain for the first time, a familiar experience turned de- liciously unfamiliar.

In a study on bringing the wilderness experience home to everyday life, Laura Riordan (2002) presents embodied descriptions of her own ascent of Mt. Shasta to give her literature review an embodied integrity. She reports that embodied writing helped her to discover her own body’s voice as well as to access and integrate anew a wilderness adventure that took place two years before. She journeys into her own body, “expressing in words what her body is sensing, not what it feels like, but what it is actually experiencing.” In the first section of her literature review, entitled “Why Do People Go on Adventures?” Laura describes her own peak experience in climbing Mt. Shasta in northern California. The following quote appears in italics and precedes a conventional review of the empirical literature on peak experiences:

‘Tis 4 a.m. on a cold Labor Day. The cold is not due to the time of year, but rather because we woke at 10,000 feet, and the waning summer heat has not penetrated this dark and rocky environment. Stars, small blinking red satellites, and intense quiet surround the mountain. Our seven bodies, wrapped in down jackets and sleeping bags, gather for a hot breakfast. We dress in silence, lacing up our rented plastic mountaineering boots in preparation for the final ascent to the 14,000-foot summit of Mt. Shasta. I scramble to attach the crampons on harnesses to the slippery soles of my already uncomfortable boots. The rest of my body joins mine in their plea against my will to return to the tent and surrender to the mountain. But I share the same goal as the rest, to get to the top. This climb awards us the experience of climbing on snow and ice, as well as a 360-degree view. What we cannot foresee is how much this experience will change us. Our chilly pre-dawn wake-up call is just a prelude to a universal peak experience” (pp. 11-12).

Using Embodied Writing to Gather Qualitative Data

Both Jay Durechou (2001) and Laura Riordan (2002) made extensive use of the internet to recruit research participants and solicit embodied writings from their research participants. Jay recruited most of his participants by contacting and networking with leaders of the Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS) learning communities by using the email addresses available on the IONS website. He described his research project to approximately fifty IONS learning community leaders and asked them if they knew individuals who might be interested in participating in his study. Prospective participants were given a description of embodied writing and some examples, and asked to write embodied descriptions of their encounters with nature. Furthermore, in order to enrich these descriptions with rich sensory and emotional detail essential to embodied writing, Jay engaged in ongoing online dialogues with forty research participants to help them develop their em-

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bodied descriptions. Typically, these exchanges involved inviting the partici-
pants to be more specific about what was really happening in their bodies. His goal was not just to understand the experience in an analytic sense, but also to convey an intuitive, body-level
sensation of the experience of encountering nature, hoping that future read-
ers would resonate with the experience themselves, 'body to body, so to speak.'
Via an online questionnaire distrib-
uted through outdoor adventure/edu-
cation electronic list services, Laura Ri-
ordan (2005) recruited sixteen
exemplar participants known for their contributions to the field of outdoor and adventure education, either in practice or in research. As Laura's study focused on the integration of wil-
derness transformers into everyday life, her online questionnaire asked re-
search participants four questions about their wilderness experiences and the integration of those experiences, and requested that the participants use embodied writing in answering the
questions. In so doing, she received rich, textual descriptions that lend her dissertation a lively, conversational quality. Laura also hoped that using embodied writing would help her par-
ticipants to integrate their wilderness experiences while writing rather than merely to report experiences that had happened in the past. Participants were given an example of her own em-
bodied writing and asked to write straight from their physical sensation, expressing in words what the body was sensing.
In an ongoing study of receiving guidance through direct contact with the presence of Spirit, Bryan Rich (2005) is using screening interviews and his own embodied discernment to assess the appropriateness of a pro-
spective participant for the study. In an interview with a woman who felt that she did not have spiritual experi-
ences, Bryan asked a simple question that evoked a powerful and immediate response from her: "Can you think of a time when you just felt like you came into contact with something that you just felt was real, without any thoughts about it?" (p. 24). As she spoke, her
demeanor became animated and vivid, speaking as though the past experi-
ence were immediately present to her. Bryan, too, felt the change in her and in himself, as though he were experi-
cencing her reclamation in his own body. His embodied response to her al-
lowed him to affirm that the woman's experience with Spirit was appropriate for his study. In a study on peak and mystical ex-
perience in Aikido, Brian Heery (2003) employed embodied writing in the interview phase of his study. Specif-
ically, he read an embodied descrip-
tion of this own experience of Aikido to an Aikido master in his study. Doing so seemed to '... evoke memories of similar experiences for my coresearch-
et and it helped foster a deeper more open and meaningful interaction be-
 tween us. It felt like some invisible pro-
tections barriers came down and we were able to communicate more fully and with greater trust and intimacy than earlier in the interview. It does make sense that going more deeply into my own experience and sharing from that place helped my coresearch-
 ers to move more deeply into their own processes and more easily share the deeper layers of meaning in their experiences" (p. 144).

Bringing an Embodied Perspective to Data Analysis
Embodied writing also invites an em-
bodied perspective to data analysis re-
gardless of the specific research meth-
od used. In Laura Riordan's (2001) use of grounded theory to study the in-
tegration of wilderness encounters, Laura reports that the embodied writ-
ings that she had collected from her wilderness adventurers allowed her to 'grapple with and create analytical codes for actions and events on a deeper level than descriptions more
raptical of qualitative data in which par-
ticipants are simply reporting their ex-
periences' conventionally (p. 131). In a heuristic study on peak and mystical experiences in the practice of Aikido, Brian Heery (2003) indicates that em-
bodied writing helped him more deep-
ly explore his own experience with three Aikido masters than would have been possible with more conventional means of interacting with data because he was inspired to embody the experi-
ences of others for himself. Similarly, in a phenomenological and heuristic study of sacred weeping (Anderson, 1996), my own experiences of pro-
found weeping, occurring several years prior to studying those of others, al-
lowed me to understand the experi-
ences of others as though from the in-
side, even when those experiences were quite unlike my own. By resonating to the experiences of others, my under-
standing stretched into the experienc-
es of others somatically, thereby allow-
ing my discerning mind to understand aspects of the data I had previously ig-
nored. Rather than using embodied writing per se, other researchers have used an embodied perspective to analyze data by resonating through movement with their research participants' experienc-
es. For example, in a phenomenologi-
cal study of dance as a spiritual prac-
tice by Jan Fisher (1997), Jan wanted to stay as close as she could to what she calls being-movement, an unstructured and free style of dancing and moving with an inward focus of attention like that of Authentic Movement or Emily Conrad-Da’oud’s Continuum. Throughout her study she danced and moved in response to each partici-
pant’s being-movement and interview in order to imbue her understanding kinesetrically with what she was actu-
ally studying. After moving, she pro-
duced a creative response in the form of prose, sculpture, or drawings to give a non-analytic, uninterpreted repre-
sentation of her intuitive experience of the participant’s movement. Finally, Jan included being-movement in her data analysis in two ways. First, after viewing all the creative responses pro-
duced by the participant, she respond-
et to them through movement and then produced spontaneous, written summaries of the interview transcripts. These summaries are a key orienting feature to her subsequent phenomeno-
logical analysis, giving the analysis an intuitive, non-verbal dimension. Sec-
ond, while conducting the phenome-
nological analysis of her interview tran-
scripts, she engaged in being-movement repeatedly in order to contin-
ually inform her analysis with the somatic, nonverbal dimensions of dance and movement she was study-
ing.

In a study of sculpting with clay as a spiritual practice, Kat McIver (2001) both analyzed transcripts for major themes and created a sculpture in clay for each participant. She presented a color picture of each sculpture in her presentation of results, allowing read-
ers to interpret the image for them-
selves prior to reading her thematic analysis. An important aspect of her analysis involved taking on the shape of the sculpture with her own body and understanding that position for a pe-
riod of time while meditating. Kat em-
 bodied the sculpture as a way of know-
ing. Finally, she provided a written de-
scription for each participant called an "embodied response" that relays her
own experience while embodying the
sculpture. In response to one sculp-
ture, she writes:

“This sculpture depicts how I feel
when I do not express, and things get
held in my body. The image itself
helps me to move through that part of
myself and see where I am stuck up
and bound. It is my voice, and makes me
aware of my need to speak my voice, or
change a behavior or way of being. . . .
I also feel it expressing the archetypal
acronym of women to be heard” (p. 200).

Presenting Research Findings
through Embodied Writing
From the very start of the collaborative
process that created embodied writing,
we had hoped that embodied writing
would invite readers to relive the expe-
riences described in their own bodies
and psyches through a form of sympa-
Therefore, researchers typically
provide examples of embodied writings
from their research participants to give
the report of results an embodied di-
mension. Jay Dufrechou (2001), Rosie
Kuhz (2001), Laura Riordan (2002),
and Brian Heery (2003) provide ex-
cerpts quoting their research partici-
pants' own words directly. For exam-
ple, one of the participants in Rosie
Kuhz's (2001) study of the transforma-
tive dimensions of sailing describes
learning to feel the boat: "Over time
becoming one with the hull and the
sails as extensions of myself like a
bird's wings. Repeated sailing in-
grained these into my muscles, so that I
feel one with any vessel I am aboard”
(p. 224). Research interpretations usu-
ally follow the presentation of the re-
search participants' own embodied
voices, so to allow readers an opportu-
nity to experience the participants'
writing prior to reading the research-
ner's interpretation.

Corney Phelon (2001) uses embod-
ied writing to describe the healing
presence of a psychotherapist in her
own words. Corney (personal commu-
nication, September 14, 2001) tells us
how she wrote her research depictions.

"When I wrote in an embodied way
I willfully entered a state (in which I
observed the stream of my thought
and allowed the richly detailed terrain
of experience to flourish simultaneou-
ly. This created a spacious container
within me, which both allowed and
protected the parallel processes of ex-
perience and thought. In this open
space I could sift through words until
one had the ring of accuracy.”

Likewise, in a heuristic study of
peak and mystical experiences in the
practice of Aikido, Brian Heery pro-
vides a series of embodied writings of
his own evolving understanding of spiri-
itual awakening in the human body.
Brian is an accomplished Aikidoist him-
self, and much of Brian's study involves in-
teractions, interviews, and Aikido prac-
tice with three Aikido masters who are
the primary participants in his study.
In his creative synthesis, he writes of
the elements of earth, air, water, fire,
and void in the practice of Aikido as
he experienced them himself in the
course of the study. His embodied de-
scription of the element of fire allows
a non-Aikidoist to feel some of Aikido's
fiery tension:

"A warm ember is alight in my belly,
a reminder of the fierce flames and
rolling heat that that have consumed
my body intermittently over the past
decades. My arm extends toward my
partner, her fingers reaching to grip
my wrist. I can feel her desire for my
wrist and resist the temptation to draw
back or strike out prematurely. Instead
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