The passages reflect thematic connections to Jean-Luc Nancy's and Édouard Glissant's philosophies, particularly through ideas of relationality, the collapse of singular meaning, and spiritual embodiment. Let's break down the alignment with their concepts:

1. Shape-Shifting, Energy, and Choreographic Embodiment

Benoît's concept of "shape-shifting" and "energy cradles" aligns with Nancy's idea of existence as a *continuous transformation*. By exploring plants, elements, and energy fields, Benoît's work embodies *Nancy's notion of sense*, which is non-fixed and constantly evolving. His engagement with non-human forms and spiritual energy fields also speaks to Glissant's *Poetics of Relation*, where identity and experience are fluid and interconnected, emphasizing collective belonging over isolated self-identity.

2. Extended Relationality and Body Transparency

Both Nancy and Glissant reject closed systems of meaning. Nancy's critique of absolute identity complements Benoît's practice of "body transparency," which allows a performer to channel other entities. This dissolution of fixed selfhood parallels Nancy's concept of *être-avec* (being-with), which asserts that existence is relational and interdependent. Glissant's *opacity*—where identities are irreducibly complex and layered—also reflects in Benoît's description of encountering knowledge from plants and animal spirits, challenging the boundary between self and other.

3. Space, Sacredness, and Prayer

The passages' reference to the "sacred" in performance aligns with Nancy's assertion in *The Sense of the World* that meaning arises in the shared, *intersubjective space*. This corresponds to Benoît's ritualistic approach, where the stage is an open, shifting environment rather than a space for control. Likewise, Glissant's emphasis on *Relation* as a sacred, endless interaction between beings and the world aligns with Ricardo's perspective on redefining the stage as a fluid, sacred space where human and non-human entities coexist.

4. Posture, Intent, and Sacred Performance

The notion of posture as both a "deception" and a gateway to deeper understanding in Benoît's work reflects Nancy's critique of singular truths. Just as Nancy challenges fixed meanings, Benoît's approach to posture as "both real and unreal" creates a dialogue between authenticity and performance, suggesting that art and being-in-the-world both exist as fluid and layered expressions. This is akin to Glissant's notion of "opacity," where identities and practices hold inherent mystery and multiplicity, resisting oversimplification.

5. Collective and Elemental Knowledge Production

The passages' focus on performance as a way to connect with and transmit knowledge from the environment, ancestors, and other species emphasizes *knowledge production beyond individual experience*. This aspect complements Glissant's view that knowledge is shared and relational, shaped by cultural and elemental exchanges. Nancy's idea that *meaning is only meaningful when shared* is also relevant, as Benoît's communal dance practice transcends the individual body and taps into a broader, collective awareness, generating a "prayer" that is both self-expressive and community-oriented.

These passages, thus, resonate strongly with the philosophical underpinnings of Nancy's relational ontology and Glissant's vision of interwoven, creolized identities that defy absolute definitions, highlighting how Benoît's art embodies and further extends these theories in practice.

Shape-shifting Navigating, Energy Work, and Choreographing Bodies

Microexpressions as Confessionals[1]
Everyday Drag and Embodiment of Characters:[2]

Benoît: Shape shifting is my passion, looking for new performative modalities and exploring them through voice, body, and energy work. I focus on the effects, energy, and radiance. Recently, I've been creating "energy cradles" with voice, connecting with plants and elements. Creating what I would call "energy cradles", exploring different types of polymorphic architectures of energy. With the sound, and with the cradling of energy, I meet the different elements and the different life forms. And often what happens with plants, is if I sing to the plant, the resonance of **the plant comes back, the sound comes back to me and the plant in a sense, if I could put it that way, I feel the plant starts to shine inside my body.** They teach me, transforming my body's knowledge. I'm curious about extended relational dancing, bonding with elements and learning from them. The

[1] : Through their immersive engagement with the environment and elements, Benoît and Ricardo touch on the concept of microexpressions acting as confessionals. Their performances and interactions with nature and energy reveal an intimate layer of communication, where even the subtlest changes in expression or movement convey deep truths about their being and relationship with the world.

[2] The text illustrates the idea of everyday drag through Benoît's and Ricardo's experiences of taking on various forms and energies—such as becoming one with plants, elements, or even embodying the spirit of a jaguar. This fluidity of identity and the ability to embody different characters as part of their daily existence and performance practice reflect a dynamic approach to identity, challenging fixed notions of self.

plant is the teacher and it starts to shift and manifest inside of me and transforms the knowledge of my body. It's shaped, it's fibres -of the plant, It kind of teaches. It teaches the body and it transforms from inside looking and feeling for example like the bloom of the coconut tree*

Collaborating with Ricardo, singing while forming cocoons and with crystals, is transformative. So for me now, things are starting to happen more in the moment. Like when today, I went to the volcano, me and and friends and we made a little circle on the lava.
Yes, on the cold lava, and the lava started to shine so strong and I felt the heat coming up my legs and into my body, you know. The heat of the lava, demands the body, the brain. It enters the body and says in a very sacred moment, in a sense so to speak, it "says", "Now you need to pray." Moments like standing on hot lava demand prayer-like reverence. I surrender to the experience, letting it guide me. It feels like an amount of meeting my body in the form of prayer. There are different things and I never know what exactly when we are in this sort of situation of bonding I have to yield to what's happening. Yesterday an ecstatic dance, I felt connected to a jaguar spirit in an ecstatic dance ceremony since there was an emblem sculpture of a jaguar)on the speaker. And there were peyote symbols on the Jaguar. And I started feeling the jaguar. I took off my shirt and I was full of sweat and making and performing the energy of the Jaguar shaking so that the peyote energy and in a trance I felt and even felt like I was hearing a certain spirit animal, perhaps the jaguar itself. It's not about choreography, but about intuitive response and prayerful movement. Dancing with an angel-winged man, I honoured the discarded wings which made me think of the Angel Gabriel. My practice is about acknowledging and serving the forces of movement. It's not about choreographing, but about surrendering and serving. I'm learning humility and service through this process. , my dance practice is more and more about prayers and saying what needs to be done so that we can acknowledge that movement that is already happening and somewhat self-directed, a movement that is about the forces that are coming to us and how we can serve the forces. So the idea of choreography is more as something that must be done.*

Ricardo: We create these whole entities like Gods with infinite power and we forget that we create those things. We're the creators of the stage, a place for big actions. Traditionally, it's where big action may happen, like in traditional dances.
It's not this space where the scenario where the lights are. It's where the fire is or it's where the moon is or it's where we are all together. It's where I find strength, not in controlling, but in shapeshifting and transforming. The stage isn't limited to theatres; it can be anywhere, even at my home where I do performances or in a restaurant, seeking anywhere where your soul can flourish. So for me, the stage is this concrete space or a very abstract and sensorial space where my soul, which is my *anima* can flourish and can give me some information and can coexist with this reality. It's not this masculine power to control but this immense power to shapeshift myself, to transform myself. For all the traditional dancers, it's always a quest. Traditional dancers often find

theatres restrictive due to many rules. The stage needs rethinking, not destruction. Every artist should go very deep into their soul to see what they do in this space. What's the sacredness of being there? It has to do with the sacredness of…I also think that our dance has a ghost behind it that triggers a lot of the questions.

Benoît: Bigger 'events' can occur beyond rational definitions of space. I want to introduce another element. In the techniques I favour, like 'body transparency,' I explore inner passages, like from tongue to
to our inside allowing the passage to become a portal* for other species to talk through me, reshaping my identities. Trees and leaves, for instance, I could also embody them. It unveils the poetry within these beings that I did not consider myself I am becoming and my body becomes a tool to receive and transform this information, to meet other species and other states of life. If I honour and serve this unfolding path within me, it becomes a teacher, transforming my understanding of identity into a continuous prayer for a life that is always changing, always shifting always in prayer. During an experience with deceased young cats in an avocado plantation, we danced with crystals and sang. Placing a crystal in a very specific place between two branches and I climbed up the tree. Ricardo initiated a ritual where unexpected events unfold. Sensing energy flow between branches, I climbed, feeling a feline consciousness envelop me. I felt like I was receiving the energy through my pelvis and all of a sudden in my consciousness I imagined myself transforming into a cat in my consciousness. I felt the cat's essence within me, praying to the cosmic constellations, aware of its passing.

"The human body, I believe, can be in service to greater goods connecting with spirituality and globality. When I encountered this visuality of the. dying cat, it taught me profound lessons about the sacred world of the universe. It shows that dance and the body serve to transcend ego and connect deeply. It then feels like I have just learned something really important and my body serves something very important. So being in service for me is a becoming. Being in service means becoming like my experience with lava, being in service to these elemental forces. it's not for me to appropriate the culture but to be in service to the divinities, to serve. The body serves and is in prayer. as heat from the lava taught me The prayers were taught by the fire of the lava going into the body as I actually felt the heat come up inside of me. All of this opens up a passage for this element to do what it has to do, nothing to do with my ego, but having to do with much bigger
Surrendering is the most important thing; it allows for a dance beyond ego, opening up to bigger dimensions. That is the teacher. What must happen that is bigger than my ego self? This ego self is a layer that is actually stopping creativity. Medicinal plants act as teachers, Teaching us to embrace other places. My perception of reality has socially been limited to certain perceptions. So I have to dissolve the walls. The medicinal plant then so to speak is said to open to the divinities that allow me to dissolve the walls and to let the teacher/s in. Let the teachers do their work as we are at once in service to the teachers.

Things happen where we finally say," Okay I think I'm starting to learn. Once we reach that point, "Why step back? Why go back to this old way of thinking, being, and being with the dance and the surrounding elements that we can be with while we dance?

Bodies:

Benoît: And when many bodies unite, each serving complementary purposes, they collectively hold the knowledge that needs addressing. As we listen to the collective body in prayer, all bodies contribute to the work at hand. It transcends the individual dancer and their individual body, becoming a very strong human collective effort. Surrendering individually, yet collectively, serves a greater purpose. In ecstatic dance, each person, like those wearing those "angel wings," serves a purpose. And this purpose was such that each did their part, I did my part and my part led me somewhere. and had to resolve something related to where it led me to what I had to resolve. After I had to go lay down and do a healing for what I resolved.
It fulfills a role leading them to resolution and healing. I saw a lot of my problems and my demons come in and I knew it was time to go lay down now. I felt that perhaps in that moment some of my ancestors might have begun to heal through my body. Until someone came up behind me and clapped a few times. Then, a man sat down nearby while I was lying there. When the clapping stopped, the clapping had passed right through my body and stopped the intense moment I had gone through. The man sitting next to me witnessed what I had experienced and remarked, 'Yes, that's how it is.'

There was another purpose outside of the dancing place.
As playing bodies, we're serving purposes beyond our egos connecting in different places. We connect and I feel that that is the dance in the choreography has a much wider purpose, Choreography goes beyond patriarchal consumerism; it serves transformative and collective purposes, going into other dimensions and serving something greater than the individual. Surrendering to this journey, trusting it serves a global purpose, **So now my question is, "How to proceed with art-making with knowledge of that."**

Posture-Deception and Deviance:[3]

[3] The notion of posturing as deceptive is subverted through Benoît's and Ricardo's practices. They describe their performative work as deeply authentic and transformative, engaging with

Illusions and Veils:[4]

~~James: In this issue, we discuss posture and how it's perceived, whether as a genuine body stance or as a facade. "Posture can be thought of as deceptive or deviant Can posture be viewed differently? Can it serve as a bridge to something as Benoît highlighted in our pre-interview* - how posture appearing as an illusion or artifice can facilitate bridging? Perhaps you both can elaborate on this concept of posture and bridging, as it seems integral to both your practices, beyond falsehood and authenticity, beyond posture and authenticity.~~

Benoît: Action! What needs to be done at the moment? What must be done? I see Ricardo embodying this knowledge in his practice frequently. It's a type of posturing that acknowledges the body as a conduit or as a spiritual connection and continuity. In ecstatic dance, for example, where swirling energy transforms the room,

Allowing the spirit, yes, but there's also sometimes the ego. I ask, " Maybe that was my ego dancing, but I don't think it was. Was I being deceptive or was this happening? But I think it was happening." An experience with peyote opened my voice, allowing me to have these flashes and process them through my body and movement. The voice also allows it to happen. The posturing is to open the body as a container so that it can pass through and do the work that it needs to do. So I think that the posturing is in service to what needs to happen. I can only know by letting it happen.

Ricardo: Posture is like the idea of painting a picture in that we as cultures have decided what's good or bad.
Western society now has decided that being different is better than being similar - a desire~~,~~ to explore something different and something new. In the West, we privilege that if someone does something their way, I do it in my own way, whereas some other cultures have so much fun with and respect for similarities.Personally, I find being like my ancestors, a better version of myself, not a different version of myself. I'm kind of happy looking like my grandpa or imitating my dance teacher. There's immense wisdom in these postures inherited from our ancestors. It's interesting to see both ideas of similarity and difference coexisting in traditional dances. The postures as a path to go back in time to connect ancestry. Our gestures are our grandparents' gestures, our

---

elements and energies in a sincere dialogue that transcends mere physicality. This redefines the connotation of posturing from deception to a profound exploration of identity and connection.

[4] The dialogue highlights how their performative work creates illusions and veils not as means of separation but as bridges to deeper understanding and connection with the universe. By engaging with the world in this way, they redefine the boundaries between self and other, suggesting that these veils are not barriers but portals to greater communion and co-creation with the forces of life.

ancestor's gestures. I cannot get rid of them. Every time I “mistake myself for being myself”, I am constantly put in front of a thousand different versions.

Being myself is totally a negation of the past and the future. Regarding posture and posturing with the body, biologically speaking, the body doesn’t understand true or false; everything is real to it. When a body assumes a posture, and this for me is when it becomes interesting in dance, when you see a dancer in a posture rather than just seeing if he is doing it well, you can really see how he feels while staying in that posture. You see the discomfort in doing that posture. That posture might have been imposed on that body-not their real posture. Not what they really want to do or what they are meant to do, and this is more interesting to see all of these bodies being trained and doing postures without understanding that there is a wealth of knowledge. While the mind may accept it, the body often rejects it. Every time we do a posture, our organs have a reaction to it. So it's not only the mind. My liver, my lungs, and my heart have a specific point of view about that posture.

And that's what makes it interesting, as it either accepts or denies the reality of the posture. This type of dance has many layers, with posture having various layers. Assuming a posture can help overcome bodily traumas without delving into the psychological realm, focusing solely on different postures within the body. However, it can also serve as a distraction from one's true self from what the posture may really be saying. I've been trained in both approaches. As a dancer, I've encountered instructors with differing methods. For instance, there was a small teacher, much shorter than me, who repeatedly urged us, “Do as I do, imitate me, imitate me.”I was in a state of shock because we had such different bodies and I could not do what he wanted me to do like him. This experience prompted an ontological question: "Is it better for me to memorize what other bodies are saying, other postures, or to acknowledge what my posture is saying? Ultimately, it's every individual's right to decide whether to follow another person or listen to their own body.

Benoît: The pelvis, being a dynamic structure, is designed to receive force from the earth and distribute it to the spine, enabling us to get and absorb that force. In its natural skeletal posture, the body assists in receiving force, open to receive, allowing us to tap into our potential so we can get the force and get the message. Posture plays a crucial role as a receiver of both force and messages. If we block our bodies too much, we hinder our ability to receive, potentially leading to anxiety. W**e are created to receive deep and to be in dialogue: I think, of posture and the physical manifestation of the skeleton and the conduct of our body how we are made. What are the ways that we as individuals can “meet our strengths” by opening our bodies so we can walk our path? Various bodies walking various paths.** Each of us, despite our singularity, we all receive and are capable of receiving information, although we also can block it. Where one person may be closing off, another might be opening up, suggesting diverse pathways of reception and understanding.

Purpose and Sacredness of Performance:[5]
Prayer, Intention, and Transformation[6]
The Role of the Body in Dance and Prayer[7]

---

[5] The text expands on the theme by discussing the purpose and sacredness of their dance and performance practices. They view their work as a prayer, a service to forces greater than themselves, and a means to explore and express the interconnectedness of all things. This approach imbues their performances with a sense of ritual and reverence, far removed from the traditional notions of performance as entertainment or spectacle.
Overall, the dialogue between Benoît, Ricardo, and James provides a rich, multidimensional exploration of the initial themes, presenting performance and the choreography of the body as deeply spiritual, transformative, and intimately connected with the broader tapestry of life. Their practices challenge conventional understandings of performance, identity, and the body, inviting a reconsideration of how we all navigate, shape-shift, and choreograph our existence in the world.

[6] : Ricardo and Benoît discuss the concept of prayer in dance, focusing on hosting intentions within the body and allowing those intentions to manifest through movement, thereby facilitating personal and collective transformation.
The overarching themes include the transformative power of dance, the importance of intuition and relational engagement with the environment, and the potential of dance to serve as a medium for exploring and expressing deeper truths and connections as well as being a space for rethinking the notion of prayer and do that away from ~~hegemonic~~ notions of religious prayer.

[7] Both speakers reflect on the body's role as a tool for communication, transformation, and service. They discuss creating sacred spaces, both physically and metaphorically, where dance serves as a medium for connecting with larger forces and realities.

“Quiero clarificar las causas porque ocurre frecuentemente que muchas veces las palabras perecen en nuestra sociedad contemporánea”

I want to clarify a few points because, in contemporary society, words often distort our intended meanings. Much of this revolves around clarifying

words or techniques that have been stolen from institutions such as this idea of “stage”, and “praying” so embedded in religion which has very little to do with everyday life. We're used to thinking of prayers in this Catholic way that we ask for something from the outside. First, this is asking for something as if the outside is a greater force and you put yourself in a state of weakness. Secondly, what I find questionable and interesting in the contemporary way of praying is the absence of the body. When we pray in this idea it’s as if we want to “solve something from the body”, as if the body was wrong, not aligned. I agree with Benoît-that praying has come to be seen in a very capitalistic way - "if I do something. I will get something”. Like paying to get that something. We become frustrated when our prayers do not come true. We suffer from that because we are asking the outside to do something that is our own responsibility to do.

I propose a different approach to prayer, one focused on hosting an intention inside our body within ourselves and hosting it for a certain amount of time, creating something from the inside to the outside. This is what my notion of praying means: to have an intention and to allow this intention to work inside of you. You see in your actions and you see the power of your intention - bringing an intention inside of you and doing something with it.’’

Benoît: Take, for instance, our visit to the avocado plantation; the intention was already set. I hadn't planned to "become the cat." We engaged authentically with the experience, allowing the energy sparked by the crystals to blend with our movements and surroundings, creating a palpable intention. When I positioned myself over the crystal, I sensed its intention to reach out to me. This transformative power arises from actions beyond our personal will. Surrendering to this unfolding moment, I recognized the importance of allowing things to happen organically. Traditional dance teaches us that intention exists beyond individual will; it's driven by necessity. Our role, as choreographers, is to create portals through which intention **can take place so that the work happens.**

Traditional vs. Folk[8]

My dance originates from traditional dances, very different from folk dance. Folk dance is a re-creation tradition, whereas traditional dances engage with actual time and space directly, without representation. We synchronize with moon cycles and constellations; if it's daytime, we dance in the daytime and in a specific location. Traditional dances train the body to connect in fractals, allowing us to explore the fractals within ourselves and see the fractals that the universe has created. In traditional dances, the focus isn't on performing for humans in a homocentric manner; rather, we dance within these fractals, whether with stars, trees, or our breath. This raises questions about how our performances are perceived in a Westernized performative art where people are there to see and receive Our idea is to co-create spaces where audiences can immerse themselves and navigate in these spaces, seeing reality from a different perspective. We strive to create sacred spaces where people can transcend their personal backgrounds and go into a deeper background.

Stage Performance and Its Limitations:[9]
Benoît: I'm not really attracted to the stage anymore. Dealing with the mass of the audience has become challenging; it's hard to feel what each individual is doing there (hard to connect with each individual). In settings where people are arranged in a more open, circular -round manner, allowing for interactions with different people, I feel more at home.

On stage, my ego tends to become very strong, a habit developed over 40 years of performing. I find it difficult to surrender on stage compared to other settings. in a more rounded place, I can let go a lot more being in improvisation. I love the fractal term that

[8] Ricardo distinguishes between traditional dances, which are deeply connected to time, space, and the cosmos, and folk dances, which are recreations of tradition. He stresses the importance of engaging with the actual time and space of a dance to connect with broader, fractal-like patterns of existence.

[9] Benoît expresses a disconnection from performing on traditional stages, associating them with ego and hierarchical power structures. He prefers more interactive and rounded setups that allow for personal connection and mutual energy exchange. Ricardo, while acknowledging the beauty of stage performances, also emphasizes the limitations imposed by traditional stage settings and advocates for rethinking performance spaces to accommodate more sacred and inclusive experiences.

Ricardo opened up the conversation with because thinking of the fractal, it's amazing to get your body subdivided in empathy, subdivided into an infinite empathy of what is happening. In flamenco, where the stage connects with tradition, the experience differs. It goes to ancient ways of existing with the spirits but in my European heritage, the stage has served the king creating a personal conflict for me. There's all these politics in my culture, so I say, "Oh no, I don't want to be in service to the human king that's ruling everything nor to the hierarchy of power that is patriarchal, I'm trying to shed away from this so I can get rid of that anxiety and instead where I'm at service to something that's bigger than the power of the king, court and the power of capital so I can be in service to something else

While I acknowledge some beautiful forces in stage performances, my personal politics led me to view the stage in a negative light— a place of pressure to be perfect and seek approval. This is my personal struggle, shaped by past experiences, but as these are the realities that I've formed in my past I recognize that others may have a more positive relationship with the stage. It's a crisis I must navigate to move forward.

Ricardo: The first thing in a kind of a creative way is informing the public that in performance, we're not only observers, that we receive in many different layers, especially in dance. Dance speaks so much to our animality and it speaks so much to our mammal-entity. Acknowledging this has been one of the works in my personal work- knowing and transmitting that people will not only receive data from the body. I invite people to a state of perception rather than a state of just receiving, which is a kind of passive sensation. The stage has emerged out of the building up of strong concepts like "stage" like "dance" like "contemporary". (To continue: See text above and repeat here):
Ricardo: We create these whole entities like Gods with infinite power and we forget that we create those things. We're the creators of the stage, a place for big actions. Traditionally, it's where big action may happen, like in traditional dances.
It's not this space where the scenario where the lights are. It's where the fire is or it's where the moon is or it's where we are all together. It's where I find strength, not in controlling, but in shapeshifting and transforming. The stage isn't limited to theatres; it can be anywhere, even at my home where I do performances or in a restaurant, seeking anywhere where your soul can flourish. So for me, the stage is this concrete space or a very abstract and sensorial space where my soul, which is my *anima* can flourish and can give me some information and can coexist with this reality. It's not this masculine power to control but this immense power to shapeshift myself, to transform myself. For all the traditional dancers, it's always a quest. Traditional dancers often find theatres restrictive due to many rules. The stage needs rethinking, not destruction. Every artist should go very deep into their soul to see what they do in this space. What's the sacredness of being there? It has to do with the sacredness of…I also think that our dance has a ghost behind it that triggers a lot of the questions.