

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

Healing Performance Practices in Los Angeles: The Lucid Body, Feldenkrais, and Gaga

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Arts in Theatre

By

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## DEDICATION

This graduate project is dedicated to my family. To my father, Allan, whose conversation provided me with clarity and purpose, my mother, Catherine, for editing every paper of my academic career with unwavering dedication, my sister, Siri, for supporting me and offering guidance when I felt low, and my brother, Julian, whose artistry continues to inspire me every day.

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## ABSTRACT

Healing Performance Practices in Los Angeles: The Lucid Body, Feldenkrais, and Gaga

By

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Master of Arts in Theatre

This graduate culminating project examines the intersections of theatre and the health and wellness community in the contemporary landscape of Los Angeles. In this project I link theatre and therapy's intersections from ancient rituals in Eastern Asia to psychotherapy's influence on theatrical productions. I chronologically track how new developments in both theatre and health have continued to inspire new forms of performance practice. This project examines three such performance practices and connects them to the healing work that inspired them. These three practices were all taught in Los Angeles in the fall of 2018: the Lucid Body, the Feldenkrais method, and Gaga. Through the study of introductory classes of therapeutic performance practices,

interviewing the trained practitioners, and producing an autoethnographically designed workbook, I hope to offer a model to enlighten, engage, and heal communities that would otherwise not have access to alternative healing methods. The workbook introducing these studied exercises is illustrated for easy comprehension with the hope that it will become a reliable guide for teachers, teaching artists, students of theatre, and curious individuals.

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: PROJECT GOALS AND METHODOLOGIES**

### **PROJECT GOALS**

In my study of Feldenkrais, the Lucid Body, and Gaga, I aim not to compare one against the others, but to create a space where each theory is explored individually, considering my experience and interpretation, in order to create a toolbox of multidisciplinary performance exercises that can be used by nonactors and actors alike. The inspiration for creating this material is to more widely distribute these healing practices and to encourage people without training or knowledge of these performance practices to experiment with them for their own personal growth or healing.

Throughout my TA assignment at California State University, Northridge, I noticed that introducing these exercises benefited my students in “Actors and Acting,” a course designed to introduce theatre to nontheatre majors, whether it be finding center, getting a sense of mind-body energy flow, or as a way of getting into character. Creating a workbook with introductory language necessary for understanding the methodology both for those with acting backgrounds, and those who don’t yet have it, was crucial. The Lucid Body, Feldenkrais, and Gaga are not taught in underserved communities; classes are offered in different cities around the world, but are not freely accessible, either being limited by few locations offering services, restrictive class sizes, or cost of attendance. Having had the experience of introducing these methods to people who had never been exposed to them emboldened me to consider possible applications in a variety of different settings. I hope this document serves to create opportunity and space for anyone to incorporate alternative methods of healing and wellness using theatre as an avenue to expand resources to heal.

While one can argue the therapeutic nature of many performance practices, there are three that I researched for this thesis for my own bodily archive. These three practices were available during the research period of the completion of this graduate project and impact my workbook, as I document my own self-discovery using Beatrice Allegranti's methodology in "The Autobiographical Body" in *Embodied Performances: Sexuality, Gender, Bodies*. Allegranti's experimental approach to movement and identity lends itself to the Lucid Body, Feldenkrais, and Gaga as they are each concerned with an internal process based on self-reflection, providing a framework for assessing the research collected from participating in workshops, classes, and exercises provided from the literature around the three techniques. Allegranti's autobiographical embodiment considers the past of the internal and external of an individual, the practice of "telling through the body" with movement, and the future of the body as a layered and fluid expression of self. Allegranti's method combines dance movement therapy, performance, and feminism to "undo" or "redo" the performativity of gender. I use her framework and language of the body as autobiography to contextualize myself within the research. Allegranti's interdisciplinary approach, although different from my own, aims to define a personal performance praxis—the inspiration behind using her methodology. I take into account my capabilities and weaknesses in the context of my experience as an able-bodied theatre artist and present my findings as an autoethnography in Allegranti's form.

In preparation for this undertaking, I reviewed the therapeutic origins of the methods studied in the work of forefathers Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud to aid in positioning the work in my academic research for fulfillment of my degree. In Calvin S. Hall's *Primer on Jungian Psychology*, individuation, the ego, the personal unconscious,

complexes, the collective unconscious, the self, persona, the shadow, and anima/animus are explored in their relation to other psychoanalytic principles. Jung encouraged his analytical psychology patients to understand their complexes and attempt to self-regulate their psyches to “maintain a balance between opposing qualities while constantly striving for growth.” (Hall) This theory is the source of the similarities among theatre techniques that I will explore as it pertains to the Lucid Body. Lucid Body’s concept of “nonjudgmental mind” leads to Gaga’s sensory-based, not image-conscious, work. Both methods, derived from Freud’s psychoanalytical theories, use childlike sense memory devices to inform their work. Freud’s influence on actor-training techniques flourished in the 1930s and directly impacted the Method as it was developed. In all three training techniques, memory is used to assess and renew the individuals’ patterns in some way. I show the connection between Freud’s language around memory, particularly his studies of childhood, to examine how these methods make use of his research and literature in regard to Gaga and the Lucid Body. Physical therapy and Feldenkrais are concretely linked, as the method was created in response to Feldenkrais’s own sports-related injury. I look at his work through a theatrical lens, however, and find movements to adapt to assist the nonactor in the performance tradition.

I am grateful for and have relied on information provided by leaders at workshops and classes to complete this analysis and gauge their significance in 2018. My methodology is reliant on research shared by, and class time with, practitioners Shayna Freedman, Caitlin Apparcel, Georgia Junker, and Danielle Agami, as well as video footage from Fay Simpson.

## METHODOLOGIES

Beatrice Allegranti is a “choreographer, clinician, academic researcher and educator” whose aim is to interrogate embodied performances of sexuality and gender through interdisciplinary practice-based research. (Allegranti) The chapter “The Autobiographical Body” in *Embodied Performances* draws on the “practice-based evidence” of her lab. Throughout the chapter she quotes her participants as they delve into the five aspects that are relevant to the autobiographical process: The Embodied “I,” Development, Voice, Language, and Re-constructing Selves. These five aspects foreground “the themes of autobiography: the telling of one’s story with(in) the body, through movement.” (Allegranti) I employ Allegranti’s five aspects as I recount my autoethnography of studying the Lucid Body, Feldenkrais, and Gaga while keeping in mind that “our bodily self-perception is formed on the basis of past information, which is always out of date with our current physical body.” (Allegranti)

The Embodied “I” is discussed in three ways during the course of Allegranti’s chapter. The first is recognizing patterns that have been embodied throughout dance (movement, in my case) history, working with new embodied possibilities, and working with holding the tension between embodied “pernicious social performances” and how this emerges verbally. Recognizing what has been embodied throughout our cultural life histories, we can become stuck in the stories we tell ourselves. In Allegranti’s lab, she noticed that her participants, particularly those with intense movement training, noted their body’s ability to hold memories and make patterns based on what she calls their “cultural history.” Allegranti argues that the physical patterns that we make are like autobiographies—stories that we tell ourselves repeatedly over time that inform our

perception of our abilities. She notices that when the participants of the lab speak about their bodies, they externalize. Instead of being “one” with their bodies, they verbalize Otherness, saying things like, “Ugh, my body is not cooperating today” or “I can’t get my body to replicate this move from last class.” Allegranti says that this position of exteriority, saying “I have” a body, rather than “I am” a body, should be challenged, and she suggests intentionally cultivating a balance between “I have” versus “I am” statements.

Allegranti’s writing alerted me that I have had trouble externalizing when speaking about, and speaking to, my body. There are things that my body does really well, like the time that I woke up in the morning unaware that a fire had started outside my apartment. I live on the second story of the complex, above a parking space, with no neighbors in the immediate area. I glanced toward the window to assess the weather for the day and saw smoke and flames licking up above my window. I later realized that my side of the building had burst into flame from debris from a major fire a few miles away. In that moment I grabbed my nearby laptop, a pair of shoes, and my car keys and ran to my car. Firefighters were already dispatched nearby, and I was instructed to drive north. I realized that my speed and general alertness came to me in a calm way; I didn’t feel frazzled or scared. I kicked into gear and got out.

There are also things that my body does that can frustrate me. I have had a slight hand tremor that I remember having as early as eight years old. My first memory of feeling like my body was “failing” me was when I was instructed in an acting class to freeze in a tableau and not being able to control the stillness of my hands. I remember being frustrated and embarrassed when our director insisted I just needed to “be still” and

“focus.” The tremor was out of my control, and I couldn’t do anything about it. I now know that sugar and caffeine, lack of sleep, and nerves exacerbate this, but as a child I didn’t know how to remedy the shaking, and I felt helpless and that my body was out of my control.

Dance (and, I argue, theatre) is considered an embodied art, yet training strips the body of its subjectivity. We speak as if bodily acts are exterior to ourselves, as I’ve demonstrated with: “My body was out of my control.” This exteriority should be challenged, and it comes up in each practice, particularly in Gaga, where the participants are encouraged to move with their training history in mind, but also to consider how they might make the same motion from a different entry point. While our body’s history and training give us a language with which to speak about ourselves, extending kinesthetic vocabulary can expand our expressive potential. Allegranti refers to her multiplicities and “I’s,” while in the Lucid Body, they are called “persona” and “shadow,” as they are influenced by Jung’s theories by the same name. Allegranti says, “I have created a space in and through my body to accommodate many “I’s.” (Allegranti) In the process of creating a character, the Lucid Body challenges the performer to break from or subvert repetitions inherent to the body in order to transform. In Allegranti’s work, she highlights that this subversion of repetitions can transform the performer’s gender representation (as they are presented socially), while in each of the three performance techniques a different subversion of repetitions is exercised in order to re-create the body’s architecture in order to find new alignment, characters, or perceptions.

Allegranti’s work with dancers is different from my own physical capabilities and, more importantly, different from the people with whom I intend this project to

impact (that being, people ranging from those with no movement experience to those who are highly trained). However, regardless of where the body starts, “It takes muscular effort to hold ourselves differently and for our bodies to articulate new movement languages.” (Allegranti) So, willingness to participate actively, and use muscles perhaps unknown, is necessary for the process. Working through the subjectivities of the body, participants of Allegranti’s lab worked with the known (technically trained) and the unknown of the body, “Therefore demonstrating the possibility that we are not the sum total of our known identities.” (Allegranti) For example, in Gaga, participants are not asked to leave their skill behind, but instead to reconsider a gesture and where it originates in the body. The Embodied “I” asks us to open portals beyond the “known.” Participants shift between awareness of “‘I am’ a body and ‘I have’ a body,” a theme that recurs throughout the three practices.

The next aspect of the Autobiographical Body is “Development.” Development is part of what forms our autobiographical body, in that it is the information has formed our perceptions and ideas of the world. “An aspect of autobiographical storytelling is concerned with reflecting on past memories.” (Allegranti) Allegranti’s lab participants take turns wearing father’s suits, mother’s gowns, and tapping into another’s identity. She asks them to consider, “What are our embodied parental performances of sexuality and gender?” In the Lucid Body actors become aware of their three layers of consciousness, “persona, shadow, and child.” (Simpson) Child-need is the “visceral desire” remembered from the actor’s youth and is frequently found by pinpointing something that they were deprived of at a young age. Allegranti says, “Social environmental factors (nurture) in early life play an equally important role in ‘activating’ or ‘silencing’ gene expression

(nature) and consequently influencing an individual's constitution and future health.”

(Allegranti) Both Allegranti and the Lucid Body use epigenetics (the study of changes in organisms caused by modification of gene expression rather than alteration of the genetic code itself) to assess Development of the performer. Allegranti and the Lucid Body use this information about the individual's childhood to assess and reconfigure. “The tension, here, lies between our capacity to shed this developmental layer as adults and live in (embody) our own skin while also still negotiating the original imprint in our everyday social lives.” (Allegranti) All three performance practices—Lucid Body, Feldenkrais, and Gaga—relate to Allegranti's term of “*Embodying Re-membering*.” Our memories are neurologically mapped as a result of embodied experiences, and reconfiguring ourselves mentally and physically can result in stronger daily performances onstage and off.

“Voice” is the third aspect of Allegranti's Autobiographical Body. The three focuses are “finding the voice, verbalizing, and verbal and nonverbal incongruence.” One member of Allegranti's lab found that while playing (in an exercise “spinning and looking up like children do and then falling”), she felt more open to finding her voice. Allegranti relates this experience to Coates, who says, “Playing provides a context for risk taking and experimentation.” (Allegranti) While practicing Gaga in a room full of thirty-plus people, or Feldenkrais in a room of six, there was an agreement that we would take breaks from movement and instruction to speak to our experience and pose questions—Allegranti calls this “voicing indecision”—to our instructors, but Allegranti's use of verbalizing as a way of “amplifying” movement experiences was not instructed. Instead, an audible breath was encouraged multiple times, which made me think back to Allegranti's statement that, “The basis of movement is of course connection with the

breath, and breath is movement.” (Allegranti) The Lucid Body, however, constantly reminds the participant to audibly exhale, and it is stated early in the book that it is “the foundation of the technique.” (Simpson) Exhaling is used in many ways, but notably in the warm-up. While being taken through some familiar and unfamiliar yoga-inspired poses, the participant is encouraged to audibly exhale to assess what emotions are conjured up in various positions and exercises. Audible exhale “takes us back to our preverbal origins, when our truth could be expressed only through primitive sounds.” In “Walking Chakras,” an exercise that takes chakra exploration off the mat and into the playing space, participants are encouraged to verbalize in “exploded” and “imploded” chakra centers. An exploded chakra has energy flowing outward, while an imploded chakra has energy spiraling inward. The exploded might be vocalized with animalistic sounds, meant to intimidate a predator. An imploded root, “Adrenalin turns on, and the panic of losing the fight, your life, or your home takes over. . . Feeling wholly lost or frightened to death” (Simpson), was verbalized in our workshop with phrases like “I don’t know where to go,” “Have you seen my mom?” repeated to strengthen the untethered feeling that comes from an imploded root. “Repetition of particular words serves to emphasize the point the speaker is making.” (Allegranti) During the lab, Allegranti facilitated an exercise by encouraging participants to repeat movement and vocal/verbal phrasing by way of understanding more fully what a movement or a word has the potential to mean to them. (Allegranti) While an audible exhale and debriefing is integral to all three practices, Lucid Body’s vocalization and verbalization is most closely tied to Allegranti’s work in the lab.

Moving from the “Voice” to “Language,” the fourth aspect of the lab, Allegranti uses the phrase “Languaging the autobiographical experience” to explain how participants linguistically assess their process. Participants can draw from their own language as a source of learning more information about themselves. The linguistic notion of a cliché may be a way toward understanding and personalizing an embodied vocabulary, “Even if they are somewhat ossified in the public domain, why not use them with my own personal intention?” asked lab participant Dominique. Using cliché can be helpful in accessing personal history. “Cliché is a way of helping me access . . . very personal stuff [and] very personal history.” In the Lucid Body, Simpson asks participants to find which Jungian “archetype” they match with. Some examples include Addict, Clown, Judge, Mother, and Mystic. Simpson urges: “We are much more complex than one archetype. But just keep going. By taking apart the pieces of yourself, you will be able to rearrange the parts to suit the given circumstances of a different character.” (Simpson) Both practitioners find that using familiar clichés or archetypes to assess your autobiographical experience, and that of your character, is not rejecting the way your body is coded, but embracing it. “It allows you to understand more about the process of reconstruction as performativity. By embracing the language and aesthetic of yourself, you can begin to process how you represent yourself, and therefore how you can change.” (Allegranti)

*“If saying is a form of doing, and part of what is getting done is the self, then conversation is a mode of doing something together and becoming otherwise.”*

—Judith Butler

“Re-constructing Selves” is the fifth aspect Allegranti uses in her chapter “The Autobiographical Body.” This section discusses the process of “undoing and re-doing oneself” or “reconstructing subjectivities” and how this process necessarily implies experiencing and “in-between-ness” as we move from past identifications to present embodied selves. In Feldenkrais, awareness of movement is used to reconstruct the body’s patterns to help alleviate stress. During Feldenkrais exercises, participants check in periodically with their natural patterned posture. While sitting, standing, or lying down, the participant is reminded to check in with how the body meets the floor after movement periods that challenge the natural state. Re-constructing Selves can then be related to the Feldenkrais method by “working with the boundaries of self and other,” with this momentary check-in with neutral, or the posture the body naturally assumes, after extended moments of the unnatural.

After reviewing Allegranti’s book about the lab and investigating the three performance practices, I feel bolstered in my argument that these techniques and tool kits are easily adapted to apply to a variety of individuals and communities. Whether someone uses my findings, and the methods presented, to help carry themselves with less tension, or to treat their body with more compassion, or explore their inner child to reassess their current desires, or motivate themselves with freeing dance, there is something in the following pages for people from actors to nonactors (who in turn, might be medical students, inmates, singers, or grandparents) to grasp onto and make a positive change in their lives. The therapeutic elements of theatre, both mentally and physically, are further illuminated through the text, and I hope they encourage the reader to create a performance praxis of their own.

I would like to state my own background, so as not to confuse anyone as they read further. The following pages are an account of my experience. I have no formal training in any of these performance practices, and I do not suggest that I have authority to produce a manuscript that aims to teach Feldenkrais, the Lucid Body, or Gaga with complete accuracy. What I have done is to create a transparent physical representation of my autoethnographic process as a consequence of my experiential investigations, concluding with a workbook of performative/healing exercises that I practiced, found useful, and reproduced in the interest of further investigation by the readers, be they actors or nonactors.

## CHAPTER 2: PERFORMANCE PRACTICE: FELDENKRAIS

The Feldenkrais method's Awareness through Movement technique "uses slow, mindful movements to achieve powerful effects in terms of strength, flexibility, and holistic integration of body and mind." (Feldenkrais) For the actor, Feldenkrais is a tool to create physical awareness of the body with the aim of economizing physical movement and mental capability to create a more fertile space for theatrics to take place.

Feldenkrais, a precursor to the Lucid Body, has been adopted by theatre makers to recharge the actor's body in preparation for physically demanding performances, but also began as an attempt to heal an injury. The Royal Shakespeare Company uses Feldenkrais in vocal training to combat fatigue by reframing the actor's body alignment to improve vocal delivery, and Feldenkrais practitioner Victoria Worsley's book *Feldenkrais for Actors* uses the movement study in specific regard to theatrical practice. Awareness through Movement classes are used in different ways, some for the purpose of increasing theatrical stamina, some for physical therapy and injury prevention, and others in holistic centers that promote well-being.

OCTOBER 2, 2018

The lesson began with a guided-awareness meditation of how the body came into class. We felt the weight of our bodies on the floor, starting with where the back of our head came into contact with the ground, then our shoulders, then our hips, then the bottoms of our feet. Our instructor, Georgia, told us not to make adjustments, but to just feel how our weight wanted to be distributed. Georgia then asked us to curl onto our sides

comfortably and gave us each a blanket that we folded to rest under our heads to support our necks and keep a generally straight alignment. We rotated our upward-facing shoulder in different patterns, first slowly moving it forward, to the center, then back, then center. Once we established a line from one destination to the other, we began making small semicircles, then rotating completely into full circles. We switched sides and did the other shoulder after returning to lying flat on our backs and checking in with how we felt now, compared with the beginning of class. We returned again to lying on our sides, but moved on to our hips. We followed the same patterns of movement—straight line, semicircle, full circle, and switched sides again—once again allowing ourselves to lie flat and check in. Next, we returned to the side position, but moved our shoulders and hips together, then began the similar trajectory of movement, but were asked to employ alternate rotations.

We ended the class by walking around the room, realizing we had just done an Awareness Through Movement class that helped our brains reconsider how we walk through space. While at no point my body moved more than two inches out of its normal resting place, and the speed at which I moved was intentionally slow, I felt the effects of this class for at least two days afterward. It didn't feel like the soreness that comes from a vigorous class, but more like a stretching that would come from doing physical therapy or having a chiropractic alignment. The most notable sensation I experienced during the class was where my mind went while we were on the ground. Focusing on being present in your body and senses during a guided movement class is something I've experienced when trying to perfect a pose during yoga, but the faster pace (if you could call it that) of a vinyasa usually comes together in a "flow" so your body ends up leading the way, and

any in-class meditation is focused on steady breath or correct posture. In Feldenkrais you are asked to move with complete awareness of what feels right, or different. In class, you are asking your brain to go back to the most basic human movement and reconsider how your body works on a daily basis and how relearning can improve the physical body.

This class was my first Feldenkrais lesson since 2013, and in that class we had focused on our eye muscles, slowly moving our gaze through the space and alternating our bodies. Both classes were tiring workouts, but for the brain as opposed to the body. During our class on October 2, 2018, I conjured up a lot of images. I felt some might be coming because of my associations with the areas that we were focusing on. For instance, when we began moving our hips back and forth, I saw bright reds and pinks, which I now realize are the colors of the root chakra, found at the base of the spine and associated with the color red. Instead of a glowing light, it was more hallucinogenic, with patterns moving in alternating directions like one would see in a trippy art film. I found myself trying to focus on the class and not distract myself with exploring this imagery, but that comes from habits I learned in yoga. What I think was happening was that my mind was trying to process what my body was doing, and maybe even overcompensating for the small, extremely slow movements.

OCTOBER 10, 2018

This Feldenkrais lesson began with us standing, noting our posture, but not judging it, and then returning to our blankets to lie flat on our backs and assess how our weight distributed as we lay down. We began by moving our pelvises in slow movements. Georgia asked us to imagine kneading bread, or working with clay, not to

focus on one point in particular, but to rotate the area of focus evenly, either side, front or back. Once again, we checked back in with our bodies by lying flat on the ground. This class took a little more out of my emotional body than the rest. A lot of our focus was on very vulnerable parts of the body, like our necks and lower backs (or more accurately our spines, particularly the cervical and lumbar parts of the spine).

OCTOBER 31, 2018

The morning of October 31, I woke up early to review for the Lucid Body intensive I had scheduled for that weekend. The chapter I happened to read was one with a quote that stayed with me all day, “It ain’t no sin to take off your skin and dance around in your bones.” Little did I know, that chapter read before my third Feldenkrais class would set the tone for the next few days. Georgia began this class by alerting us to the fact that perhaps the spookiest thing we could do on Halloween morning was to think about our flesh “costumes” that we wear every day, covering our skeletons. We began the class standing, thinking about how our bones were postured, how our weight is distributed to different parts of our feet. We lay flat on the ground and felt where our bodies connected to the earth, particularly the lumbar spine and cervical spine and back of the skull. Then we were asked to focus our attention on the parts of the spine that were elevated from the earth, the atlas, the thoracic spine. We began by lying with our feet flat on the ground and knees up toward the ceiling, moving our pelvises away from and toward the top of our heads. What resulted was an awareness that moving the pelvis away from the head created an arched back, and moving it toward the head left our spines more flat to the floor. We proceeded to move our skulls on the floor, then took ourselves into a

seated position and shifted our heads, simultaneously with our gaze up and down the wall of the studio. This was an unusual movement that took a lot more brain power than I anticipated, but when we combined the two movements, head and pelvis, I realized that Georgia had just led us through an exercise that helped us relearn how to look up and down. My upper back and collarbones, which I had noticed in our initial check-in as being parts of my body that moved a lot when I looked right, left, up, or down, were doing so much of the work that could have been more evenly distributed to other parts of my body, namely, my pelvis. The next day as I walked my dog, he did a double take and darted back to a patch of grass that piqued his interest, and instead of using only my neck to look; I counterbalanced my weight and shifted my whole torso to look around. I'm so grateful to have had the opportunity to challenge my patterns of movement and see a change in my movements that didn't take premeditation or thought process. The agility followed me outside of class and into the real world.

### **CHAPTER 3: PERFORMANCE PRACTICE: THE LUCID BODY**

The Lucid Body is an acting technique created by Fay Simpson. The technique brings self-awareness to the individual through analysis of energy through the seven chakra centers. The guidebook and classes are introduced as an acting technique, yet the origin of the Lucid Body came to Simpson after a performance piece she created as a dancer in high school. After familial disputes, Simpson developed anxiety that induced horrible cramping, later diagnosed as colitis. As a dancer, Simpson created her first abstract movement piece in response to this. She could share her pain with an audience and release it. This was when she realized her mission to “re-create the world from [her] truth” and use the body to self-heal. I explored Simpson’s teachings regarding how to access patterns of personal energy flow and feelings, their relationship to Carl Jung’s shadow, anima, animus, and the seven chakras rooted in yogic tradition that were developed in her quest to heal. While a major claim of the book is that it offers practicing actors the ability to uncover the possibility of “every human condition,” the first half is an independent self-reflection and “undoing” of habitual patterns that block energies and cause physical and emotional pain.

The first conscious introduction I had to theatre’s ability to heal was studying the Lucid Body while I was an undergraduate student at Eugene Lang College in 2013. The department of theatre hired artists to guest-direct productions and teach every year, and over the course of my time there, I was introduced to different techniques at varying capacities, including Moment Work with Tectonic Theater Project, Suzuki and Viewpoints with SITI Company, and originating a role in the first production of Liz

Swados's oratorio *From the Fire*. The Lucid Body is an acting technique created by performer, writer, and teacher Fay Simpson. While my study of the Lucid Body during college was limited to one semester, I was able to take it with Fay, and it greatly impacted my life.

I will explore Simpson's teachings regarding how to access patterns of personal energy flow and feelings, their relationship to Carl Jung's shadow, anima, animus, and the seven chakras rooted in yogic tradition that were developed in her quest to heal. While a major claim of the practice is that it offers actors the ability to uncover the possibility of "every human condition," the first half is an independent self-reflection and "undoing" of habitual patterns that block energies and cause physical and emotional pain.

NOVEMBER 3, 2018

I entered a medium-size dance studio with my yoga mat, water bottle, and notebook, as instructed by my welcome email from our Lucid Body teacher, Shayna Freedman. Shayna is Lucid Body's "resident yoga teacher" and infuses her practice with the same chakras and mythology that surround the teachings of Lucid Body. She has been studying Lucid Body for fifteen years and apprenticed with Simpson at Yale School of Drama, NYU Tisch School of the Arts, The Studio NY, and Michael Howard Studios. Her email read that she was "excited to embark on our journey together of digging deep into the self, and creating complex and dynamic characters." Upon arrival I realized that the class was going to be extremely intimate compared to the intensive I took in January 2016. Our class consisted of two people and me, compared with the sixteen or so from the class I took almost two years before. The two others in the class were a married

couple; the husband, Peter, had taken Lucid Body before, and his wife, Katherine, had been introduced to it through osmosis. They were both involved in an immersive production and seemed to work together artistically quite frequently. By the second day it was just Peter and me; he informed us at the start of class that Katherine was not ready to explore the dark corners of herself that she had glimpsed the day before, but would return to the process when she felt ready.

*“We must first dissect ourselves in order to rebuild ourselves for the stage.”*

—Fay Simpson

In preparation for studying Lucid Body, participants turn inward to assess their chakra centers. The chakras, in yogic philosophy, refer discrete energy centers located along the spinal axis, from the base of the spine to the top of the head. In classical yoga practice they represent ascending degrees of spiritual energy or attainment. Simpson defines a chakra as a “wheel- or disk-shaped energy center along the center line of the torso through which body energy is received, assimilated, and expressed.” What comes naturally to your body during guided meditation and “walking chakras” are what you call your “survival body” or “body armor.” Simpson’s definition is: “Habitual physical posture that has developed in response to emotional trauma throughout a person’s life. A person’s body armor indicates his emotional repressions. For example, someone who walks around with arms crossed and shoulders slumped forward may be protecting his heart (imploded fourth chakra) and/or ego (imploded third chakra).” (Simpson) The exercises ask the participant to enter each chakra from the imploded and exploded, but what feels like “home” is what you learn to manipulate to find character. The exercise

described below is my experience from the first day of the workshop, when we were guided through the chakra centers.

The first chakra center that I found myself able to strongly harness was both imploded and exploded root. I could go from an animalistic sense of fight to an untethered sense of flight quite easily, but with drastic flips between. This is what we'd call a "spastic chakra." A spastic chakra is "a chakra that oscillates between imploded and exploded in a choppy, staccato rhythm. First one extreme, then the other. No balance." As a person scared of the future, and the unknown, as well as someone who can get fiery to protect myself, I feel like a diagnosis of spastic is an appropriate conclusion.

When exploring my sacral chakra, I noted that I felt balanced by comparison. A balanced chakra is "a chakra through which the energy flows easily, in and out. It is a healthy chakra, with little or no emotional/energetic trauma." This rings true for my relation to the sacral chakra, which governs the maternal, the desire to protect those you love, as well as a sense of modesty. Exploded and imploded oscillate between shame and predatory sexual behavior, but a balance between the two links to my own history of being open to intimacy, with a healthy dose of shame from my own experiences as I formed into the person I am today. Neither exploded or imploded spoke to my survivor body, but the "watery" balance between the two was noted by Shayna.

The third chakra center is the solar plexus, and the first moment in class I started to cry, a trend that only got stronger as the process went on. While an exploded third chakra is exhibited in a person with strong ego, sense of self and power, an imploded third is manifested after feelings of inferiority and vulnerability. This was also a time in our class when I felt under the gun and out of my body. Shayna asked us to think

of something we do extremely well, “Could be flipping pancakes! Anything!” and for the life of me, I couldn’t think of a single thing that I thought I could do better than anyone else. I tried to embody this exploded ego, but had to change my posture, the tone of my voice, to feel anything. Now, when she asked us to go to a place of failure or disappointment, I had no problem getting there. I couldn’t even think of a skill to *pretend* to be confident. I started thinking about this very project and doubting my capabilities, its importance, my own time management. I was grateful to be led out of this headspace.

The heart is the next chakra center, and one that I felt the strongest entering. Thinking about those I love, my favorite color, favorite flavor of ice cream, genuinely put a big stupid smile on my face. I felt compelled to hold my hands to my heart and embrace the sense of glee that comes with meditating on the things that you love. When we transitioned to exploded heart to imploded heart, I immediately turned bright red and started crying. I am a person who feels deeply. I could beam at or sob at the same sunset depending on the slightest change in the weather. Triggered by Shayna’s mention of “loss,” my heart hurt. This was the biggest shift from my studies of Lucid Body in 2013 to now. At that point in my life, I was a junior in college, busy taking the maximum amount of credits, working on the spring play without credit, and generally booked to the brim. I called my family every two weeks or so, but would need reminders to check in. I had no interest in cultivating meaningful relationships because I had enough to worry about.

Since the death of my childhood best friend last summer, I have been taking my time to appreciate the beauty in the world. Sometimes a song comes on the radio and I smile, thinking she sent it to me, other times I sob or cackle with laughter. In 2013 I had

not experienced that kind of unexpected loss, and my chakra chart read that I had a blocked heart chakra. Despite ending on my imploded fourth, I was finally able to understand that center of me, and felt thankful that I don't stay imploded, but can remember that the reason my heart hurts so much is because I recognized how strongly I could love someone.

The next chakra, the throat, was an easy one to get into. Blabbing on about something to my unexpecting friends is something I do very well (maybe I should go back to my third chakra with that in mind next time!), but I also know when to bite my tongue. One of my least favorite qualities in others is when people don't listen, or only listen for a cue to begin their own rant. Exploded fifth chakras are also those who spill their feelings freely, think creatively, and could use a screening or filter every once in a while. I think that my strong dislike of an exploded throat, or fifth, chakra is because I see it in myself. However, both exploded and imploded came to me with relative ease. I could gush about whatever I had for lunch that day, but feel the pangs of embarrassment, shame, choking, because of admonishments in the past that taught me that I should just be quiet to avoid those negative feelings.

The sixth chakra is located behind the brow, this is what governs whether or not we have open minds or set beliefs. Neither is good or bad, but I felt that I had a clearly exploded brow. I am open to learning, changing my opinion, and listening to people on opposing sides with compassion and fair consideration. Sometimes I end up bonding a little too hard with people whom I vehemently disagree with politically and have to take a step back and consider that maybe I'd be a better advocate if I were more like my friends who, say, cut people off who voted differently than them. My imploded brow was found

when I imagined that I have a higher moral compass than those who disagree with me, that there is a right way to be, and that I could manipulate my status in the world by directing my own life. Imploded chakras are also people who might lie to themselves to feel better, so perhaps I should give it a shot to boost my solar plexus!

The seventh chakra is located at the top of the head, “where divine energy—prana, ch’i, or the life force of the universe—enters your physical energy pattern.” (Simpson) Also called “the crown,” this chakra relates to our belief systems and our awareness of the effects our actions have on others. I felt that this chakra was quite open. I generally have a “it’ll work out” mentality, and I see that there’s light at the end of the tunnel. This is also the chakra that stores our stored histories, or as Jung calls them, “archaic remnants.”

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After assessing my own chakra centers, I felt prepared to dive into new characters by inflating or deflating as necessary. For instance, in an exercise where my objective was to mirror Peter as he performed a choreographed sequence from the moment he stood to walk to center stage, to how he sat down after dancing the piece, I had to embody someone with a structurally different body and chakra organization than my own. “The art of acting has to do with the ability to transform oneself into another character that walks, thinks, and feels differently while still working from the self.” (Simpson) The necessary step for me in that moment was to turn up my sacral chakra, implode my heart, explode my brow all the while remembering the choreography that we had been taught minutes before. I felt a lot of pressure to see Peter for who he was, but also diagnose what

I saw from his performance, and emulate him in a respectful and attentive matter. The moment I sat down and returned to being myself, Peter put his hand over his heart and said “thank you for seeing me.” The vulnerable place that these exercises ask you to dig into are scary, but ultimately lead to healing of self and understanding from others.

## CHAPTER 4: PERFORMANCE PRACTICE: GAGA

Gaga is a movement language that raises awareness of physical weaknesses, awakens numb areas, exposes physical fixations, and offers ways for their elimination. Gaga is the main training method of Batsheva Dance Company, “which helps the dancers develop and advance their movement’s precision and sensibility.” (Katan) The exercises that shape Gaga are meant to inspire self-reflective improvisations. There are two educational tracks, one being Gaga/Dancers, which is meant for trained dancers, the other being Gaga/People, which does not require the participant to have any dance training. “The focal points of the training are its sensual inquiry, the direction of the dancers’ attitude toward the physical research, and the buildup of the practice upon layers of researches—thus, there is an integration of varied physical inquiries at the same time. Alongside linguistics dance is also a medium for communicative expression. Thus, dancing embodies processes of reasoning.” (Katan) Mirrors are covered in a studio where students are practicing Gaga so that the sense of their movements is more strongly focused. The language allows for habits of exaggerated movement to be broken down, making the experience more effortless and related to the senses.

Ohad Naharin has been the artistic director of Batsheva since 1990. Batsheva was founded in 1964 by Baroness Batsheva de Rothschild, who invited founding mother of American modern dance Martha Graham to be the first artistic advisor. Graham invited Naharin to her dance company in 1974, and he trained at the School of American Ballet and the Juilliard School. After completing his education, he returned to Israel and founded the Ohad Naharin Dance Company in 1980 and rejoined Batsheva, this time as

its artistic director, in 1990. Naharin developed a movement language as a “toolbox for dancers” in response to a back injury, and thus Gaga was born. “Gaga is radically different from most dance training. The mirror is banished from the studio, and dancers do not perform specific combinations of movement but instead respond to verbal instructions; these prompts can call attention to specific body parts, actions or qualities. This exploration arms the Batsheva dancers with an extraordinary range of movement that stretches beyond that fostered by traditional training methods.” (Friedes) About the name “Gaga”—in 2008 Naharin presented a demonstration as part of the Works & Process series at the Guggenheim Museum and stated that, “He didn't want to name it for himself . . . as he wanted the work to stand detached from him: “I was simply thinking of something that sounded like baby gibberish, and they told me ca-ca was not a good idea.” (Sagolla)

Naharin “worked informally for several years with nondancers, trying to make contact with the root impulses of human movement, and soon he discovered great commonalities between dance and nondance movements.” (Sagolla) The participant is asked not to reinforce movement techniques, but instead to continually add to the individual’s physical vocabulary, which is a departure from traditional dance training methods. As I looked for a third performance practice to bolster my workshop journey, I was struck by Naharin’s approach to the art form. The invitation for nondancers to participate and the focus on the bodily senses as the core of the practice helped solidify Gaga as the third performance technique of my autoethnography.

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I attended one of the monthly Gaga/People workshops held at The Sweat Spot, a dance studio mere blocks from the café where I worked for more than two years. Upon entering the studio, to which I had never been, I noticed about a dozen familiar faces. Good tippers, those who sighed when I alerted them to the avocado shortage affecting Silver Lake, and people I had seen on The Sweat Spot's website homepage . . . isn't this a class for PEOPLE? As a child, I was introduced to dance quite early. I began taking movement classes at the Santa Monica YMCA as a preschooler and started ballet at the Westside School of Ballet shortly after, and I was comically bad at it. I recently found video evidence of me plié-ing one beat out of time with the rest of the class. Perhaps my shining moment was a spot of comedic improvisation for our dance to "Cotton-Eyed Joe" in a jazz class a few years later. But through my research, I knew Gaga would be drastically different from my experiences as a small child. When I saw the relaxed attire of the class attendees (cropped hoodies, cargo pants, sweatpants cut into shorts) and the curtains covering the mirrors of the classroom, I knew that my fear of putting on a pair of pale pink tights and comparing myself to the other students while we stood at the barre were behind me.

When we entered the room, our instructor, Danielle, asked us to move freely throughout the space. Peripherally I could definitely see some impressive shapes around me, but nobody was studying anyone else. There was nothing to copy, and nothing for me to be embarrassed about. Danielle instructed us to move using only our skin, and after a few moments, only our muscles, a few moments more, our bones. What resulted in my own mind was an awareness of senses. Heat and contact with the floor were heightened,

and I was more aware of every part of my body at once, as opposed to being focused on a single point.

Danielle asked us to explore pleasure in these movements, an important word used in the Gaga vocabulary. “In instructions such as “‘connect effort into pleasure,’ sensuality and sensory information are integrated with the psychology of dancers.”

(Katan) By removing the intention of what shapes our bodies made, we were free to focus our practice on purely that sense. Dancing with pleasure then led us into an exercise in which we transferred energy from different parts of the body to others. We began with our hand, moving energy through it, exploring the shapes it made. From the hand we moved toward the wrist, where less movement was possible. Instead of focusing only on the joint and bones that create the movement in the wrist, we thought about the skin and muscles. After the wrist we moved to the forearm. I felt dumbfounded, not knowing how I could possibly move my forearm without the help of my wrist and elbow to make it dance. What I found was that I could tense the muscle, letting it spasm and flex. I took delight in seeing my arm move, even so slightly.

When we moved up the elbow, to the bicep, to the shoulder, I recognized that my range of movement had become more creative and full of more sensation. The isolation work did not feel mechanical, like it had at the very beginning, but energetic. The energy was not the result of my muscles, skin, joints or bones, but something imagined and harnessed over the course of the exercise. With that new relationship to movement in my body, we began from our hands once again and moved that energy from the fingers of our right hand, up through the arm and chest, and again back down to the left hand. On pleasure, Katan says, “the movement becomes fleshier and the stretching of the flesh on

the molecular level becomes physically pleasurable. The pleasure is, therefore, first and foremost a bodily feeling. However, pleasant movements affect the emotionality of the dancers since bodily feelings are recognized as a source of enjoyment. Thus, the qualities of bodily feelings equal the content of mental feelings; a pleasure of the body is the pleasure of the soul, and bodily effort is recognized within the energetic source of the being.” (Katan) The opportunity to harness this sense of enjoyment was in itself therapeutic to me, particularly in a dance class. Although I’d wager that I was the only person terrified to enter the dance studio that day, because of my fraught history with practicing the art form in the past, I was able to enjoy myself and the journey. This created a new perception of myself and my capabilities because the language was not about form and precision, but about the pleasure of moving my body through space.

After the guided exercises we sat in the room and Danielle opened the floor for students to ask questions. Many started with, “When I’ve taken Gaga in the past. . .”, which was helpful for me to get a better understanding of what others might have experienced with different instructors or with different exercises. One person mentioned feeling like she was “pretending” when she was guided through exercises like imagining rain drizzling on the back of her head, then imagining forceful winds and simultaneous downpour. Danielle told her, “Well, if you feel like you are pretending . . . realize that we all are.” Einav Katan says in “Embodied Philosophy in Dance: Gaga and Ohad Naharin's Movement Research” that “there is neither idea nor form without matter . . . the human body is already a medium for meaning. The body is involved in communicative processes since the physical habitus is cultural and individual at the same time. Correspondingly, the body takes part in acts of sense making.” This sense making through the medium of

the body creates an awareness of self, both in the present and from past experience, that allows the participant to practice sensing. Sense of self and sense of the senses are at play theatrically with Gaga, Lucid Body, and Feldenkrais. If both actors and nonactors can work with their senses, the gap between mind and body can be in conversation with each other. With this training in mind, the participant might learn how to “project their body image onto their physical” reality and expand their movement vocabulary. (Katan)

In “*Embodied Performances*” Allegranti speaks of “me-and-not-me boundaries” becoming blurred. She related this to psychosis, written about by French intellectual Roger Caillos, who writes that in such states: “the meshing of self and body, this unification of the subject, fails to occur. The psychotic is captivated by space, blurred with the positions of others... the body separates itself from thought, the individual breaks the boundary of his skin and occupies the other side of his senses.” (Allegranti)

Just as Danielle had asked our class to separate our senses from the reality of the classroom, we were able to occupy other areas by separating the mind and body. When dancers (and nondancers) are able to direct their attention from their perceived work, or the shapes of their movements, their senses lead them away from the tension that might limit their capabilities and expand boundaries.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

In summary, my investigations into the healing implications of performative art led me to several conclusions. The first is that opening oneself to a variety of methods, techniques, and languages was productive. I was able to derive meaningful experience from each, enabling me to create for myself a toolbox combining the most successful exercises to my own practice. I found that when my students were introduced to various exercises, particularly Feldenkrais, they had a wide range of reactions to them. Some students found no benefit, while others were thankful for the introduction to finding new awareness of movement and personal relief. My subjective and learned experiences impelled me to share what I found to be successful with my students, who in turn each had their own subjective and personal experiences with the material. While I cannot concretely say that a single performance practice is definitively beneficial to all, the opportunity to add to the tool box benefited them greatly.

This process and the realizations that followed were what helped me to develop the organization of my workbook. Feldenkrais is the first method introduced for many reasons: it was the first of the performance practices introduced to me; it is also a precursor to, and an inspiration for, the Lucid Body technique. It's arguably the most approachable of these methods, requiring no "performance" element, although it is used in dramatic practice, as stated in Chapter 3. Lucid Body is a natural transition from Feldenkrais, as they share some of the same language. Gaga was introduced to me most recently, and stands alone, as it is a dance practice as well as a performance language—a departure from the first two.

The second conclusion I came to was that these performance practices adequately serve dual purposes inasmuch as they successfully help us to both heal and to express—promoting healing of the self while expressing either our authentic selves or the characters that we are charged to act. In my workbook I wanted to create opportunities for participants to begin their own exploration of both, whether they need to heal, to grow, or to express themselves more completely. Through my research I realized that all three were created by someone who was looking for a way to move after sustaining a physical injury.

The third finding, harkening back to the second, is that understanding and assessing our minds and bodies through these performative practices may also enable us to understand our inner selves as well as each other. Self-acceptance and acceptance of others (empathy) is at the root of all theatre. Even the word *personality* derives from the mask through which the actor expresses his character in ancient Greek theatre, known as the *prosoponus* (in Latin, *persona*). Theatre has always been about understanding and expressing the self in interaction with others. My autoethnographic approach to these performance practices has resulted in a shift in my perception of myself and my body in relationship to the world and others, which I am happy and grateful to be able to share.

Based on the above experiences and conclusions above, I considered the merits of compiling a review of possible experiences that actors and nonactors might explore in order to derive their own beneficial experiences and perhaps set out on their own journeys of self-awareness and self-expression. I chose eight representative exercises from the three methods discussed above to constitute my workbook. I am by no means an expert practitioner of these techniques, but someone wishing to share their impact on me

and an account of what it is like to experience these introductory classes. My interpretation of these experiences, documented in the previous pages, inspired the workbook of exercises and its blank spaces for readers to fill out as they begin their own practice. The framework will be contextualized using their three definitions to explore what it means to “do” and guide the analysis of the exercises.

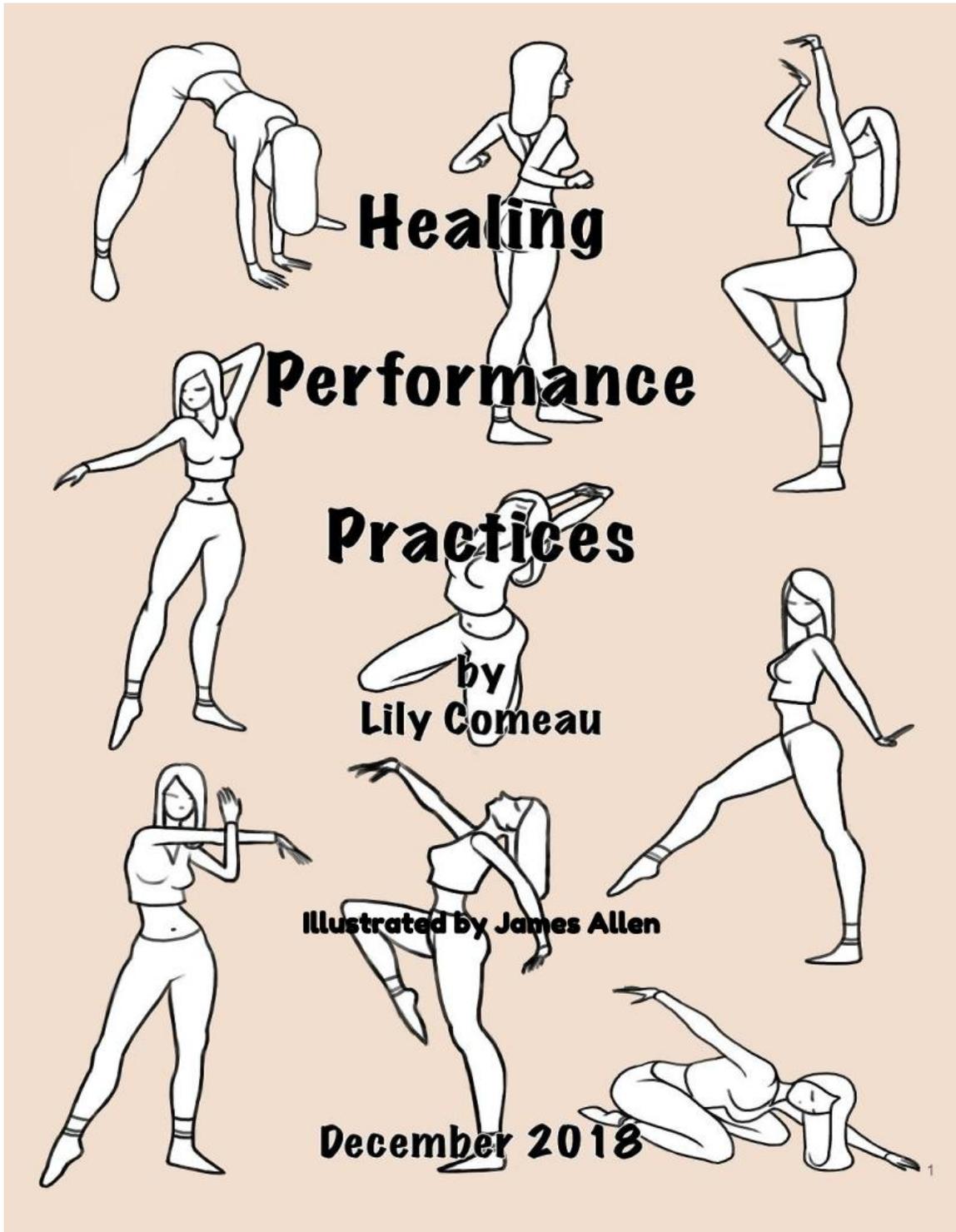
My plan of dissemination for the workbook would be to send the text forward to the chairs of theatre departments at the California State Universities and offer myself as a visitor to Introduction to Theatre and Movement classes to share my process of self-reflection and discovery with major and nonmajor students enrolled in theatre classes. I hope to encourage those with no performance background to explore their own capabilities by sharing the work with community centers as well as with companies like the Actor’s Gang, which teach theatre to inmates in California correctional facilities.

Initially I will send the thesis, along with the workbook, to prospective practitioners, offering to dialogue with them about possible applications of my work. In addition, I plan to publish the workbook as a separate publication, expanding it with additional materials as I continue my investigation into this exciting and important area of connection between theatre and healing, forging new routes between performance practice and self-discovery.

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# Glossary

**Ashi:** Instruction meaning “move outside of your feet.”

**Audible Exhale:** During the Lucid Body warm-up, practitioners express whatever they feel at every moment, audibly. By entering the nonjudgmental mind, an actor is able to observe exactly how they physically/emotionally feels without editing themselves. Then, by releasing sound from a specific place of physical discomfort, they learn to express their feelings truthfully. Sometimes the process works the other way around: An actor will simply allow sound to erupt out of them, and the tone of the sound that comes out will tell them how they feel in that moment.

**Biba:** Instruction meaning “pull your body away from your seat bones.”

**Chakra:** A wheel- or disc shaped energy center along the center line of the torso through which body energy is received, assimilated, and expressed.

**Exploded Chakra:** A chakra from which the energy is excessively flowing outward more than inward. This is an expression of emotional excess.

**Float:** An instruction given by a Gaga instructor that connotes that the dancer should change their physical attitude to envision the space between joints, organs, and tissue that results in an airy quality of being.

**Gravity Line:** The vertical path of gravity down to the earth, which describes our neutral posture in its most perfect form. An imagined pebble would fall straight down along this line—thus, gravity line.

**Groove:** An instruction to find the musicality of a movement, with or without hearing music.

**Imploded Chakra:** A chakra in which the energy is spiraling inward, connecting to the softer, more vulnerable shadows of self. This is an expression of emotional recession.

**Judgmental Mind:** The mental state wherein the subject constantly compares themselves with others, to establish the pecking order and define their own place within it.

**Lucid Body:** 1: A movement-based actor training technique that incorporates Eastern practices and philosophies such as yoga and the theory of the chakras. 2: The state of being toward which practitioners of the Lucid Body training strive, in which actors can perceive the currents of energy pulsing through the body and can actively redirect those currents at will to create any character. The body is lucid and the mind is clear, allowing focused communication between the two.

**Neutral Body:** A bodily state of being in which the habitual muscular/energetic tensions are absent, and from which any character may be built. This is the goal of the Lucid Body warm-up.

**Non-judgmental Mind:** A mental state wherein the actor observes themselves and others without value judgments.

**Oba:** Instruction that stands for “discover traveling stuff inside your body.”

**Tashi:** Instruction meaning “move with feet glued to the floor.”

# Introduction

This workbook is my personal account of exercises of Feldenkrais, The Lucid Body and Gaga. I take from them, modify, and present my findings. I am not a trained practitioner of these methods and techniques, but I invite you to participate and follow along with me in your journey to find a toolbox of activities to enhance your practice, whether it be for performance, self-care or curiosity.

# Exercises: Feldenkrais

## The Breath

- I am lying on my back with my hands rested on my belly (thumbs below the navel, pinkies extended to the hips) and taking time to notice how my body moves while I breathe naturally. Now I move my palms under my ribcage and notice the movement that takes place there.
- Now I intentionally breathe into my lower belly. After a few moments, I then return to my natural breath and notice any changes.
- Now, instead of breathing *in*, I focus on breathing *out*. Slowly I exhale all of my breath, contracting the muscles of my torso until I feel the need to take a breath. At this point I swallow, and then let my mouth open, allowing the air to rush in. I notice how this inhalation moves through myself, including how it creates movement in my belly. I allow my breath to settle and repeat.
- I observe the quality of my breath and notice how this awareness affects my attitude:

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# Walking

- As I lie flat to the floor on a mat, I notice where my skull meets the ground. Then my shoulders. I notice one shoulder making more contact with the ground than the other. I notice my hips. They seem to be more evenly distributed. The heels of my feet are making contact at different points.
- I curl onto my right side with my knees slightly bent. I rest a folded blanket under my head to support my neck, but keep a relatively straight alignment. This exercise is going to isolate the shoulders, so I keep the rest of my body still and planted as I work through the following steps.



- As if following a line in space, I move my left shoulder forward, then center, then slowly backward. I practice this motion, aiming for a gentle, smooth movement. I try this as slowly as possible in moments where I feel stuck. It is important not to do this quickly, but with great care and attention.
- When I reach a comfortable, slow, flow, I begin to raise my shoulder as I approach the center. This will create a small semi-circle. I imagine this semi-circle as I rotate forward and backward. After a few rotations, I switch the semi-circle the opposite way, so that when you approach center, your shoulder is dropping down toward your hips.
- Now slowly, without effort, I draw a full circle. Once I find a comfortable groove, I switch directions.

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# Walking Continued

- I return to lying on my back. Assessing how my body now falls to the ground. I notice my shoulders have adjusted slightly
- I return to my right side, again with my knees slightly bent. I repeat the same forward line action as previously done, but using my hips to draw a line in space, isolating that movement from the rest of my body.
- Next, I begin to draw a semi-circle, starting with the hips drawing up toward my head. I reverse and draw the semi-circle down to my feet.
- Now I move my hips into a circular pattern.
- Once again, I lie flat on the ground and assess.
- I return to the side position, and experiment with different patterns. While my left shoulder draws a line forward, my right hip draws a line backward. I return and switch.
- Now I attempt to draw opposing semi-circles. I take note of which way is more comfortable, or more difficult.
- I repeat on the left side of the body, then slowly make my way to standing. I move around the space and notice the movement of my shoulders and hips as I walk, feeling greater awareness.

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# The Eyes

Adapted from the article “The Use of the Eyes” by Jack Heggie

“Think about a small child learning to read. His parents, or teachers, have told him that this is something that he should learn to do, and probably his natural curiosity is piqued. Adults spend many hours reading books, magazines, and newspapers; they come away with strange stories, and spend more hours talking among themselves about what they have read. How fascinating it must be to be able to read!

Book in hand, the child begins to try to associate the unfamiliar shapes of the letters with certain sounds. It’s not so easy, and he concentrates, focusing all of his attention on the letters, blotting out all of the interfering peripheral visual sensations, sounds, and feelings....

Being able to concentrate like this is an important skill, but it is possible to become stuck, with the whole attention narrowed down to a point, and to forget that it can be opened up. One mechanism for narrowing the attention is shutting down the peripheral vision, and this can be associated with shutting out sounds and bodily sensations also. Thus, if you pay careful attention in the exercise above, you may be able to notice that your hearing “opens up” when you become aware of your peripheral vision.”

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# *The Eyes Continued*

- To begin, I determine my dominant eye. I hold my right thumb out at arm's length and sight over it at some object that is at least 10 feet away. Next, I close and open one eye, and then the other. When I open and close the dominant eye the thumb appears to stand still. When I open and close the other eye, the thumb appears to jump to one side, out of line with the target object. Most people who are right-handed are also right-eyed, that is, the right eye is used to aim a rifle or to look through a telescope. Also, most left-handers are also left-eyed. If your dominant hand and eye are on opposite sides of your body, you are said to be cross-dominant.
- While laying on my back, with knees bent upward at a 45 degree angle and feet flat on the floor, I close my eyes and with the palm of each hand shut out all of the light. Once total darkness is achieved, I experiment with the hands' placement and notice that when the pinky finger side is flush to the nose, where the pinky finger meets the hand, just at the bridge of the nose, I find the hands fit against the face as if these parts of the body were meant to do this.
- I stand to face a wall about 10 feet away and close my nondominant eye with my palm. With my legs apart and the knees slightly bent, I begin to turn my body left and right with an easy motion. As I turn, I imagine that there is something to the left side, then to the right, then left, and so on. I turn my eye to the side and let the body follow, so that the eye leads the motion.

# *The Eyes Continued*

- As I continue to do this, and while noticing my visual field, I begin to scan my body with awareness. Starting with the feet, I notice how the pressure shifts left and right as I turn, then notice my ankles, calves, knees, thighs, hips, spine, chest, shoulders, head, and eyes. Noticing how this shifting of attention shifts my motion.
- Shifting all of my weight to my right foot, I continue turning left and right, letting the eye lead the motion. Scanning my body, feet to head, I notice these changes. I alternate by shifting all of my weight to my left foot.
- Now I shift my weight onto my left foot as I turn left, and onto my right foot as I turn right. After a few minutes, I reverse the weight shift so that when I turn left, my weight is on the right foot, and as I turn right, my weight is on the left foot. I notice what I see as I turn and let the eye lead the motion. Then I stop and rest.
- I find an object at eye level about ten feet away (like a colored thumbtack) and continue to turn left and right as before, but fix my eye on the target object so my eye remains still in space. This requirement of keeping the eye fixed on the target will limit the ability of the head and body to move.
- I notice how the eye stands still, and the head turns around it - just the opposite of the way that the head and eye usually move. I continue to turn left and right; and, as I turn, I begin to pick out objects at the extreme left and right, and top and bottom, of my visual field. The eye remains fixed on the target as I do this. I find that I can see quite a few objects without making out details.

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# The Eyes Continued

- I turn left and right, noticing my entire visual field, and scan my body as before. It is slightly difficult to pay attention to bodily sensations and visual input simultaneously at first, but if I persist without straining, it becomes easier. I ask myself what else I can see as I turn. I notice that I can see my nose.
- I continue moving in this way while shifting my weight to my right foot for a few minutes, and then my left foot. Then shift to the right as I swing right, and to the left, as I swing left. Finally, I shift my weight right as I swing left, and left as I swing right, with eyes fixed on the target and scanning my body with my attention. I notice how this kind of motion allows me to move the eye muscles and the rest of the body, while at the same time maintaining a constant visual input. This allows me to check and improve the use of the peripheral vision while moving. I find that this is a very different proposition from a static check, which I do by having someone wave a light or colorful object off to one side while I stand still and look straight ahead.
- Now, I release the eye and swing left and right in the easiest way, as in the beginning. I notice how the turning angle of the body has increased. I can feel just what has changed in my body to enable it to turn further without more effort. Again, I stop and rest briefly.
- I resume turning left and right, but now fix both the head and eye on the target. The head and eye remain fixed in space, and the body turns left and right below them. I pay attention to the entire visual field, picking out objects at the extreme edge, and slowly scan my body. After a few minutes, I shift my weight to my right foot, then to my left foot, and then left and right in the two ways that I have done previously.

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# *Exercises: The Lucid Body*

## *Nonjudgmental Mind*

I challenge myself to practice a nonjudgmental mine for a whole day. I keep a journal, and when I do find myself being critical of myself or other, I write it down. If I find myself struggling, I try in hourly increments to keep myself in check for a shorter span of time.

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After a period of successful nonjudging, I reassess and journal to remind myself what arose. Was I judging at work? In the car? On a walk? Where was the easiest place to keep a nonjudgmental mind? The hardest?

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# *The Audible Exhale*

While alone, either at home, in my office, or in the car, I allow myself to practice an audible exhale. When something is irritating or difficult, I vocalize this through my breath. By letting the sound of my explain what I'm feeling internally, I feel open to change. My frustrated exhale might turn into one of silliness, to one of joy. I let my body tell me how I feel, and listen.

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**"LET YOUR BODY DECIDE WHEN IT IS READY FOR THE NEXT STEP."**

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# The Heart

- As I lie on the floor on my back I put a pillow under my ribcage. Keeping the top of my head and pelvis on the ground (*fish pose* in yoga). Now I visualize my heart area as a sun exploding out of an open window and let the sun radiate outward all the way to the ceiling. I massage under my collarbones and breathe deeply. I find that some days I am open to exploring an open heart, and some days I don't. Instead of judging myself, I try again after a short period.
- Now I remove the pillow from under my ribcage and put it over my heart, like a shield. I try again, using a heavy book on top of the pillow to get a better sense awareness of an imploded heart. I visualize a dark cave. As I explore the cave I notice my breath and begin to experience grief and sadness. After a period of time I remove the weight, and assess how I feel. I write down any thoughts that arose from exploring the heart.

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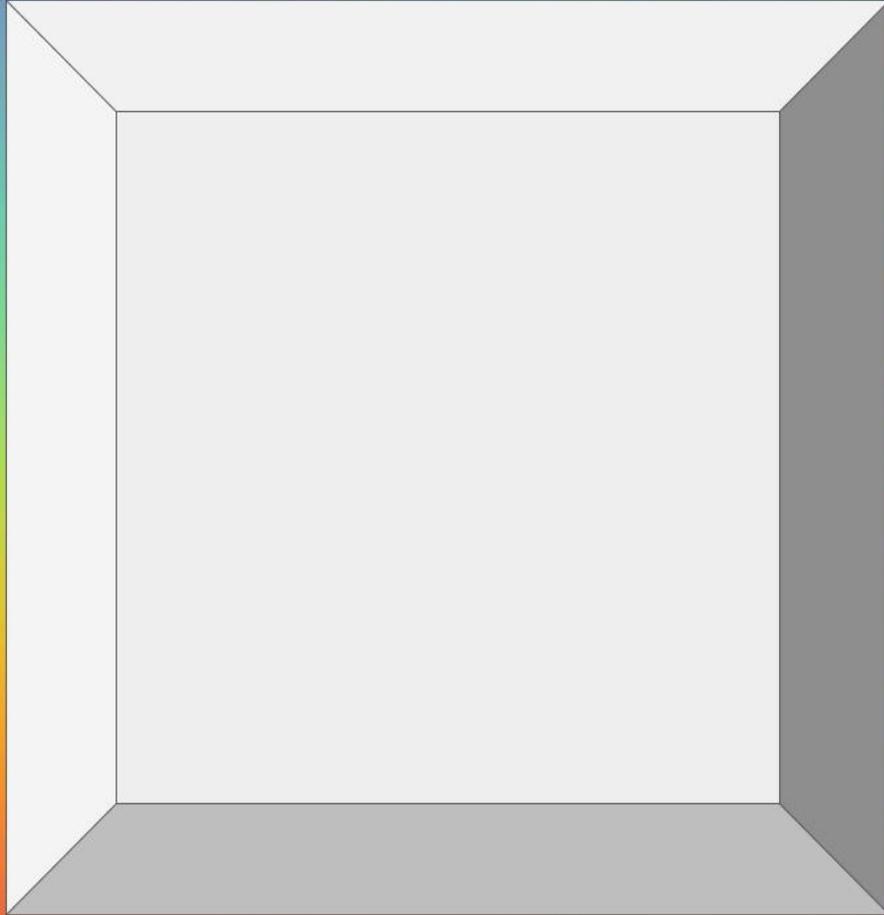
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# The Brow

I picture a change that you would like to happen in my life - maybe a relationship, a particular job, or the resolution of a problem. I picture the world with this change exactly as I want it. I spend the next day living in the world as if this change has been made. I notice that because of this visualization, I notice a change in my behavior. I found it helpful to draw myself after this change has been made. I invite you to draw yourself with this change in mind:



*The above exercises are taken from The Lucid Body: A Guide for the Physical Actor by Fay Simpson. Some have been modified to suit the goals of including the non-actor for the purposes of this workbook.*

# *Exercises: Gaga*

It is crucial with Gaga that once you begin practice, that you not return to the state your body was before the class began. That being said, if you grow tired or want to slow down your pace, you can lower the volume. Take moments to float, but without losing what senses you've awakened.

**TAKE THE INSTRUCTIONS GENTLY INTO YOUR BODY  
WHILE BEING AWARE OF SENSATIONS, ABILITIES, AND  
LIMITATIONS.**

# *Inspired by Lena*

I begin by improvising movements through space. I explore what feels good to my body by experimenting with different contact points. Maybe wiggling of the fingers, or arms contracting into the chest. I explore the head, neck, shoulders, ribcage, belly, hips, arms and legs.

After at least five minutes, I imagine the space between my navel and groin. I imagine the center of that location slowly expanding like an inflated ball out into the universe as I continue your improvised movements.

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# Throwing Exercise

- I imagine a ball the size of a tennis ball. Using **only** my fingers, I experiment with throwing the ball into the space in front of me.
- Now I try throwing the orb using muscles in the fingers and the hand.
- Now using the wrist, I throw the ball and experience how this changes things.



- Now, using my forearm and elbow I throw the ball again.
- Extending to the shoulder, I begin using fuller movement
- Now I make use of the spine, noticing the change
- Last, I use the entire body when throwing the orb and write down what images appear.

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# Floating

First I take a moment after moving through the space to sense that my bones are floating inside my flesh. I carry myself in balance with gravity. I feel my body sifting through the air around me. My inside gliding within my body. I imagine my bones moving independently of my flesh.

Alternately, I attach the bones to the flesh and notice the difference in movement. I take stock of whether or not my quality of movement has changed.

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*The above exercises are taken from Gaga as written about in Dance Movement: Going Gaga by Lisa Sagolla. Some have been modified to suit the goals of including the non-actor for the purposes of this workbook.*

**APPENDICES B: CLASS COST SPREADSHEET**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Price Hourly</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Practice</b>
November 3	Shayna Freedman	\$20	4	Lucid Body
November 4	Shayna Freedman	\$20	4	Lucid Body
October 3	Georgia Junker	\$8.33	1	Feldenkrais
October 10	Georgia Junker	\$8.33	1	Feldenkrais
October 31	Georgia Junker	\$8.33	1	Feldenkrais
November 18	Danielle Agami	\$25	2	Gaga/people
<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$210</b>	<b>13 class hours</b>	