

**'The Art of Making Choices:  
The Feldenkrais Method  
as a Choreographic Resource'**

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## **Abstract**

This document contextualises the practice-led Performance as Research (PaR) project 'The Art of Making Choices: The Feldenkrais Method as a Choreographic Resource'. It demonstrates how the included artistic submissions form an organic whole and substantially contribute to knowledge to the emerging trans-disciplinary field of 'Somatic Informed Dance Practice' (Brown 2011). In an organic, fluid way the document interweaves interpretations of The Feldenkrais Method, a leading twentieth century somatic educational practice, with examples of applications and resonances of such applications within my choreographic practice.

The document sets out how my research contributes to the field by exemplifying a dialogic relationship between a 'somatic educational practice' and an emerging 'somatic dance practice', revealing how The Feldenkrais Method can provide an empowering and agency-constituting process for dance-makers and performers within somatic-informed contexts. The proposed trans-disciplinary PaR-methodology, draws on non-linear modes of enquiry and knowledge-creation as tools for embodied choreographic questioning. The document discusses how the undertaken research makes explicit a multi-dimensional range of theatrical applications of The Feldenkrais Method. Drawing on Complexity-Theory considerations this research suggests that The Feldenkrais Method itself offers an embodied, critical, emancipatory and inter-subjective process of discovery and choreographic thinking to the participant and, within performance making contexts, supports collaborative processes of self-organisation of a dance-ecology, as a process-of-enquiry within a process-of-enquiry.

## **Performative Research submissions:**

**'Urbane Rituale'** large-scale site-responsive choreography, work commissioned by Tanzinitiative Hamburg and performed at the St. Pauli Stadium, Hamburg, Germany on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2003

**'Body/Soma/Self'** (2004-2009), a series of four laboratory-based performative research projects, undertaken to address specific research questions uncovered during **'Urbane Rituale'**. *The outcomes of all but one of these projects were performed at public events.*

**'Chaser'** (2004) Site-responsive choreographic project; Performed on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2004 at Feldenkrais Centenary Conference; Feldenkrais Guild of Germany; Munich University, Germany

**'trace/reverse'** (April 2005) Dances for two to six dancers; Performed on:

19/03/2004 at Chisenhale Dance Space, London;

01/04/2004 at 2<sup>nd</sup> European Feldenkrais Congress, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany.

02/04/2004 at Symposium *'Problems and Mysteries'*, London Metropolitan University;

**'Crossing'** (November 2006) Trio; Performed on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2006 at *'Escapade International Improvisation Festival'*, London Metropolitan University, London

**'Weave'** (November 2009) Collaborative laboratory project. Presented on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2009 at Symposium *'Documenting the Performance'* London Metropolitan University, London

**'The Dybbuk'** (2010) Choreography, Movement Direction and Set Design for play by Julia Pascal; performed between 10<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 2010 at *'Theatre for the New City'*, New York City.

## **Published papers**

Kampe, T. (2010) *'Weave': The Feldenkrais Method as Choreographic Process* in *Performio Vol: 1*, No: 2 (Spring 2010) pp34-52

---.(2011) *'Recreating Histories: Transdisciplinarity and Transcultural Perspectives on Performance Making'*, in *The Korean Journal of Dance 2011. 6 Vol. 67*

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Problem and aims

*'The Art of Making Choices: The Feldenkrais Method® as a Choreographic Resource'* was a trans-disciplinary practice-led research project, undertaken between 2003 and 2010, that explored applications and resonances of The Feldenkrais Method®(FM), a key 20<sup>th</sup> century system of somatic movement education, within performance-making contexts. It is this project, with its various Performance as Research (PaR) outcomes, laboratory and performance documentation, and the written commentary that is submitted for this PhD by prior publication.

My research was initially driven by curiosity and necessity - as a dance-practitioner whose work emerged within the critical frameworks of the UK New Dance and Independent Dance landscape, and who has worked in culturally diverse and inclusive contexts, I needed accessible and non-normative tools for critical and collaborative choreographic practice. Consequently, my research aimed at finding working methods that acknowledge what UK New Dance pioneer Emyln Claid called 'dancers as thinking bodies'(2006: 132) and contribute to 'empowering the performer to participate in the creation of the performance'(ibid: 124). By drawing on the educational practices of physicist Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-1984), this choreographic research project tentatively aimed to extend boundaries of choreographic processing towards a trans-disciplinary performance practice through 'leading the non-dance expert in and the dance expert out'(Forsythe W., cited in Gehm, Husemann, v. Wilcke 2007: 97).

### 1.2 Context

My past experience as a dance practitioner, educated and active within the field of 'somatic-informed dance practice' (Brown 2011), with a professional background and academic research profile in choreographic practice and performance-making and professional training in FM, forms a personal context for this project. This research project was not only concerned with developing skills within the field, or with transforming the awareness of participants, but also, to use the analogy of 'Emancipatory Action Research', aimed to emancipate participants, including the author, from 'the dictates of tradition' (Zuber-Skerritt 1996). It thus extends Feldenkrais' concerns to foster 'a de-conditioning, the liberation, in which we develop a self-active part which liberates the individual from his subjective enslavement' through reflective embodied processes.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The late Systems Theory thinker Aharon Katzir, in conversation with M. Feldenkrais, in Feldenkrais 2010:173.

My research is situated in a historical trajectory of twentieth and twenty-first century body- and performance-cultures, where artistic, socio-political, and educational concerns overlap as part of *'The Great Refusal'* to affirm 'one-dimensional', totalitarian, and authoritarian traditions dominant in Western culture (Marcuse 2007). Concerned with working *'from* rather than *about* the moving body' (Bacon and Midgelow 2010), this research project contributes knowledge to the subversive trajectory of such 'critical moves' (Martin 2009). It most distinctly contributes to the 'marginalised discourse of somatic dance practice', which Fortin & Vieyra (2009) argue seeks to distance itself from the 'body as object', through its examination of the application of FM outside of its traditional educational domain.

### 1.3 Methodological considerations

'The Art of Making Choices' comprises of a series of original, collaborative PaR projects of deliberately varied nature. Claid's claim to free up any unity of style to achieve 'liberation' (2006), echoes recent arguments for contemporary dancers' needs to develop flexible moving identities (Clarke 2011, Roche 2011). Subsequently, this project probes applications of FM in a broad range of artistic contexts. Melrose (2008) suggests that, rather than analysing product, academics 'should be enquiring about the making of work'. Claid argues further that within collaborative practice 'its processes, not its products, have the power to shift cultural practice' (2006: 124). In line with this trend, the focus of this project has been on the formulation of innovative modes of performance-making and their relationship to emerging product.

### 1.4 Outcomes

Shacklock (2010) refers to The Feldenkrais Method as a means for 'intrattentive training' allowing the individual 'to attend to and think about oneself while moving' (2010: 102), stating that

the method may be used by dancers to improve or enhance awareness of their bodies and the way their bodies move, but it has yet to be integrated into choreography or performance (2010: 101).

My research project meets the need for such integration into choreography and performance, and proposes that the method offers more than a training of the awareness of the performers' 'bodies', or quality of 'movement'. My work contends that The Feldenkrais Method itself offers an embodied, critical, and inter-subjective process of discovery and *choreographic thinking* to the participant and, within a performance making context, supports processes of self-organisation of a dance-ecology as a process-of-enquiry within a process-of-enquiry.

My project has resulted in the development of an interrogative ‘open systems’<sup>2</sup> approach to performance-making. A key outcome of the project is the development of processes that form *tools for embodied choreographic questioning*, valid for performers, choreographers and theatre directors alike, which allow the performers to work as co-creators ‘with all the power of bodily experience.’<sup>3</sup> Feldenkrais asks for a thinking that is organically linked to sensing, feeling and action: ‘Thought that is not connected to feeling at all is not connected to reality’ (1990:44). The cultivation of non-dualist thinking through trans-disciplinary arts-research, as undertaken through my project has political dimensions. It provides a praxis for a radical reform in thinking, which complexity-philosopher and ecologist Edgar Morin (2007) urges for in response to a planetary ‘poly-crisis’ at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a

kind of thinking that reconnects that which is disjointed and compartmentalized, that respects diversity as it recognizes unity, and that tries to discern interdependencies. We need a radical thinking (which gets to the root of problems), a multidimensional thinking, and an organizational or systemic thinking (Morin 2007: iv).

### 1.5. Complexity considerations

The transfer of FM into performance-making - a process-of-enquiry within a process-of-enquiry - is understood as a complex system involving a large number of interacting agents, allowing for conditions for uncertainty, ambiguity, and emergent non-linear causalities. By drawing on Feldenkrais’ dynamic-systems perspective on learning (Buchanan & Ulrich 2001; Ginsburg 2011; Goldfarb 1990), and on Morin’s ‘Three Principles of Complexity’ (1999) as illuminating positions, the processes of transfer identified have been concerned with:

- a) **The Dialogic:** providing conditions which allow for ambiguity, diversity, openness, and flexibility. Feldenkrais’ ‘Theory of Reversibility’, as working-position that ‘the adherence to one principle to the utter exclusion of the opposite is contrary to the laws of life’ (2005:18), allows for an embracing of the paradox between different perspectives of the agents of the artistic process – choreographer, performers, spectators. Morin describes the ‘The Dialogic’ as ‘the symbiotic combination of two logics, a combination that is at once complementary, concurrent, and antagonistic’ (Morin 1999: xv).

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<sup>2</sup> Cillary (2005) refers to ‘open systems’ as ‘systems that live within a constant exchange with their environment’ (Cillary in Birringer 2005:121).

<sup>3</sup> Review of ‘The Dybbuk’: Molofski, M. (<http://ifpe.org/Reviews/Play-01.pdf>; accessed 24/06/11).

b) **Recursiveness:** a providing of conditions for flow of information through feedback-loops within 'the dialogic'. 'A process is recursive when it produces the elements or effects necessary for its own generation or existence' (Morin *ibid*). My research was concerned with developing *modes for transfer of the following conditions for recursiveness within performance making processes:*

- *The creation of conditions for self-awareness*, as capacity for observation of non-linear causality between action, 'sensory insight', and affect (Rywerant 2000). 'Awareness [...] listens to the action. Such listening, I think, is the first feedback. [...] without feedback it is impossible to condition or de-condition a grown-up person' (Katzir in Feldenkrais 2010:174). My research acknowledges the lived, embodied, affective position of the *self-observer* as *self-spectator*.
- *The creation and modulation of feedback-loops between participants* within rehearsal process and performance to support communication within the social interaction of the dialogic creative process. This also includes *the creating and modulating of conditions for spectatorship/participation*.
- *The creation of conditions for pattern support, to enhance and develop emerging patterns or themes*. E.g.: through the use of constructive choreographic devices, such as repetition or theme and variation, or through the transfer of 'Awareness through Movement' (ATM) sensory insights into improvisational play.
- *The creation of conditions for perturbations:* a disturbing, dis-orienting, restricting, or opposing of emerging patterns, to allow for alternative and new sensory insights, or choreographic solutions to emerge.

c) **The Holographic :**

Kelly (1999) describes this as 'the recursive dialogic of part and the whole' (Kelly, in Morin 1999: xvi). Feldenkrais lessons are concerned with breaking up whole situations into parts and with 'de-patterning and re-patterning' the relationship of parts to the whole, and designed to suspend habitual environmental contexts, which will allow habitual thinking and behaviour to become de-stabilised. Such recursive dialogic – *a zooming in and out* - between detailed embodied inquiries, and a connecting to a broader contextualisation of an awareness of the 'whole self' in relation to its social environment has been at the heart of my practice.

My research identifies five areas within FM informing this project:

**...Through movement:** a privileging of movement, understood as relational (Batson 2008), as vehicle for knowledge creation, self-awareness, and 'world-making' (Klein and Noeth 2011).

**Theory of Reversibility:** 'the first principle of the Feldenkrais Method being no principle' (Hanna 1980), as discussed above as a position to question the given at any time, underpinning strategies and modes of embodiment inherent in FM; it provides a context for a methodology of *embodied questioning*.

**Choreographic Thinking:** Feldenkrais' proposition of non-reductionist thinking 'with images, patterns and connections' (2010: 88), constructed through multi-modal enacted *self-imagining*.

**Body-Mind-Environment-Unity:** Feldenkrais' evolutionary stance on a '*whole self*', challenging a humanist centrality of the individual, highlights an inter- and trans-subjective position of the living organism. This enworlded *self-in-process* echoes Morin's complexity-concept of 'self-eco-re-organisation' (2007), as ongoing process of de-patterning and re-patterning of the living agent in relation to the environment.

**Working with the person:** Feldenkrais insistence on working with the person, not with bodies (2010), and a concern for 'human dignity' (1990), places ethical, political and spiritual dimensions into the practice which results in a compassionate, empathetic, and non-corrective, inter-subjective dialogic working mode.

The above considerations form a critical framework for the commentary on this practice-led project. Rather than giving detailed accounts of individual projects included in this research submission, the following commentary will discuss:

- The Feldenkrais Method.
- My research in context to the work of peers.
- Notions of The Choreographic : reflections on 'Social Choreography'(Klien 2009) and the work of Doris Humphrey who inspired the title of this project.
- Research Methodology with a focus on Trans-Disciplinarity (TD)

- Discussion: with a focus on Embodiment, Transfer of Practice, Subjectivities, Collaboration, and Limitations.
- Conclusion with considerations on resonances and future research.

The appendix ii will offer the reader further opportunities to access detailed evaluations of each project submitted as part of this practice-led research portofolio.

## 2. The Feldenkrais Method

The Feldenkrais Method was developed by Judoka and physicist Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-1984), between the 1940s and 1980s, as ‘an approach to working with people, which expands their repertoire of movements, enhances awareness, improves function and enables people to express themselves more fully.’<sup>4</sup> It is applied within contexts of rehabilitation, sports, and increasingly within Performing Arts education and training, and forms part of the widening field of *Somatics*, posited by Thomas Hanna as the study of ‘the body as perceived from within by first-person perception’ (1986), and as ‘the art and science of the inner relational process between awareness, biological function, and environment, all three factors being understood as a synergetic whole’ (1985:1). Feldenkrais developed his work in response to Freud and Pavlov, in dialogue with leading twentieth century body-learning pioneers and Systems-scientists. His work, which places learning at the heart of the human condition, is recognised within current research on Neuro-Plasticity (Merzenich 2012), and Enactive Cognition (Varela 1995, Noë 2009) and has been associated with the philosophical field of Radical Constructivism which asserts that ‘the "real" world manifests itself exclusively there where our constructions break down’ (von Glasersfeld 1984).

### 2.1 Modalities

FM makes use of two interrelated approaches, ‘Awareness through Movement®’(ATM) and ‘Functional Integration®’(FI). While ATM lessons are facilitated in groups, FI hands-on interventions happen on a one-to-one, non-verbal, level. ATM lessons are led through verbal instruction and questions. Feldenkrais clarifies his use of verbal instruction as mode of facilitating an embodied and ‘ecologized thinking’ (Morin 1999):

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<sup>4</sup> IFF Standards of Practice <http://feldenkrais-method.org/en/node/348> [accessed 03/08/12]

In my lessons the student learns to listen to the instruction while he is actually carrying out an exercise and to make the necessary adjustments without stopping the movement itself. In this way he learns to act while he thinks and to think while he acts (1992: 60).

The ATM teacher facilitates conditions from which ‘awareness’ can be cultivated. ATM lessons can be understood as detailed educational micro-choreographies. FM takes a distinct place within Western somatic practices, finding its uniqueness through offering processes towards an embodied questioning and re-construction of habitual behavior. This is achieved through non-corrective, pleasurable, and structured inquiry as defined in ATM and FI, facilitated by the practitioner in empathetic, improvisational dialogue with the learner.

## **2.2 Self-Imaging and The Choreographic**

Feldenkrais was influenced by the work of neuro-psychiatrist Paul Schilder (1999[1935]). Feldenkrais’ interpretations of Schilder’s concept of ‘self-image’ begin with the premise<sup>5</sup>:

We act in accordance to our self-image. This self-image - which, in turn, governs our every act - is conditioned by varying degree by three factors, heritage, education and self-education (1992:3).

Feldenkrais saw self-education as key for intervention for personal and social change. FM is not concerned with ‘bodies’, but with accessing a ‘self-image’, understood as a unity divided into four components: movement, sensing, thinking and feeling. It aims to foster a capacity for ‘self-imaging’ (Beringer 2001) in the learner through movement. The emphasis on self-education to support the autonomous learner through processes of assisted inquiry, raises questions regarding modes of social interaction within collaborative choreographic processes.

## **2.3 Self-Image and World Making**

There are two major interpretations of FM: one highlighting it as an ‘approach to changing and improving motor behaviour’ (Buchanan and Ulrich 2001). The other, highlighting emancipatory dimensions, asserts that ‘by developing a better self-image, individuals will evolve towards more autonomy, self-reliance and freedom, and this is the path to social change’ (Ginot 2011:155). My work echoes Ginot’s call to ‘construct somatic practice as a practice of empowerment’ (ibid). Feldenkrais offers embodied strategies for empowerment as a necessary anti-repressive re-habitation towards an autonomous adult. In his post-Holocaust anti-totalitarian thinking Feldenkrais posits a holographic relationship between individual and society:

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<sup>5</sup> For a critical perspective on Feldenkrais’ use of Schilder’s terminology see Ginsburg (1999) and Ginot (2011).

A society in which its members are only so many units composing it is not the final form of society. A society of men and women with greater awareness of themselves will, I believe, be one that will work for the human dignity of its members rather than primarily for the abstract collective notion of human society (1992: 29).

Such position, where social change is facilitated through reflective movement-based processes towards individuation, is echoed in Klein and Noeth's call for a dance scholarship concerned with inquiring 'how dance creates "world" as a medium bound to the body' (2011). This project investigates how a nexus of a *Feldenkrais-informed dance practice* shifts questions from individual self-imaging to an inter-subjective world-making towards 'fundamentally different existential relations' between multi-dimensional individuals and world through creative practice (Marcuse 1987).

### 3. My research in context

I acknowledge the work of colleagues who contribute, as part of a collective knowledge trajectory, to the field of choreographic practice in similar veins than my own work.

#### 3.1 Improvisation as Open System

Similar to my own work, the practice-driven research of Klien (2009), and Turner (2011), is concerned with Complexity-, Dynamic Systems-, and Emergence-led perspectives on dance making. Both highlight the importance of improvisation as tool for knowledge-production, and as process- and performance-mode supporting the autonomy of the performer within collaborative processes. Both argue for a dissolving of the binary between choreography and improvisation within dance-making contexts.

#### 3.2 Beyond the Disciplines

Turner's research into 'Emergent Dance' (2011) is situated as inter-disciplinary within the intersection between dance, digital technology, and science. Klien's work, like my own work, must be understood as *trans-disciplinary*, 'research that combines the aesthetic product and the creative process with questions and topics from broader areas of life' (Borgdorff, 2007: 76). Klien's work, which is part of a trend towards 'Social Choreography' (Hewitt 2007, Klein and Noeth 2011, Monni 2011), aims 'to open the disciplines of choreography and dance to other fields of human knowledge production' (2009: 5). My practice departs from Klien, and from Turner who draws on stylised neo-classicist dance idioms, through distinct concerns with the interface between a non-normative,



somatic educational practice and performance-making processes, thus making a distinct contribution to the expanding field of *Somatic Dance Practice*.

### 3.3 Somatic Informed Dance Practice

There have been a number of research publications concerning the relationship between FM and dance training and education providing insights into issues regarding notions of motor-skills support, subjectification, and creativity for the dance learner (Fortin 2002, Long 2002, Kovic 2007, Shacklock 2010). Such research has had an important impact on my practice, and only recently, through the inception of the 'Journal for Dance & Somatic Practices' in 2009, it has found a matching and invaluable forum for trans-disciplinary practice investigating 'somatic informed' processes of performance making (Brown 2011).

Little has been published on the relationship between Feldenkrais and choreographic processes. This project forms the first sustained research initiative in the UK on the interplay between Feldenkrais and dance-making processes. While Feldenkrais/Dance practitioner Scott Clark, founder-member of Siobhan Davies Company (SDC), taught the company for six years, little is documented on the distinct impact of his work on the choreographic practice within SDC. The late Gill Clarke referred to the emerging practice at SDC as a 'laboratory of self as ground for testing [...], letting experience be the driver'<sup>6</sup>. Such thinking beyond movement, notions of 'testing', 'self', and 'experience' within Clarke's reflections link a choreographic ethos emerging from the SDC 'artistic community' to the work of Moshe Feldenkrais and to concerns exemplified through my own research.

The Israeli pedagogue and performance-maker Amos Hetz draws extensively from the FM. Yet again, little is documented on the impact of FM on his practice. Hetz has been influential on other FM-Dance practitioners, such as Berlin-based Katja Munker (2010; 2011), who identifies the relationship between creativity and learning as a key focus of her research, and argues for an 'aesthetics of change and conditions' which, 'supports the development of human capacities'(2010: 171). Munker's trans-disciplinary concerns, like my own, blur notions of artistic, educational, and social disjunction. Her practice has primarily been concerned with solo work (2010), and durational practice (2011). My work departs from her concerns, by focussing distinctly on facilitating somatic processes as tools for collaborative practice within varying professional settings.

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<sup>6</sup> Clarke, G.(2011a) *Crossing Borders*, talk; Siobhan Davies Studios London 25/10/2011

My research aligns itself closely to Natalie Garrett-Brown's work advocating for a political orientation of 'somatic informed dance' that challenges dominant visual modes of dance-reception through foregrounding corporeal dimensions of inter-subjective relations between performers and spectators (Brown 2011). Brown draws on collaborative and site-specific practice, and on modes of embodiment emerging from the somatic practice of 'Body-Mind-Centering™'. My work makes explicit the emancipatory orientation that emerges through distinct modes of 'disorientation' and 'embodied encounter' (Brown 2011) inherent within The Feldenkrais Method, in relation to choreographic facilitator and performer.

#### **4. Feldenkrais , Humphrey , and the Choreographic**

The title of this project 'The Art of Making Choices - The Feldenkrais Method as Choreographic Resource' takes inspiration from Modernist choreographic pioneer Doris Humphrey's book 'The Art of Making Dances' (1987 [1959]), and plays through applying notions of 'reversibility' and 'variation' – key compositional principles within FM – with re-patterning the situatedness of the choreographic. If Humphrey's book was placed in a Modernist high-art field where 'choreographers are special people' (1987: 20), this project dis-places notions of the choreographic into an educational practice designed to improve the well-being of 'the average person'(Feldenkrais 2010: 116). My project contends that the practices developed by Feldenkrais, who likened his works to musical compositions, are deliberately choreographic. If Klien proposes choreography itself as an aesthetics – 'a sensitive knowing'(2009: 99) - the facilitation of such sensitive knowing, at the heart of Feldenkrais' concerns, is understood as choreographic process.

##### **4.1 Choreographic Thinking**

For Humphrey, the choreographer's 'greatest interest is in people' (1987: 22). Feldenkrais' insistence of working 'with the person'- not with bodies - providing the individual with tools to overcome a socially-constructed habitus 'through movement' - could be likened to Humphrey's concerns towards 'individuality and independent thinking' (Feldenkrais 2010, Humphrey 1987: 18). While Humphrey portrayed the dancer of her generation as 'a notoriously non-verbal thinker, and inarticulate as well' (ibid: 21), my research extends the proposition that Feldenkrais provides a sophisticated choreographic toolkit for a learning of and becoming-articulate in such non-verbal thinking. Feldenkrais aimed to provide learners with

conditions where they can learn to think. They have to think without words, with images, patterns and connections. That sort of thinking always leads to a new way of action (2010: 88).

He referred to this as ‘thinking with the elements of thinking’ (ibid). Such embodied, patterned, imaged, connective, and divergent thinking, can be posited as *choreographic thinking*, or as the choreographic per se, understood by Klien (2009) as ‘the very source of knowledge’. Klien argues, in line with a Feldenkraisian epistemology, that ‘the perception of patterns, relations and their dynamics, the integration to existing knowledge, and the creative application to a wider reality, all together constitute the choreographic act’ (2009: 100).

As a Feldenkrais practitioner I am the facilitator of such conditions for learning of non-verbal thinking, a similar position to which philosopher Alva Noë (2009a) assigns the role of the choreographer - as ‘engineering the determining conditions of personhood’. Humphrey saw the choreographic process as an inter-subjective dialogue, demanding empathy and inter-personal skills to allow choreographers to relate to their dancers by ‘understanding them, physically, emotionally, and psychologically’ (1987: 21). Such empathy-skills as described here are close to the embodied aptitudes developed within the trained Feldenkrais practitioner and exemplified within this project.

## **5 .Methodology**

### **5.1 Context**

This project is located as practice-led research in the field of Performance as Research (PaR). It values embodied knowledge, recognises subjective, non-linear, and relational dimensions of artistic processes, and acknowledges emergent, uncertain, and collaborative modalities which challenge the myth of the solitary researcher (Barrett 2007; Bolt 2004; Foster 2009; Haseman 2007). Drawing from educational and artistic disciplines , it is located as a dialogic between somatic movement education and somatic dance practice, thus in line with current trends towards trans-disciplinarity (TD) as an emerging research paradigm, particularly within the field of somatic practices, and choreographic practice (Borgdorff 2007; Kershaw 2009; Montuori 2007; Whatley & Garrett-Brown 2011; Ziemer 2009). The methodology developed in this project forms an enacted collage where values and practices from educational processes and performance-making practices are layered, blended into, and challenged by each other, creating a distinct performative modality. It is thus in line with Borgdorff, who contends that the

type of artistic research that combines the aesthetic product and the creative process with questions and topics from broader areas of life [...] may be characterised as trans-disciplinary research, if the synthesis achieved in the artwork has something additionally (or different) to offer, both conceptually or perceptually, to the outcome that would have resulted from a single discipline approach (2007: 76).

## 5.2 Feldenkrais Method as Somatic Mode of Arts Inquiry

The International-Feldenkrais-Federation (IFF) places ‘a state of mind that fosters a process of inquiry rather than one that seeks to define solutions’<sup>7</sup> at the core of its standards of practice. Such state of mind forms the embodied methodological base to evoke a better ‘functioning’ in process-participants. Feldenkrais defined function as ‘the interaction of the person with the outside world.’<sup>8</sup> The ethos of such investigative embodied-mind, where the de-centered agent-self is socially embedded, comes close to Gesa Ziemer’s call for research that links an emergent perceptive self to societal change.

Art researches in areas, where there is nothing to know. Where linguistic eloquence is being slowed down, where we are disoriented and touched at the same time to perceive something. This is exactly where new questions and ways of seeing emerge. It is never art for art’s sake, but indirectly influences attitudes, values, ways of interacting, and actions. Art forms the social through and through - without being social work (2009, translated by the author).

Such perceptual slowing down and disorientation are deeply embedded in all strategies within FM, and are echoed most currently in the performative aesthetics and call for ‘re-enchantment’ of Erika Fischer-Lichte (2009) who draws on the systemic concept of autopoiesis to invite people to ‘to enter a new relationship with themselves and the world’(2009: 207).

## 5.3 Feedback-loops

Research knowledge has been gleaned through feedback-loop processes of performance-making, including inception, rehearsal, publication, reflection, documentation, and evaluation which includes ‘peer-reviews’ by international arts-reviewers. Borgdorff suggests that

the art world conducts its own form of “peer-review” [...] artists themselves ultimately belong to the ‘forum of equals’ and determine what matters and what does not.[...] The value of the research is judged by the stakeholders in the research process (2007: 76).

Several levels of quality assurance through feedback-loops within a ‘forum of equals’ were built into the methodology of this project: as an ‘extended peer review’

- all projects were conducted amongst a team of informed peers: established artists, somatic practitioners, and partner organisations .
- the projects were supported by talks, papers, and publications presented to academic peers.

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<sup>7</sup> IFF standards of practice <http://feldenkrais-method.org/en/node/348> [accessed 03/08/12]

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

- the professionally produced projects were reviewed by international newspapers, web-publications and a leading European dance magazine.

#### 5.4 Feldenkrais Method as a Research Model

The Feldenkrais Method offered an embodied trans-disciplinary model for my research methodology, where knowledge and methods are collaboratively identified and tested in 'real life-situations' (Borgdorf 2007, Rywerant 2001).

##### 5.4.1 Levels of operation

The FM served as a model for reflective and critical practice on four levels:

- **Meta-Pattern:** FM provided a structural meta-pattern concerned with the patterning, de-patterning, and re-patterning of performance processes and products. Such triadic structure is analogous to an 'action-reflection-improved action' cycle as found in Action Research models (Stringer 1999).
- **Modes of construction:** It provided resources for transfer of somatic-educational strategies to performance-making practices. The discussion section of this document illuminates the progression and development of these strategies throughout this project.
- **Self-Organisation:** On a micro-level within each project, it provided tools for embodied choreographic questioning and creative inquiry for process-participants.
- **Communication:** these processes are understood as experiential, reflective, interpersonal, and dialogic - processes between people, which rely on and support a 'choreographic empathy' (Kampe 2010) between all participants. As such these processes as understood as *collaborative modes of knowledge production*.

#### 5.5 Theme and Variation: Compositional pattern

The overall trajectory of the project forms the following pattern:

The first (*Urbane Rituale* 2003) and final project (*The Dybbuk* 2010) of this research-portfolio were undertaken within professional contexts. These two **Professional Projects**, both underpinned by distinct research questions, were separated by four **Laboratory-Projects** (*Body/Soma/Self* 2004-2009) concerned with developing choreographic methodologies through reflective practice.

- *Urbane Rituale* opened my research to a focussed use of FM, and served as the initiation of this submission as a whole.
- The research within *Body/Soma/Self* with its laboratory-projects *Chaser* (2004), *Trace/Reverse* (2005), *Crossing* (2006), and *Weave* (2009), was undertaken in order to further aims, questions and methodology identified as emerging in *Urbane Rituale* through inward-looking structured practice-led inquiries.
- The final project *The Dybbuk* was a tentative *professional testing-ground* for further extension and manifestation of the results of the research into FM as a choreographic resource.

Such pattern is analogous with a key holographic process of 'self-eco-reorganization' (Morin 2008) within FM which, as described above, rests upon

- A) The observation and articulation of a 'function' or problematic 'real-life situation'.
- B) The de-patterning, and de-familiarising of the existing situation, under non-goal-orientated, varying, and unfamiliar conditions; Such introspective explorative learning situations are undertaken under assisted laboratory conditions.
- A) The integration of new sensory insights, knowledge or skills, as acquired in process B, into a real-life situation or 'function' which forms an improved variation of situation A.

Within my research project this holographic ABA process was organised as

**A:** *Urbane Rituale (2003)*: choreographic direction of a large-scale participatory, site-responsive, immersive dance-event at St. Pauli Football Stadium, Hamburg. The project probed methodologies of re-imagining mass-movement events in public spaces, raising questions regarding individual participation in relation to a culturally diverse and inclusive group of performers, and a blurring of notions of spectatorship towards performative engagement. It identified FM as a potentially emancipatory resource for process development. Dance-historian Wittmann (2003) noted the complexity of structure, and a lowering of stimuli towards performative montages – here, dog training rituals - as part of a trans-disciplinary choreographic aesthetics:

[...] a man who walks his dog across the whole football pitch, accompanied by the football hymn 'You'll never walk alone', sometimes stroking the dog who sniffs his way across the lawn. These images are complex and unforgettable. In fact it is always the simple images which strike us [...] a logistic masterpiece (2003, translated by the author).

Wittmann further identified a position of the individual within a re-imagined social and spatial environment, in line with a Feldenkraisian social-imaginary:

The formations on the pitch are of fascinating beauty, when 35 bodies fall like dominoes in snake-like formations. [...] strangely enough, no fascist-like after-taste comes up, no atmosphere of subsumation of the individual [...]. At the end the spectators are allowed to enter 'the holy pitch' [...] it becomes clear why the programme notes highlighted: "the next revolution will not be technological, but social "(2003, translated by the author).

Reviewer Lieb (2003) noted the subversive nature of participation and situatedness of the choreographic as dance-installation concerned with a re-organisation of environmental conditions. The project was staged by 150 performers, including professional dancers, members of a girls' football-club, an asylum-seekers' choir, to name a few:

A real fan-club, Ultra St.Pauli, heats up the mood with chants. [...] The real highlights do not happen on the pitch, but behind the seating area. There are women in white dresses like sleepwalkers [...] between glittering knives and forks. At the metal barriers dancers are caged like monkeys in a zoo. Behind the entrance hundreds of precisely arranged empty beer bottles on the floor are placed as an installation on the beauty of drinking. Final result: One-Nil for individuality and small-scaled play (2003, translated by the author).

Dance-sociologist Klein (2009)<sup>9</sup> commented on the relationship between mode of process facilitation and quality of product:

Kampe directed the process in a highly professional and exemplary way; his knowledge in the domain of transmission, his experience, calm , pleasing and competent manner led the project to an outstanding success.

**B:** Laboratory-Projects of 'Body Soma Self' (2004 -2009) were driven by emergent and developmental aims and questions. These core-projects focussed on studio-based practice, debate, peer-exchange, and documentation processes. All laboratory-projects were undertaken and presented through public performances in collaboration with academic and professional partners including: The Facility - PaR Unit London Metropolitan University, The Feldenkrais Guild of Germany, Chisenhale Dance Space London - and conducted with expert somatic-practitioners and dance-makers as co-researchers, including Feldenkrais, Body-Mind-Centering™, and Pilates practitioners.

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<sup>9</sup> Reference letter Gabriele Klein on direction of project *Urbane Rituale* (unpublished)

During the research period the nature of questions asked shifted from questions regarding the transfer of:

- *movement vocabularies* (Chaser 2004) and
- *structuring devices* (Trace/Reverse 2005)
- *modes of sensory-insight and discovery in relation to immersive spectatorship* (Chaser 2004)

from FM to performance-making processes,  
to questions going beyond movement, concerned with:

- *accessing and enhancing the affective capacities of performers* (Crossing 2006)
  - *processes that support capacities for judgement and choice-making* (Weave 2009)
- within performance-making practices.

This shift of questioning from kinesis to meta-kinesis emerged through reflective processes, and demonstrates a shift in my own learning as researcher, therefore recognising these collaborative laboratory projects as emancipatory self-experiment and trans-disciplinary research, which, as Montuori insists, must 'place the knower at the centre of enquiry' (2007: 8).

**A:** *The Dybbuk* (2010): Movement direction, choreography and design for play by Julia Pascal; produced for a 3 weeks season at *The Theatre for The New City*, NYC. As a culminating *test-project* I facilitated processes that allowed for a *merging* of the 'micro-ecology' of psycho-physical reflective practice of the performers, with the 'macro-ecology' that involved interaction with a moveable set-design. My role included the devising of movement scenes, integrating interaction between performers and set, and the creation of several choreographic scenes during the second half of the play.

The development process of the piece involved a three-week period of working with the ensemble in daily practical laboratory-sessions. During rehearsals time was made for debate, verbal feedback, and questioning. I also worked in collaboration with Pascal on integrating text-based work and movement-based practices and interactions with objects and set. This co-rehearsal continued for the first week of the run of the project. Drawing on research undertaken in *Urbane Rituale* and *Body/Soma/Self*, the rehearsal-process included an *application of a questioning approach* allowing for trial and error, even during the run of the play. Reflections on the process undertaken within this culminating project were documented through semi-structured interviews with participating artists.



Excerpts from these interviews serve as resource to illuminate the impact of processes probed in the following discussion section.

During the research period I engaged in further projects which had an influence as *testing-ground and self-experiment* on the overall project: as performer for three projects with choreographer Liz Aggiss, as performer and co-director of theatre projects with Julia Pascal, as choreographer/director for eight projects with graduate dance and theatre companies. I understand these projects as necessary reflective practice and testing-ground accompanying this more structured evaluative project.

## 6. Bodies of Knowledge

### 6.1 Dialogic Bodies

An initial concern of this research project was the question:

*How does the practice of the Feldenkrais Method inform a development of performance-vocabulary, and specific movement qualities for the performer?*

My research identified a dialogic-body as resource for performance investigation. While FM focusses on neuro-muscular-skeletal organisation, the body-coding proposed has no fixed centre, but is part of an ecological system that is reflected in a 'functional unity between body, mind, and environment' (2005: 149). My research suggests that such de-centralised body places a dialogic between awareness and adaptability as its potent core. While aiming for free flow in joint articulation and an articulate 'culture of pelvis and hip joints' (Feldenkrais 2005), FM lessons play with differentiating and varying of kinetic-chains to allow for complexity, poly-centricity, and omni-directionality in body coding.

Such differentiating includes a testing, shifting and reversal of:

- Places of movement initiation.
- Isolation and re-connection of body-areas in relation to a larger function.
- Stability- and mobility-providing organisation, in relation to environment and ground.
- Sequential and simultaneous relationships between articulated areas in the mover.
- An interplay between parallel, symmetrical, asymmetrical, and counter-directional shaping and orientation of relational body-connectivity.

The two laboratory-projects *Chaser* (2004) and *trace/reverse* (2005) were distinctly concerned with investigating strategies and potential for dance-vocabulary development arising from FM practices.

- Within *Chaser*, mostly *non-differentiated body-codings*, large free flowing multi-directional whole-body moves, at times focussing on asymmetry, core-mobility and core-initiation, and on reversal of mobility-stability-agents emerged as part of the research process. (DVD 2 Duet *Chaser*)

Such *vocabulary outcome* was challenged further within

- *trace/reverse* (2005) through applying de-familiarisation strategies (use of constraint as perturbation, reversal of joint-stability/mobility order (*proximal-distal-reversal*) and strategies of de-patterning and re-patterning.

Here, complex body-codings emerged that focussed on *movement differentiation* through rapid changes in:

- movement initiation, orientation, and direction
- *dialogic relationships* within patterns of skeletal connectivity,
- counter-direction within body-shaping,
- variation of range of dynamics

(see DVD 2 *trace/reverse* London; *trace/reverse* Berlin),

## 6.2 Core-Mobility: Challenging the vertical

Throughout this project a body-coding emerged that abandons a stable 'core' for 'core mobility' in the mover, in which potentials for adaptability are seen as a resource for creativity. Dominant Western dance aesthetics privileges *core-stability* and verticality of alignment where the *axial-skeleton* is understood as centralising anchor supporting the actions of *distal areas* of the human body (Batson 2008). Feldenkrais challenges this Cartesian model of alignment by asking the mover to constantly shift place of movement initiation, and by offering movement explorations where 'joint-order' relationship of stability and mobility are varied and reversed. This 'proximal-distal-reversal' strategy, embedded in both ATM and FI practices, was used extensively during the creation of all projects. Although Feldenkrais lessons can be designed to support a broad range of body-codifications and functions, my research suggests that FM proposes a bias towards a corporeality which emphasises a relational omni-directionality in mobility and articulation of segments of the human core. Such flexibility in body-shaping and orientation is further dis-oriented by Feldenkrais' preference for asymmetrical body-coding, another similarity between Humphrey's work and Feldenkrais' quest to 'stimulate the senses' (Humphrey 1987).

## 6.3 Non-instrumentalisation

While emerging vocabularies within this project may seem similar to other 20<sup>th</sup> century dance-movement vocabularies, the way the performer is invited into the reflective process of 'embodied analysis' (Kampe 2010) makes the Feldenkrais approach to movement development distinct. The dancers' decision-making processes are an integral part of the dance language. Bodies are not understood as texts, but as readers. Performers are not asked to instrumentalise their bodies, but are becoming players.

## 6.4 Spatial and Dynamic self-referentiality

While spatiality of movement organisation within FM-lessons is self-referential - linked to an intentional relationship between mover and environment - rather than concerned with theatrical codes of presentation or representation, FM also privileges a 'slower ontology that challenges the western capitalized view that prioritizes "more and faster" ideologies' (Wood 2011), offering a limited dynamic and spatial range as a working position. FM privileges a 'yielding' or 'indulging' dynamic quality by encouraging participants to reduce speed, resistance to gravity and force, and

scale of movement, while allowing for connectivity with the ground.<sup>10</sup> Such ‘slowing down’ and yielding allows participants to align heightened perception with fine-tuned action. Consequently movers are invited to connect intentionality with action. The impact of such psycho-physical connectivity within performance contexts was described by research participants:

**As awareness enhancing :**

The movements are so gentle, and bring you back into yourself, but not only into yourself, it makes you aware of first of all your center and then you open out; and everything is quite gentle, so it’s very specific; no movement is gratuitous. So it helps to focus (Dante Interview 11/08/10).

**As relating a heightened proprioception to a readiness for action:**

You become aware of parts of your body moving, particularly the feeling or the sensations of it. [...]You are more active [...]a performer should be active at all points (Karsberg Interview 10/08/10).

**As empowering to choice-making in movement design or performance:**

[...] more control of the decisions of how and when to move, and if I move this part what will I project, what will my body say to the audience (Lerer in Kampe 2010)?

**As a resource for affective action where ‘movement is impacting emotion’ (Perlin in Kampe 2011):**

I am much more a physical actor than I thought; I always thought that I am a thinking, feeling actor which is fine, but actually it works, the movement infers the emotion (ibid).

The effect of such non-linear causality between dynamic movement-organisation, and psycho-physical implications of transfer of such practice to performance was recognised by reviewers of *The Dybbuk* (2010):

The production is [...] the most profound, gripping, meaningful theatrical experience I ever have had [...] Thomas Kampe, who designed the sets, also provided choreography, and his use of dance and movement imbues the production with all the power of bodily experience. The actors don’t “act”; they move and become. The movement he creates for the actors embodies what authentic movement therapists use in their work, [...] an extremely powerful modality (Molofski 2010).

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<sup>10</sup> I am using terminology based on Laban, and post-Laban practices such as LMA, Bartenieff Fundamentals™, and BMC™. FM itself offers a limited language to describe the complexity of movement organisation. ‘Yielding’ or ‘indulging’ refers here to a non-resistant relationship to the dynamic qualities of weight (force), space, time, and flow. (Longstaff 2004). Hackney (1998) uses the term ‘yielding’ to articulate an actively giving into gravity, to connect with the ground rather than resisting it.

[...] the work of the five actors in bringing their vision to life cannot be over praised. They were fully there, embodying the full range of emotions from lust to anger (Benjamin 2010).

My research identifies a synergistic relationship between the omni-directional and relational core-mobility, as prioritized within FM practices, the emphasis on free flow, slowing down and lightness as dynamic modes of investigation, and the emerging capacity for choice-making, affective presence, and expressivity of performers in rehearsal and performance.

## 7. Transfer

*'[...] you are always opening; opening new rooms in the house, opening new doors, opening new experiences.'*

Director /Writer Julia Pascal 2010

*'And your awareness begins - like a ripple - to widen [...] it creates a kind of 'total awareness' I found.'*

Assistant Director Kimberley Sykes, Observer/Participant 2010

### 7.1 Transferring and Extending

This chapter discusses practical modes of knowledge-transfer as extending - dynamically, spatially, contextually, and socially - FM modalities through artistic processing. Such extending, most clearly articulated in the project *Crossing* (2006), aimed at expanding the limitations of FM in its 'pure form' within artistic contexts, due to it being sensory-based and 'pre-expressive' (Barba 1990), rather than being affective and expressive. My work acknowledges that FM developed as an emergent hybrid form from its inception, and is never applied in a neutral context; rehearsal participants, including myself, inevitably bring their own micro-narratives and needs into a necessarily complex and contaminated process. Building on prior projects, *Crossing* proto-typed such *contamination* through *testing and contextualizing* within improvisational and highly dynamic conditions of dance and Physical Theatre frameworks, for example, Laban, Contact Improvisation, Michael Chekhov, and Grotowski- based practices. Such *extending* served as working-method to be applied during the final project *The Dybbuk* (2010).

## 7.2 Modes of transfer

The project identifies the following re-occurring modes of transfer:

**7.2.1 Preparation:** The use of FM as *preparatory-practice*, supporting key multi-modalities that challenge visual perception as privileged mode of process engagement through the combination of verbal instruction and questioning in ATM, and haptic dialogues as found in FI, with *eyes closed reception of process participants*. The results of such preparatory-practice, organically and un-directed, 'bled into rehearsal and performance' (Perlin 2010). Research-participant Rachel VonMoos commented on the *non-linear effect* of such preparatory practice on the process of dance-making:

I felt a strong readiness to enter my own work [...] Connecting the morning experience with the solo I was making in the afternoon was a very inspiring aspect for my creative process. During sessions ideas/images would come up, structures for explorations, [...] all these to be 'used' in the afternoon. I worked with some of the 'instructions', as restriction, not achieving the goal (VonMoos in Kampe 2010: 49).

In dialogue, actors Dante and Perlin commented on the impact of such preparatory practice on quality of performance in *Dybbuk* (2010):

**Dante:**

The days when we worked [...] with certain Feldenkrais exercises, and then did a run of the play - it was amazing, very quickly could you feel a listening....

**Perlin:**

....an inner landscape, a much greater togetherness, a physical contact, the play became much more about the physical contact, not just about the text (Dante 2010, Perlin 2010).

**7.2.2 Tools for rehearsal:** *extending educational modalities of FM as modes of inquiry* into rehearsal and performance practice :

- **Kinaesthetic tuning:** the use of ATM and FI as *Kinaesthetic Tuning Scores* as direct resource for movement generation. Here, the facilitator provided topics/functions investigated through FM to be transferred into performance investigations; performers were given time immediately after ATM-practice to explore modes of enquiry and emergent, unfamiliar, movement patterns within improvisational contexts; minimal verbal intervention allowed for a foregrounding of kinaesthetic experience as resource for enquiry.

- **Verbal Instruction:** Transfer of modes of verbal instruction into improvisational and editorial processes, e.g. use of suggestion, imagery, and metaphor, reframing, pacing, and modelling, and through the use of questioning.<sup>11</sup> Such verbal instruction is understood as performative and includes intention and tone of voice of the speaker (see chapter 8.5 – 9.3).

*Re-framing*, understood as *offering alternative views* on an action e.g. reaching with arm while laying on right side :*'reach with your right arm and notice how your right shoulder follows forward'*, to *'allow your right arm to slide forward and notice how your left shoulder changes contact with the ground while your weight begins to shift'*.

*Pacing* refers to *descriptive, rather than prescriptive*, accompanying of an action, therefore highlighting occurring phenomena, e.g.: *'notice how your ribs are beginning to roll while you are reaching forwards'*.

*Modelling*: highlights experiential models of good practice; this is based on the *facilitators' own experience*, or might refer to an observed model of good functioning in the learner worked with, or within peers, e.g. while standing: *'notice how your pelvis and ribs slide easily to the left when you shift weight; try to explore this further until the sensation becomes clearer. Then explore this quality of weight-shifting towards the right side. Are you able to let your ribs slide in similar ways over the standing foot?'*

*Questioning*: throughout all projects an *instructing through questioning* was applied as re-occurring strategy. By taking the role of questioner the choreographer facilitates an environment for inquiry and at the same time subverts traditional hierarchies within the choreographic process, allowing for *not-knowing* and collaborative processes of *'finding'*. Choreographer and performers become *'co-enquirers'* (Igweonu 2010). Julia Pascal commented on the effect of such questioning in rehearsal processes for *The Dybbuk* (2010):

In rehearsal, you are constantly encouraging to ask questions; you are verbalizing all the time - how does this feel? You are synthesizing the body-mind by the fact of questioning. So, the person is forever connecting the two, they are not shut off mentally because they are doing a physical action (Pascal: interview with Thomas Kampe 08/08/2010).

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<sup>11</sup> For a more indepth discussion on the use of language in the work of Moshe Feldenkrais see : Reese, M.(1985) *'Moshe Feldenkrais' work with movement: A parallel approach to Milton Erickson's hypnotherapy'*; *Ericksonian Psychotherapy*( Vol 1), Brunner and Mazel, New York.

Actor Simeon Perlin commented on the effect of such rehearsal modes:

I don't feel that I'm being told to do something; I feel I'm being encouraged to discover something in myself (Perlin in Kampe 2011).

He further identified 'a strategy of what if?' as *emerging mode of self-questioning* within editorial and performance practice:

What happens if I do it as if one arm is lighter than the other, or if I'm terrified and my body is tight and constricted, what happens to my voice, what happens to my intention? (Perlin 2010).

- **Problem setting:** The transfer of *problem- setting and solving* processes into improvisation and movement generation included the setting and letting go of *physical constraints* to allow for discovery of non-habitual movement choices. Dance-maker Karin Fisher-Potisk comments:

It invites us to find a way around restriction - usually by freeing up another part, allowing something else to move, or take over... This became very clear for me i.e. when placing one hand on the head - the head became a much more active limb (Fisher-Potisk in Kampe 2010: 48).

This 'holding on to the head' literally blocks the use of the neck, disturbs habitual self-use, and thus asks movers to activate their ribs in relation to head movements in unfamiliar ways. Such problematizing also included a gradual increasing of range of complexity of tasks given, through 'approximations', *repetitions with variations in small increments* (see dvd 2: Laboratory Kampe London; trace/reverse Berlin).

- **The use of touch interactions**, as used in FI practice, involve haptic dialogues of listening, following, guiding, and manipulation. Like verbal instruction, pacing, modelling, reframing and questioning, these dialogues become non-corrective and holographic modalities which can shift focus from 'detailed' inquiry to 'global' whole-body touch. (see chapter 9.5. for further discussion).
- **'Testing the extreme' through contextualizing** : All projects were concerned with 'testing of the extreme' (Rywerant 2001), as extending of FM through improvisational, and editorial processes rooted in 20<sup>th</sup> century hybrid dance-theatre traditions that seek to employ a visceral, extreme, and ecstatic physicality in performance. Pascal (2011) elaborated on the process of such extending:

It works because the performers are emotionally more available and free and connected to each other and themselves. When you then bring in Grotowski- or Laban-based strategies or grotesques imagery, they



have already a solid confident base where they don't feel judged, they are just being asked to stretch (Pascal in Kampe 2011: 266).

- **Combinations of the above processes to generate movement material.**

All of the above processes operate synergistically.

### 7.2.3 Tools for performance construction

The above modes of transfer were applied to investigate internal psycho-physical self-organisation, to the construction of movement material and the shaping of emergent whole pieces. Following Feldenkrais' paradigm of a 'body-mind-environment-unity' (2005), the choreographic working modes were applied to creative interaction with complex environments throughout this project:

- as site-responsive practice (*Urbane Rituale; Chaser*) where moving spectators encounter performers from different perspectives within a complex environment;
- as interaction with moveable set-design and objects (*The Dybbuk*), where performers create and inhabit changing conditions for spectatorship
- as interaction with projected environment (*Amen/Weave* 2009), where the performer merges with virtual environments and moving stage set.

Such enaction of, and interaction with, complex environments was also at the heart of other 'self-and-environment-experiments', professional projects not included in this submission, created in collaboration with other artists alongside this project.<sup>12</sup>

### 7.3 Toolkits

My project identifies several dialogic toolkits for the choreographic facilitator:

- **No rules:** remembering that 'the first rule of FM is that there is no rule' (Hanna 1980).
- **Cultivating awareness** as key to overall process and as base for further decision making for both external observer and performer.
- **Privileging movement** and 'sensory insight' as experiential resource for performance making.
- **Stimulating curiosity:** e.g. by taking the role of the 'what if?'- questioner.
- **Practicing Absence:** giving performers time to absorb information.

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<sup>12</sup> Dance-film works with Liz Aggiss (2003 -2011), politically inflected theatre works with Julia Pascal(2004-2012).

- **Allowing time** for discovery, development, and emergence of non-linear causalities between kinesis and meta-kinesis.
- **Creating feedback-loops** for action/reflection cycles; e.g. by engaging in verbal dialogue with performers by giving feedback on observed movement, and by asking questions regarding intention behind movement explorations. This includes:

**The use of self- and peer- observation, peer-interaction and peer-instruction** to extend inter-subjective processes inherent in ATM and FI into dialogic rehearsal practice.

- **Reducing and increasing of stimuli:** Such position of perceptual reduction invites the spectator/participant into non-habitual visual or 'somatic modes of attention' (Csordas 1993).

Within Dybbuk, in the transition between act two and act three, spectators were placed in darkness which over several minutes gradually builds, through minimal vocal utterings of song-fragments, to a dimly-lit scenario revealing performers merged with a chaotic set/environment engaged in micro-gestures, stillness and breathing. NYT reviewer Litt (2010) described the effect of such reduction as 'powerfully elevating a folk-tale to an existential meditation'. Benjamin (2010) commented on the impact of such choreographic/directorial strategy as 'not afraid of creating moments of charged stillness that brought the frantic moments into brilliant relief.'

- **Emergent pattern support:** identifying and *going with* 'occurring patterns' of movement material suggested by performers or site, using devices such as **repetition and variation** of dynamics and spatial intention/orientation. This includes encouraging the performers to explore a variety of contrasting creative choices to a given theme.
- **The use of perturbations, through constraints or reversal,** to *disturb and de-familiarize* emergent ideas, to allow for new patterns, connections, or qualities to emerge.
- **Working through 'approximations'** in gradual stages through action/reflection cycles. This includes the gradual setting of movement material, or the increase of complexity and problematizing of choreographic multi-layered forms.
- **The use of 'differentiations'** to create 'novelty of sensation' (Feldenkrais 2010) through
  - *The breaking down of actions* into small 'units of actions', identifying intention and effect of each unit; and then to re-develop selected small units into a large whole again.
  - The use of 'reference moves' or 'contrasting leitmotifs' through the working in binary or tertiary rondo structures which might include variations of sections: ABA, ABACA, A B Variation-A Variation-B A B A, and so on.

- **A reworking and ‘making strange’** of movement material or scenes through ‘de-patterning’ and ‘re-patterning’.
- **The use of omni-directionality and poly-centricity** in body coding and staging.
- **Use of touch interaction** and relationship to objects and set.
- **A blurring of authorship, a becoming one:** negotiating and delegating generating, development, and editing processes between process participants.
- **The deliberate ‘hiding’ or excluding of function** of movement patterns during the lessons, and only perhaps towards the end of the lesson to introduce the function. A refusal to give answers.

## 8. Subjectivities

The performers are examining. They are examining sensation, so they are using emotional and intellectual parts of the self at the same time; what you are doing is to encourage that flow, which the performers then take into rehearsal and into their performance. And that's the strongest effect I have ever seen in rehearsal- which is fantastic (Pascal 08/08/2010).

### 8.1 Questions of Agency

FM processes are aiming to support the awareness of an *intra-subjective*, *inter-subjective*, and *trans-subjective* agent-self. Such multi-dimensional agency, understood as-in-process, allows participants to gain ‘sensory insights’ to make choices and ask questions from within, regarding:

- *internal psycho-physical self-organisation.*
- *relationship towards the environment.*
- *a shared functionality and materiality that goes beyond individual uniqueness.*

These enacted questions regarding a ‘whole self’ - relational and environmentally embedded – are, as Litt (2010) suggested, ‘existential meditations’ with transformative potential. Re-framed, these questions asked through FM practices are concerned with:

*What, right now during or after FM practice, does it feel like to be myself?*

*How am I engaging with the world?*

*How could I engage differently with world?*

*How can I modulate my interaction with the world so that it feels the way I want it to feel?*

## 8.2 The Critical Subject

The role of facilitator in FM is to provide conditions that enable participants to differentiate and realign relationships between *cultural efficacy, physiological efficiency, and self-efficacy* through felt subjective experience (Bandura 1994).

You often ask “how does that feel”? You make the person experience their own bodies as if it’s a new coat, and that is very exciting, and makes the person realize that they can expand and grow in a way they had not thought of before [...] That questioning which transmutes into a body change allows the person to widen and realize they are capable of much more (Pascal 2010).

By suggesting a self-reflexive kinaesthesia as key constitutive factor for agency of the participant, through processes of de-patterning and re-patterning, creative processes become concerned with de-stabilisation, opening, critique, and crisis. My research acknowledges the self-constitutive and critical potential of FM practices probed within performance making contexts. It also acknowledges the emergent, de-centred, de-stabilised position of the subject within the process. As a choreographer I am not working with abstract movement, or complex systems - I work as a person, with people – and for people. Such position, at the heart of the value-system of this project, acknowledges mutual agency-in-process, empathy, desire, communication, vulnerability, curiosity and compassion.

## 8.3 Dancing Subjects

My research enhances Klein’s (2011) claim for a *subject-constitutive potential of dance* by transposing FM processes and questions as introduced above into rehearsal and performance praxis:

*we move and improvise attuned to ourselves through FM processes*

*we ask questions regarding our ‘whole selves’:*

*who are we?*

*how are we relating to our environment?*

*what do we want?*

*what do we desire?*

*we move*

*who are we now, while and after moving?*

*who are we now, through movement?*

Feeding questions regarding self-efficacy into rehearsal processes has affected *kinaesthetic-affective feedback-loops* within the artistic dialogue between participants. Julia Pascal commented on the effect of this questioning in rehearsal for *The Dybbuk* (2010):

You are showing the blood and guts through the movement.  
 It's all the way through - it's how you ask the actors to show their intention through the body. Your direction in this play is:  
 "Show me, show me what you need; what do you want from the other person?  
 Show me."  
 And the performers are ready to engage - they like it and they respond to it.  
 You are not telling them - you are asking them (Pascal 2010).

#### 8.4 Self-Questioning

Creating varying conditions for questioning as part of the *emerging* methodology within this project raised issues regarding the transition from *facilitator-led questioning* to *self-led questioning* where the performance-maker becomes *autonomous self-questioner*. Research participant Alenka Herman commented on her emerging questions during *Weave* (2009):

Most of the questions that I have been asking myself during the process such as - 'what is relevant?' 'why am I doing this?' 'why like this?' 'who told me this must be like that?' - will stay with me in future. All of these questions help me to find more freedom. [...] The search is important, because in looking for answers I find more options (Herman in Kampe 2010: 48).

*Such becoming-questioner* through repetitive processes of ordering and dis-ordering the organisation of the motor-cortex will, following Feldenkrais' assertions on neuro-plasticity and holographic functioning of the nervous system, necessarily 'have parallel effects on thinking and feeling' (ibid).<sup>13</sup>

#### 8.5 Conditions for play

Doidge (2007) identifies neuro-chemical processes of 'globalisation' where conditions within the brain are created that 'enhance or diminish the *overall* effectiveness of the synaptic connections and bring about enduring change' in self-organisation (2007:118). Doidge and other trans-disciplinary neuro-scientists (Damasio 1999, Freeman 1995, Hüther 2012) suggest that neuro-plasticity - *Feldenkrais' aim for 'flexible brains'* – openness for adaptation and change in behaviour depends largely on a 'fertilization' (Hüther 2012) of newly-wired synaptic patterns and neuro-modulators through our affective and inter-subjective perception of pleasure, passion, and compassionate love.

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<sup>13</sup> For a further discussion on self-learning strategies within FM see Ginsburg 2010: 171-187. For the relationship between FM and processes of auto-suggestion and hypnotherapy see Reese(1985).

A key role of the FM practitioner and, within this project, of the choreographic facilitator has been to consistently 'fertilize' conditions for: learning, discovery, and absorption of new behaviour for the individual and between participants. Such fertilization acknowledges feeling – pleasure, curiosity, fear, pain, and desire - in the inter-subjective process of performance making. My research suggests that notions of *non-correctiveness*, *affirmative suggestion through modelling and pacing*, and notions of *problem-solving and play* provide conditions for risk-taking and learning. Sykes (2010) commented on the effect of such multi-modal *fertilizing* in rehearsal for *The Dybbuk*:

Individual liberation, you stop censoring yourself [...]we laugh about this a lot in rehearsal; the actors' ego that you so often get in rehearsals, goes out of the window; because it removes the insecurity and allows you to be free, you accept your body, you accept other people's bodies; it's just much more humane (Sykes 2010).

Pascal (2010) elaborates:

It's because there is no fear. What I think you have done is eradicated fear from the rehearsal process, through the FM and play [...] The speed with which [the performers] have absorbed, has translated into performance in ways I would not have thought possible. It's as if they have worked together for a year, in fact they have worked together for three weeks.

Pascal links this 'allowing you to be free' (Sykes 2010) to an enacted knowledge inherent in FM that can serve as a resource for artistic practice: 'It's something native to your childhood-self - it's also your artist-self.' Stimulating this 'childhood-self' and 'artist-self' are part of a key modality within FM – many ATM lessons chosen as resource within this project playfully revisit functions rooted in phylogenetic and ontogenetic 'developmental patterns' e.g.: hand-mouth co-ordinations, grasping, reaching, pushing, rolling, weight transfer, creeping, crawling, transitional movements from floor to standing.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Such practice places FM in line with other key somatic practices affiliated more directly with dance practices, such as the work of Irmgard Bartenieff (2002), and Bainbridge-Cohen (1993). FM 's complexity perspective on developmental progression is perhaps best represented by the work of Ginsburg (2011), Russell (2004) and Thelen (1994).

## 8.6 Emergent Pleasures

Dance-maker Colin Poole (2005) commented on the psycho-physical impact of FM/Dance practice during research project *trace/reverse*. Perhaps not accidentally, his comments on a newly developed articulation and integration of the upper-rib areas into his whole-body movement patterns were followed immediately by observations on the pleasurable nature of FM/dance inquiry:

I always feel I am being very kind to myself and very generous as a mover in this process. I never feel that I hurt myself. I am pushing through the limits, but it feels like I, not massage myself, but draw my attention somewhere, and am working at that, and noticing the differentiation of one part to another [...] (Poole, in DVD 2 *trace/reverse* Q&A 11 min: 26 sec).

A place of permission and taking pleasure in learning to meet the unknown, was identified as a result of a directorial feedback position of 'We shall see' that permeated rehearsal strategies during the creation of *'Dybbuk'*. This commitment towards the emergent nature of creative solutions through experiential dialogue, a refusal to provide answers replaced by a cultivation of an atmosphere of curiosity, was met by research participants positively. Dante (2010) stated that she

[...] just felt sheer enjoyment. And that's really great because also "we'll see, and maybe that will feel different tonight, and maybe this works"... so there's still discovery in every performance, I mean it's a finished work for a paying audience, but it's a work in progress for us. It never ends in that sense, which keeps it alive.

## 8.7 Crisis

Processes of de-patterning, though introduced through a play and possibilities for re-integration of new knowledge into enworlded functions must provoke crises of self-image and of 'knowledge and skills' (Martin 2009). Allowing for *a space for crisis* - a 'Krisenraum' (Klein 2011) - and ambiguity has been part of the choreographic practice cultivated throughout this project. Dance-maker Alenka Herman draws attention to an existential questioning, a self-reflection on an undoing of habits, as emerging from FM/Dance practice:

I went on a journey [...] I could feel so clearly the difference on two sides of the body. Who lives here? This was the question that stayed with me for a long time [...] I realised and could feel how emotions, habits and tensions stay in the body, how much power they have to transform. There is a lot of work in undoing (Herman in Kampe 2010: 49).

Seeking such undoing and un-knowing as working-position, enacted by the artistic-facilitator, was not always immediately acceptable to process participants, creating an ambiguity towards the process and own direction.

Initially, there was a resistance because I felt: “Can’t you tell us what to do?”  
That’s like a deformation of however we’d been taught directly (Dante 2010).

I really could not let go in ATM sessions [...] but the sessions took me to some mental space where I don’t go normally (Isobe in Kampe 2010: 49).

Although I am confused and undecided in my own research, I am somehow calm and relaxed due to Feldenkrais (Herman *ibid*: 42).

Inhabiting such position of *un-knowing* was described by participants as :

.....less rational [...] although I was aware of every movement.

.... very open and soft, it felt more organic .....(Herman *ibid*)

.... encouraged [...] to listen to our intuition , and that was the crucial approach we took for our artistic practice.

.....less fear towards the unknown.

.....easier for me to let my inner voice come out, to see the actual potential of it (Isobe *ibid*).

Cultivating Feldenkrais’ position of the ‘whole self’, understood as emergent, psycho-socially enworlded, and as-in-question within artistic working-modalities comes perhaps close to Edgar Morin’s call for a ‘true rationality’ :

True rationality is open and enters into dialogue with a reality that resists it [...]. A reason that ignores living beings, subjectivity, emotions, and life is irrational [...] true rationality is not merely critical, but self- critical. It is recognizable in its ability to recognize its own insufficiencies (1999: 129).



## 9. Collaboration

### 9.1 Ensemble

**Sykes:** 'We are all going on the same journey together.'

**Dante:** 'And it opens, for me, it opens – and if it opens you, the other person will also open, if you're blocking, the other person gets blocked!'

**Pascal:** 'There is a trust between the ensemble and you'.

**Dante:** 'The work we did helped center me, center the group as an ensemble; it was an amazing discovery to know that it happened so quickly, finding yourself physically ready to act.'

**Perlin:** 'What we have been doing movement-wise that led into the rehearsals, focusing on physical interaction, uninhibited physical interaction, at times almost brutal and erotic and primal, and the work we are doing - the base line is animal.'

**Pascal:** 'There is a sexual freedom also, you asked them to have a lot of body contact.[...the performers] allow themselves to be free with their own bodies and other bodies, and their sexual and creative self comes through in the group and that also comes through in performance.'

**Karsberg:** 'It certainly makes you more aware of how you are on stage physically, as an individual [...] but also together as a collective; what it certainly has done it has created an ensemble in a very short period; It was liberating for the ensemble, it's again the collective and the individual.'

**Dante:** 'Because of the combination of things; but the 'no inhibitions' in the small fine tunings [...] Feldenkrais does something that takes away that inhibition from the word go, when you know that there's no right or wrong[...] It immediately changes the relationship between the actors.'

**Perlin :** 'It brought us onto another level in the ensemble; it sort of brings you together doesn't it?'

**Dante:** 'Yes, and quickly as well, extremely efficiently'.

## 9.2 Ensemble Awareness

My work acknowledges the inter-subjective position of the individual, as a bio-psycho-social and political condition. Ziemer (2011) identifies modes of 'Komplizenschaft' – *complicity* as emerging models in performance-making processes. My research enhances such complicit ways of working, where holographic working methods have been identified as 'liberating for the ensemble [...] and the individual' (Karsberg 2010). Making space for the unfolding of 'the genius of diversity' (Morin 1999) within group processes where 'we know what we're doing, but we also know what the others are doing', forms part of the ethos of an *open systems* approach that this research proposes (Dante 2010). Claid confirms such proposition as a timely way of working by stating:

Now [...] liberation is about nurturing the voice of each individual within the group [...] This shift is something to celebrate (2006: 131).

## 9.3 Empathy

Dialogues between FM practitioner and learner revolve around feedback-loops of mutual bodily listening and adaption to form an empathetic 'social cognition' (Gallese 2009). Ginsburg (2011) connects research on 'Mirror-Neurons' (Fogassi & Gallese 2002, Gallese 2010, 2011), as neurological indicators of our capacity to socially interact, with key practices within FM interaction. The discovery of mirror-neurons in primates suggests a recursive relationship between perceived action and simulated action through a neurological mirroring between partners. Ginsburg highlights that mirror-neurons function holographically, influencing the larger circuits of 'action representations', and the organism's ability to modulate its relationship with its social environment (Fogassi & Gallese 2002). Ginsburg identifies three main recursive conditions that foster the activity of mirror-neurons:

Intentionality – when movement is organized with intent towards a goal;

Agency – that the movement is initiated by a living creature.

Pattern of mobilization – spatial and dynamic movement organization (Ginsburg 2011: 262).

Such conditions correlate with modes of communication within FI where the practitioner simulates or explores movement function in dialogue with a partner. The questions asked within FM, verbally or through touch, and transferred into rehearsal processes during this project, are all concerned with linking a relational intentionality, agency, and pattern-recognition through movement. My work enhances such enacted questioning into the interaction between participants of rehearsal processes, either indirectly, through a bleeding in of preparatory practice into artistic process, or more

directly, through a ‘fertilizing’ (Hüther 2011) of such conditions, by providing a fluid layer of psycho-social conditions of play, pleasure, and compassion, during rehearsal and feedback.

#### 9.4 Inter-subjectivity

Through touch, two persons, the toucher and the touched, can become a new ensemble [...] a new entity (Feldenkrais in Ginsburg 2011: 267).

Modes of interaction inherent in FM rely on honing into inter-subjective processes of mutual learning through coupling with peers and environment, to be understood as ‘dancing together’ (Feldenkrais in Goldfarb 1990). Nevertheless, FM processes (in habitual practitioner client relationship of ATM – *teacher talks, student-group does*, with no demonstration or social interaction; FI happening *as one-to-one exchange* mostly on a table) tend to formalize the social interaction and hierarchies in rather limited ways. This project has consistently probed the extending of modes of sociality inherent within FM into more open and dynamic contexts, questioning ways of expanding ‘self-image’ and ‘self-awareness’ to a shared-social-image and awareness as modality for choreographic practice.

#### 9.5 Touch interactions

My research suggests that a transfer of FI touch-modalities to interaction of participants through improvisation enhances the organic potential for social exchange of sensory insights inherent in FM, stimulating a state of ‘uninhibited physical interaction’ (Perlin 2010) as base for performance making through:

- Introducing of FI-based touch interactions as mode of non-verbal communication between facilitator and performer, providing sensory stimulation, pattern clarification, and a psycho-physical modality of ‘support’ (Rywerant 2001).
- Sharing such touch explorations with ensemble/research-participants as mode of dialoguing and transfer into movement exploration: *performers working with each other*.
- Shifting modes of touch interaction from *hands-on-torso* touch to *torso-to-torso* touch and dialogue as resource for movement generation.
- Shifting dynamics of touch interaction from ‘yielding’ qualities to forceful ‘fighting’ qualities, and introducing notions of ‘resistance as choice’ while maintaining a shared awareness.

## 9.6 Co-creation

FM-practices rely on coupling-processes where sociality is constructed through the interaction of flexible communicative partners. Within such context the role of the choreographer is understood predominantly as facilitator of conditions for co-creation. This included the facilitating of:

- Conditions for awareness and self-eco-reorganisation of individual performers, allowing for flexibility, openness, and curiosity through movement.
- Conditions for the 'necessary encounter with the unfamiliar' (Mumford and Garde 2011), through interactions of ensemble members.
- Conditions for generation and development of movement material through individual performers and ensemble.
- Conditions for shared periods of debate and reflection, as developed during laboratory projects, strengthening conditions for 'complicity':

The format of the week was very helpful; the ATM lessons in the morning and the following improvisations set me off to experiment [...] The plenary sessions at the end of the day helped to[...] share, listen, exchange impressions, [...] gave a focal point where you felt that you are not alone (Lerer in Kampe 2010: 49).

- Conditions for spectatorship: A key role for the *choreographer as facilitator of conditions* is to engage with conditions for viewing/participating, by becoming the 'link between internal process and external product [...] vital for the work to be read in the public domain' (Claid 2006: 124).

A main emphasis of this research project has been on investigating FM as a resource to create conditions for co-creation between performers and choreographic facilitator. Negotiating the role of the choreographer as a 'facilitator of a choreographic environment' forms part of a learning between the participants. I understand *facilitating* and *socially-choreographing* such collaborative learning as important part of my artistic input and output.

## 10. Limitations

### 10.1 Bias

FM offers a physiological bias with a focus on neuro-muscular skeletal organisation in relation to environment. Such bias, a hierarchical privileging of the nervous-system, influences working modalities and self-image transmitted, as such highlighting an *observant self*, rather than a highly dynamic or affective self. FM emphasises a reducing of muscular tonus in the participant which might not always be a desired working position. FM at large bypasses the functioning of soft tissues, including organs and connective tissue. The research of FM-practitioner Dr. Robert Schleip on innervation and psycho-physical response-ability of fascia has shed light on physiological FM principles from a tissue-based perspective, beyond the 'body without organs' that the self-image constructed through FM implies.<sup>15</sup>

### 10.2 Documentation

Documenting artistic process, as a resource for evaluation and further research, has been an emergent part of this project. Not all projects were documented productively. *Crossing* lacks both, video documentation – due to legal problems of festival producers in relation to film-maker, and written feedback from participants. *trace/reverse* was documented in various locations and stages, including rehearsal-workshop documentation. While this provided a useful resource, feedback questionnaire from participants would have been invaluable. Organising and structuring documentation in multi-modal ways, through video, photographs, interviews or questionnaires, and providing ample resources for such documentation, became a main focus of *Weave*, and supported a shift in research focus towards a non-reductionist person-centred stance. Clarifying the need, beauty, and value of participant feedback – shifting the position of the knower away from myself as lead-researcher to the shared perspective of the team, enabled me to develop more satisfying documentary procedures for the final project, *The Dybbuk*.

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<sup>15</sup> I am referring to the writings of Antonin Artaud whose final radio play *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* (1947) was published at the same period when Feldenkrais articulated his first writings on an emancipatory rehabilitation of behaviour through movement- 'Body and Mature Behaviour' (1949).  
'When you will have made him a body without organs, then you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions and restored him to his true freedom' ( <http://ndirty.cute.fi/~karttu/tekstit/artaud.htm> [accessed 10/07/12] ).

#### 10.4 Perturbations

The slow and non-goal oriented ontology of FM stands in contrast with professional expectations often encountered in 'real-life' contexts. Kessel and Rosenfield (2008) identify two problem-areas within trans-disciplinary (TD) research:

**The Research Conduct Challenge:** setting conditions for research by choosing collaborators to formulate and synthesise questions and assumptions arising from different disciplines.

**The Implementation challenge:** the connection of TD-research with potential users of the research results, i.e., practitioners, policymakers, and public.

While I was able to conduct the project consistently with academic and external partners, it was in the contextual application of research with professional partners that constructive problems arose. The success of *The Dybbuk* partially arose from problems identified in prior projects, not included in this submission but publicised within the research period. The movement direction/staging and choreography for *The Merchant of Venice* (2007) became problematic since conditions for working/research modalities were not negotiated clearly enough between all participants at the start of the project. Subsequently, on the onset for the production of *The Dybbuk* (2010) I articulated, clarified, and ensured working conditions needed in order to implement research-led FM-Dance processes as tools for performance-making with all partners involved.

## 11. Conclusion

*'We see ourselves.'* Actor Simeon Perlin 2010

*'[...] little things that have a profound effect.'* Actor Juliet Dante 2010

### 11.1 Balance

*'Perhaps art as such will have no objects'* (Marcuse 2007: 111).

My research suggests that the Feldenkrais Method, concerned with questioning habitual perception and behaviour, placed within a choreographic context can support a 'new culture of uncertainty' (Montuori 2007), and yet support an open-ended, rigorous, and re-constructive approach to collaborative practice. Feldenkrais' work and his ideas on embodied self-care in the here and now, are close to Randy Martin's ideas on a function of dance as tool for 'looking at the re-organisation of now' (2009). My research places such 're-organisation of now' at the heart of choreographic practice.

### 11.2 Outcomes

My research project makes an original contribution to the trans-disciplinary field of somatic dance practice:

- By exemplifying a dialogic between a 'somatic educational practice' and an emerging 'somatic dance practice', revealing how The Feldenkrais Method can provide an empowering and agency-constituting process for dance-makers and performers within 'somatic-informed' contexts 'that recognize the emergent dancing subject as a feature of the work' (Brown 2011: 71).
- By proposing an emerging trans-disciplinary PaR-methodology, drawing on non-linear modes of enquiry and knowledge-creation as tools for embodied choreographic questioning.
- Through the creation of original works, produced and reviewed within 'real life situations', drawing extensively on the work of Moshe Feldenkrais.
- By making explicit a multi-dimensional range of theatrical applications of the Feldenkrais Method, beyond release dancing - offering dynamic and affectively intense performance modes drawing from 'all the power of bodily experience' (Molofski 2010).

- Through offering a model for embodied reconfigurations of a 'social kinaesthetic' (Martin 2010) within dance-making processes away from vertical and core-oriented modes of interaction, towards a pleasurable, de-centralised - therefore collaborative - organisation.

### 11.3 Resonances

I continue to disseminate my choreographic methodology internationally through performance-making, the hosting of regular workshops, and through teaching in Higher Education, both at undergraduate and post-graduate level.

Trans-disciplinary resonances of my research have included:

- **Further artistic work** with Pascal Theatre Company throughout and beyond the research period (*The Golem* 2005; *City of Refuge* 2007; *The Merchant of Venice* 2007, *The Secret Listeners* 2012). These works drew extensively on methodologies developed during this research project.
- **Further artistic work** as performer with choreographer and dance-film maker Liz Aggiss, concerned with embodied responses to complex environments (*Men in the Wall* 2003; *Break* 2005; *Beach Party Animal* 2011).
- **Site-responsive works with socio-political inflections** with various European partners, including: The Wedding Collective – movement-direction for site-specific opera *The Secret Consul* (London 2011) with professional performers and London-based asylum-seekers; Swiss/UK-based artist collective JOCJONJOSH - choreography for installation *Existere* (London 2011), presented as response to recent ecological crises integrating ninety naked performers forming a 'shelter'. Collaboration with TIG (Braunschweig, Germany 2012), direction of object-based movement intervention *The Web* in collaboration with professional performers and performers with learning disabilities.
- **As co-partner in the organisation of European innovative arts and training initiatives:**  
Dance Beyond Borders (2008) – co-organiser of EU-funded dance-making initiative hosted by Dance Kiosk Hamburg, in collaboration with Escola Superior Lisboa, ARTEZ Arnhem, and Retina Dance Company, Antwerp, including 11 emerging choreographers from 4 European countries. As part of this project I presented laboratories under the title 'The Art of Making Choices' with resident choreographers at Kampnagel K3 Choreographic Centre in Hamburg (2009, 2011) and at Tanzfabrik Berlin (2009, 2010, 2011). In 2011 and 2012 I co-organized



*Crisis Art Festival* in collaboration with Academia Dell' Arte, in Arezzo, Italy. *Crisis Art Festival* was designed as 'a sharing of performances, symposia, and debate' to investigate the 'relationship between art and resistance [...] confronting crisis with a new social imaginary'.<sup>16</sup> In 2012 I co-facilitated *The Mill* in collaboration with Blackhole-Factory, Germany. *The Mill* was designed as a

'trans-disciplinary exchange-project for performing artists with and without disabilities[...] as a metaphor for [...] a whirling of ideas, attitudes, visions, conditions and forces which can develop the performing arts further[...] a grinding and re-mixing'.<sup>17</sup>

The research undertaken in *The Art of Making Choices* fed effectively into these projects.

- **Contribution to academic research within the field:** Mentor for *Choreographic Toolbox* (University of Hamburg 2009). My contribution included a published interview in the publication *Textband Zeitgenössische Choreographie - Choreographischer Baukasten* (Klein 2011a). My research was mentioned in a recent Palatine-study as 'model of good practice' (Ilgweonu 2010). In 2010 I joined the editorial board for the 'Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices', published by Intellect.

My research had an empowering impact on my pedagogic practice in Higher Education. I was awarded *University Teaching Fellowship* at London Metropolitan University in 2010, and *Associate Professorship* in 2011 for developing an educational model that bridges *Somatic Practices*, interrogative *Dance Making Practices*, and *Professional Contexts*. Dance magazine *Tanz* (Kästner 2010) published an article about the innovative dance-curriculum designed and facilitated by me at London Metropolitan University under the title '*Funky University*'.

#### 11.4 Outlook

The research presented in this project is by no means exhaustive; Feldenkrais left an oeuvre of more than 2000 recorded ATM lessons offering a vast space for discovery and transfer. Further research on the use of FI partner-interaction practices and the use of *Imagined Movement* within dance making contexts would allow for new enquiries into possibilities towards collaborative practices within performance making contexts.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.crisisart.org/index.html> [accessed 10/08/12]

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.blackhole-factory.com/?p=1625> [accessed 10/08/12]

#### 11.4.1 Beyond physiology

Future somatic-driven PaR topics could be interpretations of FM through the field of Biosemiotics (Wheeler 2006), the application of Bio-Tensegrity principles (Levin 2002), and the research of Feldenkrais-practitioner Robert Schleip on the innervation of Fascia within a performance making contexts. I am planning collaborative projects with theatre-maker/Feldenkrais practitioner Andrew Dawson (Wellcome Trust Award 2010), and Dr Libby Worth of Royal Holloway University for 2014 and beyond.

#### 11.4.2 Culture

The emphasis within FM on core-mobility, poly-centricity, relationship to ground, and on yielding dynamic qualities, together with an emphasis on embodied questioning, deliberately challenge dominant Western patriarchal modes of body-coding. Research in relation to gender, for example, how Feldenkrais de-patterns and re-patterns the male dancing-self, is of interest to me. Recent collaborations with Vocab Dance and ADiaspora Dance Collective at Londonmet, suggest research on synergies between FM and Africanist dance practices. Projects undertaken with Blackhole-Factory/TIG (2011, 2012) were concerned with social inclusion of performers with learning disabilities through somatic-informed processes as probed within this project. Such applied practice-led research will be followed up in collaboration with the 'Institute of Integrated Design' of University of Coburg, Germany in 2013 and 2014.

#### 11.4.3 Spectatorship

My research touches upon notions of re-configuration of spectatorship towards multi-modal ways of participation. My latest project *The Secret Listeners (2012)* followed up such re-configuration where action/reflection cycles and feedback-loops between spectator/participants and performers were varied within an *immersive-performance* format. By taking the format of a *guided tour*, spectators were often literally *taken by the hand* or led each other through performers and environment. Time for casual questions and answers was organically fed into stylised movement-based performance, emotionally charged story-telling and factual lecturing, where a merging of performers with projected environment, was followed by shared tea, cake and discussion. My research calls for further investigation into the relationship of emancipatory FM principles to notions of spectatorship.

#### 11.4.4 Epilogue: Dances for a sick world

Doris Humphrey's book *The Art of Making Dances* was published at a seminal time of crisis within 20<sup>th</sup> century dance culture. New developing modes of presentation and non-determinism beyond representation left Humphrey with uncomfortable conclusions. Emerging choreographers were referred to as 'abdicating their rights to be people, pretending to be objects in space', leading Humphrey to a linear reasoning that 'a sick world will produce a sick art' (1987: 171). Perhaps a somatic-informed choreographic practice that cultivates a non-verbal thinking, facilitated in an empathetic inter-personal quest for 'human dignity' (Feldenkrais 2010: 68), allowing for questioning the given, can produce much needed *dances for a sick world*. Such choreographic practice might well be found outside traditional stage settings, within trans-disciplinary contexts and processes that realign the artistic with the everyday through images, patterns, and connections – a shared embodied learning, as facilitated through practices as probed within this project 'The Art of Making Choices'.

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**Appendix i Statements**

**Statement**

I hereby declare that the submitted publications do not form part of any degree qualifications and have not been considered for any other qualifications before

**Thomas Kampe**

**Collaborative Research Statement**

16/08/11

To whom it may concern

This is to state that THOMAS KAMPE worked with me as co-creator on THE DYBBUK in 2010. His research work with the Feldenkrais Method, and the applied choreographic strategies were key to the creation of this production. His input was a massive influence on the success of the production and enabled the cast of actors to realise a body-mind potential they would otherwise have never attained.

**Julia Pascal**

Director

[www.pascal-theatre.com](http://www.pascal-theatre.com)

# tanzinitiative hamburg

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Hamburg, 14. 7. 2011

## **Urbane Rituale Collaborative Practice Statement**

In 2003 Tanzinitiative Hamburg developed a project for the St. Pauli Football Stadion in Hamburg. The idea was to combine community work with highly artistic professional dance work, as well as taking into account the history of the place and the history of dance in Germany and Hamburg. I invited Thomas Kampe as choreographer because of his experience in contemporary community work and because of his unique choreographic approach. He also has a reflective critical knowledge on German dance history, which provided the basis for a sensitive historic contextualisation which was an essential aspect of this project. Through this Kampe's choreographic ideas enabled the dancers to experience a contemporary approach to work with mass movement as well with individual choreography.

Thomas Kampe was responsible for the overall choreographic vision of the work as a promenade performance which included events in non-traditional spaces, such as performance work below seating ranks and in between the spectators, and responded to site-specific topics. His role also included choreographic work on individual scenes, with a diverse range of participants, such as 'man with dog', or large group scenes on the football pitch.

His application of the Feldenkrais Method within the process supported the success of the project greatly. I even think this method helped to integrate different communities of people and "scenes" with totally different knowledge and background in dance and performance and to come up with a high level artistic work. For Hamburg this performance was the first of its kind and the first collaboration of contemporary dance with the football community. As St. Pauli is a world famous „cult“ club the event interested a large audience of non-dance-spectators and was highly recognized by the media.

The German Dance Film Institute Bremen covered the project in its magazine *Tele Dance Journal* 2003, produced by the Goethe Institute and ZDF 3sat/arte. The documentary *Testers and Testators - Expressionist dance between exile and future* looked at dance in England/London – Hamburg – Israel.

**Irmela Kästner**, Artistic Director of Tanzinitiative Hamburg



From: **Adi Lerer** (adilerer\_26@hotmail.com)

Sent: 22 August 2011 11:36:52

To: Thomas Kampe (thomaskampe@hotmail.com)

### **Collaborative statement**

This is to confirm that Thomas Kampe worked as co-director with me on the piece *Amen*. The piece was originally developed during the Weave residency at London metropolitan university in May 2009. Kampe's work with The Feldenkrais Method as a choreographic resource had an empowering impact on me as a performance maker and on the piece itself. The piece was then developed collaboratively over two weeks after the weave residency. Here Kampe's choreographic input allowed me to interact more organically and imaginatively with the projected environment through movement, and also enabled me to develop strategies and internal empathy to link movement with spoken text in complex ways. Kampe's work and my experience with The Feldenkrais Method as facilitated by him, had a major impact on the success of the piece .

Best wishes,

Adi Lerer

[www.adilerer.com](http://www.adilerer.com)

## Appendix ii

### Individual Pieces

#### ***'Urbane Rituale'* ; St. Pauli Football Stadium. Hamburg, Germany 2003**

Site-specific performance with 150 performers, funded by Hamburg Cultural Council, in collaboration with *Tanzinitiative Hamburg*, Hamburg Free University; *Retina Dance Company*, 1.FC St. Pauli Football club, and *Artifact architects*.

Role: Choreographic Direction and Conception

Collaborators: Annet Walter (Co-choreographer), Irmela Kästner (Dramaturg)

*Urbane Rituale* posed questions on how the Feldenkrais Method can serve as accessible resource for collaborative dance making with performers of mixed abilities in a site-specific context.

As the first large scale participatory dance movement event staged in post-WW2 Germany, *Urbane Rituale* was concerned with re-visioning and re-habituating

- of a chosen site rendered with habitual performative expectations : St Pauli football stadium in Hamburg, Germany<sup>18</sup>.
- of a tradition in modernist mass-movement practices: Rudolf Laban's 'movement choirs'<sup>19</sup>
- of the social functions that choreography can inhabit as a 'somaesthetic' practice (Shusterman 2000) of embodied self-care, as part of a 'social kinaesthesia' (Martin 2009) that seeks to embrace marginalised social groups through accessing liminal performance modes and 'marginalised dance discourses'(Fortin 2009).

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<sup>18</sup> The 1.FC St.Pauli 1910 - slogan 'non-established since 1910'- traditionally sees itself as the underdog football club in Hamburg with a traditionally left- wing following, always overshadowed by the hugely successful FC Hamburg. At the time of *Urban Rituals* the club was on the verge of bankruptcy and on its way into the third league; currently the club is playing in a renovated stadium in the first league.

<sup>19</sup> Rudolf Laban(1879-1958) staged several major large scale movement choirs in Hamburg between 1922 and 1927 and established his small ensemble 'Kammertanzbühne' in Hamburg in 1923.

These concerns were negotiated by participating organisations including Tanzinitiative Hamburg and myself during the planning phase of the project.

The project investigated how mass choreographic events can be staged in a contemporary context, asking the following socio political and artistic questions:

1) How can 'mass-movement' be employed in a context of diverse urban micro-cultures? *Preparation included debates and workshops with local marginalised groups, including asylum seekers, a women's football association, St.Pauli Football club hooligans, and senior citizens.*

2) How can large-scale participatory performance be made genuinely collaborative, challenging the roles of choreographer, participant and spectator? *Preparation included exploring the accessibility of existing dance - and non-dance practices as resources for collaborative dance-making with non-professional performers.*

3) How does such performance re-vision physical environment? Using non-traditional, sometimes abject spaces, and juxtaposing still performers with mobile observers, the piece invited a critical perspective on St.Pauli football stadium, interrogating the spectacle through displacement of spectators, and compartmentalisations of space and activity associated with it. It explored the 'forgotten histories' of the stadium as the site of a WW2 air raid shelter, fairground, and abattoir.

My role in this project was two-fold: as a dance maker I was responsible for the visioning and steering of the totality, thus for overall concept and forming of the piece. Furthermore, I was responsible for the collaborative production of choreographic episodes within the totality of the project. This included working with distinct groups of participants using somatic movement practices as resources for movement generation.

Feldenkrais' 'theory of reversibility' (1985) provided a working position that created an inclusive point of view in the visioning of the piece. Practically, this had an initial non-censoring effect on the conceptualizing of the project. As 'the first principle of the Feldenkrais Method' suggests that 'there is no principle' (Hanna 1980), subsequently my role was to create a choreographic 'open-system' within the process that had clear boundaries, yet was permeable to the influences of a diverse range of cultural idioms. This led to a juxtaposition and interaction of eclectic performance cultures of often opposing aesthetic values and forms within shared space and time. The liminal choreography of the *St.Pauli Freibeuter Hooligans* (e.g. chants accompanied by highly dynamic

gesturing amongst the ranks of spectators; the lighting of smoke-producing firework devices), existed in close proximity to the virtuoso dancing of Retina Dance Company on the football pitch.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, a series of practical strategies arose from this paradoxical and dialogic thinking that affected the choreographic concept of the project and the use of the site as performance space – e.g. to include ‘abject’ spaces such as spaces beneath the seating areas, to reverse the spectator-performer relationship in staging where the spectator travels while the performers stay stationary, and to conceive the greater form of the project as a spiralling promenade performance. This overall form also included the blurring of boundaries between spectator/performer through staging and interaction especially in the final section of the project where all participants of the event share the same space- dancing together.

A large part of the conception of the structure, narrative and episodes of the project was created through the application of strategies inherent in ATM and FI practices:

1. The observing and identifying of existing and emergent movement patterns. This ‘educational strategy’(Pieper & Weise 1996) was employed as a choreographic construction strategy during several initial ‘site visits’. As observer I switched from being ‘self-observer’(what are the patterns the site is inviting me to perform?) to ‘site observer’(what ‘patterns’ does the site contain? ) simply asking to be ‘descriptive’ in attending. This process of observation was combined with two other key strategies:

a) A process of ‘imagining movement’: Referring to ideomotor response theories Feldenkrais developed this strategy in his practices to enhance sensitivity of the learner, as well as to improve neuromuscular rehabilitation possibilities and to develop kinaesthetic empathy (Hagendoorn 2004) of both practitioner and student. In a Feldenkrais context this is mostly practiced by performing movement only on one side to the body, and then imagining the movement on the other side of the body. As an effect of these practices the learner learns to actively switch between observational acting and imagining, both informed by a schooling of interoception and proprioception. This strategy applied to the choreographic process allows the choreographer to switch from the ‘neutral’ observer stance to a ‘What if?’- position of the choreographic dreamer or questioner, enabling the practitioner to imagine alternative choices to initial responses.

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<sup>20</sup> Here it has to be said the most astonishing moment of the project was to meet a St.Pauli *Freibeuter* member sitting crying on the pitch after the event- for him it was a shocking realization to see his passionate ‘choreography’ being received as within an art context.

b) Adopting a flexible systemic point of view : Feldenkrais' anti-reductionist 'Body-Mind-Environment Unity' stance asks the practitioner to 'act'- and this would include movement, sensation, feeling, thinking - relationally, holographically, and multi-perspectival: observing or imagining at times 'globally' by focussing on a larger context, or to shift towards micro-patterns, observing from different orientational perspectives,-close/far/above/below etc - while at the same time asking relational questions and observing relational patterns. The observer learns to develop an 'awareness' of their own positioning. This positioning is by no means reductionist and abstract notions of time and space, as Feldenkrais understood a person simultaneously as biologically, intrapsychically, and socially constructed. If as Noë (2009a) suggests, the task of the choreographer is 'to engineer the determining conditions of personhood', then my choreographic role within the project was to develop empathy toward the existing and imagined *determining conditions* of the site and participants through the above observation strategies. The subsequently emerging choreographic topics and responses thus were at times driven by an aesthetics of 'kinaesthetic experience'(Lavender, in Butterworth 2008), architecturally informed, or responded to historical socio-cultural offerings surrounding the site, or user-groups while ultimately addressing the subversive celebratory aesthetics of the whole event.

2. The supporting, enhancing and manipulating of emergent patterns: within a Feldenkrais process observed, imagined, or acted-out behavioural patterns are initially supported and reinforced until a clearer pattern emerges, and only later, at a secondary stage restricted, interrupted, opposed, or reversed (Pieper & Weise 1996) to explore non-habitual movement possibilities. In a dialogic process these two phases or strategies will form a recursive loop where the practitioner continuously returns to the enhancing phase to support the potentials of the student and thus communicates a constant asserting of possibilities, yet a raising of curiosity towards occurring deviations beyond experienced 'zone of proximal development'<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Feldenkrais strategies echo the work of Russian social-constructivist educationalist Lev Vygotski (1978) Vygotski researched into constructed learning through cultural mediation and internalization and focussed on the social processes of assisted learning, a learning that happens through the facilitation of a more experienced peer or social group. Vygotski posed that successful learning happens through empathic adaptation of the learning facilitator to the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the potential of action at a given moment of time, of the learner – a key perspective for the participants in the process of a Feldenkrais lesson.

Applying this supporting, enhancing, reinforcing, embracing or travelling with choreographic ‘seeds’ or creative utterances of the collaborators within the creation of the project ‘Urban Rituals’ asked the choreographer to work in dialogue with collaborating dancers, to identify partners’ knowledge and abilities, to refer to those inter-textually, and then to apply a series of constructive strategies and devices to deviate from familiar ground. These devices included ‘defamiliarisation strategies’(Shklovsky 1917) such as repetition, the enlarging of existing patterns of movement, reorganisation of spatial orientation and sequence in timing or speed, but also an increasing difficulty of movement patterns by setting problems or constraints.<sup>22</sup> In relation to the spectator – site relationship this meant that traditional site-expectation regarding sporting events, and expected spectator behaviour patterns were referred to, manipulated and often radically opposed.

3. Creating the piece through gradual small approximations which includes recursive processes of observation, reflection, and subsequent action. The Feldenkrais Method works chiefly through processes of repetition where small changes in knowledge, increases in difficulty, or perturbations are gradually introduced into dialogue with the learner to allow the participant to be able to accept and integrate rather than reject, unusual and newly acquired patterns of behaviour, function, or skill.

Working in graduations within the process of creation of ‘*Urbane Rituale*’ meant for example that after an initial site visit there would be time for reflection, to then feed-back and discuss information with the team, to then re-visit the site with information based on reflection and then to gradually select, develop, and refine ideas that would form the base for the next phase of development within the process. As Pascal (2010) observed in the process of the creation of ‘*The Dybbuk*’, this slow working in approximations ‘*eradicated fear from the rehearsal process*’(Pascal, in Kampe 2010), thus contributed to inclusive nature of the project which included performers of mixed abilities.

4. The ‘lowering of stimuli’ as knowledge forming strategy;

Referring to the ‘Weber-Fechner Law’<sup>23</sup> Feldenkrais uses ‘*making strange*’ strategies and manipulation of time and space of suggested movement patterns, such as slowing movements down and varying size and scale, to foster a ‘Brechtian’ reflective position of the participant, which

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<sup>22</sup> Several projects of the later research projects ‘Body/Soma/Self’ were distinctly concerned with probing the transfer of Feldenkraisian defamiliarisation strategies and the use of problem setting or constraints into a dance making context. See evaluation of ‘*trace/reverse*’ and ‘*Weave*’.

<sup>23</sup> Feldenkrais (1992, 2005) refers to the work of E.H. Webern (1795-1878) and G.T. Fechner (1801-1887). The ‘Weber-Fechner Law’ suggests a logarithmic relationship between physical magnitude and subjective perception of stimuli, where by a lowering of stimuli increases perception.

leads to the forming of a 'phronetic' knowledge, a knowledge of 'how' self and behaviour are constructed and organised.<sup>24</sup> By applying such strategies as part of the structural organisation of his lessons, Feldenkrais' key concern is to support the participants in their ability to learn.

To learn we need time, attention, and discrimination; to discriminate we must sense; this means in order to learn we must sharpen our powers of sensing [...]; the human senses are linked to the stimulus that produce them, so that discrimination is finest when the stimulus is smallest (1992 : 58, 59).

Within the overall organisation of the project '*Urban Rituale*' this slowing down, lowering of stimuli, or reducing of input of information into the choreographic field- thus a resistance of the spectacular- was a re-occurring strategy informing several sections in different ways. For example, within the 'corridor section' leading the spectators to the main football pitch, episodes with minimal spatial and dynamic content are placed in between highly dynamic and 'noisy' episodes providing for an energetic binary structure which enhanced the atmospheric impact of one another. The first scene within the stadium and on the pitch is constructed through repetition and gradual accumulation of pedestrian activities to enhance the reading of the spatial impact of the whole nearly empty stadium on the spectator as well as to serve as a build-up towards a highly dynamic ending. The episode with 'Man and Dog' juxtaposing a dog training situation against a double-speed version of Elvis Presley's '*You'll never walk alone*' allowed for ambiguous poetic and satirical reading of man's ( or dog's?) best friend placed against a distorted version of the traditional football hymn of St Pauli Football club.

On reflection, it appears that the totality-perspective of the project from its ideological point of view, and the somatic approaches towards dance making within the project share 'somaesthetic' concerns. Shusterman (2000) argues for a revival and reconstruction of a cultural and philosophical 'somatic turn' and states that by introducing somaesthetics '*as a philosophical discipline of theory and practice*' he 'tried to show how philosophy's oldest and most crucial goals directly entail a concern for improving our bodily perception and functioning' (2000: 166).

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<sup>24</sup> Montuori (2007) suggests that this guiding of the learner towards the experience and reflection on 'the construction of knowledge' combined with a pedagogy that leads to '*An understanding of the organization of knowledge*' are key elements of a new, 'transdisciplinary' approach toward enquiry.

Shusterman posits that

- 1) Philosophy has always been concerned with a *'critique and re-education of the senses'*;
- 2) *'Experiential somaesthetics'* and therefore practices such as the Feldenkrais Method are concerned with philosophy's goal of the acquisition of self-knowledge;
- 3) Philosophy aims at 'right action' depending on knowledge, self-knowledge, and on effective volition and agency;
- 4) That the three above goals are bound up to an overarching quest to achieve a better life.

Envisaging such large scale dance event was supported through accessing FM - processes which facilitated an efficient, socially compatible, choreographic/directorial process for such an event while promoting learning as an organic and creative activity. Revisioning my role as dance maker, as well as the role of all other participants, in the position of 'the learner' enabled me to engage with a complex choreographic project, and to make what seemed impossible possible at any given moment in the process. This revisioning of mass-movement in public spaces where participants seek social and political recognition through choreographic practice departs in *'Urbane Rituale'* from the contemporary sporting spectacle that habituates the chosen site, and equally queries modernist dance practices that formed key reference and point of departure to the project. Eddy( 2009) highlights commonalities between 20<sup>th</sup> century Somatic practices and modernist dance genres such as the mass movement experiments of Rudolf Laban's movement choirs. Laban's work shares commonalities with the work of Moshe Feldenkrais. Both designed their holistic practices through processes of embodiment and analysis of movement, chiefly to stimulate curiosity and provide capacities for experiment of the mover (Bradley 2009; Igweonu 2010) within a wider cultural trend of understanding movement practice as tool for personal and social change (Franko 2002; Hardt 2004). Rudolf Laban's Movement choirs were concerned with 'totality', structured around unity, community, and leadership (Counsell 2004), and were based around an abstract structural reading of 'universal' principles and grand narratives.

Feldenkrais' work radically departs from Laban's 'universalist' and 'totality' perspectives, towards a constructivist stance where a process of structuralization is understood as systemic and emergent, and an environment is provided for differences in perception and enaction of the micro-narratives of each individual within the movement frameworks provided. Both practices challenge modernist



notions of Cartesian spectatorship (Counsell 2004) by being participatory and experiential, yet Laban's work seeks to create a 'Gemeinschaft'- community, while Feldenkrais seeks to inform the individual ready for action to contribute to a diverse and complex model of 'society'. Nature and form of *Urbane Rituale* stayed deliberately ambiguous and multi-focal. The project revolved around a non-representational 'somaesthetic', concerned with sociality, and a revisioning of contemporary ritual performance in urban spaces to enhance diversity in cultural participation.

### ***Body/Soma/Self***

*Body/Soma/Self* formed the core of the research project leading to four distinct outcomes –

*Chaser* (2004); *Trace /Reverse* (2005); *Crossing* (2007); *Weave* (2009)

*Body /Soma /Self* emerged as a result of the success of *Urban Rituals* and was specifically concerned with introspectively researching potentials for the transfer of aspects the Feldenkrais Methods into dance-making processes. The project *Chaser* (2004) was undertaken by invitation of the Feldenkrais Guild of Germany, and to be presented as part of the Feldenkrais Centenary Celebrations at Munich University. The project was designed as a reflective research project with the goal of identifying and further querying the research outcomes of the project *Urban Rituals*. The focus was on probing the compositional strategies and scientific concepts inherent in the work of Moshe Feldenkrais, and their implications for the dancer and the choreographer in the process of making and performing choreography.

'*Chaser*' (2004) referenced the site-responsive format of *Urban Rituals*, integrating professional dancers, Feldenkrais practitioners, and spectators in a promenade format that was concerned with using the chosen site as 'score' for choreographic or scenic development. In the process of dialogue with the Feldenkrais practitioners involved, similarities between choreographic processes and the Feldenkrais processes inherent in ATM and FI were identified, discussed and practically probed within the creation process.

The process and structure of the choreography were divided into two sections: the creation of a duet (dancers Sarah Gray; Anouk Llaurents; Sound Jamie McCarthy, 15 min) which was created over a period of 6 days; the creation of a site-responsive performance, created during a 1 day workshop with a group of Feldenkrais practitioners/performers during the Feldenkrais centenary conference in Munich. The duet was concerned with an aesthetics of 'kinaesthetic experience' (Lavender, in Butterworth 2008), non-representational and enquiry based, and was created in collaboration with

the dancers through structured improvisations. The dancers brought their individual expertise of somatic movement practices and exploration-based postmodern dance techniques into the process, thus working dialogically with the choreographer.

The creation of the duet was chiefly concerned with two research questions:

1. How does the practice of the Feldenkrais Method inform a development of dance language, vocabulary, or specific movement qualities for the dancer?
2. Can the Feldenkrais Method be used to formulate a choreographic toolkit that enables dancers to become co-authors in the choreographic process

*Chaser* constituted the preliminary research into these choreographic research questions, using simple, or 'classic' Feldenkrais themes, strategies, and lessons to develop working strategies concerned with the transfer of somatic knowledge and procedures into a choreographic context.

During the creation of the duet *Chaser* two particular strategies were probed:

- The transfer of modes of investigation inherent in distinct Awareness through Movement (ATM) lessons as resource for movement improvisation.
- The transfer of Functional Integration (FI) hands-on modes of dialogue as a resource for partnership in choreographic context.

Three major strategies to support this transfer were identified:

- The use of ATM or FI as 'kinaesthetic stimulus' and non-verbal resource or score for improvisation and movement investigation. Here dancers took part in ATM or FI partner-work explorations sessions led by the author; at the end of each session the dancers would take time to transfer bodily information and modes of enquiry developed throughout the lesson to explore emergent movement patterns within an improvisational context; there would be minimal choreographic verbal intervention from the research leader during this process apart from an initial invitation to take time to explore through improvisation, to allow for space to foreground kinaesthetic experience as resource for enquiry.
- Transfer of use of Feldenkraisian modes of facilitating learning into the improvisation process through verbal instruction, e.g. use of suggestion, imagery, and metaphor, reframing, pacing, and modelling to support emergent patterns, use of questioning.

- Transfer of use of Feldenkraisian modes of problem setting and solving processes into improvisation processes - the setting and letting go of physical constraints to allow for discovery of new, non-habitual movement choices, e.g. adding and taking away of the constraint of holding on to the head with one hand while using the head to initiate movement in different directions. This '*holding on to the head*' literally blocks the use of the neck within the performed movement, disturbs habitual body-use, and thus asks the mover to activate their ribs in relation to their head movements in unfamiliar ways.
- Combinations of the above processes to generate movement material.

The lessons and strategies selected as resources for the creation of the duet *Chaser* emphasised body-codifications which share commonalities with other 20<sup>th</sup> Century Western movement and dance discourses. Even though Feldenkrais lessons can be designed to support a broad range of body-codifications, uses, and functions, the project undertaken suggests that The Feldenkrais Method proposes a bias towards a corporeality which emphasises an omni-directionality in mobility and articulation of segments of the human core - pelvis, spine, ribs, skull - in relation to one another, prioritising lightness and freedom of flow in dynamics, and reversibility in coordination. This bias towards a three-dimensional and omni-directional use of torso can be genealogically linked to the work of modernist movement pioneers Vsevolod Meyerhold, Bess Mensendieck, Martha Graham, and Erick Hawkins, who focus on an articulate use of the '*culture of the hipjoints and posture of the pelvis*' (Feldenkrais 2005;105), and perhaps more so to the 'decentralization theories' of dance maker Alwyn Nikolais.<sup>25</sup> All of those modernist movement practitioners challenge a static Cartesian model of upright mechanical balance which carries 'high moral valence' in Western societies (Batson 2008).

More importantly, Feldenkrais' model of bodily behaviour and movement organisation is part of a 'paradigm shift' (Batson 2008) in human movement science towards a dynamic systems understanding of human development (Thelen and Smith 1993). It offers a non-reductionist view on movement as an emergent and complex relational process where perception and action are understood as one, in short a dynamic system. Feldenkrais lessons are designed to ask the learner to develop an ability to shift place of bodily attention, movement initiation, and direction, while developing an organic readiness to adapt to gravity and environmental changes in any given

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<sup>25</sup> Martha Graham's ideas on the acquiring of movement skills as means of 'developing freedom and spontaneity of action' (Graham, in Rand-Rogers 1980:185) correlate to Feldenkrais' concept of maturity and empowerment – Feldenkrais coined the term of 'acture' as replacement for 'posture' to highlight the psychodynamic and socially constructed nature of postural states, but perhaps also to emphasize a potential for self-improved action.

situation.<sup>26</sup> While Feldenkrais designed his lessons by referring to an evolutionary necessity of a living system to cope with changing environments, and to his extensive training in Judo, Batson (2008) likens this body-attitude to 'Kamae,' the poised presence of the Japanese Noh actor, a postural state 'open to all eventualities, as a virtual movement' (Amazaki, cited in Batson 2008:143), where body and mind, and perception and action, are coupled through motion. This emphasis on a 'relational body' (Batson 2008) concerned with the 'structural coupling' (Varela 1972) of a self-regulating moving organism within a dynamic environment, formed the starting point for the initiatory questions regarding the nature of the emerging movement vocabularies for *Chaser*.

The movement vocabularies developed within this project were structured around several functional themes derived from Feldenkrais:

- Movement explorations concerned with multi-dimensional mobilization of torso and a subsequent concern with internal changes in body organization and shape; here, questions of movement relationships within torso, but also between torso and limbs were highlighted.

Simultaneously, the dancers were asked to pay attention to and investigate occurring changes in self-organization in relation to environment- the ground and surrounding spatial kinesphere.

- Movement vocabularies concerned with locomotion patterns, including travelling, and level changing; vocabularies explored included phylogenetic and ontogenetic 'developmental patterns': rolling, weight transfer, sitting, creeping, crawling, transitional movements from floor to standing.
- Movement vocabularies that emerge from haptically adapting to and interacting with duet partner.

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<sup>26</sup> This evolutionary stance, also found in the work of Mabel Todd(1980), is manifested in both Feldenkrais and John Dewey's 'Body-Mind' position(2007) leading both to pedagogical strategies that involve exploration , problem-setting, and problem solving through awared action. Banes (1987) and Ross (2007) claim that Dewey's work had, through the teachings of Margaret H'Doubler and Anna Halprin, a profound influence on the practices of the US early post-modern dance practices of the Judson Church Dance Theatre group, as well on the choreographic methodologies of Alwyn Nikolais and Murray Louis.

Within the choreographic process the dancers were not given set movement vocabularies, but were asked to find movement responses to given tasks. The structure of the duet in *Chaser* was organised as structured improvisation around set themes and movement material, allowing the dancers to act and interact within set parameters. While emerging movement or dance vocabularies within this project may seem similar to other 20<sup>th</sup> century organic movement vocabularies, it is the way the dancer is invited into the reflective process of ‘embodied analysis’ (Kampe 2010) that makes the Feldenkrais approach to movement development distinct, particularly the way in which subjectivity is fostered within a ‘deconstructive’ dance making process (Bales&Nettl-Fiol 2008). The dancers’ decision-making processes, which are rooted in relational thinking, sensing, feeling, and movement, must be understood to be part of the dance language.

Dominant Western dance aesthetics places an emphasis on ‘core-stability’ and verticality of alignment where the axial skeleton (Pelvis, spine, ribs, skull) is understood as centralising stable anchor to support the actions of ‘distal’ areas of the human body. Feldenkrais radically challenges this dualist Cartesian model of body-organisation by asking the mover to constantly shift place of movement initiation, and by designing movement explorations where relationship of stability and mobility are varied and reversed within ‘joint order’. This ‘proximal-distal reversal’ strategy is embedded in both ATM and FI practices and was used extensively during the creation of ‘Chaser’.

### ***‘trace/reverse’ (2005)***

***‘trace/reverse’*** was a choreographic laboratory project, initially supported through a bursary of Chisenhale Dance Space London with workshops leading up to a performance held over a 7 day period under the title ‘Body/Soma/Self’(performance 19/03/2004 at Chisenhale Dance Space, London). Variations of the emerging piece ***‘trace/reverse’*** were subsequently featured at the symposium *‘Problems and Mysteries’* run by the performance as research unit ‘The Facility’ at London Metropolitan University (2/4/05), and at the 2<sup>nd</sup> *European Feldenkrais Conference* at Freie Universität Berlin (1/4/05). The research process involved a group of six professional dancers, four professional guest Feldenkrais teachers, all with a background in dance, and an open group of workshop participants.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Dancers: Anouk Llaurents, Jenny Lam, Rainer Knupp, Colin Poole, Claudia Schnuerer, Katsura Isobe  
 Feldenkrais Practitioners: Scott Clark, Carline Scott, Jackie Adkins, Alex Croft.  
 Academic Participants: April Nunes, Sarah Reed.

The research process, which was the first Performance as Research project in the UK investigating the application of the Feldenkrais Method in a contemporary dance context, was structured through morning workshops open to a wider public and attended by dancers and UK based academics, run by invited Feldenkrais Practitioners, and afternoon workshops/rehearsals run by myself in collaboration with the dancers involved. Practical sessions were followed by debate and periods of peer observation. The project took an introspective stance, investigating potentials of transfer of somatic processes into a dance context, seeking to transpose Feldenkraisian modes of construction into choreographic processes.

At the heart of this project were questions of how conditions for the creation of embodied knowledge and inquiry are facilitated within the processes of the Feldenkrais Method, and how those conditions can be transferred to choreographic practice. Initial research questions were framed around topics regarding the furthering of vocabulary development as initiated in project '*Chaser*', and a questioning of compositional and choreographic structuring devices inherent in the Feldenkrais Method. By examining Feldenkrais and *Awareness Through Movement* strategies and lessons through choreographic processing and structural compositional analysis, the project proposed a hypothesis that The Feldenkrais Method draws on a series of 'defamiliarisation strategies' in order to foster an environment for self –organisation, learning, curiosity, self-reflection and subsequent self- correction, to 'help the individual discover new possibilities and choices in movement' (Igweonu 2010:10). During the research process ATM lessons appeared as highly structured micro- choreographies aiming to facilitate improved perception and action of the participant. By interpreting ATM lessons, and indeed the Feldenkrais Method, as choreographic, a broad range of 'choreographic devices' (Smith-Autard 2000) were identified. Such devices can be understood as 'defamiliarisation strategies', first theorised by Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky(1893-1984) in his essay 'Art as Techniques'(1917). Shklovsky, like Feldenkrais, was concerned with habituation of perception and behaviour and saw the main function of art as to challenge habituation:

Art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar,' to make forms difficult, to increase the length and difficulty of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged (Shklovski 1917: 12).

Similarly, Feldenkrais proposes an aesthetic experience to the participant/learner which makes use of this 'making strange' to heighten sensory–motor awareness and capacities while stimulating critical reflection on the organisation and construction of embodied knowledge. Feldenkrais states that an important feature of the group work is the continued novelty of situation that is maintained throughout the course. 'Once the novelty wears off, awareness is dulled and no learning takes place. If a configuration needs repetition, I teach it in tens and even hundreds of variations until they are mastered (Feldenkrais, 2010: 37).

The formal devices identified through the research project can either be used to create coherence and familiarity within the overall 'narrative' of a lesson, or are used to increase unfamiliarity and range of difficulty, thus to problematise movement patterns explored; these two paradoxical functions do not exclude each other but overlap and serve the function to make the participant familiar with the unfamiliar while providing tools for questioning of habitual behaviour:

- Use of theme and variation e.g. mobilising the pelvis while lying on back as theme, while introducing spatial and dynamic variations<sup>28</sup>
- Repetition
- Reversal
- The slowing down or decreasing of size of movement
- The breaking down of movement patterns into smaller segments
- The use of juxtaposition of contrasting movement patterns to form binary or tertiary structures : ABA, ABACA structuring
- Spatial re-orientation and displacement .e.g. a lesson which supports the functioning of the legs in walking being taught lying on the back or on a side
- The use of constraints; e.g. adding and later taking away of restricting movements such as crossing the legs in standing while mobilising the hips, to decrease movement range of initial movement exploration
- The deliberate 'hiding' or excluding of function of movement patterns during the lessons, and only towards the end of the lesson to introduce the function. <sup>29</sup>.

Chelav (2003) emphasises the relevance of organisational, compositional aspects of the ATM lessons and suggests that each lesson has a 'logical structure and is like a work of art. It is hoped that the

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<sup>28</sup> (Feldenkrais 1990:115) *Lesson 6 Differentiation of Pelvic Movements by the Means of an Imaginary Clock*

<sup>29</sup> Chava Chelav (2003), one of the first students trained by Moshe Feldenkrais suggests that '*Feldenkrais defined functions as movements with a definite purpose, such as walking, bending, turning, and so on*' (2003: i).

teacher and student alike will, through the medium of the lesson, will have a sensual-emotional-thoughtful experience.[...]The components of the lessons become clear, its hidden layers and logical structure become obvious in this way, the logical structure can foster logical thinking'.(2003;ii) Within the somatic movement practices The Feldenkrais Method finds a unique signature through the combination of application of de-familiarisation devices, logic in compositional structuring of lessons, and the use of verbal instruction.

The collaborative nature of the research process allowed further topics and questions to emerge which formed the beginnings of a working methodology for subsequent projects. Here, a shift from a reductionist point of view concerned with structure, strategy, form, and vocabulary, towards a person-centred perspective occurred. Questions towards the development and transfer of skills such as structuring and forming of vocabularies, and subsequently questions of empowerment of the dancer within the rehearsal process emerged. There were several foci within this arising question that seemed relevant to the re-orienting of my research:

- The construction of choreographic tasks and movement phrases which involve defamiliarisation processes
- The use of language and imagery
- The relationship of language to movement experience through the use of questions.
- The use of self and peer observation, peer interaction, peer instruction

During the ATM lessons and dance explorations taught by fellow practitioners and myself an 'instructing through questioning' was identified as a re-occurring strategy. Key questions used in the Feldenkrais Method are concerned with guiding the participants' attention towards the quality of bodily sensation or relationships within skeletal organisation. Igweonu confirms that 'the art of "questioning" is central to the teaching and practice of the Feldenkrais Method - as an inquiry based system of learning and unlearning movement habits'(2010:12).

By taking the role of questioner, in both the ATM teaching and subsequent choreographic process, the choreographer facilitates an environment which encourages enquiry and at the same time subverts traditional hierarchies within the choreographic process, that allows for not-knowing and collaborative processes of 'finding', and both choreographer and dancers becoming 'co-enquirers' (Igweonu 2010). It became evident that not only did the peer-teachers observed began their morning session with movement processes that facilitated self-observation but also included periods of peer-observation followed by verbalisation of observed movement patterns. One of my initial



aims was to explore processes of verbal-instruction as part of the dancers' choreographic processes probed in the afternoon sessions. Witnessing the dancers observe each other and then begin to give verbal feedback to each other, it became clear to me that the linking of sensed, experienced or observed movement to the use of verbal language might be a key empowering process and skill for the choreographer or choreographic dancer. By foregrounding a notion of questioning into a dance making process this project sought a dance aesthetics that resists the given.

### **'Crossing' (2006)**

Dancers: Lizzy Lequesne, Colin Poole, Thomas Kampe (Project Leader) Sound: Mark Horrocks

Guest artist/workshop leader: Graham Dixon, director of Michael Chekhov Institute UK.

The laboratory project '*Crossing*' (2006; trio, '*Escapade*' Improvisation Festival staged at *The Rocket* on 09/11/2006) arose from a critical stance towards the application of The Feldenkrais Method in performance making contexts. Aim of this choreographic project was to examine how the pre-expressive nature of The Feldenkrais Method can be questioned, challenged and extended in the context of the creation of hybrid dance-theatre forms rooted in 20<sup>th</sup> century traditions that seek to employ a visceral, extreme, and ecstatic physicality in performance.<sup>30</sup>

As a transdisciplinary project it draws from several disciplines- a somatic educational practice such as The Feldenkrais Method, 20<sup>th</sup> century theatre training practices, and the eclectic mix of contemporary dance knowledges as brought into the process by the participating dance artists. While The Feldenkrais Method seeks to address improved self-organisation, and autonomy of the individual, inherent practices revolve around concepts of 'function' and improved functioning.

Chava Chelav (2003), one of the first 13 students trained by Moshe Feldenkrais suggests that 'Feldenkrais defined a function as movements with a definite purpose, such as walking, bending, turning, and so on'(2003: i). The focus on function as 'effective action' (Feldenkrais 1990:85) with an imperative of supporting movement which is 'light and easy', combined with a bias towards introspection, can leave a limited dynamic and spatial range in the movement repertory of the performer. While the Feldenkrais Method offers an organised system to access aspects of sensing

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<sup>30</sup> I refer here to European post-dramatic theatre and dance practices pioneered in the work of Antonin Artaud, and pre-WW2 expressionist and grotesques dancers such as Valeska Gert, Mary Wigman, Kurt Jooss, Dore Hoyer, the Tanztheater of Pina Bausch, and more currently the work of Alain Platel and C'de la B (Belgium), and Meg Stuart(Berlin). Stuart's work has been concerned with 'radical vocabulary....the doubt of the body....the body questioning itself.... non-ordinary states of mind.' (Stuart,cited in Gehm, Husemann, v. Wilcke 2007: 132).

and thinking through movement within the performer, developing an affective connectivity is not addressed actively within the application of the method. Through workshops lead by myself and visiting artist Graham Dixon, Artistic Director of Michael Chekhov Studio London, rehearsal practice and final performance, this project explored psycho-physical and impulse-strategies within Feldenkrais Method in relation to other body-mind related approaches to theatrical physicalisation such as Laban Effort/Shape-, Warren Lamb's *Posture/Gesture-*, Michael Chekhov-, and Jerzy Grotowski-based strategies.<sup>31</sup>

The project aimed at linking the 'impression' and 'self –awareness' perspectives offered by Feldenkrais with more 'expression' oriented modes of training and performance while placing an emphasis on notions of personal creativity, communication and partnership. More specifically, this project probed the following questions by using practices inherent in The Feldenkrais Method as either preparatory exercises, or by transposing Feldenkrais principles into 'expressive' workshop- and rehearsal process:

1. What similarities and parallels in practices and theories can be found between Feldenkrais' work and selected psycho-physical theatre practices?
2. How can the Feldenkrais Method be a useful resource for psycho-physical and post-expressionistic theatre based training and performance?
3. How can psycho-physical theatre practices enrich practices inherent in the Feldenkrais method?
4. How can these theatre practices be useful for the dancer?
5. How can 'hands-on' strategies found in Feldenkrais' *'Functional Integration'* be used as resource for performance making?

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<sup>31</sup> All of the above approaches share a twentieth century ideology of the importance of an individual and shared psychology that is manifested through embodiment.

Outcomes:

1. Performance at Escapade International Improvisation festival.
2. A furthering of a methodology of the application of practices and principles of the Feldenkrais Method in a dance-theatre context.

Here the following resonances emerged, suggesting that

- The sensory-awareness based self-observation strategies inherent in The Feldenkrais Method can serve as tools for observation of somatic responses to emotional changes within the performer.
- The acquiring of movement competencies inherent in the Feldenkrais Method can serve as skills base for more dynamic physical theatre investigations.
- The investigative skills stimulated through the practice of ATM or FI interactions can be transferred into rehearsal practice as modes of enquiry.
- The non-corrective nature of Feldenkrais practices allows for an atmosphere of play and non-judgement in the rehearsal process.
- The working mode of working in small increments or approximations, leaving a quality of allowing for work-in-progress, supports a non-judgemental working mode.
- The breaking down, analysing, and re-patterning of known movement patterns echoes processes found in the acting approaches of Konstantin Stanislavski and Michael Chekhov such as breaking down situations or scenes into 'units and objectives'.
- Working through de-patterning of habitual and encultured movement patterns, and seeking a neutral observational stance offers a positioning that echoes the 'Via-Negativa' approach towards learning suggested by Jerzy Grotowski (1968).<sup>32</sup>
- Strategies such as supporting and enhancing emerging movement patterns echo strategies found in Grotowski's emotional 'Impulse' work.

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<sup>32</sup> Theatre practitioner/theorist Jerzy Grotowski (1933-1999) referred to this process of stripping away socially inscribed behaviour as 'gradually eliminating whatever proved superfluous' (1968: 19) in both the acting as well as the defining of the performer-spectator relationship.

- Touch interventions as used in Feldenkrais' *Functional Integration* practice, which involve haptically oriented dialogues of listening, guiding and manipulation can develop empathy, communication skills and trust amongst the performers.

### Methodologies:

During the laboratory project ATM lessons were explored that combine changes in shaping and coordination of the torso through flexion/extension and side-bending patterning, which were then transferred to solo and partner explorations which investigated aspects of Warren Lamb's post-Laban 'Posture-Gesture-Merging' framework, and Michael Chekhov's 'Psychological Gesture' practices.<sup>33</sup> Both practices ask the learner to connect feeling, emotional states, or inner attitudes to changes of body positioning and organisation. Such connectivity is encouraged through questioning that accompanies the embodied situations. Questions asked concern feeling state of the mover, or ask the mover to use their imagination to put themselves into a specific situation that demands a non-neutral, emotionally charged attitude.

Learning happens, like in the Feldenkrais Method, through comparing differences.

The mover might be asked to reach for an imaginary object while deliberately detaching the movement of the torso from the reaching of the arm, or to initiate with the torso first before the arm is activated, or to curve or arch the torso while reaching. Other Feldenkrais lessons utilised in the project were concerned with the use of mouth, eyes, face and breath, or concerned with pressing of limbs or torso against the floor, thus exerting energy outwards towards the environment. Those lessons would be used as preparatory lessons for Laban based Effort/Shape-based practices and vocalisations which later supported Grotowski-based explorations on emotional 'Impulse'.<sup>34</sup>

During the project I organised the practical process through principles of reversibility between internalisation and externalisation, between questioning and moving; within the Laban- Effort/Shape work the movers were given distinct movement patterns and qualities to explore, and questions and suggestions regarding inner attitude, feeling, emotional states were being fed into the movement process, so that movement qualities stimulated and revealed potential for feeling. To subvert linearity in logic and encourage flexibility in body-mind attitude the movers would then be asked to

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<sup>33</sup> Both approaches are concerned with linking inner attitude and feeling states to enacted bodily organisation.

<sup>34</sup> Grotowski furthered Konstantin Stanislavski's (1863-1938) psycho-physical concept of a motivating 'Impulse' as a pre-action state that exists 'born in the body' (Grotowski, in Richards 1995). Grotowski aimed to train the actor's availability to such 'Impulse' through imagination and action. A similar pre-action imagination learning can be found many Feldenkrais lessons and forms a key strategy within ATM lessons.

attach an opposing feeling to the same movement pattern or quality. e.g a sharp, outward directed movements movement a strong force might be initially associated with a feeling of anger or frustration- the movers would then be asked to execute the movement pattern while laughing or working with a quality of joy. Grotowski's emotional 'Impulse' work asks the performer to move from a series of given images which suggest a range of feelings states or emotions. Performers are asked to pay attention to physical – and this might include postural, muscular-tonic, or breath rhythm- responses to verbal instructions might which situational suggestions such as :

'The image is relief- imagine something terrible has happened, and now it's over.'

Or 'The image is disgust- you are simply disgusted.'

Learners are asked to non-judgementally observe responses to a broad range of contrasting emotional imagery. During the project I guided this process in small approximations; learners were first asked to engage in this process lying down (a Feldenkrais strategy to disrupt the social spectacle of being seen by and the seeing of other, thus giving space for uninterrupted self-discovery), while just focussing on breathing rhythm quality of sound utterances. Participants were then asked to simply enlarge and enhance breathing and sound patterns. The same process would be repeated while standing upright. Participants were asked to pay attention to responses in breath, sound, postural changes, and gestural engagement, and equally to the first process asked to repeat, enhance, and enlarge the physical responses- creating feedback loops by letting the feeling enlarge the movement and letting the enlarged movement intensify the feeling. In between each given image participants were always asked to return to a neutral observant stance.

These practices were to be used as 'tuning scores'(Nelson, L. in Gehm, Husemann, v. Wilcke 2007) for the participants to develop greater empathy - kinaesthetic, and emotional empathy towards their own psycho- physical organisation and potential in relation to the experience of others. The heightened sensory- emotional-movement awareness developed in the processes used during this project was furthered in dialogic partner practice which involved touch interactions (e.g. being passively shaped by a partner and then responding emotionally to this posture the partner had moulded the other one into; or, working with matching touch qualities while mutually increasing and decreasing pressure with partner), following and leading exercises with movement and emotive sound, where leader and follower have to share and maintain a matching sound/movement quality, and time for peer observation through witnessing practices.

The performance was set as a structured improvisation with live mixed sound score by sonic artist Mark Horrocks. Methodologies developed within this project were seminal for the application of the Feldenkrais Method in the choreographic devising process of *The Dybbuk* (2010).

### **'Weave' (2009)**

The laboratory project 'Weave' was run during May 2009 at London Metropolitan University. 'Weave' was funded by 'The Facility -Performance as Research Unit' of the Performing Arts section of London Metropolitan University, as part of a series of research events entitled 'Recording the Performance'. 'Weave' aimed to bring together a team of international contemporary dance makers and experienced somatic practitioners to investigate the use of the Feldenkrais Method® as a resource within choreographic practices.<sup>35</sup> The project, led by myself, included collaborations with three Feldenkrais colleagues all working within the field of dance or theatre, and with dance- and theatre -makers with a specialist interest and expertise in somatic dance practices.<sup>36</sup> During and after the project *Weave I* collaborated with actor Adi Lerer on the creation of the solo *Amen*. A first version of the solo was performed on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2009 at London metropolitan University (See DVD 2 *Amen*). A further developed version was presented on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2009 as part of 'The Rag Factory' event- and evening of Performances, Art , Film, Live Music and Cabaret, London, and on 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2010 at *De La Warr Pavillion*, Bexhill.

The specific aims of 'Weave' were multi-faceted : On the one hand this project sought to work through collaborative processes of networking between advanced somatically oriented dance makers, including qualified Feldenkrais, Body–Mind-Centering, and Pilates practitioners, thus placing the Feldenkrais Method in a fluid, discursive, trans-cultural field. On the other hand, a focus of the process was to probe a potential of Feldenkrais-based processes to intervene with, or to enhance choreographic processes with a specific focus on the re-working or extending of existing works. Here, the role of *questioning* and *choice* as key topics and modes of transfer and facilitation of learning within the Feldenkrais Method were fore-grounded. Such person-centred questions

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<sup>35</sup> A research report on this project was published in 2010 as 'Weave: The Feldenkrais Method as Choreographic Process' in *Perfformio* Volume 1, Number 2 Spring 2010 pp34-52 ISSN 1758-1524.

<sup>36</sup> Feldenkrais Practitioners/Dance Makers: Simonetta Alessandri, Thomas Kampe, Colin Poole, Victoria Worsley Performers: Katsura Isobe, Stephanie Schober,( both certified Pilates practitioners); Alenka Herman, Lizzy Le Quesne, Adi Lerer, Ute Kanngiesser; Karin Potisk, Rahel Vonmoos (both certified practitioners of Body-Mind Centering™) ; Lola Maury, Rohanna Eade, Valentina Golfieri, Zoe Solomon.

regarding inter-subjectivity, agency, and volition within performance making processes emerged from the self-experiment projects *'Men in the Wall'* (2003) and *'Break'* (2005).

The week long practice based project probed selected topics of „Awareness through Movement“ lessons and dialogic ‘Functional Integration’ (FI) processes as a starting point for movement investigation, self and peer-observation, and as a resource for choreographic choice making. Our shared time in the studio comprised of verbally led ATM lessons led by a team of trained Feldenkrais practitioners, improvisational and compositional tasks, time for reflection, debate, and peer support. Each participant either facilitated explorative sessions, or worked on either a solo dance or group piece. It emerged that most works that were created had an inter-subjective, ‘extended’ and relational focus: a questioning of ‘self in a chosen environment’, investigating responses to site-specific enquiries, or creating performance in symbiotic relationship of the moving self to virtual, projected environments. This relational notion of the inter-subjective in rehearsal and performance became core topic within the creation process of the solo *Amen* which I choreographed and devised in collaboration with performer Adi Lerer as part of *Weave*. Within this piece a symbiotic relationship between the moving performer, external environment such as object and projected image in stage space, and story-telling was explored. These are some of the questions that served as starting point for practical investigation or emerged throughout the process:

- How can the transfer of selected aspects of Feldenkrais Method aid the empowerment of the choreographer, dancer, or learner?
- How can aspects of the work of Moshe Feldenkrais, who put the notion of ‘choice’ at the heart of his practices, support the development of a capacity for choreographic decision making and judgement?
- How can the concept of „dexterity“, within a dance context, as ‘...an ability to quickly find a correct solution for a problem in any situation’ (Bernstein, in Kovic 2007:2) be extended to the fostering of a ‘choreographic dexterity’ of the dance maker? .
- Drawing on Feldenkrais' non-dualist view on enacted cognition as „body-mind-environment unity“ (Feldenkrais,1985), how can the role of the choreographer be re-envisioned as a facilitator of a ‘Choreographic Environment’?
- Can somatic practices such as the Feldenkrais Method leading to an expanded choreographic reading, be affiliated to the interdisciplinary field of ‘Biosemiotics’?<sup>37</sup>

This research project was designed with an approach towards a collaborative ‘questioning and finding’ in mind. Rather than investigating distinct modes of transfer of The Feldenkrais Method into dance making under my direction, I took a more absent role as ‘facilitator of a choreographic

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<sup>37</sup> Kalevi Kull (1999: 358) states that: ‘Biosemiotics can be defined as the science of signs in living systems. A principal and distinctive characteristic of semiotic biology lays in the understanding that in living, entities do not interact like mechanical bodies, but rather as messages, the pieces of text. This means that the whole determinism is of another type. Semiotic interactions do not take the place of physical necessity but because some of the interactors have learned to do so (using the notion of learning in a broad sense here).’

environment'. This meant that I deliberately minimised notions of choreographic directorship and authorship within the process and shifted the focus of the project onto the experience and authority of each individual co-researcher while offering opportunities for networking and information exchange. This shift was facilitated through the format of the project:

- Morning workshops in ATM and FI based practices rooted in processes explored in prior projects, or based on experience of co-researchers, followed by independent rehearsal time of each participant. Each day was concluded by a plenary session which focused on discussion and feedback by each participant around the relationships between the Feldenkrais experience and quality of individual rehearsal processes.
- The use of ongoing documentation: the practical process was documented through note taking by participants and 'documenter' M.J. Clay, photographs by Christian Kipp, and Gigi Giannella; A feedback questionnaire which partially asked participants to formulate their own questions allowed for participants to reflect on their own processes.

By providing space for reflection and discussion between the participants, as well as giving opportunity for written reflection during the project, the following three topics emerged as relevant:

- Feldenkrais' position of a *body-mind-environment unity* offers a 'philosophy in the flesh' (Lakoff 1999) which suggests a subverting of the notion of the subject and the ideology of the individual, encouraging a merging of information, and a blurring of self and other towards symbiotic interaction; subsequently, notions of facilitating an internal and external choreographic environment or 'Umwelt', of collective networking emerged as working modes demanding a responsiveness, openness in decision making between the participants in the project; here my practice lead me to an affiliating of FM with the field of Biosemiotics.

The term 'Umwelt' arises from the biosemiotic work of Jakob von Uexküll (1864-1944) . Kull (1998) argues that 'Umwelt is the semiotic world of organism. It includes all the meaningful aspects of the world for a particular organism'. In her writings on Biosemiotics, Wheeler (2006) refers to 'contemporary developments in the biology of perception, of ways in which human species perception is both embodied and enworlded' (2006:15).

- An Importance of Crisis: the evoking of perturbations or disturbances through subversive strategies of de-patterning and re-patterning; Participants highlighted a cathartic journey through confusion regarding habitual knowledges, working modes, or movement patterns within the re-working of known material. Participants felt that the interrogative approach to



movement investigation through the use of constraints, questioning, de-stabilising of fixed patterns through processes of differentiation, as well as use of asymmetrical patterning within chosen lessons contributed to a 'via negativa' where habitual actions and reflective patterns are being questioned and reformed. This cathartic process was generally understood as constructive.

- Questions regarding 'somatic authority' of the dance maker (Green;2001): how can an ability towards judgement regarding the making of choices be supported through processes inherent in FM practice.
- Dance-maker Karin Fisher-Potisk elaborated on the notion of choice in action through a felt questioning:

Psychologically most important seems the repeated message: try this, then try that – how does it feel? No right or wrong – you are able to judge. Feldenkrais offers a practice of making choices, a practice of listening to the body, and a practice of judgment. The way choice and judgment are achieved is through feeling, which is of course also essential to creating art. Feeling needs to be fine-tuned and practiced as well – building on training, skill, and experience, we use imagination and embodiment to feel our way forwards (Fisher-Potisk in Kampe 2010:48).

The solo '*Amen*', choreographed and co-directed by myself with Adi Lerer during and after the project *Weave* was concerned with the finding of a choreographic voice in a non-dancer; while working within the range of possibilities of the performer, the process focused on the use of differentiation to highlight detail in movement execution and emotional rendering, as well as the taking movement choices to their extreme potentials through use of repetition and movement manipulation. The project also focused on haptic interaction with objects and a merging with virtual projected environment. During the creating of the solo '*Amen*' I explored a broad range of choreographic processes and roles to probe my own choreographic dexterity in dialogue with both performer and set designer. These included a series of contrasting strategies which are rooted in the practice of 'Functional Integration'.

**Appendix iii**

**Articles**

## **‘Weave’: The Feldenkrais Method as Choreographic Process**

THOMAS KAMPE<sup>1</sup>

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*This project report gives an insight into a choreographic research project, ‘Weave’, which was run during May 2009 at London Metropolitan University. ‘Weave’ was funded by ‘The Facility - Performance as Research Unit’ of the Performing Arts section of London Metropolitan University, as part of a series of research events entitled ‘Recording the Performance’. This report attempts something Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-1984), was deeply suspicious about; to transfer something concrete and practical into something abstract - language.*

The work of Moshe Feldenkrais, and indeed this project, are rooted in experience, and like choreography itself, has its transformational potential through the experience of movement - embodied, enacted, and enworlded. But the work of Moshe Feldenkrais is linked to language, the biosemiotic, dynamic language of the living organism in its social environment, and through Feldenkrais’ huge oeuvre of ‘Awareness through Movement’ (ATM) lessons which are transmitted to the participant through verbal instruction. If indeed the first rule of the Feldenkrais Method is that ‘there is no rule’<sup>2</sup> then it must be a delight to try ‘to make the impossible possible’, to write about possible choreographic applications of an inter-subjective process that involves movement, sensing, feeling and thinking processes, which seems to me a choreographic process in itself.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Kampe has worked with dance, theatre, and movement for the last 30 years. He has taught somatic approaches towards movement education for performers in different settings around the world. He has worked as performer, choreographer and director in Germany and Britain, and is currently Senior Lecturer for Dance at London Metropolitan University where he was awarded University Teaching Fellowship in 2010. Thomas is a qualified teacher of the Feldenkrais Method, which forms a foundation for his teaching of dance and movement. He is currently completing his PhD thesis titled ‘The Art of Making Choices: Feldenkrais Method as Resource for Dance Making’.

<sup>2</sup> Feldenkrais’ Zen-like rejection to adhere to one principle is found already in his early writings and forms a position that underpins the design of many of his ATM lessons. ‘I content that rigidity, whether physical or mental, i.e. the adherence to one principle to the utter exclusion of the opposite is contrary to the laws of life’ (Feldenkrais 2005; 18).

'Weave' forms part of a series of practical research projects, led by myself, which aims to investigate possible applications and resonances of the Feldenkrais Method within the context of performance making rather than performer training. It is the notion of 'embodied learning' which is at the heart of the work of Moshe Feldenkrais, that perhaps bridges the gap between training, performing, and performance making, and thus brings the Feldenkrais Method into a desired position to be researched, studied, experienced, applied and critiqued within the field of performing arts. Some research has been undertaken on the use of the Feldenkrais Method in the training of dancers, (Bober 2001, Fortin 2002, Long 2002, Kovic 2007). However, there has been little or no practical research into its use in choreographic process development. This is the focus of my own cross-disciplinary work. The current climate of changing demands on the dance practitioner towards reflective, self-generative, and socially-inclusive practice that bridges dance, health and education formed a key context of my research on the potential of The Feldenkrais Method as a resource for the dance maker.

My practice-based research profile emerged during my time as Senior Lecturer at Chichester University (1993-2002). My work at what was then UCC enabled me to begin to intertwine what at the beginning seemed to be two separate strands and interests: 'The Body in Performance' and 'Choreography in Context'. My research in 'The Body in Performance' was predominantly concerned with an outlook on the application of somatic processes within performance training and education. Subsequently this aspect of my research was reflected in the evolving curriculum design of the undergraduate dance provision at UCC during the 1990s, and led to my own training to become a practitioner of the Feldenkrais Method (Lewes 2003), partially funded by UCC.

The second aspect of my research profile 'Choreography in Context' emerged from a series of internationally performed dance works, most notably created in collaboration with writer/director Julia Pascal, which were mainly created outside of traditional dance making contexts - in cross disciplinary dance theatre - visual art contexts, within performed plays, in galleries, for the screen, or in site specific-out door contexts (large scale dance works with up to 250 performers in collaboration with choreographer Rosemary Lee during the

1990s). Those works included a broad range of collaborators and performers made up of professional dancers, actors, visual artists, non-dancers, and performers with disabilities. Within this context of the widening access of dance towards a diverse range of communities of performers my research interest of developing investigative, innovative and accessible modes of dance making and dance training and performance began to form.

I have been coordinating the syllabus for all practice-based modules on the MA Dance/Dance in Education at University of Limerick in Ireland since 1997 and have worked at London metropolitan University as Dance Coordinator for the BA Performing Arts since 2002. My own background as performer, performance maker, and educator led me to design a dance and movement based curriculum for the BA Performing Arts, which is rooted in reflective practice. The curriculum combines exploratory somatic practices (The Feldenkrais Method, LMA/Bartenieff Fundamentals, Yoga based experiential anatomy, Contact improvisation, Skinner Releasing Technique) with assessment and learning modes that highlight a 'dance making' perspective rooted in Central European modernist and US post-modern dance traditions.

In order to support student progress and my own understanding of applying the Feldenkrais Method as a resource for dance learning, I have worked extensively with evaluation and feedback forms which were concerned with students' self-perception and ability to transfer embodied knowledge, from laboratory-like ATM teaching and learning modes, to a variety of dance contexts. To my surprise, over the years, an overwhelming amount of students not only responded positively to questions regarding improved physical abilities and enhanced self-awareness, but highlighted a substantial increase in a growing confidence in developing creative, dance-making choices. My experiences within educational frameworks and a professional context of making dances in non-traditional contexts, including a site-specific work 'Urban Rituals' with 150 performers (and one dog!) in Hamburg, Germany in 2002, led me to a more formalised investigation into the application of the Feldenkrais Method as a choreographic resource.

At a time when contemporary choreographers work without codified signature styles, often in collaboration with their dancers, investigating a reflective, embodied process such as the Feldenkrais Method as part of an evolving somatically driven dance culture seemed timely to me - from the points of view of a performer/dance maker, dance-educator, and as a trained Feldenkrais practitioner. Goldfarb describes the role of the 'student' in process of a Feldenkrais lesson as *collaborative* (Goldfarb 1990, 149). Bales and Nettle-Fiol (2008) refer to the 'entrepreneurial dancer as the counterpart to the independent choreographer' within contemporary dance cultures that marks a general shift towards more eclectic modes of working collaboratively today. 'A growing number of choreographers are now moving away from the authoritarian mode and are acknowledging the contributions of their dancers' (Fortin, S. in Shapiro, S., 1998: 67). On her part, dance maker Gill Clarke visions the role of the dancer as 'facilitating experiences rather than delivering consumable goods' (Clarke; 2007).

My practice-based choreographic research was subsequently framed through support by 'The Facility', Chisenhale Dance Space London, and the Feldenkrais Guild of Germany who featured two projects during their annual national congress at Munich University in 2004, and during the 2nd European Feldenkrais Congress at Berlin Free University in 2005.<sup>3</sup> I have subsequently run workshops applying the Feldenkrais Method within contemporary dance frameworks internationally, most recently at 'K3 German National Choreographic Centre' in Hamburg, Germany in July 2009 and at Tanzfabrik Berlin in January 2010. I am currently completing my practice-based PhD on 'The Art of Making Choices: Feldenkrais Method as a Resource for Dance Making' at London metropolitan University. The practice-led choreographic

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3 Past practice based projects were concerned with: (a) how the Feldenkrais Method can serve as accessible resource for collaborative dance making with performers of mixed abilities; (b) how practices of embodiment and analysis inherent in the Feldenkrais Method can enhance the dance maker's ability to engage in investigative and reflective processes; (c) how 'imagined movement', a key strategy inherent in the Feldenkrais Method, can be transferred and de-constructed to digital program writing, and then re-constructed on to-be-animated objects; (d) questioned strategies towards learning and embodiment of dance vocabularies, and the choreographic application of investigative constructive strategies and devices inherent in the Feldenkrais Method; (e) drew from Feldenkrais' strategies towards 're-habitation', challenging body-uses of the performer and traditional modes of rehearsal strategies and character development; (f) focussed on probing Feldenkraisian de-familiarization strategies within dramatic dance contexts.

research project 'Weave' aimed to bring together a team of international contemporary dance makers and experienced somatic practitioners to investigate the use of the Feldenkrais Method as a resource within choreographic practices. The project, led by myself, included collaborations with three Feldenkrais colleagues who are all working within the field of dance or theatre, and with dance and theatre makers who have a specialist interest and expertise in somatic dance practices.<sup>4</sup>

The Feldenkrais Method was developed by Judo black-belt and nuclear physicist Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais and is regarded as one of the twentieth century's most influential body-learning systems within the field generally referred to as 'Somatics'.<sup>5</sup> Based on a 'dynamic systems' understanding of movement behaviour, and aiming for a non-dualist perspective on learning, The Feldenkrais Method combines investigative strategies drawn from scientific methods with a focus on embodied self-awareness. Emphasising self-observation, Feldenkrais aims to foster an enhanced ability to make refined choices within chosen frameworks. Proposing a body-mind-environment unity the constructivist work of Moshe Feldenkrais explores practical dynamic possibilities of 'self imaging' (Beringer 2001) and of constructing a kinaesthetically empathic self through movement.

The specific aims of 'Weave' were multi-faceted : on the one hand this project sought to work through collaborative processes of networking between advanced somatically oriented dance makers, including qualified Feldenkrais, Body-Mind-Centering, and Pilates practitioners, thus placing the Feldenkrais Method in a fluid, discursive, trans-cultural field. On the other hand, a focus of the process was to probe a potential of Feldenkrais-based processes to intervene with, or to enhance choreographic processes with a specific focus on the re-working or extending of existing works. Here, the role of *questioning*

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4 Feldenkrais Practitioners/ Dance Makers: Simonetta Alessandri, Thomas Kampe, Colin Poole, Victoria Worsley. Performers: Katsura Isobe, Stephanie Schober, (both certified Pilates practitioners); Alenka Herman, Lizzy Le Quesne, Adi Lerer, Ute Kanngiesser; Karin Potisk, Rahel Vonmoos (both certified practitioners of Body-Mind Centering) Lola Maury, Rohanna Eade, Valentina Golfieri, Zoe Solomons.

5 Thomas Hanna describes Somatics as "The art and science of the inner relational process between awareness, biological function, and environment, all three factors being understood as a synergetic whole" (Hanna, 1985, 1).

and *choice* as key topics and modes of transfer and facilitation of learning within the Feldenkrais Method were fore-grounded. Thirdly, the project, as part of a larger research trajectory, aimed to use choreographic knowledge and processes to re-interpret possibilities and understandings of The Feldenkrais Method within a current context of a 'cognitive turn'(Beringer 2006) in dance research, embracing a current tendency (Shusterman 2008, Noe 2009) to interpret 'consciousness' and 'mind' as inter-subjective, embodied and destabilised.

The week long practice based project probed selected topics of 'Awareness through Movement' lessons developed by Moshe Feldenkrais as a starting point for movement investigation, self and peer-observation, and as a resource for choreographic choice making. Our shared time in the studio

consisted of verbally led Awareness through Movement lessons led by a team of trained Feldenkrais practitioners, improvisational and compositional tasks, and time for reflection, debate, and reflective peer support. Each participant either facilitated explorative sessions, or worked on either a solo dance or group piece. It emerged that most works that were created had an inter-subjective, 'extended' and relational focus: a questioning of 'self in a chosen environment', investigating responses to site-specific enquiries, or creating



performance in symbiotic relationship of the moving self to virtual, projected environments.

During the daily morning sessions we investigated strategies to access the mover's awareness and ability to participate in problem solving, in investigative, reflective, and constructive processes which are using movement, sensation, feeling, and thought as resource for choreographic enquiry. These are some of the questions that emerged throughout the process or served as starting point for practical investigation.<sup>6</sup> Amann (2003) argues that somatic practices should be discussed within the field of 'transformative learning' and examines how somatic learning within or through the body contributes to the meaning making processes in the adult learner. How can the application and transfer of selected aspects of Feldenkrais Method, an educational approach and a key somatic practice, aid the empowerment of the choreographer, dancer, or learner? How can aspects of the work of Moshe Feldenkrais, who put the notion of 'choice' at the heart of his practices support the development of a capacity for choreographic decision making and judgement? How can the concept of 'dexterity', within a dance context, as "...an ability to quickly find a correct solution for a problem in any situation." (Bernstein, in Kovic 2007:2) be extended to the fostering of a 'choreographic dexterity' of the dance maker? How can the emphasis on a felt 'kinaesthetic empathy' within Feldenkrais based movement learning processes be transferred to aid the development of an enhanced 'Choreographic Empathy'. Drawing on Feldenkrais' non-dualist view on enacted cognition as 'body-mind-environment unity' (Feldenkrais, 1985), how can the role of the choreographer be re-envisioned as a facilitator of a 'Choreographic Environment'? Can somatic practices such as the Feldenkrais Method leading to an expanded choreographic reading, be affiliated to the interdisciplinary field of 'Biosemiotics'?

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6 The process was documented with support of Marie Joy Clay in several stages. Stage 1: preparation and defining of project aims through email exchanges which include project proposals, discussions between participants, sharing of relevant literature and web links. Stage 2: The practical process made up of (a) the morning sessions: through notes by participants, notes taken by 'documenter' MJ Clay; photographs by invited photographer (b) rehearsals: through reflective journals based on questionnaire, photographs and drawings by 'documenter' MJ Clay (c) plenary: feeds into questionnaire; notes of 'documenter' MJ Clay. Stage 3: The performance, programme notes, photographs and DVD which includes filmed discussions.

Kalevi Kull (1999: 358) states that: 'Biosemiotics can be defined as the science of signs in living systems. A principal and distinctive characteristic of semiotic biology lays in the understanding that in living, entities do not interact like mechanical bodies, but rather as messages, the pieces of text. This means that the whole determinism is of another type. Semiotic interactions do not take the place of physical necessity (however not contradicting this, or as stated by W. Elsasser (1982): laws of quantum mechanics hold), but because some of the interactors have learned to do so (using the notion of 'learning' in a broad sense here).' In his early writings Feldenkrais talks about '...a functional unity between environment, mind, and body... the mind-body concept is an abstraction that grew into our language and our understanding.' (Feldenkrais, 2005: 149).

In her writings on Biosemiotics, Wheeler (2006) refers to 'contemporary developments in the biology of perception, of ways in which human species perception is both embodied and enworlded' (2006: 15). Feldenkrais' embodied concern with forming an awareness that leads to 'choice' is, perhaps, close to what Wheeler describes as 'semiotic freedom'. 'We are most free when the lives of our body-minds, which is to say our lives as phenomenologically whole creatures embodied in an environment which is really part of us, are socially and politically recognised' (2006:18). Ginsburg (2010) expands:

The stance taken here by Feldenkrais is hypothetical, and also operative. It is a working position, substantiated by the practical work he had been exploring for thirty years, and shared by a pioneering group of thinker-explorers of the twentieth century who were interested in finding practical ways of furthering human development. Among these people were F. Mathias Alexander, Heinrich Jacoby, Ida Rolf, Gerda Alexander, Elsa Gindler and her many students, Charlotte Selver, Emmi Pikler, Berta Bobath among them, and of course Feldenkrais, who was influenced by this movement through his contact with Jacoby, but also through his work in Judo and contact with oriental teachers.

### **Brief Description of Morning Sessions**

During the daily two hour morning sessions, four different practitioners led Awareness through Movement lessons with subsequent transfer to dance improvisational situations or compositional tasks. The ATM lessons are taught

through verbal guidance, are non-corrective, and allow each participant to engage with given tasks at their own chosen speed. Each facilitator introduced different topics and working modes to the group. The description of each session is followed by excerpts from comments by dancer-choreographer Alenka Herman in response to each day's work.

**Session One:** I led the first session during which we explored ATM lesson involving lying on the side and reaching forward with arm and knee, leading into weight-shifting and rolling of torso. This lesson emphasised rotation in torso, but also highlighted synchronisation and coordination between torso and limbs, head and spine, between right and left half of self-organisation and allows the participant to change mode of movement organisation and vary movement choices within the given framework. The lesson was followed by an improvisation asking participants to follow emerging patterns; then, a focus was specifically brought onto movement initiation and core-distal coordination.<sup>7</sup> Subsequently a series of problem setting strategies, 'constraints' used in Feldenkrais lessons (clasped hands, hands on head), were added into

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<sup>7</sup> I use LMA/ Bartenieff based terminology here, though during the lesson I use more metaphorical imagery such as 'driver/passenger' to support principles that are already explored in the ATM prior to improvisation.

the explorations to 'defamiliarize', and afterwards to extend new, experienced movement possibilities.<sup>8</sup>

*The improvisation was less rational than how I usually feel when improvising, although I was aware of every movement. I felt more physical awareness, more sensing. I felt the brain dissipated around the body, so I could sense/think with my body and the body decided, not the mind. At the end of 1st day: My head feels strangely heavy and tired, as if I had been studying mathematics for hours. Although I am confused and undecided in my own research, I am somehow calm and relaxed due to Feldenkrais.*

**Session Two:** Colin Poole led an ATM session on coordination of the eyes, highlighting the concept of 'imagined movement', a key strategy within the work of Moshe Feldenkrais who constructed much of his experiential philosophy around ideo-motoric principles. Ginsburg (in Feldenkrais 2005) comments on the influence of the work of Neurologist and Psychiatrist Paul Schilder (1886-1940) on 'Body Image' and 'Self Consciousness' and 'Spatial Image' on the work of Feldenkrais. Schilder (1999) sought to transgress the boundaries between Phenomenology, Psycho-Analysis, and Neuro- Pathology. Like Coue, and Erickson, who influenced Feldenkrais' thinking greatly, Schilder researched into hypnotism. For Schilder 'perception and action, impression and expression, thus form a unit, and insight and action become closely correlated to each other' (1999: 8). He saw his findings reflected in the 'pragmatism of James and instrumentalism of Dewey' (1999: 8). Dewey who over a period of 35 years studied with FM Alexander, coined the terms 'Body-Mind' (1929) or 'Mind-Body' (1928) to overcome a Cartesian dualism of body *versus* mind. Regarding growth, and improved 'experience as the central concept of philosophy and the body as it's organizing core' (Shusterman, in Bresler 2004: 51), Dewey championed self-directed learning and 'experiential learning' as visionary concepts that were to shape US twentieth century education. There are striking similarities between Feldenkrais' grappling with a dualist body-mind divide and Dewey's concerns. While Feldenkrais poses a 'functional unity between environment, mind, and body', Dewey asserts that;

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<sup>8</sup> I am greatly interested in the similarity of the theories of Victor Shklovski (1917) on perception and 'making strange', and strategies built into ATM lessons to heighten awareness and foster new movement possibilities in the learner.

the body-mind is not only simply the acknowledgement of the sensory input that goes to the brain, but is based on interaction of the subject with a complex and challenging environment' (Davidson in Bresler 2004: 198).

Central to Feldenkrais' practices was the premise that 'We act according to our self-image' (Feldenkrais 1990). It is this ability for 'Self Imaging' (Beringer 2001), rooted in an inter-subjective understanding of a person, that the design of ATM lessons aims to foster in the learner. Poole then led the group into eyes-closed explorations around creating an imagined environment; a conductor conducting and imagined orchestra; then a dancer responding to imagined sound; and a going back and forth between *creating* and *responding to* an imagined world.

The session was concluded with tasks regarding the setting of composed dance material on a partner, and the learning of peer created material, all done entirely through whole body touch interaction. This choreographic task challenged participants to align imagination and physical interaction in a highly dynamic context.

*It feels now like everything I did in original solo is an alien element. I don't know exactly what the solo is about anymore. I only want to explore more. It's like I'm going around the original solo material in spiral with similar ideas without going directly into it, it is too set and intense. I'm afraid the set material will mix up what I think I am doing now, the feelings/sensations from these sessions and my explorations. It's like decisions are elusive, something I need to pull for its tail, and I am jumping from one theme to another. Maybe part of all this thinking is setting the right task. Instead of looking for answers, it is about finding the right question.*

**Session Three:** Simonetta Alessandri led ATM lesson in 'side-saddle sitting', exploring side-bending and rotational potentials of the ribs in relation to head/tail organisation, and in relation to use of the arms. The ATM explorations were followed by an improvisation based on subjective kinaesthetic responses using internal sensation and newly acculturated movement patterns as key stimulus for dance development. These improvisations were followed by work based on 'Functional Integration'<sup>9</sup> practices with a partner to highlight organisation of ribs through a non-interventional/ listening touch.

Feldenkrais (1964) gives an insight into his use of 'theme and variation' to support a learning of connectivity within body-organisation:

Another important feature of the group work is the continued novelty of situation that is maintained throughout the course. Once the novelty wears off, awareness is dulled and no learning takes place. If a configuration needs repetition, I teach it in tens and even hundreds of variations until they are mastered [...] All exercises are arranged to produce a neat change in sensation at the end of the lesson and usually a more or less lasting effect. This enables pupils to find connections between different parts of the body, as for instance between the left shoulder blade and the right hip joint, or between the eye muscle and the toes.

Goldfarb gives an insight into his circular, dynamic systems understanding on what Feldenkrais often called a process of 'dancing together'. 'The teacher's approach is to conjoin, to go with the habitual pattern of motion the student demonstrates in order to break the habituation without eliciting self correcting resistance' (1990: 155). He goes on to argue that 'The sensory-based method presented here, a systemic and dynamic approach, provides another path based on the central role of the nervous system plays in regulating movement and on the role that perception, especially kinaesthetic perception, plays in regulating the nervous system. Relating perception and action, giving voice to kinaesthetic experience, and affecting the feedback loop are central notions to this educational approach' (1990: 156).

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<sup>9</sup> 'Functional Integration' is a one to one non-verbal learning process as part of the Feldenkrais Method, utilising the same principles of assisted organic learning through hands-on dialogues, exploration, and discovery as in ATM lessons.

The Functional Integration partner work was then contrasted with a different mode of touch exploration which included a different tonus, more pinpointed detailed and active hands-on intervention with hands on individual ribs. The subsequent individual improvisations focused on varying movement qualities while focussing on ribs and a switching from a 'global use' of volume of ribs to 'detailed' and small shifts in movement initiation and orientation in space. The lesson was concluded with a discussion where Alessandri gave an insight into her own choreographic process.

*I thought about presence again, movement and performance, and everything that we are often told to do things one way, this is the right way. But why? And for me this was quite touching. We do have the freedom to move freely in any way, and the same goes for other things. I can be anyone in any way I like. This freedom allows me to grow. Today was the first time I went through the solo to the point where it now includes the original material. I found it very open and soft, it felt more organic to do that; much more than before.*

**Session Four:** Victoria Worsley introduced ATM based on breathing, and responses to gravity using rolling from side to side activities. Gravitational and postural responses in standing were first extended into a 'feeling based' exploration, and then into walking and standing investigations that touched upon 'intentional movement' and 'emotional impulses', and centred around practices based on the works of Konstantin Stanislavski and Jerzy Grotowski.

*I felt I went on a journey through the session. I could feel so clearly the difference on two sides of the body. Who lives here? This was her question that stayed with me for a long time... I realised and could feel how emotions, habits and tensions stay in the body, how much power they have to transform. There is a lot of work in undoing. The 'emotional walk' was a task that really helped me to work with emotion, and also it was so interesting to have such a simple movement so full of something. It helped me with my own material, in the solo, when I think of layering different ideas - and that can also be emotions or memories - in to one movement or movement idea. Working on emotions also helped when thinking about presence in my solo, I had something to communicate, through face as well, not just the body.*

**Session Five:** On this last day I led other ATM lessons, with subsequent improvisations focussing on integration of three dimensional use of pelvis in relation to whole body movements. This combination of several ATM's highlighted Feldenkrais' strategies of 'proximal distal reversal' and 'variation

of movement initiation' within a series of proposed movement patterns. The first part of the lesson (lying on back) focussed on variations of mobilising and connecting the pelvis in relation to floor and global body organisation while using the leg as lever (with clasped hands on folded knee) and place of movement initiation. Pelvis and axial skeleton are mainly asked to respond in providing a fluid base for stabilisation and to adapt to suggested movements of the folded limbs in their flexion/extension/rotational contexts. Some focus is already placed on changes in movement initiation by 'changing driver and passenger' between leg and pelvis. This ATM was followed by an improvisation which focussed on dynamic observation of relationships between pelvis and limbs while playing with directional changes and weight-shifts within rolling into sitting activities.

The second part of the ATM process in sitting reverses the 'stability/mobility relationship' between pelvis: here, in side- saddle sitting learners are asked to mobilise and initiate from their pelvis directly, and three-dimensionally, while using legs for 'passive' responses to provide stability. The ATM was extended into focussing on use of the head in turning and looking up and down, to integrate movement range of pelvis into the whole body activity. The subsequent improvisations around the functions of level change, balance, and turning enhanced the focus on initiating movement from, and three-dimensional use of, the pelvis while feeding in an active use of the head and



looking at the world. This resulted in a rather 'sculptural' potential for a 'head/tail connection' movement vocabularies.

*I felt that by the last day things fell into place with my solo by right amount. So it was an open exploration, informed by everything that was happening, but also had very clear structure and decisions I made as choreographer. I think most of the questions that I have been asking myself during the process such as; 'what is relevant?' 'why am I doing this?' 'why like this?' 'who told me this must be like that?', will stay with me in future. All of these questions help me to find more freedom. They are somehow liberating, even if I don't find the answers. The search is important, because in looking for answers I find more options. I also thought about my own teaching in future, and how to leave freedom when I teach [...] not to give answers but to ask questions. During the week I discovered so much information. I felt Feldenkrais opened many new things in my body and mind. The experience of the technique as well as the exchange with other participants created many new questions for me, about my process, the creative choreographic process, but also the never ending process of researching body and movement, as a dancer or a mover.*

#### Notes:

Examples of some of the feedback left by other participants on the 'Weave' project in relation to rehearsal processes have been included below.

*The question of restriction came up many times in our classes and discussions – as we identified it as a thread throughout the Feldenkrais work: A tool to shine a light on your own habitual patterns, to see if you are restricting your own movements, i.e. through holding, a tension pattern... It invites us to find a way around restriction - usually by freeing up another part, allowing something else to move, or take over... This became very clear for me i.e. when placing one hand on the head - the head became a much more active limb. Cultivating an awareness of possibilities, of feeling the whole body as one – how to achieve the most easeful, pain-free and satisfying way to move one's body... " Psychologically most important seems the repeated message: try this, then try that – how does it feel? No right or wrong – you are able to judge. Feldenkrais offers a practice of making choices, a practice of listening to the body, and a practice of judgment. The way choice and judgment are achieved is through feeling, which is of course also essential to creating art. Feeling needs to be fine-tuned and practiced as well – building on training, skill, and experience, we use imagination and embodiment to feel our way forwards'. Karin Fisher-Potisk*

*'For me, the whole week of WEAVE, including both ATM sessions and my own artistic practice, seemed to be about right and left, right half of the body and left half, right brain and left brain, intuition and logical thinking. I really could not let it go in ATM sessions (which I found easier in FI session since I was completely passive), but the sessions took me to some mental space where I don't go normally, where I felt calm or almost empty, things were much simpler and there were no need of words to explain. A vast open space, it was. The Feldenkrais Method definitely encouraged us to listen to our intuition, and that was the crucial approach we took for our artistic practice. After an ATM session, I felt less fear towards the unknown. It was easier for me to let my inner voice come out and to see the actual potential of it. Now and then, I ask myself a question: what is dance about? What does dance deal with? I am very thankful to the whole experience. It has revealed something I can passionately believe in. **Katsura Isobe***

*'The Feldenkrais sessions gave me a strong sense of awareness of the relationship of different parts of my body and their connectedness. The restrictive flow of everyday habits and how through the practice I can become aware again of the choices I have and my habits. The lessons had a natural impact on my own practice; when I came to work on the movement in my piece I gradually had more control of the decisions of how and when to move and if I move this part what will I project, what will my body say to the audience? One session we worked on the use of the eyes, and the mental and physical effect it had on the body; the work told us something about the relationship between what we envisaged to what is there in reality. In another session we worked on breath. I then took those specific elements and decided to work for a while on those different aspects in my piece – just being led by my eyes or the breath and what does it express. The format of the week was very helpful; the ATM lessons in the morning and the following improvisations set me off to experiment with my piece. The plenary sessions at the end of the day helped to have a closure to the day, share, listen, exchange impressions, which gave a focal point where you felt that you are not alone'. **Adi Lerer***

*'I found the FM gave me a connection to the poetry of movement and its pure functionality, which I work with. It interests me to be a real person on stage. In the classes itself I did not burst into wild movement investigations, but what I felt was a strong readiness to enter my own work. This was surprising. Connecting the morning experience with the solo I was making in the afternoon was a very inspiring aspect for my creative process. During sessions ideas/images would come up, structures for explorations, trust in the body and the mind ...all these to be 'used' in the afternoon. I worked with some of the 'instructions', as restriction, not achieving the goal, taking steps towards and away...'  
**Rahel VonMoos***

*'I very much appreciate that you allowed the space for the week to take different forms for different people, and for my experience to be fairly minimal. It makes me see that I need to make more time for this. But also that concentrated periods can be incredibly potent and have lasting uses. Sensations and imagery from it stays with me as a source, a goal, a stimulus. Feldenkrais helped me get a new and special sense of my body and its relationship to world. My work is all about this. I have discovered recently more about how I choreograph. It involves a process of going over and over, smudging and exploring and repeating until the precise form emerges. And the sources are body and the world. I need to be profoundly inside them. Then, after 'Weave', I worked a lot in the studio and found more precise form really emerging. **Lizzy Le Quesne***

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# Recreating Histories:

'Transdisciplinarity and Transcultural Perspectives on  
Performance Making'

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# Recreating Histories:

## 'Transdisciplinarity and Transcultural Perspectives on Performance Making'

Thomas Kampe\*

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## I. Introduction

This article discusses potentials of transdisciplinary approaches to performance making processes in the context of reconstructing a dance-theatre piece 'The Dybbuk' for a 2010 showing in New York City. 'The Dybbuk' was first created for Pascal Theatre Company, London, in 1992 and toured to great critical acclaim in Europe until 1998.

The author originally performed in the work, and was responsible for movement direction, choreography and set design which, in conjunction with text by Jewish British playwright Julia Pascal and original texts by Solomon Anski, formed a complex whole in performance.

While transcultural perspectives and influences ranging from European Expressionist Dance Methodologies to Contemporary Dance and Theatre approaches will be discussed, interpretations and applications of Edgar Morin's(2007) concept of 'transdisciplinarity' with reference to the use of the Feldenkrais Method and other 'open systems' movement approaches as resources for rehearsal practices will be examined.

'The Dybbuk' was co-directed by writer Julia Pascal and myself and toured successfully in Europe and the UK during the 1990's. In 2010 Pascal Theatre Company spent 4 weeks at London Metropolitan University recreating the piece with a new cast, and then successfully played for 3 weeks off -Broadway, during the 'Dream-Up Festival' at the Theater for the New City in NYC. 'The Dybbuk' is a visceral and poetic piece of story-telling, physical theatre, and dance examining the role of culture and story-telling in contexts of social and political crises. The piece forms a complex retelling of S.Anski's famous Jewish myth 'The Dybbuk', set in an eastern European ghetto during the Holocaust in the 1940's. With its central theme of a spirit who must return because he died too early, the play is part of Julia Pascal's 'Holocaust Trilogy'(1995), and part of a long-term transcultural collaboration between British Jewish Playwright Julia Pascal and German-born choreographer and designer Thomas Kampe examining post-Holocaust perspectives on European Theatre making.

In the re-creation of the work several problems regarding the process emerged:

- How, in a collaborative process, can a cast from culturally diverse backgrounds with a broad range of abilities find a common language and modes of communication within the piece?<sup>1)</sup>



- How can cultural references inherent in the piece be utilised and communicated by a culturally diverse cast?
- How can the piece in its original form be preserved, yet renewed and opened up to '*the genius of diversity*' (Morin, 1999) of new, creative input from the performers?
- What tools or approaches are useful as resource for a collaborative rehearsal process?

The recreation process for 'Dybbuk' called for an 'open-systems approach' to performance making, that was both transcultural and transdisciplinary in nature. In dialogue with writer/director Julia Pascal the re-creation process was placed in a broader research context concerning the application of the Feldenkrais Method® as a resource for dance making.<sup>2)</sup> This 'performance-as-research' project consisted of qualitative action research resulting in a series of workshop and rehearsal sessions documented through photographs, semi-structured interviews with collaborators, final performance and press-reviews.

## II. Working Modes and Resources for Movement Direction, Set Design, Choreography

My role in the recreation process was multi-faceted; as a member of the original cast I was able to draw on first-hand experience and kinaesthetic memory, thus being able to

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- 1) The original cast included British, German, and French actors of Jewish and non-Jewish backgrounds; the current cast for the US tour included performers from Belgian, Cypriot-Greek, Swedish, Israeli and British performers of Jewish and Non-Jewish backgrounds.
  - 2) My current practice based PHD '*The Art of Making Choices: The Feldenkrais Method® as a Choreographic Resource*' examines possible applications and resonances of the The Feldenkrais Method® within the context of dance making rather than dance training. Aim of this project is to probe potentials of Feldenkrais-based practices of embodied self-care to enhance or intervene with choreographic processes with a focus on the creation of original new works, and the re-working, or extending of existing dance works. The project also aimed to use choreographic knowledge and processes to re-interpret possibilities and understandings of The Feldenkrais Method within a current context of a 'cognitive turn' (Birringer, 2006) in dance research, embracing a tendency (Shusterman, 2008; Noe, 2009) to interpret 'consciousness' and 'mind' as inter-subjective and destabilised - embodied, enacted, and enworlded.

feed back 'meta-kinetic' information on atmosphere, imagery, and intention to the performers. In my role as set-designer, working with kinetic-sculpture and installation-based practices I needed to reconstruct a visual narrative and 'choreography of objects' within the context of the story, often juxtaposed against the spoken text by using montage and collage techniques, practices emerging from modernist visual-culture.<sup>3)</sup> As movement director I was responsible for both an 'internal and an external ecology' of the performance, on the one hand directing and guiding psycho-physical realities of, and interactions between the performers throughout the play, on the other hand organising the dynamics of the 'performance milieu' or 'Umwelt'-staging, spacing and the embodied meaning seeking interaction with set, objects, and the spectator.<sup>4)</sup>

Here, in the rehearsals for the recreation process, I deliberately drew on several distinct frameworks to using movement as a resource performance-making, each of them emerging from different cultural contexts:

The Feldenkrais Method® - The Feldenkrais Method® was developed by Judo black-belt and nuclear physicist Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais and is regarded as one of the twentieth century's most influential body-learning systems within the field generally referred to as 'Somatics'. The Feldenkrais Method uses gentle, verbally led movement explorations, and hands on interventions to allow the participant, or student, to improve range and quality of self-awareness and interaction with the world.

Contact Improvisation(CI) - an experimental dialogic dance form developed during the 1970's, focusing on kinaesthetic experience, touch, and exploration as dance resources, challenging conventional dance hierarchies and gender roles; This accessible, open, and ongoing form is developed collectively by a world-wide community of CI dancers.<sup>5)</sup>

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- 3) My own practice here emerges from my initial studies with 'Kinetic-Sculpture' and 'Action' artist Harry Kramer in Kassel, Germany during the early 1980's. Kramer was one of the European 'dance-for-camera' pioneers in the 1950's and 1960's. Another key influence on my work with moving objects was my involvement with 'AktionsTheater Kassel' between 1983 and 1986, a visual and physical theatre company based in Kassel, Germany.
- 4) The term 'Umwelt' arises from the biosemiotic work of Jakob von Uexküll(1864-1944). Kull(1998) argues that '*Umwelt is the semiotic world of organism. It includes all the meaningful aspects of the world for a particular organism*'.
- 5) For "Fortin(1998), a growing number of choreographers are now moving away from the authoritarian mode and are acknowledging the contributions of their dancers"(Fortin, in Shapiro, S.; 1998:67). Hennessy(2008) expands on the social context of CI: '*At the center of the experiment called Contact Improvisation is a(utopian?) proposal for democratic social relations reduced to its simplest form: an improvised encounter between two people. Referring to the usual choreographic process as a dictatorship of teachers an*

*Laban Movement Analysis(LMA)* - LMA offers an analytical, and expressive framework to movement experience, observation and composition. Laban's work provides detailed perspectives on possibilities of movement dynamics and spatial use of the human body and emerges from an Expressionist European dance-theatre framework, yet is widely applied in the education of actors in the UK.

*European Theatre training approaches* - in the work of Konstantin Stanislavski, Bertolt Brecht Michael Chekhov, and Jerzy Grotowski, psycho-physical, social, and expressive approaches towards movement, posture, and action are foregrounded. Questions regarding the relationship between intention, 'internal' motivation and 'external' movement manifestation in relation to their psycho-physical and social signification are being examined through action and a breaking down of movement into motivated 'units'.

As a dance maker who works collaboratively with performers of mixed abilities and backgrounds, I choose to argue that the above resources share holographically, thus individually and as a combined hybrid-process, potentials of an 'open system'(Emery, 1981), hence potentials for transcultural practice. Cillari(2007) refers to 'open systems' as 'systems that live within a constant exchange with their environment'(Cillari in Birringer, 2007, p.121), thus relying on interaction, and on patterning, de-patterning, and re-patterning of clear, yet permeable boundaries through which new information and ideas can be absorbed.

All these above educational, dance, and theatre 'open-systems approaches' are 'dialogic' and 'recursive'(Morin, 1999)<sup>6</sup> in nature, thus inclusive and transparent allowing for feedback-loops of input and reactions and responses from all collaborators, performers and directors alike. A subsequent deflated hierarchy in the rehearsal space allows for experiment, interaction, and play and serves as transcultural place of exchange of knowledge, experience, and ideas.

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*choreographers creating watered-down versions of themselves, Paxton attempted a less authoritarian form of leadership based on suggestion, invitation, improvisation, and collaboration.'*

6) Edgar Morin describes 'the dialogic' as 'the symbiotic combination of two logics, a combination... that is at once complementary, concurrent and antagonistic'(Morin, 1999, p. xv).

### III. Cultural and Historical References

For my role as choreographer, 'The Dybbuk' offered historical reference points as resources to work from. In the 1937 film 'The Dybbuk', directed by Michal Waszynski, based on the 1914 play by Solomon Anski, the wedding scene between the characters Leah and Hanan is staged as an expressionist 'dance of death', danced by Judith Berg as 'Death' and Lili Liliana as Leah.<sup>7)</sup>

The dance is organically woven into the pre-wedding scene, and integrates actors into the scene by using pedestrian qualities in the duet and in the grotesque and stylised realism of the ensemble 'movement choir' activities.<sup>8)</sup> The masked dance resembles in its montage technique the work of Harald Kreutzberg<sup>9)</sup>, yet in its concern with a depiction of social class differences of Jewish 'Shtetl' inhabitants, uses social-realist aesthetics and techniques preferred by choreographers such as Kurt Jooss, the 'Red Dancer' Jean Weidt, or 'dance storyteller' Jo Mihaly.<sup>10)</sup>

For my own choreographic rendering of a 'dance of death' in the contemporary version of 'Dybbuk', I drew on images of the works of other pre-WW2 'degenerate'<sup>11)</sup> German women dance artists, concerned with the grotesque, the anti-bourgeois, the dark, distorted and extreme subjective aesthetics and abject of German Expressionism: Valeska Gert, Dore Hoyer, and Anita Berber.<sup>12)</sup>

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- 7) 'Dances of Death' or 'danse macabre' emerge from the 15<sup>th</sup> century as an allegorical tradition in European painting and poetry; 'Death and the Maiden', as a romantic rendering of the theme of the horror and comfort of death, most famously manifested through F. Schubert's string quartet(1824), re-appears in the work of early 20<sup>th</sup> century painters E. Munch, E. Schiele, K. Kollwitz, or G. Grosz.
- 8) Initiated through the work of Rudolf Laban 'Movement Choirs' were a hugely popular urban phenomenon in 1920's- 1930's Germany. While initially conceived as participatory and recreational part of a German mass movement 'Körperkultur', movement choirs became a standard directorial tool for Central European theatre makers, such as Max Reinhardt, or Karl-Heinz Martin; as a tool for totalitarian 'mass movement' spectacle, 'movement choir' practices were appropriated by The National Socialist regime in Germany, with the initial support by Rudolf Laban and then through the huge Nazi propaganda displays directed by Hans Niedecken-Gebhardt and others.
- 9) Dance Film 'The Eternal Circle' 1952.
- 10) The dance is presented in 3 sections- The Dance of Death - The Dance of the Wealthy- The Dance of the Beggars, interspersed with acting and song.
- 11) From 1933 the often highly abstract, yet subjective Expressionist Dance -'Ausdruckstanz' - was unwanted by the National Socialist Regime, and like the works of visual artists of the Modernist Avantgarde, were labelled 'racially impure' and 'degenerate'; Valeska Gert was one of the many Jewish dancers who was not able to work under the fascist regime and who left the country in 1933.

'The aesthetics of ugliness'(Foellmer, 2009), of androgyny, viscosity, brutality, and of distortion of the artists concerned seemed fit as point of departure for a recreation of a dance- theatre work that investigates possibilities of artistic responding to the terror of the persecution of Jews during the 20<sup>th</sup> century tragedy of the Holocaust.

#### IV. My Own Cultural Background

As an artist born and educated in post WW2 Germany, my cultural background was shaped by an awareness and mediated images of the Holocaust. This radicalised my political views on the world, and my artistic interests in otherness, experimentation, the practices of the European Modernist Avantgarde, and in the emerging vision of art as social-activism and acts of political resistance within the 'countercultures' of the 1960's and 70's.<sup>13)</sup>

'Body-Art' and 'Installation' experiments in the early 1980's, which included solo performances, led me to train as a dancer, predominantly in the European Modern Dance Tradition, and in US Post Modern Dance approaches. My experience in studying in the European-based Laban/Holm/Nikolais Modern Dance traditions and later, through a 13 year long period of work in the Bodenwieser tradition with Austrian Expressionist Dance pioneer Hilde Holger were shaped by a view on dance training and making which encouraged individual expression, collaboration, and artistic experiment of the dancer.

If choreographer Kurt Jooss summed up a similarly holistic approach as: *'The aim is not to train dancers but to train people who dance'*<sup>14)</sup>, Holger paralleled this triadic approach to training which included technical, compositional, and improvisational learning with a

12) My work was particularly inspired by Hoyer's short dance 'Angst(Fear), part of dance film cycle *'Affectos Humanos'*(1963), by recreations of dances by Anita Berber for v. Praunheim's film *'Anita-Dances of Vice'*(1987) and by the short filmed versions of Valeska Gert's radical *Tänzerische Pantominen* directed by Suse Byk(1925);: *Kupplerin*(The Pimp), *Canaille*, and *Death*.

13) Here, the work of Joseph Beuys with his expanded concept of 'art as social sculpture', and social interaction as cultural activity, had a vast influence on a generation of German artists, myself included. Beuys' credo- 'everyone is an artist' seemed close enough to Rudolf Laban's 'everyone is a dancer', to encourage me to take the step to train as a dancer in London between 1986 and 1989.

14) <http://www.folkwang-uni.de/en/home/tanz> accessed 02/09/10.

simple philosophy: *'In order to be a good dancer you have to be three things: A good technician, a good artist, and a good human being'*.

Holger's inclusive approach to dance training and dance making which relied on input from students and dancers was shaped by her studies with Austrian Jewish-born choreographer Gertrud Bodenwieser, a mercurial dance star of the Austrian dance scene of the 1920's and 1930's and director of the Staatsakademie in Vienna until the fascist 'Anschluss' in 1938. During the 1920's Bodenwieser developed a modern dance training system which involved creative contributions from her dancers. According to Holger, Bodenwieser *"was a wonderful teacher. She never drilled people but spoke to individuals so they developed their own personal approach."*<sup>15)</sup>

After teaching and performing in hiding during the Nazi persecution of Jews and avant-garde artists in Vienna, Holger was able to emigrate to Bombay, India, where she pioneered a European Creative Modern Dance through her own choreographies and teaching. Holocaust survivor Holger arrived in London in 1948, reinventing herself as an advocate for European based Contemporary Dance, pioneering dance-therapy and performance with dancers with learning disabilities. Holger's work, which emerged from her fluid journeys between different worlds- the European Avantgarde, her experience in India, and a culturally diverse new home in Central London - stands exemplary for the beginnings of an independent dance culture existing today in the UK, which embraces collaborative practice, cross-disciplinary performance modes, and an inclusive, egalitarian approach to dance training and learning.

## V. Somatic Research as Resource for Dance Making

*'I work on the person, not on the body; I don't know a body without a person...'*

*I work with the person.'*<sup>16)</sup> - Moshe Feldenkrais

As an artist-academic-researcher I have developed an interest and expertise in the

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15) HH in interview with Norma Cohen : Ninety and still going strong Article Published in TES Magazine on 19 July, 1996.

16) An interview with Moshe Feldenkrais' in Beringer(2010, p.203, 208)

transfer of 20<sup>th</sup> century somatic processes to dance education and making. Thomas Hanna(1986) coined the term 'somatics' as the study of '*the body as perceived from within by first-person perception*'. Hanna, who was influenced by the work of Moshe Feldenkrais(1904-1984) adapted Feldenkrais' theories on '*body-mind-environment unity*'(1985) to define 'Somatics' as "*The art and science of the inner relational process between awareness, biological function, and environment, all three factors being understood as a synergetic whole*"(Hanna, 1985,p. 1). Eddy(2009) highlights commonalities between developments in early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Modern Dance and somatic education: questions regarding 'Body-Mind', improved function and perception, self exploration, organic movement and body-learning; a focus on self-improvement, subjectification and empowerment(Fortin, 2009; Green, 2001), and a utopian, evolution-driven vision on 'hominization'(Morin, 1999) - a fluid ontogenetic and phylogenetic development and learning of 'becoming human' through movement and dance.

Somatic tendencies towards a '*non-idealised body*' run parallel to European modernist dance approaches towards inclusion of pedestrian body-codes, and trends within current post-modern dance training methods.

Somatic movement practices have been successfully applied in dance learning contexts for the last 30 years and have been critiqued within feminist and post-modern dance education discourses. Foregrounding notions of subjectivity and 'empowerment', Fortin(2009, p.50) states that '*the somatic education discourse supports the development of an internal authority which refers to the capacity to make decisions based on sensory discriminations that accentuate the singularity of one's body*'. The question arises how these educational approaches can be applied in dance making contexts.

Over the last 11 years my research interest has been the application of The Feldenkrais Method in a dance making context, interrogating choreographic potentials and resonances of processes inherent in, and ideologies surrounding the work of Moshe Feldenkrais. This interest emerged from extensive studies with dancer/pedagogue Scott Clark in London during the 1990's. Clark integrated Feldenkrais' strategies towards experiential learning and embodied movement analysis, in combination with Laban Movement Analysis(LMA) frameworks, to create a unique and at the time hugely influential Contemporary Dance technique and pedagogy. Contemporary Dance and the Feldenkrais Method share a modernist historical rooting of placing movement and

corporeal experiment as vessels for cultural critique, education, and social change. The Feldenkrais Method makes use of two interrelated approaches which form part of a social kinaesthesia - 'Awareness through Movement® (ATM) and 'Functional Integration® (FI), both designed to *'help the individual discover new possibilities and choices in movement'* (Igweonu, 2010, p.10). Moshe Feldenkrais left a recorded oeuvre of more than 2000 ATM lessons, and numerous FI - lessons to be used and re-interpreted by a now world-wide community of Feldenkrais Practitioners.

While ATM lessons are experienced and facilitated in group situations, Functional Integration (FI) hands-on interventions mostly happen on a one to one, non-verbal, level. ATM lessons are led entirely through verbal instruction and questions which are phrased as an *'invitation for the learner to investigate'* (Bisges, 2010). Feldenkrais clarifies his use of verbal instruction in the absence of demonstration as a mode of facilitating learning and to foster an embodied and 'ecologized thinking' (Morin, 1999):

*'In my lessons the student learns to listen to the instruction while he is actually carrying out an exercise and to make the necessary adjustments without stopping the movement itself. In this way he learns to act while he thinks and to think while he acts.'* (1990; p.60)

Through instructions and questions, participants are invited to ask questions while acting, or to act in a questioning mode. Aim of this 'questioning approach' is according to Bisges (2010) to *'lead people from a more conceptual intellectual based thinking into a more kinaesthetic, sensing based, thinking, away from habitual thinking into 'awaring'*. Moshe Feldenkrais (1990, p.50) defines awareness as *'consciousness together with a realization of what is happening within it or of what is going on within ourselves while we are conscious.'* Dance maker and co-researcher Alenka Herman in research project 'Weave' 2009 describes this awareness and 'kinaesthetic thinking' experienced within a dance making context:

*'I felt more physical awareness, more sensing. I felt the brain dissipated around the body, so I could sense/think with my body and the body decided, not the mind. At the end of 1st day: My head feels strangely heavy and tired, as if I had been studying mathematics for hours.'* (Herman in Kampe, 2010)

The role of the teacher in ATM is to facilitate an environment from which 'awareness', understood as an activity to be learnt and refined, can be cultivated.



ATM lessons are highly structured educational micro-‘Choreographies’ designed to facilitate learning. Choreographic key strategies and formal devices within the lessons revolve around use of repetition and variation of theme, rondo forms, and the enhancing and reversal of occurring patterns. The lessons are deliberately non-corrective, task-based, and include re-occurring strategies of setting ‘constraints and restrictions’, and problem-solving, while allowing the ‘performer’ of the lesson to work at their own chosen speed. Time for reflection, a process of ‘scanning’ and non-doing, is paced into the lessons to allow the learner to sense differences in ‘self-image’<sup>17)</sup> and to integrate changes movement function and self awareness.

For Feldenkrais, re-educating the nervous system, as organic steering- and motor control-system continuously engaged with seeking order within a disordered, random environment, is key to improved behaviour. Subsequently, large parts of a Feldenkrais lesson are concerned with creating unfamiliar, disordered conditions and environments, and allowing time for the learner’s system to respond in its meaning- and order-seeking capacities.

Through strategies of questioning and embodied processes of ‘de-patterning and re-patterning’ the Feldenkrais Method embraces calls ‘a new culture of uncertainty’(Montuori 2009). In his practical enquires Feldenkrais refuses simplicity, predictability, and determinism which are central to a Newtonian worldview. Feldenkrais challenges a Cartesian dualist Western tradition of thought by proposing a rationality where thinking is organically linked to feeling and action:<sup>18)</sup>

*“Thought that is not connected to feeling at all is not connected to reality. Cerebration itself is uncommitted or neutral, and can deal equally well with contrasting statements. In order to select a thought there must be at least a feeling that the thought is ‘right’, that is it corresponds to reality. The “rightness” in this case, of*

17) Feldenkrais was influenced by the work of Neurologist and Psychiatrist Paul Schilder(1886-1940) on “Body Image” “Self Consciousness” and “Spatial Image”. Schilder sought to transgress the boundaries between Phenomenology, Psycho-Analysis, and Neuro- Pathology. For Schilder(1999, p.8), ‘perception and action, impression and expression, thus form a unit, and insight and action become closely correlated to each other.’

18) Feldenkrais proposes a ‘Radical Constructivist’ epistemology which is embodied, relational, and ‘autopoietic’ (Maturana, U.; Varela, F., 1980), foreshadowing Edgar Morin’s(2008) ‘self-eco-reorganizational’ vision on complexity of knowledge and the living world; Feldenkrais’ paradigm of a ‘Body- Mind-Environment Unity’(1985) parallel’s Gregory Bateson’s ecological thinking and trends within the growing field of ‘Biosemiotics’.

*course, is a subjective reality. When right objectively corresponds to reality, the thought will be of general human value'(1990, p. 44).*

Feldenkrais was able to translate developments and abstract concepts emerging from Systems Theory and Cybernetics into practical and accessible strategies towards self-reflexivity and improved 'self organization' through embodiment. The Feldenkrais Method asks Modernist questions regarding self, perception, and improved function. By refusing to give answers, in a Post-Modern positioning, the Feldenkrais Method provides an 'open text' which allows for multiplicity of answers and choices, highlighting participants' 'micro-narratives', and fostering a fluid, unstable, de-centralised self, while allowing for a strengthening in subjectification.

## VI. Application of Somatic Processes in Preparation for Rehearsal

During a 3 week period of working with the ensemble I ran daily practical sessions with a group of five actors, joined by director Julia Pascal and assistant director Kimberly Sykes. The sessions, mostly run at the beginning of rehearsal, lasted between 40 min and 3 hours, and usually began with a Feldenkrais-based ATM lesson, designed to prepare the actors' psychophysical connectedness, readiness for subsequent action, and to develop a general 'kinesthetic empathy'(Hagendorn, 2004) towards self, group members and interpretation of embodied responses to the play text.

Actor Simeon Perlin comments on this process as developing '*an inner landscape, a much greater togetherness, a physical contact; the play became much more about the physical contact, not just about the text.*'(Perlin, cited in interview with T. Kampe; 11.8.10). Through regular practice of The Feldenkrais Method Perlin sees the potential for artistic choice through developing '*a body that is ready and alive to the possibilities of taking on something new. It is like adapting to a new body, because it is your 'character body'*'(Perlin 11/8/10). Performer Juliet Dante likens her understanding of the preparatory process to a phenomenological 'bracketing' and epoché<sup>19</sup>), a becoming 'neutral' in self observation as

starting-point for artistic enquiry:

*'The movement is so pure on a basic level; the discovery of your own body, and the discovering of another body; that means it is stripped of all the emotions, all the ideas, and all the images that then come into the play; it helps a lot with interaction, especially if you have never met.. it builds trust'*(Dante cited in conversation with T. Kampe,11.8.10).

Themes emerging in these preparatory sessions were developed through partner- and group improvisations using touch interventions and interactions based on principles found in Functional Integration and Contact Improvisation. While the movement topics explored allowed the performers to develop an ability to apply themselves physically to a broad range of situations and challenges, most explorations were designed to prepare for specific choreographic challenges which involved level changes, and lifting and weight sharing skills in partnership. The solo, partnering, and group work was enhanced with expressive strategies found in LMA and Grotowski-based physical theatre to develop improvisations that would support actors' needs - developing trust, close physical interaction and intimacy, a symbiosis and 'meeting of micro cultures', and an ability to 'read' each other.

The effect of these group explorations was recognized by all participants of the process: While for actor Stefan Karsberg it *'created a ensemble in a very short period'*, for actor Juliet Dante the process *'helped to bring the group together and find a common physical language'*(Dante, 2010).

## VII. Transfer of Feldenkrais Strategies into the Choreographic Rehearsal Process

During the rehearsal process, modes of work established through the preparatory processes were transferred into the development of scenes, interactions of characters, and the developing, setting, and editing of movement material.

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19) Depraz(1999); Varela(1999); Lutz & Thompson(2003)

I used a variety of Feldenkrais-based working strategies to support the development and setting of movement material; this allowed me to question my own role within a collaborative process and to re-define the role of director/choreographer as facilitator of a 'choreographic environment'. Feldenkrais-based Strategies applied would include:

- Verbal instruction and use of questioning to aid the performers in creation process
- Developing of choreographic themes by identifying and supporting 'occurring patterns' of movement material suggested by performers
- Giving, or encouraging the performers to explore, a variety of contrasting creative choices to a given theme
- The gradual setting of movement material in 'approximations'
- The 'breaking down' of choreography and actions into small 'units of actions', subsequently identifying intention and objectives of each unit
- A reworking and 'making strange' of existing movement material or scenes through 'de-patterning' and 're-patterning'
- The development of re-occurring motifs by using repetition and variation
- Use of touch interaction and relationship to objects and set
- Allowing time for discovery, improvement and change

Theatre director and writer Julia Pascal, author of 'The Dybbuk', who took part in preparatory sessions and rehearsals, comments on the effects of integrating Feldenkrais strategies into the performance making process:

*'The way you work in the Feldenkrais sessions and in rehearsal, you are constantly encouraging to ask questions; you are verbalizing all the time- how does this feel? You are synthesizing the body-mind by the fact of questioning. So, the person is forever connecting the two, they are not shut off mentally because they are doing a physical action'*(Pascal cited in interview with Thomas Kampe, 08/08/2010).

Nature of questioning throughout a Feldenkrais process is mainly qualitative, thus concerned with the 'how' of an execution of an action, relational and dialectic. Questions are rhetoric, concerned with intra-spective connections and structural coupling of the movers with their environment. Aim of the questioning is not necessary to seek answers

but, by asking 'what if?', to stimulate curiosity and self-questioning through reflective action and subsequent interaction.

Actor Simeon Perlin interprets the strategy of questioning as empowering: *'I don't feel that I'm being told to do something; I feel I am being encouraged to discover something in myself'* (Perlin 11.9.10). Perlin draws parallels of the questioning approach to the effects of the explorative nature of non-corrective touch interventions in the rehearsal process:

*'You never once pushed me to do something that I've not wanted to do, whereas in other movement practices, I've felt hands on me, trying to push areas that don't want to be pushed; whereas with this approach you have the freedom to discover your body in a way that is comfortable for you...it is not forced.'*

Similarly, other participants of the rehearsal process found the non-corrective and questioning approach arising from the application of The Feldenkrais Method *'liberating for the ensemble and the individual'* (Karsberg 2010).

Feldenkrais' early seminal writings, and subsequent practices, are concerned with a sexually mature and liberated self, free of guilt and repressive habituation towards a sensual and sexual body inherent in Christian cultural traditions. Pascal talks about her experiences of the application of the Feldenkrais Method in combination with Contact Improvisation in rehearsal process and suggests that a focus on an inter-subjective embodied process allows you

*'to claim your body, to claim how your body could move and not to be ashamed of it, to have guilt about it ; there is a sexual freedom also; you asked the performers to have a lot of body contact; that way, they are able to drop their Anglo -Saxon protestant prudery about the body, they allow themselves to be free with their own bodies and other bodies, and their sexual and creative self comes through in the group and that also comes through in performance.'* (Pascal cited in Interview with Thomas Kampe, 08/08/2010)

For Pascal, the effects of this process of 'embodied questioning' at the heart of the Feldenkrais Method can be transferred into performance practice.

*'The performers are examining. They are examining sensation, so they are using emotional and intellectual parts of the self at the same time; the brain is not in*

*the head, so the brain could be in the little toe, so there is a flow; what you are doing is to encourage that flow, which the performers then take into rehearsal and into their performance. And that's the strongest effect I have ever seen in rehearsal- which is fantastic.'*(Pascal, 08/08/2010)

The rather slow, interrogative, and holistic integration of the Feldenkrais Method into the rehearsal process enables the performers to take time to learn - 'to learn how to learn'<sup>20</sup>), and to converse experientially with confidence.

Julia Pascal comments on the effects:

*'Now, the performers can interpret messages or different ways of working really fast; the speed with which they have absorbed, has translated into performance in ways I would not have thought possible. It is as if they have worked together for a year, in fact they have worked together for three weeks.'*(Pascal, 08/08/10)

Somatic practices have been discussed within the field of 'transformative learning'(Amann, 2003). Perlin(2010) describes the transformative potential of the combination of somatic approaches as preparatory processes and their integration into rehearsal strategies, and the effect of intensive psycho-physical movement practice on self image:

*'I think I underestimated the importance of it in previous work. I think actually I'm much more of a physical actor than I thought. In fact, probably way more physical than I am intellectual - I have always thought that I'm a thinking, not feeling actor, which is fine, but actually it works - movement infers the emotion.'*(Perlin, 11/08/10)

Julia Pascal suggests that the introspective, non-corrective, and enquiry based nature of the Feldenkrais Method can provide a foundation for further artistic risk-taking and physicalization:

*'The performers are emotionally more available and free and connected to each other and themselves. When you then bring in expressive Grotowski- or*

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20) Moshe Feldenkrais saw the need to adapt Gregory Bateson's concept of 'Deutero-Learning'- learning how to learn, into his practice.

*Laban-based strategies or grotesques imagery, the performers have already a solid confident base where they don't feel judged, they are just being asked to stretch. This approach works because there is no fear. What I think you have done is eradicated fear from the rehearsal process, through the Feldenkrais Method and playfulness, which you then develop by adding other layers of other languages.* (Pascal, 08/08/2010)

## VIII. Transdisciplinarity

In my attempt to conclude my reflections on the process of recreating *'The Dybbuk'* I want to draw from one of our reviews in the New York press:

*'..the work of the five actors in bringing their vision to life cannot be over-praised. They were fully there, embodying the full range of emotions from lust to anger. This production has been touring Europe for several years and several of the actors have been with the play for a while, but that doesn't explain the organic world they created. Sometimes all the elements—the lights, costumes, set, music and acting—come together and make magic.'* (Joel Benjamin [www.theatrescene.net](http://www.theatrescene.net), 26.08.10)

Looking back at the process of creation I would suggest that there was a 'method in the magic', in 'the organic world', in the 'being fully there', 'the embodying' of the performance.

I suggest that a key to the success of the process and performance lies in the transdisciplinary, thus collaborative nature of the rehearsal process. Referring to the works of Gregory Bateson and Edgar Morin, Alfonso Montuori (2005, 2008) proposes a working model towards 'Transdisciplinarity' that supports an '*ecology of creativity*' (Steier, F. & Jorgensen, J., 2005), and provides a framework that supports a reading of collaborative rehearsal practice as examined here.

Montuori suggests that 'Transdisciplinarity' is

(1) Inquiry driven rather than Discipline driven

Rather than using 'closed systems' approaches such as codified dance techniques and theatrical styles, we applied explorative approaches in rehearsal which offer tools for experiment and debate. This process of enquiry allows for a fluid exchange between dramatic, dance, somatic movement, and visual-art discourses and practices.

(2) Concerned with Construction of knowledge: the process is understood as being meta-paradigmatic, thus making explicit underlying assumptions of different disciplines or approaches used; Through processes of questioning participants are given tools to interrogate and articulate intention of action and interaction within a recursive feedback loop between performers, choreographers, and directors. All participants are part of the artistic decision-making processes, and aware of underlying aesthetic and socio-political assumptions surrounding the project.

(3) Concerned with Organisation of Knowledge by integrating complex thought and cybernetics frameworks. Methodologies such as the Feldenkrais Method, but also theatre training systems based on Stanislavski and Brecht challenge simplistic linear causalities through systemic approaches and complex processes of 'disordering', 're-ordering' and contextualizing; they guide the participant towards self-reflection and are concerned with 'how' enacted knowledge is created; This creative process is 'dialogic' - through reflection and debate, embracing a relational, often ambiguous '*symbiotic combination of two logics, a combination... that is at once complementary, concurrent and antagonistic*' (Morin, 1999, p.xv).

This coming to terms with the diversity of 'two logics' might concern the embodied dialogue with a partner while interacting physically, or a juxtaposed relationship between story-telling, action, and object manipulation as often found within the performance of 'The Dybbuk'. The finding an embodied performance choices emerges from the dialogue between the differing realities and perceptions of director and performer.<sup>21)</sup>

*The methodologies used in the rehearsal process are approaching artistic inquiry 'holographically', understood as the recursive dialogue between 'the part' and 'the whole'.*

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21) '*Embracing of the paradox*' (Kaetz, 2008), is key to Feldenkrais' (2010) '*theory of reversibility*', manifested in a constant reframing of perspectives and approaches to examining movement possibilities; Allowing for choices not only between two contrasting perspectives, but to at least three positions, brings the dynamic and changing relationships within these symbiotic combinations of perceived realities to the awareness of the learner.



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Feldenkrais lessons are designed in a recursive 'dialogic' between detailed structural inquiries of specific body areas or functional topics, and then a branching out into a connecting to a broader contextualisation of an awareness of the whole self in relation to environment or others.<sup>22)</sup>

The Cubist-like 'multi-perspectivity' in thought, practice, and embodied self-imaging is an aspect of my choreographic practice that emerges from adapting Feldenkraisian strategies and is evident in nature of staging techniques used in the discussed project.

(4) Places the knower into the centre of inquiry, thus challenging positivist models of inquiry. Montuori that suggests the knower should combine rigor and imagination in a process that acknowledges subjectivity- feeling, passion, and intellect of subject. All dance, theatre, and movement 'open systems approaches' chosen in this rehearsal process allow for and support subjectivity, and more so, recognize the importance of the relevance of the inter-subjective and sociality within lived knowledge-creating processes.

## IX. Where Does This Leave Us Then?

Working with a transdisciplinary approach, which is open, complex, and based on experiment, demands an ability to trust and take risks, and engage in an often time consuming dialogue amongst all collaborators within an ensemble. While it challenges traditional hierarchies within rehearsal processes, it can have an empowering effect on participants while supporting creative practice. Such complex process also demands, of all participants involved, a learning of and a becoming skillful in the facilitating of creative, interpersonal, and 'uncertain' processes. The approaches discussed above emerge from 20th Century perspectives on cultural democratization and dialogue, question a Cartesian Body-Mind division, and are concerned with a shifting from hierarchical modes of working to perspectives on self-organization, communication, and autonomy.

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22) The structure of Feldenkrais lessons give evidence of this holographic thinking in Moshe Feldenkrais' work, and the nature of the questions that the practitioner might ask can reinforce this holographic dynamism. Karl Pribram, who was awarded the Nobel-Prize for his research on the holographic nature of the functioning of the brain, regularly collaborated with Moshe Feldenkrais during the 1970's.

The production of 'The Dybbuk' was a project of personal, political and social relevance from the start. The collaboration between Jewish playwright Julia Pascal, and myself, German, both born after the horrors of the WW2 and Holocaust - began 20 years ago, as a passionate project investigating modes of collaboration, reconciliation, and cultural reconstruction of a vibrant European cultural diversity. The play, with its 'Dances of Death', and its international cast, attempts, through the means of performing artists, to examine, ritualize, and exorcise the conflicts and pain of our ancestors; Yet, the collaboration between the ensemble, through process and performance, gives rise to hope, change, and transformation.

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## Abstract

### Recreating Histories:

#### 'Transdisciplinarity and Transcultural Perspectives on Performance Making'

Thomas Kampe  
(London Metropolitan University)

This article discussed potentials and resonances of the application of the Feldenkrais Method, a somatic movement education practice, within the context of the performance making. Questions regarding transdisciplinarity arise through the application of such methodology within a collaborative creative process, where dance-, theatre-, and educational discourses are critically applied through lived, embodied practice.

Key words : The Feldenkrais Method, Somatic Practices, Performance Making,  
Transdisciplinarity, Empowerment, The Dybbuk, Choreography

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## Appendix iv

### Publications and Public presentations

#### Practice

2012 *'The Secret Listeners'*, site-responsive guided tour, direction; Pascal Theatre Company: Trent Park, London.

2012 *'Web'*, site responsive and inclusive performance with performers of mixed abilities; Choreography; Theater im Glasshaus (TIG): Kunstmühle Braunschweig, Germany.

2011 *'Existere'*, large-scale choreography for JOCJONJOSH collective: testbed Battersea, London

2011 *'The Secret Consul'* choreography and movement direction for site-specific Opera ; Wedding Collective: Limehouse Town Hall London.

2011 *'Rupture'*, choreography; Crisis Art Festival; Arezzo, Italy.

2011 *'Beach Party Animal'*, performer; dance for camera, dir Liz Aggiss & Joe Murray: Brighton.

2010 *'Celebrity Chain'*, choreography for '3fall Dance Company'; Minerva Theatre Chichester, regional tour UK.

2010 *'Controller'*, choreography; Arezzo Theatre Festival, Italy.

2010 *'The Dybbuk'*, choreography, design for play by Julia Pascal; Theatre for a New City: New York City, US

2009 *'Amen'*, choreography and Movement direction for performance; The Facility: London

2008 *'...danced with jewess'* performance to commemorate 70th anniversary of Krystalnacht pogroms; Tanzfabrik: Berlin.

2007 *'The Merchant of Venice'*, movement direction for play by W.Shakespeare, adaptation by Julia Pascal; Arcola Theatre: London.

2007 *'City of Refuge'*, direction of play by Miriam Syvan; The Facility Symposium: London .

2006 *'Crossing'*, choreography with Colin Poole, Lizzie Lequesne; Live sound Mark Horrocks: Escapade Festival : London.

2006 *'Recreations and Reconstructions'*, reconstructions of work by expressionist dance pioneer Hilde Holger; Laban studio Theatre: London.

2005 *'trace/reverse'*, choreography, Chisenhale Dance Space London March 2005, Berlin Free University, 2nd European Feldenkrais Conference, 2005. 'Performance as Research' Symposium, Londonmet, April 2005: London.

2005 *'Break'*, dance 4 camera, Channel 4 Dec 2005, solo performance, dir. Liz Aggiss and Billie Cowie: Brighton.

2004 *'Chaser'*, site specific performance and duet for dancers; Feldenkrais Centenary Conference, Munich University: Germany.

2004 *'The Golem'*, performance, movement direction. Play by Julia Pascal; Tricycle Theatre, Purcell Room: London.

2003 *'Urbane Rituale'*, choreography. Site-specific Performance for 150 performers; St. Pauli Football Stadium, Hamburg, Germany. Tanzinitiative Hamburg and University of Hamburg.

2003 *'Men in the Wall'*, performance in 3-d dance for camera project, directed by Liz Aggiss and Billie Cowie: International tour.

2002 *'Choreography for Inflatable Figures'*, digital kinetic installation; collaboration with artist Laura Belem, Paco des Artes: Sao Paulo, Brasil.

2002 *'Body, Image, Site'*, site specific performance and installation project with artist Laura Belem, Ouro Preto Festival: Ouro Preto, Brazil.

2001 *'Woman in The Moon'*, choreography and Movement direction for Play by Julia Pascal, Arcola Theatre: London.

## Written

2013 *'Between three worlds - The choreographer Hilde Holger'*; in Brinson, C. & Dove, R. (2013) *German-speaking Exiles in the Performing Arts in Britain 1933-1956*, Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies, Vol 14; Rodopi.

2011 *'Recreating Histories: Transdisciplinarity and Transcultural Perspectives on Performance Making'*; *The Korean Journal of Dance* 2011. 6 Vol. 67.

2011 *'Interview with Thomas Kampe : Tanzvermittlung'* ; in Klein, G (ed),(2011) *Textband Zeitgenössische Choreographie - Choreographischer Baukasten*; Bielefeld:Transcript Verlag.

2010 *'Weave: The Feldenkrais Method as Choreographic Process'*; in *Perfformio Vol: 1*, No: 2 (Spring 2010).

2009 *'Arriving Late'* Paper on Choreographer Hilde Holger; Conference on Transnationalism and Visual Culture in Britain 1933-1956; Northumbria University; unpublished.

2009 *'Weave'* -Feldenkrais Method and artistic judgement; Presentation, talk, performances; The Facility Symposia- 'recording the performance'; unpublished.

2008 *'The Art of Making Choices'* , presentation on Feldenkrais Method as resource for dance making; HALE Symposium on Creativity June 2008; unpublished.

2006 *Tanzen ist doch Selbstverständlich - taking dance for granted*; Tanzjournal Vol 1.

2006 *Tanz an britischen Universitäten. Beispiele von Thomas Kampe*; Tanzjournal Vol 1.

2005 *Theatre /Politics/ Identity*, presentation at 'Problems and Mysteries Performance as Research' Symposium, Londonmet; unpublished.

2004 *Dance in the City*, presentation on contemporary movement choir; Londonmet ; unpublished.

2003 *Body/Soma/Self*, paper on somatic perspectives on dance pedagogies; Bretton Hall, University of Leeds; unpublished.



### Thomas Kampe Biography

Thomas trained as a visual artist in Germany and subsequently trained in dance at the Laban Centre, Middlesex University in London and at EDDC in Arnhem. He also worked for 13 years with London-based Jewish Austrian Ausdruckstanz-Pioneer Hilde Holger.

Early solo live-art works which were featured in galleries, were concerned with kinetic sculpture, sensory perception, gender and identity. He has worked internationally in the field of performance for more than thirty years, as a choreographer, director, installation artist, designer and as a performer, including work with Aktionstheater Kassel, Amici Dance Theatre, Liz Aggiss, Hilde Holger, Victoria Marks, Rosemary Lee, Colin Poole, and other dance artists. He has extensively collaborated with writer/director Julia Pascal since 1990 in the creation of original performance works which have been featured throughout Europe.

He received a British Council Fellowship in 1986, and a Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship in 1994 to study at LIMS, Susan Klein School and at the Erick Hawkins studio in New York City. His previous work has included solo performances in venues such as Moltkerei Cologne, tanzfabrik Berlin, The ICA London, and The Purcell Room London, international collaborations with dance and theatre companies, installation work in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and site-specific choreography with a cast of 150 performers in St. Pauli Stadium in Hamburg, Germany, in 2003. He appeared in three dance-for-camera projects for Divas Dance Company, and as part of an internationally toured 3D screen installation.

In 2006 he coordinated a reconstruction programme of pre-WW2 dance works by Austrian expressionist dancer Hilde Holger. In 2010 he created three internationally shown dance works and created the movement direction, design, and choreography for the play *The Dybbuk* by Julia Pascal which was presented during 'dream-up festival' in New York City. In 2011 he co-directed Crisis Art Festival in Arezzo Italy, in collaboration with Accademia Dell Arte, Arezzo, and collaborated with artist collective JOCJONJOSH on the choreography for their large-scale body-installation *Esistere*. He also collaborated with *The Wedding Collective*, London, choreographing for a site-specific Opera production of Menotti's *The Secret Consul*. In 2012 he directed a Heritage Lottery funded site-specific guided tour *The Secret Listeners*, a political, immersive performance project with a cast of 35 performers.

Thomas' research interests are in developing a somatically informed perspective on dance education and training, as well as in applying choreographic knowledge and methodologies to a wider and accessible performative context. He was a collective member and a member of the steering group of Chisenhale Dance Space in London, and member of the board of directors of movingartsbase, London. He is a practitioner of the Feldenkrais Method ©, which forms a foundation for most of his teaching and artistic practice. His international teaching has included residencies in various venues with a broad range of clients including: K3-choreographic centre Hamburg, Germany; Independent Dance London, tanzquartier Vienna, Austria; National Dance Academy Quito, Ecuador; Budapest Improvisation Festival, Hungary; Madrid Contact Improvisation Festival, Spain; Freiburg Contact Festival, Germany; Göttingen CMC Festival, Germany; Sicilarte, Catania, Sicily; Casina Settarte, Italy; Ouro Preto Winter Festival, Brasil; Tamalpa Institute of Korea, Seoul, Korea. Thomas has taught and directed internationally in Higher Education for more than 20 years including work at Limerick

University, Ireland, The School for New Dance Development Amsterdam, Ehwa Women's University Seoul, Korea, University of Hamburg, Germany, Central School for Speech and Drama, Rose Bruford College, East 15 Acting School, Accademia dell' Arte Arezzo, De Montford University, Oxford St John's University, and University of Brighton. He was a Senior Lecturer at University College Chichester for nine years before joining the Performing Arts section of London Metropolitan University as Senior Lecturer for Dance and Movement studies in 2002. He was awarded University Teaching Fellow status in 2010 for outstanding pedagogic contributions, and was awarded Associate Professorship in 2011.