

THE WRITTEN BODY:
A STUDY OF MOVEMENT-BASED ACTOR TRAINING LANGUAGE & PEDAGOGY

by

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ABSTRACT

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The Written Body: A Study of Movement-Based Actor-Training Language & Pedagogy

Thesis directed by Associate Professor Cecilia Pang

Currently theatre movement studies tend to occur in actor and director training, rather than introduction to theatre and theatre appreciation courses. Theatre scholars and theatregoers are educated in textual analysis; why are we not supplementing this education with training in movement analysis? Four specific, notable movement-based actor training approaches, which are being taught throughout the United States today are the focus of this study: Jerzy Grotowski's psychophysical actor training, Etienne Decroux's Corporeal Mime, Rudolf Laban's Movement Analysis, and Anne Bogart's Viewpoints. In addition to analyzing the language and pedagogy laid out in a text written by the originator of the approach, I observed and/or studied with prominent instructors throughout the United States currently teaching actor training in an evolved version of these approaches in an attempt to discern a common movement language. Experiencing the teaching of these forms physically enabled me to write from a place of embodiment, enhancing my experience with the approach's relationship to both the body and the mind. This study's importance reaches from furthering the dialogue between practical teaching of stage movement and its analysis to the impact a theatre specific movement analysis vocabulary will have on how scholars and audience members interact with theatre performance.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family: Judith Calvano Raposa, Sandra Minson, Clark Minson, Talia Rego, and Bobby Raposa, for always having faith in me, even when I lose faith in myself.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A defining moment of my theatre career came in the spring of 2012 when Rennie Harris presented *Heaven*, a hip-hop performance piece that reimagined Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring," at the University of Colorado Boulder's University Theatre. It was one of only two productions performed in that space that semester and students in Introduction to Theatre and other theatre courses were required to attend. The instructors of those courses were responsible for generating discussion, paper topics, and test questions for their students based on the dance piece. An air of hesitancy became palpable when my graduate teacher colleagues and mentors discussed these duties. At the time I was a Master's student and Teaching Assistant and not in charge of my own course. I wondered why we couldn't analyze Harris's *Heaven* the way that we analyze movement for the theatre? But then I couldn't think of how we conduct movement analysis in the theatre. As an undergrad theatre student, my studies focused on physical acting; my mentor had studied with Jerzy Grotowski and grounded our training in his style. I took acting courses that explored using movement to create character. In those classes I began to subconsciously learn what would become my language of movement. Performers live through an experience on stage vocally, mentally, and physically. In what ways are students of theatre being prepared to engage with the threads that make up the fabric of performance, both separately and as a unifying whole? Is there a vocabulary for such an analysis?

Outside of the practical classroom, movement is generally understudied as a major component of theatre arts. Many traditional theatre courses focus on textual analysis, vocal technique, and emotional investigation of character, as do some forms of actor training, as each contains a strongly developed language and tends to be seen as more accessible. By incorporating stage movement analysis into all types of theatre classes and identifying a clear movement analysis language based in the languages of current movement-based actor training approaches the work will become more accessible. Where are the commonalities of language and pedagogy within various approaches? A first step in making movement analysis more accessible is to investigate the language and pedagogy of movement-based actor training.

Physical manifestations of the human condition stand at the center of performance. Across the globe and throughout time this statement is true of most types of theatrical performance. Concerning western theatre, one can look back to the Ancient Greeks who created the orchestra, which literally means dancing place, where the chorus performed. *Mimos*, Greek for imitator, eventually transformed into mime, a form committed to physical story telling. Ancient Asian performance forms including Japanese Kabuki and *Nōh*, Chinese Opera, and Sanskrit Theatre employ culturally codified gestures and symbolic movement represented in a single, sophisticated action, which would take lines or pages of dialogue to explain. For example, walking in a small circle signifies a long journey in Traditional Chinese Theatre, and waving the hands and all of the fingers signifies rain in Sanskrit Theatre. Ancient, traditional performance forms from countries such as India and Africa contain little or no distinction between dance and theatre; all movement is embraced as a part of the expressivity of performance.

In the mid-sixteenth century, Italian Commedia dell'arte performers created masked characters and relied on physicalization to relate to and entertain people all over the segmented regions. Dexterously performed physical gags, known as *lazzi*, which translates loosely as comic business, were performed mostly by servant characters. These performers were expected to be agile and acrobatically inclined to execute *lazzi* like the "lazzi of falling [...] ridiculous falling fits" which occur as the character who "tries to run away from danger pratfalls over furniture, often into a bathtub" (Gordon 11). Movement in performance can convey class, cultural idiosyncrasies, gender, societal norms, or minute details about a character's personality and desires. Physical expressivity and action provide as much information about character and story on stage as the text and vocal attributes of the performance.

In nineteenth century France, Francois Delsarte began to codify his system of expression. His interest lay in the connection of gesture, body language, and oration. Books that illustrate the Delsarte system display pages filled with drawings labeled to show the possible significance of varying gestures. He developed his ideas about how gesture brings conversation to life as attention began a slow turn from words to movement in the Western theatre. Konstantin Stanislavski, considered by many to be the father of psychological realism in acting, stressed the importance of the balance between an internal, mental dimensionality with the external physicality of action especially in his later years of work. The terms "internal" and "external" serve as an entry into Stanislavski's theories regarding actor, character development, and action. Stanislavski's articulation of the inner and outer balance necessary to create a complete character give this complex concept a level of accessibility for those without much training in acting and theatre (Toporkov).

The twentieth century saw the development of a wide variety of movement-based training approaches in Europe and Northern America. Major names associated with these forms include: Vsevolod Meyerhold, Etienne Decroux, Jerzy Grotowski, Michael Chekhov, Moshé Feldenkrais, Jacques Lecoq, Tadashi Suzuki, Anne Bogart, and more. Each artist established their own style, methods, and language of training that appears quite distinct from the others on the surface. This list doesn't take into account the dance influence on theatre training found in schools such as F.M. Alexander, Rudolf Laban, and the modern dance masters. Today these approaches are represented in the multitude of actor training programs at universities and specialized institutions across the United States.

Currently, theatre movement studies tend to occur in actor and director training, rather than introduction to theatre and theatre appreciation courses. Often, movement studies in the acting classroom focus on practical application rather than in depth training in analysis and pedagogy. Theatre scholars and theatregoers are educated in textual analysis; why are we not supplementing this education with training in movement analysis? Performance studies courses can incorporate movement studies into their analysis of performance. However, they often have other foci as well; plus theatre and performance studies alike benefits from an analysis of the languages and pedagogies of the many movement-based actor training approaches.

Many books that investigate movement-based actor training focus on one particular practitioner or style. Books like *Towards a Poor Theatre*, *The Moving Body*, and *The Viewpoints Book* to name a few, discuss the actor training approach and exercises developed by Jerzy Grotowski, Jacques Lecoq, and Anne Bogart and Tina Landau, respectively, and were written by those individuals. Additionally, *Commedia'Dell Arte: An*

Actor's Handbook by John Rudlin, *The Michael Chekov Handbook* by Lenard Petit, and *The Mime Book* by Claude Kipnis are a few of the books devoted to relaying the particulars of a specific style of physical performance training. Finally, there are books that relay several different approaches some based in movement; these include *Movement for Actors* edited by Nicole Potter, *Physical Theatres: A Critical Introduction* edited by Simon Murray and John Keefe, and *Training of the American Actor* edited by Arthur Bartow. These books may include several approaches, but they tend to lack cohesion or conversation between them; rather they are presented as separate entities and lack the analysis of the commonalities of language and pedagogy. A useful addition to movement studies is a study that introduces and compares some of the prevalent modes of movement-based actor training currently being taught. That is part of the purpose of this dissertation.

The language of physical theatre is complex and as multifaceted as the approaches to it. A theatre-specific vocabulary for analyzing movement on stage assists this endeavor. This study dissects the language of physical theatre and the pedagogies within specific approaches. Where are the commonalities? Where are the differences? Where are the entry points? Is there a common vocabulary existent in the myriad of movement-based actor training? Extracting the commonalities establishes a starting point for those wanting to begin weaving this type of training into their artistic work and for those who want to conduct physical analysis of characters on stage.

Some prominent approaches currently taught in the United States include Viewpoints and Suzuki Method, the training combination employed by the Saratoga International Theatre Institute, known as SITI Company, founded by American director Anne Bogart and Japanese director Tadashi Suzuki. Company members teach intensives in

New York while also traveling around the world to perform workshops and master classes. Bogart has taught Viewpoints throughout the U.S. at colleges, universities, and institutions such as: Columbia University in New York, University of California at San Diego, and La Mama. Other theatre instructors and artists have incorporated a movement analysis method developed by dancer/choreographer Rudolf Laban in the 1900s, aptly titled Laban Movement Analysis. Marymount Manhattan College Professor Barbara Adrian published *Actor Training the Laban Way*, which explains how she became certified in Laban Movement Analysis and used this in combination with her Voice and Speech training to create a cohesive actor training method. Surveying the language behind these approaches provides insight into the sometimes abstract and unique exercises employed in physically intensive actor training and will illuminate any relationships they share.

In an interview with Anne Bogart, director Oscar Eustis discussed elitism in theatre: “We like feeling like we understand what is going on in performance to the exclusion of others, the sense that understanding something that other people don’t understand is a way of reaffirming our specialness. We get it. They don’t. That makes us special” (*Conversations with Anne* 389). While Eustis is specifically speaking about elitism in Avant-garde theatre he raises an important point in theatre education, the need to develop a culture of theatregoers at all levels of education. The more people feel like they “get it” the less elitist art appears. Accessibility grows through discussion and analysis. According to stage movement master, Jacques Lecoq:

If theatre audiences were to acquire [a] subtlety of observation, they would discover untold riches. [...] To train people’s ability to look and see is as important as to train creative artists. It’s useless giving good wine to people

who can't appreciate it. That's my definition of culture: achieving a true appreciation of things. (52)

A common movement lexicon aids in deepening the audience experience with performance promoting discussion, analysis, and creating a starting point for new students and instructors. Engaging with some of the notable pedagogies gives insight into how they could be applied from an external standpoint. This type of work's importance reaches from furthering the dialogue between practical teaching of stage movement and its analysis to the impact a theatre-specific movement analysis vocabulary will have on how scholars and audience members interact with theatre performance. The findings of this dissertation will not only benefit undergraduate theatre instructors, but also the students, as it will give them a language to employ in the classroom and in rehearsals.

A common language, used in conjunction with movement exercises and employed in the theatre classroom provides undergraduate theatre students with both physical and intellectual ways in which to interact with performance. This combined approach will level the field for different types of learners in the classroom. Experiential and active learners, such as myself, benefit from kinesthetically engaging in the work and interacting with a physical language. Those who learn best from thinking and observing then reflecting gain language from which to approach visceral experiences that they may have a difficult time processing and communicating without being given tools and guidance for the engagement with performance analysis. Additionally, a classroom that incorporates experiential and analytical approaches with a concrete language provides students with equal amounts of challenge of the unknown and safety in a style that they are more comfortable learning in.

For this study, I chose to focus on analysis of four physically-based actor training pedagogies: Jerzy Grotowski's training approach, Etienne Decroux's Corporeal Mime, Rudolf Laban's Movement Analysis, and Viewpoints as developed by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau. These approaches provide a sampling of some of the most prevalent forms used in actor training programs across the country. My long-term goal is to offer a theatre-specific vocabulary for analyzing movement on the stage. Consideration of the pedagogy and language not only employed by the originators of these movement-based actor training approaches, but also those who continue to teach with this focus today is essential to understanding how the approaches originated and how they continue to evolve and be used today.

Because actor training is such a fluid evolving art, it became useful to explore how these languages evolved from their originators to those who are teaching them today. Grotowski, for example, did not actually participate actively in the training, although he did extensively research types of movement and their relationship to culture. He taught; he did not perform. Each of the instructors observed for this study are or have been performers and approach the form from the perspective of an actor's body, which changes their relationship to the work from that of some of their predecessors. All of the movement specialists in this study have trained either with the originators of the approach or with a certified expert trained within that specific mode of actor training.

The first part of each chapter consists of analysis of the pedagogies and texts that correspond to or originated from the approach. In the second part of each chapter, my analysis draws from that particular pedagogy in action. This is achieved through observation and study of the classroom work of four corresponding specialists who are

both professional performers/directors and instructors working in the corresponding approaches.

Chapter Two explores the movement-based actor training developed by Polish, director Jerzy Grotowski and the current teachings of Stephen Wangh, Erika Fae, Wendy vanden Heuval, and Raïna von Waldenburg in their *Acrobats of the Heart* training intensive. Wangh studied with Grotowski in 1967, vanden Heuval participated in Grotowski's Objective Drama Project in the 1960s, von Waldenburg trained with him in the 1980s, and Erica Fae was a student of Wangh's at NYU and trained with several others who had worked with Grotowski. Grotowski's work can help actors to find a deeper understanding of themselves and their craft through psychophysical exploration and how to move beyond one's habits and blocks. The *Acrobats* Instructors evolved the Grotowski training, investigating the manner in which mental and physical impediments manifest for actors on stage. They also consider the role of imagination in movement-based actor training. This chapter begins to identify a common thread of the importance of integrated psychological, physical, and vocal training as all necessary to honest character creation on stage.

Chapter Three examines mime master Etienne Decroux's "Corporeal Mime." Decroux strived to perfect physical essence and performance by posing questions of movement use on stage. Daniel Stein, Head of Movement and Physical Theatre at Brown University and Trinity Repertory Company's Master's of Fine Arts program, and others who trained with Decroux, continue to question how movement and creation of character should be employed in actor training work. Decroux 's mime work included an affinity for poetry and the abstract that blossomed into physical interpretation of nature, concepts, and the world around him. Stein's pedagogy, "Poetic Dynamics," includes ideas he learned

from Decroux while studying with him in France. Stein expands and refines concepts from Decroux, himself, and others he trained, such as metaphor, rhythm, and their relationship to the art of acting. This chapter considers the role of storytelling and perception in physical creation of character and performance.

Chapter Four surveys the Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) approach of Rudolf Laban, the only specialist in this study who developed his work mostly from a dance perspective. His distinction of physical action qualities: weight, time, focus, and flow, give language to and expand exploration of expressivity and dynamic movement onstage. University of Colorado Boulder Dance Professor Emerita Toby Hankin became certified in LMA from the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies in New York. She currently continues to evolve the approach and language created by Laban in workshops and courses by encouraging students to consider the breadth of possibilities of interpretations of the Laban terms during an exploration or analysis of movement. The Laban chapter offers a precise language for movement analysis.

Chapter Five focuses on The Viewpoints as taught by New York-based SITI Company. SITI Company members travel throughout the world holding workshops and master classes to not only teach their combination of Viewpoints and Suzuki training to others, but to continually engage with the systems which inform their work. Anne Bogart and SITI Company has expanded upon choreographer Mary Overlie's The Six Viewpoints, and continue to approach their training and work through the lens of other approaches like Grotowski's and Martha Graham Technique. Associate Professor Jeffrey Fracé worked with the SITI Company for ten years before joining the faculty of the School of Drama at the University of Washington to teach Viewpoints and Suzuki to Master's of Fine Arts Acting

and Directing students. His manner of engaging with Viewpoints combines a classic approach with his experience working with modern dance companies like New York-based Palissimo. This chapter focuses on the newest of the approaches investigates how the pedagogy and language evolves while the originator of the language is still alive and continuing to work and develop the approach.

An article published in *Backstage.com* on July 7, 2015 “7 Movement Techniques All Actor’s Should Study,” includes, Laban Movement Analysis, Corporeal Mime, and Viewpoints. Backstage may not be a scholarly source; however, its reputation as a valuable source of information for theatre professionals makes it useful to evaluate current trends. This article published on *Backstage.com* shows the importance of these approaches to those theatre professionals outside of academia. Even though Grotowski’s physical-based approach was not mentioned in the article, it is a pedagogy that continues to be taught at major collegiate theatre programs such as Yale Drama and NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts. Each of these styles remains continually relevant as they have been taught and continue to evolve since their origination.

Each of the movement specialists included in this study currently teaches movement training in renowned performer training programs throughout the U.S. These specialists have been recognized by their colleagues and within scholarly publications for their dedication and innovation to the craft of theatre movement. An article titled “Let’s Get Physical: What’s Happening Now?,” written by Nicole Potter, Acting Instructor at Marymount Manhattan College and editor of *Movement for Actors*, published in *American Theatre Magazine* in January of 2011, discusses present movement training forms including

each of the forms here. It specifically features two of the specialists contained in this study: Daniel Stein and Jeffrey Fracé.

Each type of actor training included here embraces how the physical relationship informs the emotional life of the actor in order to create character. Most of the contemporary teachers stress the need for balance between mind, body, and emotional approach to character. Those who developed these approaches understood the importance of actors honing mental, physical, and vocal skills together as each component is necessary to balanced integration of the whole self. These are the components that create character and a movement analysis language expands analytical possibility and understanding.

I adopted a methodology in the following chapters that includes an analysis of important texts that correspond to the four prevalent pedagogies listed above. The books served as a point of reference for the language of each style. *Mastery of Movement* written by Laban and *Toward a Poor Theatre* written by Grotowski remain as written examples of movement pedagogies in their specific languages. As this study investigates movement, I understand that it is necessary to combine the knowledge gained from the texts with physical work in each of the forms. In addition to textual research, I participated in and/or observed the pedagogy in action of the four corresponding specialists listed above, whose permissions I have secured, to examine how they introduce and impart the practical application of these movement pedagogies. Personally experiencing each approach enabled me to write from a place of embodiment. This enhanced my experience with the approach's relationship to both the body and the mind giving me a more complete perspective (physical and psychological) when writing.

Each chapter follows a similar structure, which begins with the significance of the originator or artist being considered in that particular chapter. This is followed by an introduction to the movement specialist who originated the style and a brief discussion of some of their major influences. From there the examination transitions to the practitioner/instructor with whom I trained and/or observed and their current pedagogy in practice, which includes attention to how they have evolved and furthered the pedagogy and language of the original. Each chapter ends with a glossary of terms from throughout the chapter, identifying the evolutions from the original language and considering how this is imparted to students today. Please note, regarding my choice of pronoun usage, I have adopted a method of switching between the female and male pronouns from section to section within each chapter. As a young woman I found that most of the books I engaged with were written from the male perspective and only ever employed the male pronoun. As I am now writing, I decided to write from an inclusive perspective, rather than simply focusing on my own gender. As such, I also employ the terms student, performer, and actor as gender-neutral references to the human being engaging in the actor training work.

I do not aim to essentialize any of the movement-based actor training approaches down to a simple set of tenets or an easily codifiable pedagogical system. Rather my aim is to analyze portions of the pedagogy, exercises, and vocabulary, inherent in each of the different approaches, in order to more easily identify commonalities. The final chapter concludes in an analysis that functions as a bridge between the chapters and consequently each of the movement-based actor training pedagogies and languages. An investigation of the language and pedagogy within various movement-based actor training approaches will illuminate the connections between them, which will lead to a movement-based

performance language, expanding the possibilities for classroom discussion, analysis, and application within training and onstage. The conclusion lays out some practical application of the language and exercises and considers how the language can bridge the gap between analysis and the practical application in rehearsals and the classroom.

CHAPTER II

IMPULSE & GROTOWSKI-BASED TRAINING

Jerzy Grotowski's contributions to the theatre range from production work, to theory and criticism, and actor training. While his multifaceted legacy lives on today, it is perhaps his research and development in actor training that remains the most accessible to contemporary practitioners. Grotowski notoriously rejected having his work codified or written down, ironic seeing as he and several of those who worked closely with him went on to publish books on the work. He feared the work being set in writing and misinterpreted. Grotowski once proclaimed at a meeting of actors and directors at the Brooklyn Academy in New York:

If I said once that the technique which I follow is that of creating one's own, personal techniques, there is contained here that postulate of a 'profound betrayal'. If a pupil senses his own technique, then he departs from me, from my needs, which I realize in my way, through my process. He will be different, distant....Every other technique or method is sterile. (qtd. in Kumiega, 111)

The "profound betrayal" is a positive one; in departing from the instructor's technique the actor becomes his own teacher. Many actors and directors who trained with Grotowski, and continue to teach today, betray him in the best possible way: using what they learned from him to expand their approach to their own work. Grotowski's influence left a barrage of acting instructors who continue to work through his exercises, concepts, and adaptations of this manner of training.

Grotowski – The Artist & the Work

Jerzy Grotowski was born in the city of Rzeszów, a little over 100 miles east of Kraków, in Poland in 1933. He was one of two sons born to Emilia and Marian Grotowski; his brother Kazimierz was 3 years his elder. Grotowski's mother worked as a schoolteacher, his anti-Soviet father served as a forest ranger until Hitler's army invaded Poland in 1939. At that time Marian, escaped to Europe. In 1940, Grotowski escaped with his mother and brother to the small town of Nienadówka, about 13 miles north of Rzeszów, for four years. After the war Marian Grotowski immigrated to Paraguay never to return or to see his family again. Of the time he spent in Nienadówka, Grotowski said, "I was born in some way a second time in this village. All essential motifs of my life started here" (*With Jerzy Grotowski*). Such motifs included a complex relationship with religion, an insatiable curiosity about presence, and searching for the roots of traditions. While mother and sons lived meagerly off her teacher's salary, she continued to educate the boys and give them a range of experiences. She insisted on introducing them to a wide spectrum of religious thought, though they lived in the staunchly Catholic country. An encounter with a young priest gave Grotowski the rare chance to read the gospels on his own, without the traditional introduction through the interpretation of the church (*With Jerzy Grotowski*). One of Grotowski's earliest influences came in the form of a book given to him by his mother, Paul Brunton's *A Search in Secret India* (Słowiak and Cuesta, 3). Brunton's book chronicles his journey as an Englishman in the early 1930s traveling across India interacting with sages, gurus, yogis, and others searching for mystical wisdom and

presence. Grotowski embarked on a similar quest in his research and work in theatre, performance, and ritual.

Grotowski got accepted into theatre school in Kraków, mostly thanks to an essay he wrote on the question “How can theatre contribute to the development of socialism in Poland?” (Osiński 14). While in school, Grotowski continued to write and began publishing articles that expounded on his ideology on the state of theatre. Early in his career his ideas on theatre captured attention and sparked debate. In school in Poland, Grotowski was introduced to the system of famed Russian actor and director Konstantin Stanislavsky. Labeled by many the “Father of Modern Acting,” Stanislavsky is widely considered to have the most profound impact on the process of acting in his search for believable truth onstage. A common interpretation of Stanislavsky’s system of physical actions is that it is a move beyond emotional and psychological memory as foundation of acting and toward the relationship between physical action and psychological response. In 1955, Grotowski “received a scholarship to study directing at the State Institute of Theatre Arts (GITIS) in Moscow” (Slowiak and Cuesta 5). He “saw the seeds of truth in Stanislavsky’s **system of physical actions**, [author’s emphasis] and he went to Moscow to study the system at its source” (Slowiak and Cuesta 6).

In his *At Work with Grotowski on Physical Actions*, Thomas Richards discusses Grotowski’s relationship with Stanislavski’s work:

One day Grotowski said to me: “After the ‘System’ of Stanislavski, came his ‘method of physical actions.’ Do you think that Stanislavski would have stopped there? No, he died. *That is why he stopped.* And I simply *continued his research*” [author’s emphasis] (105). [Richards states] Probably everyone

to differing degrees, feels a need to serve something higher or more noble than their work. [...] Conscious growth does not occur accidentally or by itself. These persons work constantly and through their efforts attempt to serve something over themselves. (8)

In continuing Stanislavski's research on actions Grotowski served something beyond himself, the work, which helped actors to find a deeper understanding of themselves and their craft.

Grotowski completed a master's degree and began work as a director upon returning to Poland from Russia. His production work from this time included a radio production of Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*, Prosper Merimee's *The Woman is a Devil*, and Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*. Grotowski gained a reputation in Poland for his innovative point of view and for his dislike of the state of modern theatre. "[M]odern staging – scenography using current sculptural or electronic ideas, contemporary music, actors independently projecting clownish or cabaret stereotypes. I know that scene: I used to be a part of it" (Grotowski 15). In 1962 Grotowski changed the Theatre of the 13 Rows to the Laboratory Theatre. In the article "Towards a Poor Theatre," Grotowski relays the impetus behind the work of the Laboratory:

We are seeking to define what is distinctively theatre [...] we consider the personal and scenic technique of the actor as the core of theatre art. [...] The education of an actor in our theatre is not a matter of teaching him something; we attempt to eliminate his organism's resistance to this psychic process. The result is freedom from the time-lapse between inner impulse and outer reaction in such a way that the impulse is already an outer

reaction. Impulse and action are concurrent: the body vanishes, burns, and the spectator sees only a series of visible impulses. (15-16)

The Laboratory Theatre was started in the southern Poland city of Opole. In 1965 the theatre moved to Wrocław, the largest city in western Poland, where it was given the title Institute for Research into Acting. As he continued in his work Grotowski would not simply attempt to approach theatrical work as a director; rather, he researched and experimented on the art of acting in his laboratory.

In his reflections, Grotowski breaks his work up into five phases: Theatre of Productions, often referred to as “poor theatre” (1959-1969); Paratheatre (1969-1978); Theatre of Sources (1976-1982); Objective Drama (1983-1992); and Art as Vehicle (1991-1999). Although Grotowski’s perspective, and often the approach to his work, fundamentally shifted in each phase nevertheless, certain themes — such as: how to find honesty on stage, removing blockages, and the psychophysical connection— remained integral.

Theatre of Productions (1959-1969).

Grotowski’s Theatre of Productions marks the only phase that incorporated the goal of a finished product performed in a traditional theatre style with an audience and subsequent tours. From a training standpoint, Grotowski’s work during this time revolved around exploration of physical and psychophysical exercises. The Theatre of Productions began in 1959 when Grotowski began working with theatre critic Ludwik Flaszen and the Theatre of the 13 Rows. Their partnership seemed born out of destiny as “they were both bored with the present state of theatre in Poland, and they both sensed that theatre as an art form trailed distantly behind other artistic disciplines” (Osiński 36). During this ten-

year period Grotowski directed all of the major productions for which he would become famous including *Akropolis* (1962), *The Constant Prince* (1965), and *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris* (1968). The international reputation of Grotowski's group grew exponentially and gained the attention of Italian theatre artist and scholar Eugenio Barba, who began writing about them in 1965. The group began touring their productions throughout Europe in 1966, and to North America later that year. Barba became one of Grotowski's greatest proponents over the years and helped him edit and publish *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968), a series of articles and interviews written by and about Grotowski.

Success abounded in Poland and abroad for Grotowski and his theatre company; however, he turned inward "to a fundamental questioning of his commitment to an artistic and creative path" (Kumiega 87). In *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris* (1968), Grotowski departed from the traditional play script; instead, his group devised the work together in rehearsals incorporating sections of the Bible, Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, and T.S. Eliot's writings. Traditional barriers between audience and performers were broken down. Pictures from the original performances in the 1960s show little distinction between audience and performer, with both parties seated on wooden floor in a small room together. In an investigation of myth, archetype, and ritual Grotowski turned to questions of community and humanity. To explore these questions, a conventional theatrical form no longer served Grotowski's purposes.

Paratheatre (1969-1978).

While the theatre of productions tended toward performance as a final goal, the Paratheatrical events such as, "tree of people" were more like the Happenings and Human

Be-Ins¹ of the late 1960s. Large groups of people experienced the exercises together without an audience; instead the spectator and participant were one and the same. No auditions were held; there was only an open invitation to those who were willing to fully engage in the event.

In 1975, approximately five hundred people from around the world attended a 'research university' organized by Grotowski [...] the activities included taking groups into the woods for twenty-four hours where they participated in improvisatory reenactments of basic myths, archetypes, and symbols involving fire, air, earth, and water [...] Through this process, participants were led to rediscover the roots of the theatre in pure ritualized experience, as well as to discover, in some ways, their own true being. (Brockett and Findlay 398)

According to Richard Schechner, during Grotowski's Paratheatrical phase, "[t]he intense and intimate 'work on the self' that characterized poor theatre [...] now had a new impetus: to dissolve the masks of imposture most people wear as their ordinary social selves and, in a spiritually vulnerable mode, to communicate face to face" (*Sourcebook* 209). Through the shift, Grotowski's work continued to search for the core of genuine portrayal of self and the genuine expression of psychophysical impulse. While this is not the only focus of the work an element of it continued to exist throughout this phase.

¹ Happenings began in the late 1950s and typically refer to an event that might, today, be labeled performance art. Human Be-Ins were most popular around the 1968 "Summer of Love," and focused on ideas of enlightenment, political action, and collective consciousness, meshing together sit-ins and communal living.

Theatre of Sources (1976-1982).

In 1980, Grotowski explained the impetus for the change to his next phase, the Theatre of Sources. “It was about four years ago [...] I was given the opportunity both by my own country and by certain international organizations to create an international programme. I said to myself, ‘that’s the moment’ and I found the name *Theatre of Sources*” [author’s emphasis] (qtd. in Kumeiga 231). The opportunity Grotowski referred to was the Mountain Project, a paratheatrical event that took place from 1975-1978 in mountains around Wrocław and France. During this time, Grotowski began to reassess the purpose and ends of his research once again and his focus shifted to source, the foundation or beginning. However, Grotowski was not strictly interested in sources of theatre, or of performance; instead, he intended to examine the sources of tradition, of ritual, and of community believing these held truths about the human spirit that would inform performance work. For instance, working outdoors was essential in attempting to connect back to a lost relationship with nature. According to Professor of Religion Ronald Grimes, the Theatre of Sources:

[...]the process of reaching below the ‘techniques of sources’ – that is, spiritual disciplines such as *zazen*, yoga, Sufi dancing, or shamanic healing – to the ‘sources of the techniques of sources.’ [...] Grotowski is not interested in imitating or syncretizing archaic disciplines but in finding simple actions to carry on ‘the work with oneself,’ the ‘opus-process.’ [...] [H]e wants to find out how any action begins. (*Sourcebook* 270)

Grimes identifies the threads of self-discovery and impulse as main components within Grotowski’s work.

Objective Drama (1983-1992).

In 1982, Grotowski left Poland during the period of political unrest and martial law. He sought asylum in the United States and eventually received an invitation to work on his Objective Drama research at the University of California – Irvine. Lisa Wolford's book *Grotowski's Objective Drama Research* may be considered the primary documentation for this period. Wolford, who participated in the training with Grotowski in the 1990s, likens the training goals to those in *Towards a Poor Theatre*: "[t]he primary purpose is to eradicate blocks in the actor's organism, so that no obstruction might interfere between impulse and manifestation" (39). Wolford analyzes the language of an early report on the project to help distinguish the focus of Grotowski's Objective research: " '[O]bjective,' therefore, can be understood to designate a type of performative technique that has a determinable effect on the participant's state of energy, analogous to the objective impact of undegenerated ritual" (9), marking ritual as a change in approach during this phase of his research.

Art as Vehicle (1991-1999).

During Grotowski's final work phase he moved strongly back to actor training. Some state that this work began as early as 1986 with the creation of the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski in Pontedera, Italy. Therefore, this "Art as Vehicle" phase continues along the same lines as the Objective Drama; however, there is more focus on "actions related to very ancient songs [and their...] direct impact on – so to say – the head, the heart, and the body of the doers (*Sourcebook* 366). In Grotowski's essay, "From the Theatre Company to Art as Vehicle," one can see the same type of language that was ubiquitous in Grotowski's earlier ideology as he candidly expounds on his perception of actor training:

[r]ehearsals are not a preparation for the opening, they are for the actor a terrain of discoveries about himself, his possibilities, his chances to transcend his limits. Rehearsals are a great adventure if we work seriously. [...] Fleming was not searching for penicillin; he and his colleagues were looking for something else. But his research was systematic, and then – there it is – penicillin appeared. (qtd. in Richards 118-119)

In this passage, ideas from each of Grotowski's research phases are combined: such combinations are a defining feature of Art as Vehicle. The rigor and precision of the Theatre of Productions work was combined with his desire for the source, the impulse, in Theatre of Sources, and with the unmasking of honest communication sought in his Paratheatre. Unblocking and examining one's psychophysical process remained a part of each phase of Grotowski's research, albeit the precise focus and modes of this investigation tended to change.

Grotowski's work was an evolving, exploratory journey. His work encompassed a range of experiences including yoga, Asian performance forms, and Haitian folk dance and music, as well as Stanislavski's work on physical actions. Grotowski consciously endeavored to experience new performance forms around the world and his work reflected changes in perspective. His approach to training did not include the goal of perfecting a technique. In fact, one should not approach this style of training with the attitude of completing it. This kind of training is inexhaustible. Grotowski's work was not intended as a physical practice where one acquires specific physical skills. Yes, it is true that many of Grotowski's exercises and forms allow the actor to explore physicality; if practiced regularly over a long period of time, many of the exercises may build strength but

they were not intended as strength building exercises. Physical forms do live at the heart of the training; however, they serve as a structure for the psychological portion of the work.

Towards a Poor Theatre

Towards a Poor Theatre remains one of the few written accounts of Grotowski's work in which he participated first hand. However, as it was published 1968, the perspective is limited to Grotowski's "Theatre of Productions" phase. Nevertheless, the book displays Grotowski's integration of the physical, vocal, mental, emotional, and energetic lives of the actor while giving him personal understanding through self-discovery, with the goal (if one must have one) of performing with sincerity. Analytical interviews with Grotowski about his research methods, descriptions of exercises employed at the laboratory, and in-depth discussion of Grotowski's theatrical ideology are combined in the book.

Towards a Poor Theatre contains a vocabulary for actor training that scholars recognize as characteristic of Grotowski. "Via negativa," for example is a term that Grotowski employed throughout the book and consistently throughout his work. This term expresses the need to remove blockages before an actor can find truthfulness of expression and presence. Grotowski explains,

We do not want to teach the actor a predetermined set of skills or give him a "bag of tricks." Ours is not a deductive method of collecting skills. Here everything is concentrated on the "ripening" of the actor which is expressed by a tension towards the extreme, by a complete stripping down, by the laying bare of one's own intimacy [...] [o]urs then is a **via negativa** – not a

collection of skills but an eradication of blocks. [author's emphasis]

(Grotowski 16-17)

This “tension toward the extreme” is a form of impulse exploration that often results in an exceptionally large or small reaction. If in one’s everyday there is a level of neutrality, the mask of socially expected behavior, then extremes must be explored to find the spectrum and roots of one’s impulses. In the “Methodical Exploration” section, Grotowski lists some of the “conditions essential to the art of acting” that should be made a prominent element of methodical research, “[t]o eliminate from the creative process the resistances and obstacles caused by one’s own organism, both physical and psychic (the two forming a whole)” (96). Rather than learning a prescribed set of skills, the Grotowski-trained actor learns about himself through an investigation of his physiological and psychological responses to the training. This is a concept from Grotowski’s early work in the Polish Theatre Laboratory. Language about removing blockages is a central to *Towards a Poor Theatre*.

While Grotowski’s work revolved around physical exploration and blockage removal, his work also included exploration of image, vocals, and presence. Importance is placed on what Grotowski called “association.” Grotowski’s definition of association can be found contextually in *Towards a Poor Theatre*. During an exercise, a critique was given to a female student who could not explain why she chose to complete a somersault in a particular moment. “No association was present” (163). Performing a somersault can be an empty act, a display of acrobatic finesse and strength. While physically exploring a movement, an actor can have a mental association or image, creating a connection between her physical and emotional, or psychological, parts. In Grotowski’s work instead of moving

on autopilot, the actor should allow associations to aid her in her movement exploration. Were the actor to imagine running and leaping over a wide river filled with alligators, for example, she could connect to the leap in a more emotional way. Rather than mechanically running and leaping because that was the form she had been told to work. Alternately, she could connect with the excitement that she felt when she first performed a somersault. An association can be a real memory or imagery created in the moment, whatever works best for the actor to work through impulses with an honest effort.

Grotowski's language seemingly turns to religious dogma in his explanation of the function of training and performance in an interview with Eugenio Barba aptly titled, "Theatre's New Testament," included in *Towards a Poor Theatre*. "The actor who undertakes an act of self-penetration, who reveals himself, and sacrifices the innermost part of himself – the most painful, that which is not intended for the eyes of the world – must be able to manifest the least impulse" (33). Many who worked with or observed Grotowski have written about the religious tone in his ideas about actor training though Grotowski has explained that his use of terms such as "holy actor" and "self-sacrifice" comes from a secular, rather than a religious, point of view (34). Grotowski's employment of spiritual language was perhaps partly an allusion to the power that he felt actors could attain when successfully eradicating blocks and clearly revealing impulses. For Grotowski, the actor who does not rely on artifice or studied skills achieves presence and awareness that raises him above the actor who relies on tricks and illusions of "representing" the part.

In the section of *Towards a Poor Theatre* "Actor's Training 1959-1962" Grotowski describes "Physical Exercises" and "Plastic Exercises." This section explains the forms of the corporels and plastiques, respectively, two of the forms that continue to be taught by

those who trained with Grotowski. The corporels are acrobatic explorations in form that involve the entire body, while the plastiques, especially in their initial introduction, isolate body parts and eventually explore fluid motion from one part of the body to another. In the “Physical Exercises,” Hatha Yoga, somersaults, a form called “the cat,” and leaps are described with a note:

It is equally incorrect to perform this series of exercises in an inanimate way.

The exercise serves the research. [author’s emphasis] “It is not merely automatic repetition or a form of muscular massage. [...] Only the exercises which “investigate” involve the entire organism of the actor and mobilise his hidden resources. The exercises which “repeat” give inferior results. (104)

Grotowski used the forms in order to motivate the actor to explore not only how the body works, but also the physical and emotional effects that the work has on the actor.

Mechanical repetitions of exercises deprive the self-aware actor of valuable research and discoveries. Repetition can lead to perfection of form, but it also likely will result in emptiness. Attention should be focused on what is happening within the actor, rather than on the outside form of the actor, as perfection of form is not a goal of the work.

The individual corporels vary from one to another without much prescription as to what makes it a corporel, most being quite acrobatic in nature. Corporel translates as “bodily,” and indeed in each of the corporels the entire body is engaged in exploring the specific forms. Headstands, somersaults, leaps, and backbends all fall under the category of the corporels. One of the main corporels is “the cat.” According to Grotowski, the cat is an exercise “based on the observation of a cat as it awakes and stretches itself.” It is one of the “[e]xercises to loosen up the muscles and the vertebral column” (103). The cat is distinct

from some of the other corporel forms in that it integrates many different types of forms under one label. Each of the corporels has its own particular structure, but can also be connected, flowing from one to the next. Moreover, movement within each corporel presents a range of endless possibilities.

Complimenting the full-bodied exploration of movement in the corporels, the plastiques require attention to be given to the movement of specific joint or muscles. It is worth considering that in French the term “les plastiques” has an artistic connotation that refers to sculpture, a physical representation of form. One could say that a sculptor explores form in the molding of her creation. According to the 1913 edition of *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, the word plastic can be compared to the French plastique:

1. Having the power to give form or fashion to a mass of matter; as, the plastic hand of the Creator.
2. Capable of being molded, formed, or modeled, as clay or plaster; -- used also figuratively; as, the plastic mind of a child.
3. Pertaining or appropriate to, or characteristic of, molding or modeling; produced by, or appearing as if produced by, molding or modeling; -- said of sculpture and the kindred arts, in distinction from painting and the graphic arts. (ARTFL)

Each of the definitions implies movement and shape “giving form,” “capable of being molded,” and even the distinction of sculpture from painting. The French word “plastique” refers to the three-dimensional molding of a substance into a formed shape. Far from being static, the student progressing in her plastique work is required to mold her body in space through an exploration of form, movement, and reaction (physical, emotional, and intellectual). The corporels and plastiques attempt to connect the extremities strongly to

the spine and to promote energy flow to the brain. In Grotowski's approach one needs to keep the body and mind open while attending to an awareness of the psychological response to the physical state being explored. Understanding and exploring these responses will stimulate the physical ability to create them honestly on stage.

A form of self-exploration from Grotowski's Objective Drama phase can be found in his exercise, "the motions." The motions have been written about by several people who learned them in Grotowski's Objective Drama Project in the 1980s and 1990s. Lisa Wolford mentions them as an example of "the most rigorously structured" of the activities in the project (44). I Wayan Lendra describes them in great detail, with photographic examples of the positions, in "The Motions: A Detailed Description," which follows his "Bali and Grotowski" article in Vol. 35 of *TDR*. Thomas Richards and Robert Findlay, in their separate accounts of their work with Grotowski, discuss their experiences with the rigorous exercise.

In discussing the motions it is important to distinguish the difference between this exercise and the corporels and plastiques. As will be discussed in detail below, the structure and purpose of the motions has both similarities but also some key differences. This could be due to the fact that the motions were developed later in Grotowski's career than the corporels and plastiques, which were developed in the late 1950s. By the 1980s, when Grotowski integrated the Motions into his training, his experiences in research gave him new perspectives and shifted his focus and approach. What is most unique about the motions, in comparison with earlier forms and exercises, is that the performer doing them does not respond emotionally. "She simply observes what is out there" (Lendra 122). The

motions complement Grotowski's earlier exercises by combining ensemble engagement, connection with an awareness of self, and a focus on observation rather than reaction.

Grotowski's work continues to evolve and change now that those who trained with him train others. Richard Schechner, in a 2008 *TDR* article, distinguishes between Grotowski's "transmission" and "influence": "Grotowski could pick the person he transmitted his performance knowledge to. But Grotowski could not limit his influence" (10). He did indeed choose his method of transmission when he appointed Thomas Richards to head The Work Center of Jerzy Grotowski in Pontedera, Italy. One need only search the Internet with terms such as "Grotowski," "training," and "MFA" to see some of the wide and varying institutions where Grotowski-based training methods are employed. Yale, The University of Iowa, and Naropa University are just a few of the institutions in the United States that come up, showing his continued influence. A former Grotowski student that continues to teach his work is New York University (NYU) professor emeritus, director, and author Stephen Wangh. Wangh's impact on actor training consists not in faithful dissemination of the exercises and concepts that he learned from Grotowski; rather, it consists in how Wangh has continued to evolve Grotowski's language and research and combined it with other approaches to create his own.

The Laboratory Theatre began its first foreign tour in 1966, a time when the inclination of the school shifted toward education; this shift can be seen in the name change to the "Laboratory Theatre – Institute of Research into Acting Method." In 1967 Jerzy Grotowski and his main collaborator from the Laboratory Theatre, actor Ryszard Cieślak, travelled to the U.S. for the first time. They spent four weeks at NYU with the acting and directing Master of Fine Arts (MFA) students there. The schedule was four days a week and

six hours a day. Stephen Wangh, an MFA directing student in the program, recalled the experience:

Some days Grotowski spoke philosophically about things like the importance of precision, or the value of silence. At other times he coached our monologues and scenes [...] Cieślak, for his part, demonstrated impossible exercises. And we Americans tried to emulate his work...until we began to understand that “emulation” was not what this class was about. (Wangh xix)

In the preface to his book *An Acrobat of the Heart: A Physical Approach to Acting Inspired by the Work of Jerzy Grotowski*, Wangh examines the exhilaration he felt in the work he did with Grotowski, as he felt bodily and mentally aware and active for the first time on stage (xxii).

Five years later, in 1972, inspired by Grotowski’s teachings, Wangh and Linda Putnam, a fellow workshop participant, created the Reality Theatre Acting Growth Program where they taught acting and social consciousness. Here Wangh began to “bridge the gap” between Grotowski’s work in actor training and the application to performance on the stage, a central concept in *An Acrobat of the Heart* (xxvii). Wangh doesn’t wish simply to rehash Grotowski’s exercises and thoughts. Rather, he attempts the ‘profound betrayal’ of applying his own technique, adapting and advancing the work that he learned from Grotowski.

Stephen Wangh – *An Acrobat of the Heart*

Wangh’s book combines a narrative of his experiences from teaching acting at NYU with the vocabulary and exercises derived from Grotowski that he has furthered. The layout of the book follows that of a year in the work. He begins with a section on the warm

up, moving on to exercises, types of work, and ending with ruminations. He dedicates two chapters to describing the specifics of the corporel and plastique exercises from Grotowski, one to the corporels and one to the plastiques respectively. Wangh explains in a note at the beginning of the first chapter that Grotowski taught these exercises in French when Wangh learned them and he introduces “les exercices corporels” as “full-body exercises” and “les exercices plastiques” as “movement isolations” (43).

Wangh speaks about the corporels as a “container,” defining the term as “**a physical form that evokes thoughts and feelings while at the same time providing safety and permission for their expression**” (author’s emphasis) (53). These exercises are containers for emotional work; they are forms used to help initiate the psychological responses and to direct the energy that develops. The difference between performing and discovering is stressed throughout the chapter. “You are not performing here, you are striving to discover the effect of this work on you” (61). Remarks such as these testify to Grotowski’s influence. As was described above, the corporels are made up of full body forms that are quite acrobatic and some require great strength to achieve. However, Grotowski and Wangh both stress that the purpose of the forms is neither to build strength, nor to perfect the form. They are meant for self-exploration and discovery. Their effectiveness comes partly because they are so acrobatic and somewhat arduous. Some of the corporels include leaps and somersaults while others literally turn the actors upside-down. These forms move actors out of their daily, habitual movements and confront them with extra-daily ways of moving. Moving outside of an habitual range provides the actor with a new range of psychological and emotional responses.

Wangh takes Grotowski's corporels and plastiques and adapts them by concentrating on the essential concepts. For instance, Wangh employs the corporel and plastique river² in his exercises, "The Container" and "The Kiss." "The premise [of the Container] is that your body is contained by something, something literal. Your work is to 'discover' the image by using your body, by pressing outward against the container, trying to find an exit (Wangh 104). In this work, the plastiques and corporels become the form used for exploration; they help the actor learn to employ imagery, or association as Grotowski would say. Through the movement exploration the actor works with container images. Different kinds of containers can include: positive, negative, strong, soft, etc. Whatever image work the actor employs, if explored fully and honestly, it likely will give him a stronger response and honesty to his work, as it is embodied with a purpose rather than being representation. The Kiss is much the same; however, it is imagistic work that relies on allowance rather than resistance. Unlike in the Container where the actor works to find an exit, in the Kiss, the actor receives different types of kisses and reacts to the reception. Both exercises rely on image work. Grotowski insists on associations in his students' work rather than on empty completions of corporels and plastique forms. Wangh creates exercises with an attention to image, which he says can be simply "a *feeling*, a sense or maybe even an *idea*" (86).

The Container and Kiss work is complemented by Wangh's "Pushing Exercise." In the Pushing Exercise the class is divided into two groups, the givers and receivers. The receivers close their eyes and the givers walk around and touch the receivers who respond to the action impulse they are given when they feel the touch. The receivers do simply

² The term river refers to the practical exploration of a flow of plastics and/or corporeals into one another.

what their name implies; they receive a touch, an impulse for movement. Wangh urges the receivers not to add anything; they are simply to respond to the impulse that they are given. Eventually, the givers begin to give less and the receivers are called upon to re-embodiment the impulses as they were given by the givers, but now for themselves. Wangh explains:

Those impulses that are initiated by coaches on the outside, are, ultimately, no different from those that are initiated by ‘invisible partners.’ And those impulses that are initiated by ‘invisible partners’ are no different from those that are initiated by conscious decision.

They are all movements received from the outside and reacted to from within. [author’s emphases] (91)

In Grotowski’s *plastique river*, the actor follows her impulses as she sequentially moves through isolation of separate body parts, exploring each isolation and the impulse that made her move from one to another. In the *Pushing Exercise* Wangh employs the experience of tactile engagement with another student before returning them to the work of their own inner impulses.

These exercises created by Wangh are clearly influenced by his work with Grotowski and just as clearly incorporate his own approach and language. Like Grotowski, although often more clearly than him, Wangh is attempting to help his students become more physically aware, alive, and present, while assisting them to work in an honesty of presence. Wangh advises, “engage yourself in the physical action, because once you dare to follow your impulse, the very fact that you are doing so will imbue your image with reality” (97). Impulse combined with association tends toward honesty. Many of Wangh’s

assertions sound similar to those of Grotowski in *Towards a Poor Theatre*. However, Wangh sees his work as “filling in a gap” between physical training and work on stage and between the student in the classroom and the performer working on her own. “I wanted to find exercises that would permit actors to bridge the gap for themselves, forms that would serve them while they rehearsed on their own” (xxvii). Wangh continues this work in a similar vein in his workshops.

During a recent workshop, Wangh discussed certain ideas in the work that were essential to Grotowski: dedication to generosity; theatre not being a commodity, competition, nor cleverness; actors not being types, mere interpreters, or servants of the director; and the value and creativity of the actor (Acrobatics Intensive). Each of the ideas listed by Wangh directly connect to Grotowski’s approach to training; they empower the actor through self-awareness and ability to honestly display oneself in performance. These ideas influence Wangh’s own work in actor training. After retiring from teaching at the collegiate level, he felt it was “important to help create a venue to continue this work” (Wangh Personal Interview).

Acrobatics of the Heart Intensive

Wangh has been leading Grotowski-based training workshops since 2011. He turned to former students of his, and the Grotowski-based work, to assist him in creating a space where they could continue to work with one another while continuing to grow the work. Produced by the Synaesthetic Theatre and the Center for Embodied Performance, a two-week long Acrobatics of the Heart Intensive took place in July 2015 in Plainfield, MA, at an artist-run workshop, residency, and retreat center called earthdance. The webpage for the intensive succinctly described it as follows: “The Acrobatics of the Heart intensive

offers training in an organic approach to acting using the body as source, initiated by Jerzy Grotowski in the 1960's and further developed by Stephen Wangh"

(*acrobatoftheheart.com*). Those interested in participating in the intensive had to apply and provide information about why they were interested, what their experience with this type of work was, and what their performance experience was in general.

In reaching out to Synaesthetic Theatre to produce the workshop, Wangh connected with his former student Chris Nichols. Instructors at the intensive included Stephen Wangh, Erica Fae, Wendy vanden Heuval, and Raïna von Waldenburg. Wangh and vanden Heuval worked with Grotowski in California in the 1960s and 1980s respectively; vanden Heuval had also been a student of Wangh's at NYU. Von Waldenburg and Fae trained with Wangh and Ryszard Cieślak, one of Grotowski's principal actors. I attended the intensive. In total, for the two weeks of the intensive, there were 32 participants, 4 instructors, a producer and his 2 children (who were not participants, but their presence added a constant reminder of play and fun to the experience).

The artist-instructors were not trained solely in Grotowski's pedagogy. They had worked within other training styles and with a plethora of directors and ensembles. Each adapted what was useful to them, combining it with their own unique perspectives and experience, to create their own approach as actors and directors, precisely as Grotowski had suggested. At the 2015 intensive, when language or an exercise came directly from Grotowski the participants were told so. If the form or exercise had been adapted or developed by the instructors themselves or had come from another source, they would inform the participants of the details. The key to the work was to find what worked for

each individual, how it worked, and for each participant to create their own technique or self-training method.

Participants at the Acrobatics Intensive spent from 7:30am to anywhere between 8:00pm and 10:30pm training, eating, and cleaning together; we slept in a dormitory-style, 4-story house called Gratitude Lodge. The room that I stayed in accommodated eleven participants. Oddly reminiscent of the Grotowski's Objective Drama Project (ODP), the workspaces for the Acrobatics Intensive were located in a large farmhouse. One was comprised of a 14-sided space, named the umbrella room, because of the unusual design of the ceiling, and a barn-like rectangular space with a high beamed ceiling. Some of the sessions were held in the orchard, a large open field on the side of the farmhouse. We, like the participants in the ODP, removed our shoes and were often encouraged to not speak, or succumb to chatter, while in the spaces working or during breaks in the middle of a work session.

The workshop began on Sunday, July 12 with check-in, light dinner, and a meeting used as an introduction and orientation to the work and living situation for the next two weeks. Participants were given a schedule, which provided a layout of which groups would meet with which instructors when and a brief title of the work to be done in that session. Daily sessions began with open training from 7:30 – 8:00am, which gave participants time to work in the studio on exercises and concepts learned throughout the intensive. From 9:45am – 12:00pm (the morning session) the group was divided into two almost equal groups: the green group (of which I was a part) was comprised of those who had not worked with these specific instructors or had little introduction to the Grotowski-based work. The red group was mostly made up of those who were returning participants from

previous years, or were former or current students of those leading the intensive. The morning sessions for the green group were always with the same instructor, Erica Fae, and began with an introduction to Grotowski's corporeal and plastique exercises.

The first afternoon session went from 2:00 – 4:00pm and again the participants were divided into two groups; however, this time it was not based on experience. This split was in part because we were a rather large group to have sessions together with a single instructor, and in part to give us a chance to work with others from the opposite morning group. The groups in the afternoon were labeled violet and persimmon (of which I was a part). Often the session that the violet group had one day, the persimmon group had the next, and vice versa. The persimmon sessions often did not have the sense of progression or as focused a thread of work as the green sessions, since the persimmon sessions were not only with different instructors but also covered an array of exercises.

The second set of afternoon sessions went from 4:15pm – 5:45pm and usually consisted of several options from which each participant could choose. Some were repeat sessions that took work from the persimmon and violet sessions further, others were new sessions that did not have allotted time earlier in the schedule. Evening sessions went from 8:00 – 9:30 or 10:00pm, took place 4-5 times per week, were often talks early on in the intensive, and work sessions toward the end. All times between sessions were meals, cleaning, and breaks. We had one day off during the two weeks on Sunday, July 18.

At the intensive Grotowski-based training exercises were employed to investigate the psychophysical relationship and concepts from Grotowski's work and the work of those leading. These exercises were used to give participants a clear understanding of Grotowski's work and its use, while the instructors urged participants toward a concrete

application and creation of one's own work methods. Blockages, impulse, and image were investigated through Grotowski's "corporels" and "plastique" exercises taught by Erica Fae along with her "judge work," and were also weaved into "voice work" with Stephen Wangh, along with impulse and image work from the exercises described in the above section on his book. Modes of awareness, presence, and impulse were explored in the "just stand", "I am one who", and "campfire" exercises with Raïna von Waldenburg. Ensemble engagement, moving beyond oneself, and awareness without reaction were examined in "the Motions" with Wendy vanden Heuval. Each of the instructors brought together not only their experience of the training that they had with Grotowski or those who had trained directly under him, but they also incorporated other training experiences. They wove in trainings and knowledge they gained from others, such as Kristin Linklater and Michael Moriarty that spoke to them or the work in a clear and connected way. These four artists also brought their perspective from engaging in the work through their personal training, acting, and directing.

On the first evening, all of the participants and leaders of the intensive met together and introduced and acquainted everyone through two exercises. In the first, before participants learned each other's names, they were to walk around the room and look at one another; if anyone felt energetically drawn to someone she was to place her palm on the top of their head. No pressure or social nicety of returning the touch was to be observed. No speaking was to occur during the exercise. Participants could choose to look at the person who placed her hand on their head or simply to stand and receive the touch. It was an act of vulnerability and immediately broke down some inhibitions, which was surely the design. The second part of the introductions took place with the entire group

seated in a circle. Our first instruction was not to prepare any specific introduction; we were all challenged by Wangh to live in the moment and simply to state our name and then exactly what we were feeling at that specific moment in time. The second one is told not to prepare, she might go into a frenzy of preparation. Allowing oneself the freedom to embrace the impulse of the moment and challenging oneself to honestly permit whatever occurs in that moment to be witnessed by a large group of strangers can be difficult. These introductory exercises summed up the overarching pedagogical focus of the workshop: to open oneself to experiences outside of typical daily life and to resist blockages that keep the performer from honestly displaying her psychophysical self, two of Grotowski's pedagogical emphases.

Erica Fae's direction of the green group during the two-week immersion incorporated identifying and acknowledging blockages. Before delving into these concepts, forms and exercises were taught that provided a common movement vocabulary and structure to give the participants an entry point and contextualization for some of the Grotowski work. Two types of exercises became a major component of the green group sessions, the corporels and the plastiques. In the green group, Erica referred to the corporel she taught as the "old school cat." This title referred to the fact that, rather than an adaptation participants would learn in other sessions, she would teach as close to the original Grotowski and Cieślak form as she could.

The awake "old school cat" includes three ways of moving: undulations, hip circles, and kicks. Each of the three ways of moving has two variations. The term "awake" refers to the "old school cat" beginning in a resting position in which the actor lies down on the floor. As the actor rises, it is her eyes that lead the movement. Her curiosity and desire to see

eventually lead her head to rise and see more and eventually she gets to a position with her feet and hands on the floor which looks similar to, but is not, a downward dog from Hatha yoga. The cat does not have to begin in a resting position; especially if the corporel is part of a corporel river which will be explained in more detail below.

As Fae explained during the intensive, in the undulations the pelvis creates a figure eight in the air. While performing the exercise the movement flows through the spinal column as the knees and elbows bend and straighten and the head extends forward and pulls back. Fae likened this form of undulation to the ubiquitous Japanese tsunami image. The tailbone/coccyx might appear to lead as the actor pushes his weight forward, rounding his spine and moving onto his tiptoes. When he has extended himself as far as possible, he will briefly (depending on the speed with which he performs the undulation) be in a position similar to “a cobra” from hatha yoga, with an open chest and back arched, but with his legs off of the ground except for the connection at the toes. Knees and elbows bend as the coccyx travels toward the feet until the actor appears like a runner readying for a sprint, then the coccyx propels the actor forward opening the chest up as the undulation moves like a wave from the lower to the upper body.

The other undulation flows in a similar manner, but in the opposite direction. Rather than the coccyx appearing to lead, it is the chest that seems to drive this one. The performer comes into the cobra-esque, legs-off-the-floor position with her chest hovering close, but parallel to the ground as her knees and elbows move from bend to extension and her head and chest lead her forward. Her head, unable to go further back in the cobra-esque position, the core must contract in a concave manner; the knees and elbows bend

until the performer appears to be in an extreme downward dog-looking position, when the head and chest flow forward once again in a continuous stream of movement.

The hip circles, another way of moving within the cat, start with the feet and hands still on the ground with the hips either parallel to the floor as they circle in a clockwise or counterclockwise direction. While the head and hips move in the same direction, they rotate slightly off from one another as if orbiting around a single axis point of the spine. One is up when the other is down and the head should be very slightly following behind the hips. The second type of hip circle is very similar to the first; however, instead of the hips constantly being parallel to the floor, they become parallel as they rotate toward the floor. As the hips come to the right or left they open up and face that direction, leveling out at the top of the rotation and turning again with the back facing out as they reach the next side. In this second variation, the feet go on their sides rather than on their toes when the hips move to the sides.

A main point to remember in the kicks is that they initiate from the core and therefore extend from the core rather than initiating from the thigh, knee, or foot. These kicks punch out rather than sweep. When kicking, the actor gets low in a crouch meets pushup-like position, bringing his core close to the ground and back toward the weight-bearing leg. The kicking leg punches out to the side, or behind the actor, and his facial focus remains on the spot, or image, that he will be kicking; the actor acquires a mental target and then kicks at it.

Some important notes about the cat. First, there is no order to the ways of moving. Once “the cat” rises out of resting, or if it is employed during a corporeal river, any of the movements can begin to flow into and out of one another and all don’t have to be included.

At this point the actor aims to follow impulses rather than to construct a choreographed order of movement. The corporels will look very similar and yet different on each performer. While the forms have very specific structures and rules, they also allow for incredible freedom of rhythm, flow, and association. Association affects the form most obviously when the actor attends to specificity and honesty of impulse. If, while in a cat position, one has the association of a recent break-up, the energy might involve more anger or perhaps despair; conversely if the association is around a playful escapade with a current lover, the energy could be quite sultry and the movements more fluid. Energy, repetition, rate of speed, flow of movement, and tension are all constantly shifting within the flux of impulse and association within the corporels.

I should acknowledge that the term “position” does not quite fit when describing any of the movements or the appearance of the cat. In using that word, I am attempting to give readers a reference for their mental image of the movement. As Fae described in the intensive sessions, “the key is the undulation; don’t think of it as asana to asana in yoga. It’s about the movement not the positions.” These exercises are not taught with the purpose of attaining a perfected posture or simply to gain muscular strength. They are containers for the work, forms to use when attempting to identify and engage with blockages.

Participants were told that the exercises were containers for the work of self-exploration, as ways to deepen understanding of one’s physical and psychological impulse and response. One would likely never perform a cat, corporel, or plastique river onstage. Again these forms aren’t skills to be executed onstage or strength building exercises; although, with regular practice one cannot help but tone their muscles through this work. Fae discussed the term “container” in her work with the green group. A versatile container

can hold or be used for anything. The cat is a strong container for emotional work because it physically demands a lot from the actor. A physically demanding container tends to quiet the mind and allow honest emotions and reaction to become visible.

Participants in the 2015 Acrobatics Intensive learned the plastique exercises in segments. Every large joint moves in a circle the head and neck, chest, hips, shoulders, elbows, wrists, knees, and ankles. The hands and feet can undulate; the arms can cause the wrists to flick and punch through the air (although not necessarily with a closed fist as one would picture in a fighting stance): and the legs can jump and run. In speaking with the participants, Wangh likened the plastiques to French mime isolations with the caveat that those isolations were true isolations, an attempt to move that one part of the body without engaging any other, as will be explored in more detail in the next chapter, which discusses the work of Etienne Decroux. However, in the plastiques, even when the actor is working on a specific body part--for example, the right shoulder--it is still not isolated in the traditional mime style. When working on the plastiques and corporels the whole body must be engaged at all times in an active state of readiness to receive the flow of impulse, which is accomplished by staying on "the cross." This image connects back to Grotowski's desire for the integration of the extremities with the core and energy flow through the body.

Erica Fae explained the cross as one's center point. In the cross, the body is in an active stance with the feet about eighteen inches apart, one foot slightly in front of the other, and the knees not locked. Within this position the spine connects the flow of movement in an active, ready manner. One can move quite easily from one position to the next within this stance. Fae also referenced the openness of the circulatory and nervous

systems while in the cross, promoting bodily function without literal blockages. Consider, for example, the feeling of your foot after you have been sitting on it for a while. The flow of signals has been disrupted and movement becomes difficult. While in the cross the body position is optimal for flow and reception.

The more open and unencumbered an actor can remain physically the easier her blood and energy flows from one part of her body to another. In his book, Wangh asserts, “our spines serve as the central energy transportation and communication lines for our body. If our spines are inflexible, they can block impulses and feelings from being felt or expressed” (44). Of course, one cannot remain always onstage standing with legs slightly apart, knees bent, with spinal alignment and arms, chest, and neck open. But the actor who attends to her cross in training, keeping open engagement in any position or movement finds herself in an as optimal a flow as possible. Biologically speaking,

[t]he rapid transmission of signals, which is vital for human movement, is a function of the ‘action potential.’ This action potential is achieved by temporary changes of current flow in and out of cells which then propagates a signal along the nerve axon. [...] Please note that no movement is possible if the action potential is completely interrupted and that movement will be impaired if the signal propagation is abnormal. [...] The central nervous system needs continuous feedback about movement. It receives the information in the form of the status of muscles, i.e. length, instantaneous tension and the rate of change of length and tension. (Trew and Everett 76)

Working in the cross position, especially within a corporel or plastique river designed to engage the spine, promotes the function of the “action potential” also

known as impulse. I find it to be no coincidence that the scientific term for impulse is action potential. Grotowski, whose training approach employs exercises designed to integrate the physical and psychological bodies and to aid the actor in recognizing and following instincts, uses the word “impulse” as a technique for exploring potential action. This potential action is either realized in the following of impulse, or is blocked by inhibitions.

Working through the plastiques and corporels separately or together, letting them instinctively flow from one to the next creates what is referred to as a river. In an ideal river the actor allows impulse to guide his movement exploration; he is open and ready to try whatever imagery or instinct comes to him. Much like the introductory exercise on the first night of the workshop, this ideal river should not be planned, neither before nor during the river. Such an ideal state is not easily achieved, but rather is something for the artist to aspire toward, a freer, more impulsive exploration with each river he investigated. Mental and physical blockages can create fear and lead to impulse resistance.

Impulse, rhythm of thought, awareness, and presence can be greatly affected by what Fae labels “judges.” Fae developed language and exercises that create a concrete image or association for the actor’s blockages. The term “judges” refers to the thoughts an actor may experience, positive or negative, that begin to critique his work. These thoughts might hinder his progress if he succumbs to the judgment that he mentally imposes on his impulses while he works. Such judgments sometimes occur while he is in the midst of action, leading him to block impulses and to return to habitual movement instead of exploring new action, because the habitual movement has safe associations. Other times, as the impulse to respond or act occurs, the judge thought will simultaneously occur

stopping him from ever attempting his impulse. Once the participants acquired a basic comprehension of how to work in the corporeal and plastique rivers, those who were in the morning session with Fae were introduced to “judge work.” Fae’s judge work requires an attentiveness to not only engaging with the corporeal and plastique forms within the structure taught to the participants, but also a conscious interaction with the judgments and thoughts about the work that occur in one’s head while attempting the exercises.

However, judgmental thoughts are just one type of blockage that can occur. Grotowski gives insight into other blockages that people face, as well as his perspective on removing them:

We feel that an actor reaches the essence of his vocation whenever he commits an act of sincerity, when he unveils himself, opens and gives himself in an act of extreme, solemn gesture, and does not hold back before any obstacle set by custom and behavior. And further, when this act of extreme sincerity is modeled in a living organism, in impulses, a way of breathing, a rhythm of thought and the circulation of blood, when it is ordered and brought to consciousness, not dissolving into chaos and formal anarchy – in a word, when this act accomplished through the theatre is **total**, [...] it enables us to respond totally, that is, begin to exist. (92-3)

This excerpt contains essential elements of Grotowski’s pedagogy and the work explored at the 2015 Acrobats Intensive. For Grotowski, the quintessence of performance is sincerity. In order for an actor to reach the level of sincerity that he describes the actor cannot hold back, or be blocked. The sincere, unblocked actor for Grotowski has honest flow of impulse. Grotowski describes a rhythm, or perhaps a conscious liberation, toward flow of

the mind and body. In his phrase “circulation of blood,” one can see the concept of the cross as a practical, physical manifestation of liberating a flow of mind. Grotowski’s insistence on “ordered consciousness” of this symphony of the mind and body requires discipline and effort on the part of the actor. Rather than a fluky moment of random synchronization, the actor needs a controlled, repeatable state of being and consciousness. This psychophysical control creates what Grotowski terms “total theatre.” The significance of the work being repeatable requires active engagement of the mind and the body.

Thomas Richards, who worked as a young man with Grotowski and currently continues Grotowski’s teachings at The Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards in Pontedera, Italy, published a book in 1995 that explores his work with Grotowski titled *At Work with Grotowski on Physical Actions*. He reflects on realizations that he, as a young actor, came to in the work with Grotowski:

the body would look to remember its process, the mind would either speak “Yes,” to encourage the body, or evoke some precise memory or image that might help the body in its search. The emotions, then, left alone, might become less afraid to react to that which the body and mind were doing. In other words, the body and mind would accomplish their own individual tasks, giving room for the emotions to react naturally. [...] –the body. Its organic stream began to speak strongly enough that the mind could no longer block it or so easily get in its way. The mind also began to learn at which moment to be passive, or to speak positively, in order to help unblock the body’s process, guarding, at the same time that the structure would be maintained. In other words, the mind started to learn that it was not the

unique ruler, that the body also has *its own way of thinking*, [author's emphasis] if the mind would just let the body do its job. (68)

The idea of mind as unique ruler comes in different forms for different actors. However, Richards articulates a major focus of Grotowski's work: learning to listen to each particular body's needs, the mind, the physical, and the emotional, without allowing one to take over for the others. Typically, the one that takes over the others is the mind; which is the focus of Fae's judge work. This work consists of assisting the actor in recognition of when the psychological body overtakes the others, while also helping each of the bodies (physical, psychological, and emotional for Grotowski, add energetic for Fae) to accomplish their own individual tasks, and through training making these bodies less afraid to react.

Judges often tie back to feelings of fear. Fae defined the parameters of the judge exercise, which was a physical conversation with our own psychological judgments. While working in the forms of corporel and plastique rivers, she gave the options to receive the judgment and talk to the judge through the physicalization of the river, or to embody the judge and respond in a physical river to oneself as the judge. A level of role-playing exists in this exercise as the embodiment of the judge and the self reacting are explored through physical dialogue (rather than verbal dialogue) that comes directly from the honest interaction with the thoughts that occur while working. It is the physical, emotional, and energetic response to the mental articulation of judgments that fuels Fae's judge work.

Personally, when first working within the rivers, many of my thoughts were: "What should I do next? Am I judging myself? How do I engage with this work? I feel like I don't know what I am doing. Now I am stuck in a loop of not knowing what I am doing." I brought this issue to the instructors at a question and answer session. Wangh responded

with the insight of someone who has engaged with this pedagogy for many years. He remarked that the particular precision of the phrasing of my question contained an answer, “stuck in a loop.” The explanatory imagery I used was the imagery that I could explore in my exercises. I feel like I am stuck in a loop; what does it mean to be literally stuck in a loop? How does that affect my physicality? I should explore that state physically and continue to observe the emotional or intellectual response that follows. The judgment of feeling like I had no imagery blocked me from progressing. Had I listened to the precise words of the judge, I would have noticed the rich imagery available for me to explore within my honest state of being in the moment.

Judge work, as described above, might mistakenly be thought of as a simple exercise. People follow their impulses by attending to the thoughts and judgments that occur intellectually and engage with them on a physical, emotional, and energetic level. Sincerity abounds; acting is easy! Fae explained, through her discussion of one’s observer and experiencer, why this work is not only difficult, but also one needs practice and attentive training to make progress. She proposes there are two energies at play within the actor through an analogy of bicyclists. Cyclist one is the experiencer and cyclist two, the observer. “In their ideal state, in a plastique river, the two cyclists are neck and neck and you can’t really tell who’s winning. However, these two are not always in their ideal states, which is why we are training, to make them more ideal.” The problem occurs when the judge voice drowns out the observer.

Fae’s concept of the observer can be defined as the part of an actor that notices, but does not judge or criticize, that which the actor does as the judge would. It is the difference between the mind simply noticing, listening, and cataloguing impulse and response versus

criticizing and causing blockage in reaction to the impulses of the other bodies (emotional, energetic, physical). The terms “noticing,” “listening,” and “cataloguing” are key to the training. Without such attention and processing, the actor would be responding mechanically, or as if in a trance. Fae warned against this type of work, as does Lisa Wolford in descriptions of her work with James Slowiak, Grotowski’s appointed leader of the Objective Drama Project in Irvine. “A participant who tended toward lethargic movements and pseudo-trance was advised that she should always work with a partner or stimulus present in the room, while another who tended to push herself too hard was instructed to look for more playful associations” (39). If the intention of the work is to engage honestly and catalogue responses in order to find genuine response in performance, then the observer and experiencer must maintain an active physical and mental relationship with the work rather than one characterized by passive repetition or a trance-state.

The experiencer is the doer whose ideal state, according to Fae, is “a state of gameness,” willing to try anything. Wangh expounds on a similar concept in his book, relaying a story from his experience working with acting students on emotions and imagery in river work. “What you are working on here is just the experience of listening itself and noticing how the external signals instantly affect your internal state” (139). The observer listens and notices the external signals affecting the experiencer internally. Using the forms as a container allows the actor to experiment while working within structure, training herself to focus on the mind, and learning when to let the other bodies lead her impulses.

Adhering to the rules of the form trains the actor to follow a construct, just like any game that has rules which help to define it to the players and onlookers. At times, it is easy for the players and onlookers to follow but, at other points, they must look closer because as the rules aren't entirely clear. Formal structure creates something for the actor to work against and helps focus her energy toward specificity of action. Listening and attending to an awareness of the imagery and emotion evoked by the work in a specific form allows the actor to experiment with impulses and states that might be beyond her daily experience and habits. This listening/attention will move her, at times, out of her comfort-zone; if she can listen to the reactions of each of the four bodies allowing her to gain valuable information about her ability to achieve such states in a controlled manner on stage.

In working on the plastiques and corporels with Fae participants were encouraged to work silently. Vocal response sometimes would occur as uncontrollable impulse but Wangh made the point that working in silence allows each person's focus naturally to follow its own path. When working silently, someone might or might not be looking at the working actor; it is more private. When one employs his voice a performative quality can creep in if the actor thinks other people might hear. It helped to train in silence especially when participants first began with the work. During week two the persimmon group began voice work with Stephen Wangh.

The voice work with Wangh began abstractly, with sounds rather than words; however, it included the action of impulse and play that the participants were engaged in during the morning sessions. Wangh began the first day of voice work, by directing participants to lie on the floor with an attention to openness, to being on the cross. He led participants through some soft palette exercises from Kristin Linklater's work (see *Freeing*

the Natural Voice, for more specifics). Participants then were to imagine being tickled; with that image, they allow themselves to laugh with honesty. After some time the room exploded with laughter. Wangh urged the participants to play with the pitch while continuing to find the honest laughter. After having worked physical impulses for over a week, it was time to turn the attention to vocal impulses.

In *An Acrobat of the Heart*, Wangh discusses a problem with voice work. He begins the chapter with a Grotowski quotation: “The most elementary fault, and that in most urgent need of correction, is the overstraining of the voice because one forgets to speak with the body” (qtd. in Wangh 150). Wangh identified Linklater’s soft palate and resonator exercises as forms that integrate the psychological, emotional, and physical, with the vocal as a way to explore reaction and impulse. Making sound evokes internal responses in the same way performing actions does and equally benefits from reinforcement through a connection to imagery. He stated that a trap of the work occurs when an actor begins to work with words; a temptation is to let the words take over.

Wangh urged participants to “think of the work as a series of allowances.” Over the three sessions with the persimmon group, he progressively moved participants towards speaking text. He moved us from sounds to gibberish to text. The imagery or impulse always moved both voice and sound just as it had in the physical work with Fae. Wangh led exercises that challenged the participants to work in an array of sound qualities. In one exercise, participants stood in a circle and passed a vowel sound to one another. The first person started the sound; the person to their left listened and got the sound from them, then transformed it slightly before passing it to the next person. Changing the pitch, dynamic, or timbre of the sound took the participant out of an habitual way of speaking.

Exploring the new, as in the corporels and plastiques, led to new impulse and imagery. Wangh asserts, “choices of pitch and resonance may seem at first to be ‘technical’ decisions, but they may also activate hidden psychophysical connections and put you in touch with strong emotional sources” (156).

On the third day of voice work, Wangh broached text with the participants. However, rather than working on our own memorized text, for which the group already would have associations, he provided lines from Shakespeare’s *Richard III*. Before beginning the text in the voice work session, Wangh reminded the group to “let things play upon you rather than make the speech. There’s lots of ways of holding on, the hard part of letting go is trusting that there will be something.” The instruction concerning the text was to explore the imagery the words evoked. When a participant felt himself “making the speech” or adding quality, Wangh suggested that he return to the imagery of the words and play with the pitch, dynamic and timbre of the specific words that caught the actor’s attention. Wangh stressed listening rather than doing. He quoted Grotowski, “Everything is a reaction.” “Do not think of the vocal instrument itself, do not think of the words, but react – react with the body” (Grotowski 153). Voice work with Wangh focused on physical and vocal reaction to inner impulses. Such impulses included psychological reactions to the movement one experiences, and mental and physical reactions to sound, text, or acting partners. Participants were urged to allow physical and vocal aspects to work together rather than allowing the vocal aspects to take over, losing the equality with physical engagement. Honest interest in that which is happening around an actor will likely lead her into a wider array of possible avenues for exploration. Listening gives one something to react to allowing for a natural response/impulse instead of fabrication.

Fae's judge work and Wangh's voice work was complemented by Raina von Waldenburg's employment of "just stand," "I am one who," and "campfire" exercises. These exercises function as a way for actors to engage with their presence and connectivity with an audience when onstage. Just stand, was the first of the sequence of exercises. A timer was set and the first participant stood in front of the "audience," or the group of participants, for a pre-determined amount of time--one-minute during the introduction to the exercise in the intensive. Each time the persimmon group worked on these exercises with von Waldenburg the times progressively got longer--from one minute to two minutes before abruptly jumping up to seven minutes. Von Waldenburg explained that the point of just stand was for the actor to be sincerely present with the audience while simply standing still on stage in front of them. It was not, she explained, an attempt to "Zen" your way through it with intense focus. Participants were encouraged to react naturally, be it with a smile or tears; whatever occurred in the actor should be shared as he simply stood in front of the audience. She discussed the balance that must take place: "what do I need" versus "what does the audience need?" which seems antithetical to Grotowski's concept of "self sacrifice." However, such experiences in the intensive led me to shift and crystallize my perspective on Grotowski's actor training concepts.

When Grotowski spoke of self-sacrifice, he spoke of a shedding of pretension and habits, those comfortable ways of portraying oneself that unmask what is truly happening inside the actor's mind and hidden impulses. He discusses using a role as a way of exploring the self. "The important thing is to use the role as a trampolin [sic], an instrument with which to study what is hidden behind our everyday mask – the innermost core of our personality – in order to sacrifice it, expose it" (Grotowski 37). Von

Waldenburg's just stand and I am one who exercises are other tools to get at "the core of our personality." Even professionally trained performers with years of experience, like those in attendance at the intensive, may find it difficult to just stand and be aware, present, and truly giving of oneself in front of an audience. Strong fear can creep up in this level of honesty and self-display; such fear tends to come with loud judges that block impulse and the honest display of self. It can be easier to hide behind the role and to avoid one's own state in an effort to protect from the fear of judgment, inner or outer. Self-sacrifice becomes most difficult when judges appear, making the actor self-conscious of what she is, or is not, doing while in front of others. "The more we become absorbed in what is hidden inside us, in the excess, in the exposure, in the self-penetration, the more rigid must be the external discipline; that is to say the form" (Grotowski 39). That form can be corporeal and plastique exercises, or an attempt to just stand and be, or the delivery of dialogue without layering anything more than what is happening to the actor in the moment, as in the case of the I am one who exercise.

In I am one who the actor starts in the parameters of just stand; however, once the energetic, emotional, or intellectual internalization of the actor becomes overwhelming he can choose to step to the side physically and honestly externalize (verbally, physically, or both) what is happening to him, or within him, at that moment. However, von Waldenburg insisted that participants do so without "acting," adding pretense, or applying a mask in order to hide or lessen what they were feeling. For example, if the actor was nervous and felt his hands shaking, he should not attempt to control or stop the audience from seeing the shaking. He could tell his audience, "I feel nervous." However he chose honestly to relay was valid. After being introduced to judge work with Fae the I am one who exercise

felt intimidating, allowing the audience to hear the judge thoughts that occurred during the moments of truthful sharing. Conversely, the fact that von Waldenburg introduced the exercise by being the first participant created a safe and supportive environment. Her demonstration showed that it was safe to share the judge thoughts because everyone has them to some extent.

In moments of sincere sharing, the performer can take the exercise further by speaking memorized text, such as a monologue. Rather than acting or attempting to find the emotion or situation asked for within the context of the piece, however, she will use her internal state and explore her present feelings and energy as if she were explaining that state to those watching with the words of the text instead of her own. She might start nervously giggling; if asked by von Waldenburg at that moment to begin her text she could giggle her way through “To be, or not to be” assuming that famous monologue were her selected text. As a new wave of energy or emotion washes over her, she should immediately embrace it as it happens, continuing to externalize what is happening for her audience. If, as she giggles through “To be, or not to be” she starts to feel frustrated with herself, she could continue, “that is the question” engaging with the frustration that she feels for giggling.

At times, this exercise can seem counter intuitive; in that the emotions and mental state of the actor in the current moment might be antithetical to that of the character in that moment of the script. However, as the instructors reminded us within the intensive, often an actor is cast in a role during a time in her life when her state is opposite that of the character. Instead of working against what happens to be occurring naturally within the actor, it is useful and more interesting for her to use that energy and emotion to help her

explore her own presence through the life of the character she has been cast to portray onstage. Again, Grotowski's concept of self-sacrifice can be found in this the work because it allows the audience to be witness to the actor's innermost thoughts and fears while onstage.

Von Waldenburg's campfire exercise was very similar to I am one who; however, instead of being separated from the audience, the participants are gathered in a circle around an imagined a campfire. Each participant took a turn, as in I am one who, but the focus was on telling a story, without affectation. The first story told was how one felt in the moment, though the exercise eventually turned to memorized text. Being in a circle changes the training environment from being "onstage" in I am one who to being a part of the group in Campfire, which could be more comforting or intimidating depending on the point of view of the participant. Both I am one who and Campfire aim at self-sacrifice and training the actor toward Grotowski's concept of the "holy-actor." These exercises eliminate the resistance to impulse; they encourage actors to remove the masks that block "holiness."

During the intensive Wendy vanden Heuval brought the persimmon group outside to do Grotowski's Objective Drama Project (ODP) exercise, "the motions." Vanden Heuval didn't spend much time explaining; she rather gave participants a brief contextualization of her time at the ODP and then had the group get up to start learning the exercise while doing it. "Grotowski discouraged learning through verbal explanation, perhaps because the brain does not record the emotional quality of an action when learned through a mental process only. Learning kinesthetically, on the other hand, incorporates both the physical precision and the emotional quality of action" (Lendra 124). Several exercises throughout

the intensive were taught to participants as they attempted to figure them out physically, rather than verbally explaining.

Vanden Heuval asked the persimmon group to stand in a diamond shape oriented to the cardinal directions with an appointed “leader” at each point. The leader served as someone who knew each of the positions and could guide those of us who were new to the motions. To begin, the group faced west. Then we collectively came into the first position (position is an imperfect word, as in all Grotowski’s work the key is not to attain a perfect posture, but rather to engage with the form physically and mentally) and retained that position for what the group determined to be the right amount of time. When we were first attempting to do the motions, we were told that each position should last for a minute or two. Vanden Heuval told us that our eyes were to have what some might call a “soft focus” and be directed toward the horizon, so that participants could see one another peripherally, without looking at one another directly, while also taking in all that was around in the environment. Once the group collectively rose out of the first position, we turned in a controlled and collective manner to face the east and came into the same position facing east. This was then repeated after the group moved to face south, and again to face north. Once the same position had been completed in each direction, the group faced west again and executed a movement called the “coda”, which contains the only movement where individuals follow their own time rather than moving in unison. After the coda, the group returned collectively to the next designated position and followed the same progression. Once again, after the group collectively moved in and out of the second position in all four directions, progressed to the coda, and then on to the third and last set. The particular positions are not necessarily pertinent to this pedagogical discussion, to the

vocabulary of Grotowski, or that of the instructors in the intensive. If someone were interested, these positions, they are described in great detail with pictures in I Wayan Lendra's article mentioned above.

What is pertinent to this study is the pedagogy behind the motions and the inclusion of them in Grotowski-based training. The motions is a complex exercise, meditative in quality, slowly performed and physically strenuous. The structure of observation without external reaction contrasts it with, yet compliments, the corporels and plastiques and other exercises included in the intensive. This conjunction was bolstered by the fact the green group had thus far worked as individuals during the corporel and plastique rivers; at this point in the training, the rivers were in many ways a solo practice for us. Although others in the room were engaged in their own personal study that did not affect the others, at least not consciously. The motions fostered a group dynamic through its structure, focusing attention physically and mentally on the ensemble rather than the individual.

During the first attempt of the motions, the persimmon group certainly struggled together. At times I could see someone jolt out of a position, or I could hear the strained breath of someone working through a difficult position. I, myself, had difficulty when attempting a one legged stance on my right foot. As I tried to hold the position my whole body began to shake and my breath became forced as I tried to steady myself. Time ceased to exist in my mind as the group continued in the motions. My best guess was that it took us around 45-60 minutes to complete the entire exercise, but that is a rough estimate. About two-thirds of the way through it began to rain. Hearing the stories about how intense Grotowski's trainings were, I knew that those who trained under him would not stop in the middle of a training session because of a little rain. As the group continued the

rain picked up; we were getting drenched and somehow an unspoken feeling of support and positive energy grew palpable amongst the group. Falling rain covered our faces and brought a chill in the air; the length of the exercise led to muscle exhaustion, that certainly affected me, if not the others; and yet, the group completed the entire cycle of the motions together. Afterward, many of the participants agreed that the connection and support we felt grew stronger as we pushed through our discomfort and whiny thoughts about the rain. We were collectively empowered, and dynamic group energy took over toward the end. The group worked beyond the individual to connect the whole.

Instructors at the 2015 Acrobatics Intensive described how Grotowski was not the type of instructor who placed himself amongst his students to work with them and guide them through their immersion in the training. This differed greatly from the hands on approach of the instructors at the Acrobatics Intensive. Grotowski typically didn't actually participate in the work during the trainings. He watched from afar and spoke up when he had something to say. Often, he would leave his assistants to teach an exercise or help create a portion of the work. Grotowski, therefore, comes from the perspective of a spectator rather than an experiencer. This does not discount his point of view, his deep research, or his contribution to actor training. However, it certainly affects how he wrote about the work and presumably how he taught it. Additionally, it likely made an impression on his students and affected the way in which they learned from him and what they took away from their work with him.

As Grotowski progressed in his research and experimentation in training, the descriptions of his practice move in the direction of immersive communalism: everyone is both student and instructor. This development helps to explain his choice to have his

assistants lead the trainings. Throughout his life, Grotowski was deeply interested in sincerity of being and an eradication of that which blocks any honesty of presence. For actors working towards such a presence, the work is never done; some kind of mental or physical blockage will almost always present itself; there is always something to improve upon. As was discussed above, Grotowski wasn't interested in developing a method or technique that students could memorize and apply to their work. His interest lay in the students learning about their personal relationship with the work and finding their own personal ways of understanding their blockages. Former Grotowski student, Robert Findlay relays his experience with the paratheatrical project "Tree of People": "We had been told in a letter[...]we were not to come as students expecting them to be our teachers. Nor were we to come expecting to create a theatrical situation or to function as actors" (Osiński 169). The essence of Grotowski's approach lives in a desire to learn through self discovery rather than through others.

One evening, during the second week of the Acrobatics Intensive, participants gathered for an evening session that came to be referred to as "Teachers as Students." That evening, participants watched Wendy vanden Heuval, Raïna von Waldenburg, and Erica Fae worked with Stephen Wangh as the instructor, or more like as the director or guide for the pieces, that each of the women wanted to work on. Vanden Heuval and von Waldenburg worked on specific pieces, a film scene and a theatrical monologue, respectively. This evening work session demonstrated several key points for example, the idea that there is always improvement to be made and something new to learn in the work. While each of these women had extensive training, none came to the session with an attitude of being an

expert. They acknowledged Wangh's perspective while attempting to work through something new about their relationship to the work.

Grotowski-based training, like many movement-based approaches to actor training, is extremely taxing and difficult, mentally and physically. I understood this after feeling not only how sore my shoulders were the day after I learned "the cat," but also how mentally exhausting these exercises were during the judge work. These women knew this even better, as they have been training in this way for decades. The work can also be immensely frustrating, especially when physical blockages, such as weak muscles, foster a mental blockage or judgment; one begins to criticize his own impediment for being unable to accomplish something that others appear to accomplish easily. Of course, in this type of work, it is unfair and unreasonable to judge oneself against the work of others but that can be a common problem. These instructors were brave enough to display the insecurities and issues that blocked them in their own work.

As vanden Heuval worked through her film dialogue she appeared to get frustrated several times especially when Wangh asked her to continue her lines while also doing the cat exercise. At one point, Wangh suggested that she and the participant who filled in as her scene partner push against one another, while delivering the lines. All the while Wangh watched viscerally taking on the intensity being given off by vanden Heuval as he allowed himself to become physically affected and responsive to the work being done. Wangh's directives weren't always clear; however, he generally got powerful and energetic responses from vanden Heuval, even as she became physically exhausted in doing what he asked of her. This session happened late at night after she had taught all day.

Grotowski discussed the function of fatigue in the work: “[t]here are certain points of fatigue which break control of the mind, a control that blocks us. [...] a training for how to go beyond our limits. These are not the limits of our nature, but those of our discomfort. These are the limits we impose upon ourselves that block the creative process” (204-205). At the end of the session with vanden Heuval, Wangh tied everything he had asked for back to a simple statement: “look deep into the needs of the text through a physical exploration.” He had found some deep insight into the character even with his brief introduction to the scene. The character is all riled up but she must hide this. Wangh worked to get vanden Heuval, “all riled up” and then challenged her to work with the energy in the way that the character has to do.

Von Waldenburg brought a monologue from Edward Albee’s *The Goat* into her session with Wangh. In the play, a family must cope with the information that the father of the family, Martin, is having an affair, with a goat. The section of the play that von Waldenburg chose to work on was at the end of Scene 2, when Stevie, Martin’s wife, works through the information of the affair. My initial impression of von Waldenburg was of an intensely candid and energetic woman. She seemed to exude confidence. Working with her in the I am one who exercises only reinforced these opinions. Her energy filled the room when she got up and demonstrated the I am one who exercise for the group. Her feedback to participants who were in the exercise was insightful and honest.

In her work with Wangh she did not lose any of these qualities; however, she challenged herself in approaching the character from a place beyond the daily way of presenting herself. When she began, Wangh asked what she wanted to work on. Von Waldenburg replied, “effortlessness,” “ease,” and “just saying the lines.” Stevie’s lines, at

this point in the play, could be explosive; the many shades and levels of turmoil, frustration, and disbelief need to be explored and nuanced. Von Waldenburg's explosive expression of lines like, "You have brought me down, you goat-fucker; you love of my life!" (Albee 44) were earned through consummate stillness and composure. Yet when asked, "How is it going?" from the calm voice of Wangh, von Waldenburg replied, "I feel like I'm in a sauna here!" Wangh responded, "If you're going to work with stillness and quiet like this you're going to have to be incredibly specific. It's going to be a lot of work to keep yourself open to the threads that work through to where it needs to get to. When you feel yourself checking out or pushing you can notice that but then try to get back to the specificity." Indeed, she was clearly sweating; the effort of working through all of those complex emotions as well as the excitement and pressure of working in front of the entire group from the intensive while appearing effortless had taken its toll.

At this point, the group was in the second week of the two-week intensive. Everyone had worked with each of the instructors; speaking personally, I had developed a great respect for them as artists and teachers. They not only instructed the groups through the exercises, they often executed them with the participants. Watching them during their evening work session with Wangh, seeing how conscientiously they gave themselves to the process of working through their trepidations and struggles further deepened my respect. They demonstrated belief in the value of Grotowski's pedagogy and in their development of it while intertwining it with their other artistic trainings and experiences.

Conclusion

In Richard Schechner's article "Grotowski and the Grotowskian," he discussed the differences between the figures identified in the title of his essay:

It is not easy to describe exactly what “Grotowskian” means. But just as there is a stereotype of the “method actor” derived from Lee Strasberg’s interpretation of Stanislavsky, so there is a stereotyped Grotowskian style. This stereotype includes “rituals” combining materials “researched” from cultural “archetypes” merged with one’s own “deepest” personal experiences or “associations” (11).

I do not aim to essentialize Grotowski’s work down into a simple set of tenets or an easily codifiable pedagogical system. It is not the intention of this study to stereotype his work further. My aim is to analyze portions of his pedagogy, exercises, and vocabulary that have been adopted and adapted by those who worked with him. I aim to identify major components of his writing, research, and work in actor training, as opposed to his performance work, that have influenced others and that continue to be disseminated to actors in training today. My efforts will help advance the overall goal of identifying commonalities in movement-based actor training approaches.

A Grotowski-based actor training language begins with those concepts, terms, and exercises that can be found overlapping in several of his phases of research. From there, the language carries over in the writings and accounts of those who have studied directly with Grotowski. The essence of this language would continue to be found, in an adapted form, in the words used by those who worked with Grotowski and are now training others. In following this line, I come to a Grotowskian actor training language that I will use later in this study to compare with the actor training languages of other schools and specialists who start from an engagement with the physical in their actor training methods.

Grotowski's concepts of self-sacrifice/total act, **blockage**, and via negativa express the core idea of removing, or "eradicating," that which inhibits the actor from sincere expression. Grotowski's pedagogy includes a focus on ridding the actor of the physical and psychological blocks that exist within him. In this manner, Grotowski carried on Stanislavsky's later work of integrating the physical with the psychological as two parts of the actor that not only affect one another but are integral to one another. Conjoining them self to create what Grotowski called the "holy actor" – one who "undergoes an endless process of self-development" (40) that leads to genuine performance.

Association, or image, is the term that defines the crucial mental ability of the actor to connect with the physical movement, exercise, reaction, or work in general. Without association the actor's work becomes mechanical repetition or empty action. Lack of association could also denote a lack of integration or a blocking of one of the four bodies that Fae referred to: physical, emotional, energetic, and psychological, and the fifth body that could be added from Grotowski and Wangh's work – namely, the vocal. They are the **physical, psychological, and vocal**, as "the energetic body" can be seen as an extension of the physical and "the emotional body" can be seen as an extension of the psychological. Each of these bodies lives within the actor and each reacts to that which the actor encounters in the form of **impulse**, or scientifically speaking, action potential. When an actor works, an impulse occurs. It can be the impulse to cry, for example: this impulse affects his emotional body leading to a feeling sadness or, perhaps, anger if he doesn't want to cry. The actor reacts to this impulse, either **blocking** it in order to keep from crying, or **allowing** it to affect him. Allowing the impulse to express physically perhaps causes the actor to open his chest and to lean his head back; he has learned through his physical

exploration carries an association of sadness and is a way of allowing his emotional body to respond to the crying sensation. The actor might need to quiet his mind and not give power to the **judge** who tells him, it is not ok for a man to cry in public. In this series of allowances, the potential for action has become reality; the actor followed an impulse and let it flow through each of his bodies.

Wangh's attention to **listening** and cataloging is vital to exploring reactionary impulse. Listening to that which is happening within the actor is as important as listening to that which is happening around the actor. An **openness**, from being in the cross position, will keep an active readiness to receive any impulse from outside, or in, will mentally keep the actor fully engaged and honestly responding; as well as allowing the neurons to have an optimal flow creating connectivity between the brain, spine, and extremities. Allowing oneself to explore the extremes of emotions, energy, vocals, and physicality helps to move the actor beyond her limits. Once extremes are found she then can play with the levels appropriate to the moment, or the demands of the exercise or role.

In Grotowskian work the **container** for the psychophysical exploration is the exercises and forms that allow the actor to experiment with imagery and impulse. For Grotowski, it was specifically exercises like the corporels, plastiques, the motions, rituals, ancient songs, and folk forms that guided his investigation. However, all of the containers that he used integrated vocal, physical, and psychological aspects. Most important for Grotowski was that the actor find those exercises or containers that work best for him. Rather than acquiring skills the actor should learn to remove blockages that keep him from honest self-expression because, for Grotowski, honest self-expression is the quintessence of theatre.

The bolded words in this chapter make up an introductory Grotowski-based actor training language. They include the major concepts in his pedagogy and advances of his work made by Stephen Wangh, Erica Fae, Wendy vanden Heuval, Raina von Waldenburg, and others who continue to explore this pedagogy today. This chapter is by no means a comprehensive compendium of their vocabulary and research; however, it includes many of the overarching actor training concepts. This set of terms provides a starting place for introducing new students to Grotowski, his concepts and the advances of psychophysical actor training made by him and others.

CHAPTER III

POETICISM & CORPOREAL MIME

Best known for his corporeal mime, Etienne Decroux worked to create a poetry of physical expression. Decroux's mime thrived on abstract expression and physical articulation. His investigation into bodily expression progressed beyond gesture and words. In addition to creating character and story he strived to perfect physical essence and art by posing questions of how movement is used in performance. This style of physical work inspired actors, dancers, and mimes alike in his time. Decroux's research motivated some performers to reconsider the way in which they approached their craft. Although Decroux's view of the work tended toward a purism that made him create and research with an attention solely focused on mime, those who followed in his stead would approach the work from their own point of view. Today those continuing to teach a Decroux-based pedagogy have expanded corporeal mime to include character creation and storytelling in varying performance forms.

A ubiquitous image of a mime consists of a man in black and white make-up and costume silently exploring the box he appears to be trapped in. Although this is not the mime work of Etienne Decroux in many ways his work led to this type of mime. Bestowed with such titles as the Grammarian of Modern Mime and the Father of French Modern Mime by his colleagues and fellow performing artists, Decroux developed a contemporary form of mime in the Twentieth century through an exploration of the possibilities of physical expression. Nineteenth century pantomime relied heavily on connecting dialogue with culturally understood, representational gestures, such as the bad guy sinisterly

twirling his moustache before attempting his evil deeds. Decroux worked toward a mime that could corporeally communicate without reliance upon realistic gesture or a codified physical language.

Decroux – The Artist & the Work

Decroux developed an appreciation for physical strength and hard work outside of the theatre. Born to a mason in 1889, Etienne Decroux grew up as part of Paris' working class. Accounts of Decroux's childhood, by Decroux and others, focus on the relationship of father and son. Decroux's father, Marie-Edouard Decroux, influenced not only his son's initial career path, but also subsequently his artistic endeavors. Marie-Edouard read poetry to his son often, talked politics with young Etienne, and for several years, every Monday, the father took his son to the *café-concert*, a variety show of sorts. It was there that Decroux discovered the nineteenth century pantomimes, which became the antithesis of his own performance style (Leabhart 2-3).

In the nineteenth century, pantomime did not simply refer to a performer's style of acting, but rather a style or genre of production. Forms of pantomime, in Western Theatre, date as far back as the Ancient Greeks. The word pantomime combines Pan, the allegorical god of Nature, with *Mimos*, meaning to imitate, creating a word that refers to the imitation of that within nature, albeit often human nature. Decroux was most familiar with the nineteenth century pantomimes. Their plots relied on fairytales and a combination of the prototypical elements of past Commedia dell'arte scenarios. Such scenarios typically included situations such as a father marrying off a daughter to the highest bidder, although she was in love with a young man without money, and servant antics and tricks abounded affecting the action of the story (Broadbent 89-95). These nineteenth century pantomimes,

as described by Decroux's contemporary, fellow theatrical artist, and friend Antonin Artaud, were "corrupted" by their use of gestures to directly represent the spoken words (Artaud 233). According to Decroux, they were a "play of face and hands which seemed to try to explain things but lacked the needed words" (*The Origin of Corporeal Mime* 9). He did not hold a high opinion of the style.

Not much is written in English about Decroux's childhood education. He was apprenticed to a butcher at age thirteen, and therefore, one can surmise that his academic schooling was brief. His tutelage surely took place more at his father's side than in any schoolhouse. He spent his teens into his twenties working manual labor jobs. Toward the end of the First World War he served in the French army as a soldier. After three years in the army, and a little less than a dozen working various manual labor jobs, Decroux's interest turned toward politics. In 1923, after saving enough money to be unemployed for a year, he enrolled in Jacques Copeau's *L'Ecole du Vieux-Colombier*, an acting school. Decroux's original intention in attending Copeau's school was to improve his speaking ability and lose his working class accent for a potential political career. However, "he was so inspired by the creative movement work used by Copeau that he altered the direction of his life" (Felner 51).

Jacques Copeau founded the *Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier* theatre company and the connected school, with company member Suzanne Bing, in a reaction "against all the baseness of the contemporary theatre," (Hiatt and Copeau 451). Copeau began his theatrical career as a drama critic, rather than as a performer; in fact, he had never set foot onstage before founding the theatre company. When he began the *Vieux-Colombier* theatre company, Copeau insisted on company training. He created outdoor sessions, which

included fencing, swimming, and rhythmic exercises. The natural setting rehearsals were a way “to encourage the actors to get used to a lack of technical elements”; such elements were a part of the spectacle of contemporary French performance that Copeau wanted to move beyond (Evans 11). He contended that work in nature would assist the actors in their connection to human emotions and gestures. Copeau founded his school on rejection of “a realism that he believed was stifling the actor’s creative faculty, and so became, almost by accident, the originator of plastic acting in the French theatre” (Lust 291). “Plastic” acting refers to a focus on the integrated whole of voice and movement, rather than a focus on the text and diction. Copeau, and Decroux after him, despised artificiality on stage. The fact that both men entered into the world of acting from outside perspectives (Copeau as a critic, Decroux as a manual laborer) likely influenced their perceptions of performance.

Although the majority of the pedagogical ideas for the school came from Copeau, Suzanne Bing performed a large portion of the teaching and was tasked with translating Copeau’s ideology to the classroom (Evans 27). Decroux referred to her as, “our formidable leader” (*Words on Mime* 1). In the essay “The Problem of the Actor,” Copeau discussed the need for combined presence of being and feeling in the actor, or the marriage of the mental and the physical, he called it “battle of the blood” (Rudlin and Paul 71-81). His writings on the school discuss the inspiration that Copeau and Bing found in children at play, as well as athletics, improvisation, dance, and gymnastics to help achieve such integration.

The more advanced movement classes focused on the development of kinesthetic awareness, maskwork, improvisation, and stylized movement.

The most basic of these was the course in kinesthetic development taught by Mme. Bing that dealt with ‘notions of space and movement,...force and

duration, place, orientation, balance, lightness, heaviness, gentleness, elasticity, resistance direction [...] Exercises were designed to make the student aware of the 'feelings accompanying an action.' To develop an inner sense of rhythm and phrasing, children's songs were sung and mimed with changes in rhythmic patterns and dynamics. (Felner 41)

Bing and Copeau introduced games that challenged the students to "develop greater sensitivity to their own movement," through movement isolation and improvisation (Kusler 19). Copeau introduced masks in order to encourage the students to engage in physical expression rather than relying on facial and vocal quality. In Copeau's mask classes the ideas of immobility and silence were key concepts:

[a]n actor must know how to be silent, to listen, to respond, to stay still, to begin an action, to develop it, and to return to silence and immobility. [...] The virtue of the mask is even more convincing. It symbolizes perfectly the position of the interpreter in relation to character, and demonstrates how the two are fused together. (qtd. in Felner 43-44)

Bing and Copeau created a curriculum focused on teaching the students the power of mask, improvisation, and activating the actor corporeally. This work planted a seed in the young Decroux that germinated as he focused his efforts in physical expression.

When Decroux arrived at the school in 1923, he was placed in the B section, which consisted of participants who did not intend to make the stage their career. He was known as "the orator" to his classmates and often said, "above art there is politics" (Dorcy, 43). According to his former schoolmate Jean Dorcy, it was during the end of the year performances of the A Section where Decroux experienced mime work for the first time as

an audience member (43-44). What Decroux had been watching was the advanced students performing scene work through Copeau's exercise of the "inexpressive mask," a mask worn to neutralize the faces of the actors, requiring them to rely on their bodies rather than their faces to relay story and character. Decroux spoke of his first encounter with mime at *Vieux-Colombier* more poetically, "These things, seen, and experienced first hand, gradually moved into the back of my mind, down the back of my arms, and finally down to my fingertips where they modified my fingerprints" (*Words on Mime* ii). Indeed his identity had been altered. This became a turning point in Decroux's life. From then on he continued to pursue acting as a career with a focus on mime.

In 1925, partly because of financial problems, the *Vieux-Colombier* school closed. Decroux continued to work with Copeau's protégés Gaston Baty, Charles Dullin, and Louis Jouvet in production work. The relationship with Dullin proved to be most fruitful for Decroux as he continued to work with Dullin for over eight years at his *Théâtre de l'Atelier* in productions such as Ben Jonson's *Volpone* (1931) and in plays by famous classical playwrights such as Aristophanes and Shakespeare. Dullin faithfully carried on in the tradition of Copeau with minimal scenic elements, preferring the actor to be the centerpiece of the work. Eventually, Dullin asked Decroux to teach at Dullin's school. Decroux began developing his own mime performances and theories on the value of mime in performance based on what he experienced at the *Vieux-Colombier*. It was while working at his school that Decroux met Jean-Louis Barrault. He and the young Barrault began working together and defined the principles of their new mime. While Decroux worked as an actor to pay the bills, his love was in mime work. Few others at the time shared his singular view. Barrault recalled, "[u]ntil that time Decroux had stood alone

against those who laughed at him; then, for nearly two years, there were the two of us; and of those who laughed, and us, it was we who became the stronger” (Barrault, 23). In Barrault Decroux found someone who shared his passion for movement and mime.

By the 1940s Decroux had become a well-known name on the Parisian stage and in film. His most famous film works included *L'affaire est dans le sac* (1932) and *Les Enfants du Paradis* or *Children of Paradise* (1945), which is considered by many to be a masterpiece of French cinema. While Decroux gained fame and recognition from his film and stage performance, he was more interested in his mime research and work. “In 1944, while *Children of Paradise* was playing to thousands in movie theatres, Decroux and his students gave private showings for 10-50 people” (*Etienne Decroux* 13). Of his work outside of mime Decroux remarked, “that is how I got bored” (qtd. in Leabhart and Chamberlain 50). Within his own teachings he focused strictly on his mime technique, “corporeal mime.” In 1957 Decroux left France for the United States, where he taught, directed, and performed for five years. In the U.S. he taught at several major institutions including the Actor’s Studio and New York University. By 1962 he had returned to France and became the director of his own school in Boulogne-Billancourt, just outside of Paris. There he founded his *Theatre de Mime Francais*. Little is written about why Decroux decided to return to France. However, once back in France he is said to have lived meagerly, charging very little for his lessons, and devoting himself to those who were willing to engage with him in his pure mime form (*Etienne Decroux* 76-77).

Corporeal Mime

Decroux’s legacy lives in the evolution and focus on physical expression that he developed in his approach, which is variably referred to as corporeal mime or just mime.

Additionally, I employ the term “corporeal” to distinguish Decroux’s mime against the mime work of his contemporaries Jacques Lecoq and Marcel Marceau. Decroux insisted that he did not create anything new with his induction of corporeal mime. All he knew, he admitted, he learned from Copeau and Bing; however, his major contribution to mime was his focus on the form as its own art,

It did not take me long to decide that the causal relationship of the two arts in question ought to be reversed. Instead of seeing in our mime one of the preparations for spoken theatre, I saw in the spoken theatre one of the preparations for our mime [...] Mime, I thought, has better things to do than complete another art. (*Words on Mime* 15)

Acknowledging mime as an art form in its own right marks Decroux’s departure from his mentor and establishes his change in technique. Where Copeau used mime as an entry to the text, Decroux dropped the text completely, focusing on the physical work. It was from here that he developed the name “corporeal mime,” rather than simply inexpressive mask work, as Copeau referred to this type of work (Leabhart and Chamberlain 68).

Defining Decroux’s Corporeal Mime vs. Pantomime.

Because of the multitude of forms and variations that mime can take it can be difficult to define exactly what one means by “mime.” There are as many definitions of the art as there are practitioners. Some practitioners use the terms mime and pantomime interchangeably, others clearly demarcate differences between the two forms. Decroux set out to define his mime against the prevailing idea of mime created from the nineteenth

century pantomimes of his youth. In creating his corporeal mime, he needed to first define it against pantomime.

David Alberts, mime-performer and author of several books on mime and Decroux, explains the difference as such,

pantomime is an illustration of a story. It depends heavily upon accurately described objects, actions, situations, and events to tell this story. Mime, on the other hand, may tell a story, but regards the conventions of experience and of the stage as too explicit, and relies upon a more implicit, more abstract approach to the theme, which is of greater importance in mime than the means of presentation. (54)

In Alberts' definition the pantomime aims to represent objects and circumstances in order to enhance his silent storytelling. The mime, however, explores abstract concepts physically out of which story can be arrived at through the audience's interpretation. For Decroux, the focus on exploration and the abstract were paramount to the art of the mime, rather than the pantomime's need to clearly define, display, and represent. While Decroux experimented in both modes, his focus, both in research and performance tended toward the abstract inherent in mime. The difference between mime and pantomime mirrors the two forms of mime defined by Decroux and Barrault in their early work together.

Within corporeal mime there exists two styles of mime performance defined by Decroux and Barrault: "objective mime" and "subjective mime." Their objective mime relies on a physical illustration and representation of objects through "the study of counterpoise" (Barrault 28). Counterpoise involves an attention to how the mimed object, with which the performer is interacting, would affect those parts of the performer that are

not in direct contact with the object. Barrault elucidated the distinction between objective and subjective mime in his memoir. Subjective mime is, “the study of the soul translated into bodily expression. The metaphysical attitude of man in space” (28). The abstraction inherent in this definition is likely no coincidence: subjective mime, as the name suggests, relies on perspective and interpretation in an exploration of a theme or idea.

Decroux’s affinity for the abstract of subjective mime can be seen in his research and performance, as is documented in many clips from public documentaries and personal home videos. These clips, available on YouTube, display Decroux, alone at times and in other instances with his performers, working in the subjective mime style. Clips titled “*La Grammairie*,” or “The Grammar,” specifically contain Decroux working rather than his troupe performing in the style in which Decroux directed them. The clips of Decroux investigating movement are particularly illuminating with respect to his working style. In them, he wears a somewhat fitted black shirt and shorts, against a white background (most of the clips are in black and white). In a home studio, in front of the camera, Decroux articulates his body into different poses and modes of expression. At times, he stops mid-motion and begins again working through the motion he had aborted a moment ago. Anyone watching may get the sense of this being his laboratory, his research, the Grammarian of Mime at work. In these clips Decroux looks older, perhaps in his 60s, although they have not been labeled with a date. In photographs of Decroux from his early work in mime, he wore much less. Typically only a loose loincloth covers his body, allowing the onlooker to distinguish the extent to which he employed his body in articulation and expression.

A clip of the French documentary, *Le théâtre d'Etienne Decroux*, contains footage of his troupe performing, including his pupil, Jewel Walker whose work will be discussed in more detail below. Performers wear body suits, allowing their bodies to be perfectly outlined without being exposed. At times the performers' faces are exposed, although, they rarely rely on facial expressions. When their faces are not exposed they are covered either in a hard mask or simply obscured with a semi-translucent appearing fabric. In the piece *L'usine*, or "Factory," three masked performers wear black unitards with a white outline, allowing their profiles to stand out against the black background. Rather than permitting bare hands to show, they are covered up in mittens that are black on the back and white on the palm. Expressionless masks add to their automaton appearance while attributing an antithetical, primal quality to them at the same time.

The performers move around to a mechanical-type of soundtrack with lots of angular, rapid movements, they appear to be human cogs in a mechanism. For all of Decroux's protestation against representational movement, the music used in this piece sets a clear tone, promoting a particular interpretation. However, it is the movement that creates the depth of interpretation. Through the contrast of angular, repetitious group movements against more rounded, at times even flowing, style, Decroux creates commentary on human vs. mechanism as this piece was created in the 1940s, during the age of the assembly line. The figures appear the most human in their entrance. In synchronization the three figures appear to dance into the space, before abruptly stopping and looking and leaning toward the sky to their right, with their backs to the camera and immediately pop into an open legged squat, as if sitting on a bench. They begin to bounce and twist their torsos with wide, rounded arms. They shift between the torso twists and

their erect stance staring up and right. At this point the figures appear to be working on an assembly line. Physical tension and counterbalance create the appearance of hammering and pushing. Until the group comes together and succinctly appears to form the machine itself. With such a rapid transition the group loses their individual space working together to form the cogs, gears, and arms of the machine they become one. When they move away from one another again, they regain their individuality and some of their human quality.

The masks abstract the performer for the audience, making the movement paramount to the essence of their portrayal. There is no discernible story, no characters displaying relationships or personalities. There are abstract ideas, which must be connected through interpretation. Copeau's influence on Decroux began with the mask work at *Vieux-Colombier*; however, the former student took large strides away from the instructor. Decroux's employment of masks did not simply aim to encourage performers to focus on their physicality as a means of character creation. For Decroux, there is no performance without the movement; the masks serve as the necessary tool for exploring pure movement.

In *Les Arbres*, or "Trees," four performers in white unitards have their faces obscured by white fabric. They move together throughout the piece, creating the form of a tree physically, as a group. Their limbs go from quaking and quivering as they sprout fingers and appear to be shaken by the wind. Later full hand sways, seemingly leaves, wave in the breeze. Neither *Les Arbres* nor *L'usine* has a set or overly detailed costumes. Any detail found in the costumes serves the purpose of enhancing the mime's work. The masks in both pieces diminish the individual in preference of the group identified as a whole, either machine or tree as the case may be, enhancing the illusion. Both pieces display a

highly abstract conception of the action that they portray. Rather than storytelling, the pieces display an essence of their respective themes and performer interacting with metaphor. Both are definitive of Decroux's mime.

A key distinction in Decroux's work is that the body is "neither the arms, nor the face" (Leabhart and Chamberlain 66). Decroux intended to employ and emphasize the entire body and take focus away, not only from spoken words, but from the gestural focus on the arms, and, in his opinion, the over reliance on facial expression. Decroux developed isolation exercises aimed at focused ability to control separate portions of the body, this was Decroux's "keyboard." According to Decroux, "[t]he human body should follow the example of the instrumentalist" ("Origin of Corporeal Mime" 15). Decroux's keyboard divided the body into specific combinations: the head without anything else, add the neck "the hammer," add the chest "the bust," add the waist "the torso," add the pelvis "the trunk," and the whole body. He also had exercises that separated: the head without the neck, the neck without the chest, the chest without the waist, the waist without the pelvis, and the pelvis without the legs. In Decroux's keyboard importance focuses on movement isolation. "We know that the human body cannot be exactly like a keyboard. On a keyboard we can always isolate one note from another, but we can't isolate the chest from the head. [...] But nevertheless, the thought is there" ("Origin of Corporeal Mime" 15). Decroux had further defined the isolation work he learned with Copeau and Bing. It for him moved beyond gaining sensitivity to movement and became a way to explore abstract expression. To create an essence one must first dissect the parts before artistically recomposing the whole.

Words on Mime

Partly a manifesto on the art form, and partly on performing arts in general, Decroux's *Paroles sur le mime*, or *Words on Mime*, not only illustrated his ideology, but also explained his ideal for the form of mime. *Words on Mime* begins with a section titled "...originates in the *Vieux-Colombier*," a tribute to his induction into mime work. He discusses the important role Suzanne Bing played in the school's success; the range of class work from acrobats, to Japanese *Nōh* and from history of music to literature and poetry; and he explains the effect Copeau and the school had on the students. The fire ignited by Copeau spread amongst the students when the school closed. "Out of them rose this proliferation of mime and the speaking chorus in popular demonstrations" (3). Many of Copeau's pupils went on to teach mime at their own schools and perform with their own troupes, once Copeau's school and company disbanded. Decroux attributed the proliferation of mime in France in the 1940s and 50s to the trainings at the *Vieux-Colombier*; however, Decroux was one of the few who desired to focus solely on mime as its own form of art.

Decroux's discussion was broken up into sections such as theatre and mime, dance and mime, and teaching, to name a few. He made it clear that he prized the physical form of mime over theatre and dance. In his section on theatre and mime he posited, "Mime [...] has better things to do than compete with another art. Since it can grow to be self-sufficient, superior to the theatre and equal to dance from which it differs in its roots, it must build itself up" (15). For Decroux, the actor's tools included words, speaking, and movement. His preference for the actor was that they balance vocal with physical. Decroux insisted that when he watched a play his attention and experience focused on the literary,

making any appearance of mime strange. For him, when mime and words are put together “both are poor” (32). Decroux’s solution: a give and take relationship where one becomes rich while the other is poor and vice versa. “Poor” and “rich”, as Decroux employed the terms, were not meant to be judgment or qualitative; although, his preference tended toward poor, “a sentence that says enough for the reader, says too much for the stage” (35). *Commedia dell’arte* was on the poor extreme of Decroux’s spectrum, as it was a devised art that depended on physicality over text. On the rich end of the spectrum Decroux placed Baudelaire, with Corneille in the middle. Overall, Decroux was a purist. He wanted each form to focus on the purity of its mode of expression. For Decroux, actor expression should begin with the written word, because by necessity they interact with text. It should then go to then to diction, then what he called “attitude” which was presumably the physical and emotional portrayal, and finally gesture. Although he separated the arts of theatre and mime, he, nonetheless, desired physically engaged performance on a level above simple reliance on gesture.

Decroux’s opening discussion of the “Mime and Dance” section comments on his need to defend mime as “not just plagiarized dance” (*Words on Mime* 41). He makes the point that movement, full-bodied presence and motion, on stage does not constitute dance. Decroux becomes obtuse in his attempts to distinguish between the two forms. One wonders to which type of dance Decroux refers in statements such as: “Since we concede to the dancer that the mime lacks lightness, he must concede to us that he, the dancer, lacks weight” (56)? Many dancers would argue against this generalized distinction. Former student Thomas Leabhart includes a summary and analysis of *Words on Mime* in a book on Decroux. Leabhart’s summary of Decroux’s distinctions is equally generalized. Leabhart

lists mime's implosion, invasion, and inspiration in pain as contrasts to dance's explosion, evasion, and inspiration in joyous abandon (*Etienne Decroux* 60-62). Surely, both men considered mime in contrast to a very specific type of dance that has not been listed or distinguished within their writings; nonetheless both oversimplify the distinctions between mime and dance.

Decroux's mime shared many qualities with dance, especially the modern dance works from his time. Decroux's exposure to movement work came within the theatre rather than through dance, affecting his relationship with and definition of types of movement. He considered his corporeal mime as its own artistic form and resented having to explain it. For someone who thrived in abstract expression, he likely felt that his work spoke for itself. More importantly than how Decroux defined mime against dance were the specific choices of descriptors that he used in defining his mime. Implosion suggests that the energy of the mime expresses from an internal visceral or psychological drive. Leabhart's phrasing of "inspiration in pain" makes a qualitative judgment about the emotional depth of Decroux's mime work, as does his distinction that mime is opposite of the "lightness" of dance. Mime then, for Decroux, had expressive weight or power; surely he preferred the dramatic to the comedic in this work. Decroux felt it important to distinguish his work from dance and in doing so related his definition of corporeal mime: abstract expression, which employs the physical form to relay something of the inner life of the performer, displaying an idea of humanity.

In the "Teaching" section, Decroux returns to a discussion of the importance of whole body expression over gestural reliance in conveying emotion and concepts. "Feeling is better demonstrated when applied to concrete action. Separate from concrete action, it

can become exhibitionistic” (125). Concrete action did not include gesture for Decroux; for him action came from embodied movement, fully corporeal. He commented on over use of the arms and a need to focus on the use of “the trunk.” For Decroux, the arms should be used “on the condition that they extend the line of force initiated by the trunk” (125). Regular training of the body can lead to flexibility, strength, and clarity of articulation, which adheres to Decroux’s ideology for mime: body of a gymnast, mind of an actor, and heart of a poet. “Gymnastics suggest to us those things that we do not conceive out of our own everyday movement” (128). Initiating movement from the center of the body can lead to an entire body engagement of attitude. Training the body to move beyond his everyday movement allows the mime the possibility to explore more abstract movement, thus allowing a greater range of expression. “It is a mastery of balance that gives our walking its air of nobility” (129). However, to go further in that exploration the mime must mentally train as well.

For Decroux, the actor needs to be able to balance the subtlety of moving between emphases on the text versus on movement. However, the actor’s imagination is also of prime importance to Decroux, “thought is not subject to the earth’s gravity” (70). The body can only be so supple and strong; eventually the mime must turn to her emotional and psychological work to further the expressive ability, especially when dealing with the abstract. In a discussion of the public showings that Decroux held at his school each week, he explained the expectations that are placed on the mime student. “You will see the drama of creating, and that of obeying, and the construction of pieces” (130). Decroux’s “mind of an actor,” for the mime, was one that knew the balance of when to follow rules and when to devise and create. By obeying the rules, the student recognizes the restrictions that she (or

the form) places on herself in order to have something to work against. Decroux did not hold public showings to display a finished product to the audience. He regretted that, “[t]he mime enters a world dominated by a golden calf named result” (qtd. in Dorcy XXII). Instead Decroux looked at the audience as a way for the students to work harder and as a means of the audience to learn more about the craft of mime. All of these considerations must be worked through and balanced in the mind of the performer.

It is likely that his childhood experiences with poetry led Decroux to his final analogy of the three, “the heart of a poet.” According to Decroux, “[e]verything is allowed in art, provided it is done intentionally. And since man’s body is the medium of our art, it must be his body that imitates thought” (*Words on Mime* 84). Decroux covers the roles of the body and mind here. The role of heart in the mime becomes filling the thought and movement with symbolic expression. The poet works elaborately, but through the structure of his choosing. He employs aesthetic communication. Ideas are often communicated metaphorically, as can be seen in the above examples of Decroux’s performances; this is the very essence of his work.

Decroux’s Influence

Etienne Decroux taught at his studio outside of Paris until he died in 1991. His work reinvestigated and defined mime for a new generation and produced major names in mime, as well as those who continued the work from a theatrical point of view.

Marcel Marceau – One of Decroux’s most famous students and, in fact, one of the most famous modern mimes, Marcel Marceau defined mime within the popular culture of his time. In 1945 Marceau became a student with Charles Dullin and studied mime under Etienne Decroux. Marceau’s work displayed the incorporation of objective mime in

Decroux's teachings, as it was the style Marceau embraced, exemplified in Marceau's creation, the character Bip. Bip had a white face, with red lips, black triangles below the eyes, a top hat, and always a flower, which Marceau said signified the fragility of life. In Marceau's performance, "*Le petit café Parisian*," Bip simultaneously portrayed opposing characters of a waiter and a persnickety customer through gestural articulation, changes in posture from one character to another, and through clarity of facial expressions.

Throughout Marceau's long career Bip held a variety of jobs including, bird keeper, mask maker, lion tamer, and also took time to chase the butterflies. Through all of these performances, Marceau displayed an amazing ability to isolate and control his body.

Watching his performance after reading a definition of counterpoint helps the concept come to life.

However, Marceau did not solely work in objective mime. Influence of Decroux's subjective mime can be seen in pieces such as, "Youth, Maturity, Death, and Old Age", where Marceau, as Bip, in a matter of minutes completes a poetic interpretation of the life cycle.

Marceau's description of mime work hints at Decroux's influence as well:

When you talk you can lie and when you play with your body and your soul you have to be understood immediately and you have to take the essence of life. And this is why I compare [mime] to music, which explains nothing and touches the soul of the people with sound. And I do it with silence. (NPR Interview)

Marceau understood the power of essences. He presented his audiences with the essence of youth, age, innocence, fantasy, and other qualities that are definitively human. Marcel Marceau continued to perform through 2005. In 2007 he died at 84 years old. Marceau

learned from Decroux; however, while Decroux attained fame outside of France amongst practitioners of the arts, Marceau gained celebrity amongst the masses. Through Marceau's performances, mime became popular across the world in the 1950s.

Jewel Walker – Jewel Walker first experienced mime in 1956 when he attended a Marcel Marceau performance in New York, just before heading out for his first professional acting job, 10 weeks of summer stock in Indianapolis, ID. He recalled, "I was bedazzled. [...] I carried the program from Marceau's performance on the bus, read it many times over the summer, noting what his training had been and who was his teacher" (qtd. in Campbell, i). That was how Walker learned of Etienne Decroux.

From 1957-1962 Etienne Decroux worked and taught in New York City. During that time Walker studied with Decroux and was a member of his company. In working with Decroux, Walker was able to marry his love of physical exploration with investigation of abstract expression on stage. An unpublished thesis on Walker contains descriptions of the work students like Walker investigated with Decroux. Decroux, like Copeau, worked with masks, teaching the students to not only work from a neutral place and explore the possibilities of their physical movement, but to embrace a "hunger for abstraction [...] poetry is expressed through the heart and through the body rather than through spoken language" and facial expression (Knowles 20-21). Exercises consisted of walking "in patterns on the floor, entering the space in rhythm dictated by Decroux, not permitted to stop or change the rhythm;" and within these exercises line, speed, and intensity were all explored (Knowles 16). Exercises in neutrality and rhythm gave Walker a chance to investigate dynamic changes and fluctuating relationships, both of which piqued Walker's interest.

Neutral is a good word. I used to use it interchangeably with zero – zero, un, deux, trois. When we do a movement exercise we start in the way that is symmetrical. The knees are not stiff, but they're reaching into the ground and I'm reaching up at the same time. I feel that tension. It generates energy (Walker qtd. in Knowles 37-38).

Walker also worked with Japanese director and movement-based training system Suzuki Method creator, Tadashi Suzuki, who will be discussed further in chapter four. Walker surely furthered his idea of generating energy from tension and stillness through his work with Suzuki, whose book is titled *The Art of Stillness*. Walker took what he learned from Decroux and deepened his investigation; Walker departed from Decroux, however, in the type of work to which he applied the training. While Walker worked in mime, he did not have the purist attitude toward the training that Decroux projected. Traditional stage acting deserved as much attention from this type of work as devised solo mime pieces.

In the little that Walker wrote, it is clear that he made no distinction between movement class and acting class. Both work toward the common goal of physically expressive performance. In an essay written by him in *Master Teachers of the Theatre*, he commented on the lineage of knowledge that he came from and its affect on him: "And here was I, one generation from Stanislavski, Copeau, and Reinhardt-the recipient of their labors. I took the stand that I would live in the question, What is the possibility of theatre? And I went to work" (Walker 116). Went to work indeed, Walker developed a system while he was a professor at Carnegie Mellon with colleague Robert Parks; they called it Dynamics. Dynamics is a set of exercises "designed to transcend the Cartesian body-mind dualism," through mediation, breathing, yoga and group work (Knowles 35-36). Walker's

coursework began with Dynamics and moved to corporeal mime work in the style of Decroux. His employment of the physical exercises was in an effort to assist the students in their awareness of the possibilities available to them in their creation on stage.

Daniel Stein – Today, the work of Walker and Decroux lives on in the United States through mime masters like Daniel Stein. According to Stein, his view of theatre was rather pedestrian until he met Jewel Walker at Carnegie Mellon. As a child, Stein had seen Walker perform on *Mister Rogers Neighborhood* as Mime Walker. Stein entered Carnegie Mellon after attending a six-week summer workshop with drama professor Baker Salisbury. He had not yet completed high school but that did not stop Stein from attending the oldest degree granting drama program in the United States. Stein developed a fascination with Walker's classes. He learned about Etienne Decroux during a discussion on Walker's training. After two years training at Carnegie Mellon, Stein left for Paris to train with Walker's mentor, Decroux.

In Decroux, Stein saw much of what he admired in Walker. "I watched Jewel work all the time...all the time. Every word that came out of his mouth was considered. He didn't say things that he didn't consider. And Decroux was the exact same. [...] They both lived the artist's way" (Stein Personal Interview). By "the artist's way" Stein refers to their total immersion in their art. Rather than standing and waiting for the bus daydreaming in a slumped stance, the artist works on her *relevé*. When at the gym, working out, she doesn't listen to music to tune out what is happening; she examines and catalogues her physical and mental reactions, Stein explains. Living "the artist's life" is dedicating one's life to their art. This is an ideal Stein firmly believes in as he himself has lived this life as well. Stein trained with Decroux in Paris from 1973-1976. He learned isolation and physical

articulation as well as the power of abstract expression and poetic movement. Stein began working in Paris at the French National Theatre and creating his own work. When he returned to the United States in the 1990s, he was offered a position as the Director of the Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre in Blue Lake, California. His movement training for actors has brought him to Sarah Lawrence College and Berkeley Repertory Theatre, among other places. Currently, Stein serves as the Head of Movement and Physical Theatre and Professor of Practice at the Brown University/Trinity Repertory Master of Fine Arts program in Providence, RI. Throughout his career teaching movement, he has developed his own style and pedagogy deeply influenced by Decroux and Walker.

Daniel Stein – Poetic Dynamics

Daniel Stein's pedagogical language contains strains of Decroux and Walker's language, with heavy doses of his own style and point of view. Stein clearly lays out a major portion of his teaching philosophy, "Poetic Dynamics," on his website:

Poetic Dynamics is a [...] codifying, in one place, the principals [sic] I use and teach others to use for their work both as interpretive artists and in devising new work. The creative act is not magic; it is craft at the service of vision (Not 'a' vision but 'good' vision). Craft is the articulate manifestation of various principals [sic]. Good vision is an ability to recognize the remarkable in the mundane of the 'day to day'. Art often combines the two by making patterns that move us. (DanielStein.org)

Stein's choice of identifying actors as interpretive artists weighs heavily in his approach to actor training. Stein investigates physical approaches of interpretation and the implications of perception and association. "Good vision," on the part of the actor, comes in

understanding how to manipulate one's instrument, the body, in service of storytelling and character creation. His principles include: medium, metaphor, rhythm, and pattern and storytelling, among others. Understanding the body is the first part of the movement-based training approach employed by Stein. It is that understanding which is key to the physical work, rather than the idea of it being solely physical.

In *Master Teachers of Theatre* (1988) Jewel Walker discusses physical theatre training: "Despite many changes in the past few years, [movement for actors] remains the least defined, theoretically and practically of the actor training disciplines: acting, voice, speech, and movement" (109). A common perception is that physical theatre refers to choreography or dancing. In Daniel Stein's recorded lecture series, he discusses another misconception about physical theatre: the idea that the phrasing refers to gestures and "doing with your body the things you're talking about" ("Poetic Dynamics" Lecture 1 Part 1). Stein remarks that the audience does not need the same information twice. Physical theatre, in many contemporary training practices, tends to work toward an integration of the physical and intellectual. An actor works physically (or one could say in physics, and Stein does); however, the physical life of the actor must be inspired by ideas, emotions, and that which is processed intellectually (metaphysics). An often-repeated phrase of Stein's is, "if it's true in the physical world then it's probably true in the metaphysical world. If an object is unsupported it will fall; if an idea is unsupported it too will fall" ("Poetic Dynamics" Lecture 1 Part 1). This simple saying helps to define Stein's pedagogical approach to physical actor training.

For Stein, the actor's craft develops in her an ability to translate between the physical and metaphysical worlds. He goes further to consider that the audience, most

often, receives the performance metaphysically. Physical and metaphysical are two different mediums, or delivery systems, according to Stein. He discusses conversations one has with oneself mentally, the metaphysical world, about something that happened in one's life, an experience within the physical world. Stein suggests his students need an awareness of those conversations that one has with oneself. He stresses the importance of cataloguing reactions to situations and attempting to understand one's actions and reactions. However, he equally stresses how getting obsessed with those conversations can be just as dangerous as ignoring them. Without paying attention, the actor might lose self-awareness and understanding; however, becoming obsessed with the metaphysical will put the actor entirely in his own head; impeding acting and reacting. To counter this, the actor must learn to balance physical and metaphysical interaction.

Stein's pedagogy places importance on how the medium (physical acting within Stein's teaching and subjective mime in Decroux's) relays the story. He quotes Marshall McLuhan, "the medium is the message." Stein summarizes, "how the message is coming to you has a great deal of influence on how you receive the message, no matter what the message" ("Poetic Dynamics" Lecture 2 part 1). A key question becomes, "how to craft the character to relay the desired story?"

When Stein began working at Brown University, he met a colleague from the Communications department and eventually began attending her classes. She taught the breakdown of typical communication in which 70% of the meaning in most conversations comes from what one sees. 20% of a conversation gets communicated from the tone with which the content is expressed. And 10% of it actually comes from the content. Stein walked away with a strong impression and perhaps validation, "people do not hear what

you're saying, they see what you're saying and they're moved by the tone or not. What you're actually saying, is pretty small in the equation. It's essential, what am I seeing?" (Stein Personal Interview). Stein's approach to actor training integrates physical and intellectual to create an effective medium. Vital to that creation is an understanding of just how the medium affects the audience.

Stein's discussion of medium includes what he labels as "visual listening." A skill he feels the acting student must acquire to build awareness.

Seeing is of itself a creative operation, one that demands effort. Everything we see in our ordinary life undergoes to a greater or lesser degree the deformation given by acquired habits. That is to our vision what prejudice is to our intellect. ("Poetic Dynamics" Lecture 1 Part 1)

Some might call this perception. Stein demonstrates this concept to his students through a performance of sorts. In his lecture series, he discusses cubist deconstruction, where all of the parts of an object are removed from their typical arrangement and reconfigured which creates abstraction of the original object. This affects the viewer's association with that object and association makes up so much of how an audience perceives that which they view. However, in Stein's demonstration, he spoke with a French accent, wore a black lace, bustier, a red, see-through skirt over black running shorts, and a small, vintage-style, black hat. At this moment he was the character Béb ; yet, it is difficult to process concepts of cubism and abstraction when receiving the information from Béb , Stein's exact point. The medium has affected the message. Béb  had not appeared until the second half of the second night of lectures. The audience had become accustomed to Stein in his loose, active wear and American accent. However, that was not all. Stein's habitual movement while

lecturing tends to include a high energy, rapid movement, and a sharp, inquisitive tone. Bébé, however, moved slower with a sensual air and controlled evenness of expression (“Poetic Dynamics Lecture 2 Part 2). While embracing a love for comedic performance, he also employed the physical creation of character central to his philosophy. Stein’s teaching focuses on understanding how to craft the medium, through building character and storytelling, to aid in desired perception. An actor cannot control exactly how a particular performance is perceived; however, thoughtful crafting can help the astute artist portray an essence and poetic expression of the performer’s design through their translation of the physical and metaphysical worlds.

In Stein’s discussion of metaphor he most heavily bears the marks of Walker and Decroux’s influence. He references Decroux’s body of a gymnast, mind of an actor, heart of a poet when he explains metaphor. For Decroux, the body of a gymnast gives the performer a capability of physical strength and flexibility. The mind of an actor allows the performer understanding of the meaning that forms the circumstances of what she creates onstage. Stein explains that the heart of a poet has to do with metaphor. Stein employs Valentine’s Day as an example. It is a time when many people give cardboard boxes in the shape of a heart, filled with chocolates to those they care most about. Hearts are everywhere to be found during Valentine’s Day. However, they are not real hearts. It is not socially acceptable during Valentine’s Day to deliver bloody hearts to loved ones. Stein perceptively points out, “somehow, the real thing isn’t at all what people want” [“Poetic Dynamics” Lecture 1 Part 1]. Metaphor can often be more beautiful or more artistic than the truth. The truth of any situation or occurrence is subjective. Metaphor becomes a way of exploring and representing a version of someone’s interpretation of the truth. Stein’s

metaphor, therefore, is a tool to be employed in physical and metaphysical exploration on stage. Metaphor is the artistic interpretation of the ideas and characters presented on the stage.

Stein discusses the role of rhythm, in crafting performance, with metaphor, while balancing the physical with the metaphysical. As he explains it, rhythm plays the important role of giving ideas a form to work against or within. "If it's true in the physical world, then it's probably true in the metaphysical world." The foot coming into contact with the floor and gravity are the forms one works against while walking. "Ideas have no inherent rhythm" ("Poetic Dynamics" Lecture 2 Part 1). In order for ideas and emotions to develop they need a form, a constraint, or perhaps a set of rules to work against and assist their progression. Rhythm seems a curious word choice to define this concept. In some physically-based approaches to actor training, rhythm gets applied to the physical form and refers to the manner by which an actor moves through space. In fact, the main entry for "rhythm" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines it as, "[s]enses relating to a regular repeated pattern of sound or movement." However, reading further on the definition of "rhythm" in art and architecture is, "[t]he harmonious sequence or correlation of colors, elements, or masses" (Oxford Online). Stein's employment of the word combines both definitions. His rhythm contains various ways in which to interact with ideas, giving the actor an approach to exploring and experimenting with his ideas by working them within concrete forms.

Stein identifies three types of rhythm: tempo, dynamics, and architectural rhythm. Each of these three types can, and will, be broken down further into subcategories. In speaking about the rhythm of tempo, Stein begins to employ musical language. He breaks

up the rhythm of tempo into times of and interludes between. But rather than strictly speaking of a musical tempo, he refers to reoccurrence as a part of what he labels, “tempotic rhythm.” In Stein’s first lecture, of the series, he uses a small music box to make a point. He begins the second night of the lecture with this same music box. He remarks, “The music box happened a week ago, and yet when it happened tonight, there was a rhythm to that [...] a tempotic reoccurrence.” This concept bears similarity to what Marvin Carlson refers to as ghosting, in *The Haunted Stage*. Once an audience has been introduced to a strongly defined image, character, or concept if it appears again, the repetition affects them. Memories and association become connected to the particular image and a reoccurrence of it inevitably will be affected by the previous experience with the image. Using this concept in acting can help the performer create patterns of recognizability that the actor can use to balance the introduction of new concepts. Pattern and recognition are important aspects of Stein’s tempotic rhythm.

According to Stein, dynamic rhythm works with tensions and lack of tensions. “Dynamics have rhythms, sometimes those rhythms are inherent to the dynamic and sometimes those rhythms actually create the dynamic. The ability of one to affect the other [...] then anything is possible” (“Poetic Dynamics” Lecture 2 Part 1). Stein refers to both physical and metaphysical dynamics. Two characters onstage that are not speaking to one another can create tension, yet the dynamic changes when one of them can no longer take the silence and begins to speak. In the moment before the character speaks there is a world of possibilities open to the situation, once one of them chooses to speak the dynamics change, along with the number of possibilities. Shifts in dynamic create complexity of relationships onstage. Awareness of dynamics, something Stein feels acting

students don't often enough consider as a rhythm or form with which to experiment, can give an actor insight into relationship construction on stage.

Architecture, the final of Stein's modes of rhythm, consists of individual shape, relationship to other shapes, and dimensional location within the space. Architectural rhythm explores the implications of spatial relationships onstage. Stein's actor training explores what he terms, "the sociology of shape," in other words, a consideration of how shape affects perception. On an individual level, this can be seen in the creation of character. Stein employs Decroux's keyboard, in his Poetic Dynamics lecture series to demonstrate variations on meaning that slight physical adjustments can make. Stein uses an example of leaning over and whispering something into his scene partner's ear. He gives two options for the lean. Both he and his scene partner face the audience. In the first, Stein leans slightly up and over, his hip raises a little, and his outside leg extends bringing him up on his toe. In the second, his torso remains exactly as it was in the first attempt; however, in this one his hip dips down slightly; he bends his inside knee as he leans toward his scene partner. At first glance the two options look rather similar; however, there is a difference of quality in the two. When he asks the students in the audience, "do they mean the same thing?" They reply that the second option looks guilty, sinister, underhanded, etc. The slight dip of the hip in leaning in created an emotional quality attached to the sequence of moving specific body parts in a specific way. Stein connects this to the purpose of the scale work, "[t]he reason we study the scale is not even so that you can be articulate, it's so you have choices [...] and you actually have an idea of what they might mean" ("Poetic Dynamics" Lecture 1 Part 1). A small change in the architectural rhythm made a large change in audience perception. The above example included changes of individual shape,

while also considering the relationship to another shape. In his lectures, Stein further clarifies with an example of the queen of England. If she walked down to a crowd on a grand, carpeted, main staircase, the perception of her would be very different than if she had to descend toward the crowd on a spiral staircase (“Poetic Dynamics” Lecture 2 Part 2).

Experimentation in the rhythms of tempo, dynamic, architecture in devising work and building character leads the actor through a study of metaphysical and physical relationships. Stein demonstrates three different characters walking over to greet a woman with a handshake; he does so by again employing a Decrouxian isolation while incorporating associative pattern, individual shape, and relationship to other shapes, all of which affect the dynamic. In the first, he rounds his back and extends his neck, allowing his head to lead him. For the handshake he barely extends his arm, keeping his head in front of the rest of his body. He uses the tips of his fingers to lightly, momentarily grasp at the hands of the woman he greets. Stein explains if the head leads, one leads with ideas. Stein’s adaptation of Decroux’s scale allows him to employ the body of the gymnast to the mind of the actor. Isolation and control are employed to present a metaphysical concept.

For the second greeting Stein begins with an expansion of his body. His arms extend out from the shoulders pushing his chest forward. As he approaches the woman he appears to be crossing for an embrace rather than a handshake. He does not embrace her, however, his hand reaches for her forearm and he grasps with a warm smile putting her in a position to return with a similar style of greeting. Stein clarifies, if the chest starts to lead the appearance is an initiation from the heart or emotion. He also makes the distinction, of the change in dynamic from the first handshake, partly because of a change in architectural

rhythm. Rather than shaking her hand, as he had in the first, grasping her arm creates a radical change in spatial relationship. The hand being further away from the center can feel less personal. However, interacting with a portion of someone closer to their center creates a more personal or intimate dynamic.

In the final greeting Stein leads with his pelvis. He slowly strides toward the woman with a lascivious expression, or perhaps I read that expression as lascivious because of the body part that appears to propel him forward. If the procreative-digestive part of the body leads, it is the passion that leads, one could potentially also say this is desire, as the stomach and the pelvis are associated with food and sex respectively. Stein importantly points out, these associations may not be the truth, but rather what it seems to be. If a man approaches a woman leading with his pelvis it may be assumed he is also thinking with the lower half of his body. On stage, one is not concerned with truth, but rather perception (“Poetic Dynamics” Lecture 1 Part 1). Dynamics would change depending on how the woman receiving these greetings reacted or with architectural changes.

Stein’s experiments in rhythm connect to a trend in corporate communication. A recent career services lecture, on the University of Colorado Boulder campus, focused on persuasive communication. Communication studies and seminars examine the benefits of understanding different styles of communication. A method of persuasive communication developed by communications consultant and lecturer Thaler Parker, investigates differences between those who communicate from the head, from the heart, and from the hands respectively. Physical analogies are made between different ways in which a person communicates. Head communicators tend to employ a vocabulary of “I think,” “if I understand correctly,” “and to my knowledge.” Someone who wants to work out problems

intellectually might be categorized as a head communicator. Heart communicators may speak in terms of how they feel, work to empathize with the situation, or aim to create a harmonious environment for all involved. Hands communicators tend to be doers, people who would rather get to work on problem solving than to talk through possible scenarios. Through an awareness of how others communicate, it is assumed that one could craft their own communication style to be more appealing and understandable to those with whom they are interacting. Again, it is a matter of perception and working toward a crafting of that perception. In his training of actors, Stein explores the mind/body relationship through a study of physical communication and perception. For Stein, “[w]hat becomes fascinating is when the body starts telling a story that’s perpendicular to the words” (“Poetic Dynamics” Lecture 2 Part 1).

Pattern and storytelling involve a relationship between perpendicular and parallel. Stein explains parallel as instantly recognizable, while perpendicular is more complex to recognize. There is a spectrum with perpendicular on one end and parallel on the other. On the parallel end of the spectrum, pattern thrives to create ease of understandability. Perpendicular can still have patterns, but they may be more sporadic or comprised of more complicated relationships. Stein is careful to not place a value judgment on one over the other as both serve a purpose and can be effective in storytelling.

The ability to instantly recognize makes us feel good. That perpendicular, which is a little bit more complex to recognize, for some audiences, is what they’re looking for. Radically different [...] both are wonderful, both are important, and both are constructed differently [...] Where it gets interesting is when they get close to each other (“Poetic Dynamics” Lecture 1 Part 2).

On stage this becomes partly a balance between what to show, what to say, and what to leave to the audience to figure out, which is similar to Decroux's balance for the actor in *Words on Mime* of action and text.

Stein's focus is on storytelling, but what is storytelling? According to Andrew Stanton, cinematic writer with Disney and Pixar,

Storytelling is [...] knowing that everything that you're saying from the first sentence to the last is leading to a singular goal and ideally confirming some truth that deepens our understandings of who we are as human beings. [...] The audience wants to work for their meal; they just don't want to know that they're doing it. [...] It's this well organized absence of information that draws [the audience] in. (Stanton "Clues to a Great Story")

Stanton speaks about cinematic storytelling, which is very similar to storytelling on stage. He discusses making the audience work to solve the problem, giving them the equation rather than the answer. Stanton and Stein have similar views of storytelling. Both involve attention to craft with a larger message or metaphor and in the crafting they both consider the importance of tempering recognizability with a complexity that requires the audience to work out the story for themselves. In fact, in Stanton's *TED Talk*, he remarks on the power of silent storytelling, a major component of Stein's training of actors.

Stein created an exercise that he has called, "The Waiting Room," in it students are asked to:

Create a waiting room to SOMEWHERE [author's emphasis]. The audience does not know what you are waiting for at the beginning of the piece. Please use this fact to your advantage as the piece progresses. This is to say I would

like the ambiguity of where you are and what you are waiting for to unfold as the piece moves towards its resolution. (Stein assignment)

Stein doesn't give much else in the area of direction; the point of the exercise is clearly for the students to figure out how best to establish the world of their story. However, he does list two of the major considerations "**Total** commitment to the situation and its characters" and "the utmost importance" of the three rhythms (author's emphasis).

Stein's choice of language in the classroom with his students provides insight into his pedagogical approach. While visiting Stein at the MFA program at Brown University and Trinity Repertory I had the privilege of attending the performances of his second year students. The students were working on the "Waiting Room" exercise detailed above. They were assembled into four different groups that consisted of three to four students in each group. Stein explained that the students had been working on this particular assignment for three weeks. They had one week between getting the assignment and the first draft and two weeks between second draft and final draft. I got to see the first run of the final drafts in class, as well as a polished showing to their fellow classmates in years one and three, of the three year program. The conversation between Stein and his students after the first run of the final drafts elucidated Stein's classroom language.

The focus of the discussion after each performance did not revolve around language of "good" and "bad." Conversely, Stein and the students examined the "storytelling" that took place in each piece. Stein commented to students, "the storytelling is clear for me until..." or "I don't know what the intention was for it. If that's the story you're telling." Students would counter, "this belies the story that we're telling," or "how does it change the story if I...". Stein wants his students to not only have an investment in their work, but a

practice of devising and of training that they can continue to grow when they are working on their own. He is less interested in teaching a set of skills, than in helping the actors to devise story, create character, and advance their art. "I teach some of [Decroux's] scale work, but I'm not teaching physical theatre to become a physical theatre artist. I'm teaching actors who need to be able to do everything" (Stein Personal Interview). Stein's work is not result based training, his work aims to aid actors in honing their physical skills, but also their ability to create character, imbue their work with metaphor, tell clear and intriguing stories, and more.

A comparison of two of the groups' performances provides a lesson in balance of the abstract with recognizability. Both groups consisted of three students, in both there were two male students and one female, and both groups chose to employ sound, as well as very minimal, if any, dialogue; even though spoken dialogue was allowed within the constructs of the assignment. While I was taking notes on the language used in the classroom, I did take the time to jot down some summary points of each performance for reference in Stein's manner of evaluating the showings.

Upon my initial viewing of the first of the two pieces I had little written down. Although the movement was captivating, if there was a message or story that I was supposed to receive, it was unclear to me. My notes were as cryptic as the performance and also as poetic. The main remark I had written was "chocolate frosting tears, so beautifully melancholic" and there were a few stick figure drawings of the engaging physical relationships the actors had with one another throughout the piece. For the opening image one actor lay with her back on an acting block, legs propped up, fully extended, on the upstage wall. The top of her head was toward the audience and she held a

large cupcake in her hand. To her left, another of the actors sat on the floor with his back to her, feet on the floor, knees bent, and facing stage right. He held his arms up in the air, holding a newspaper. To her right the other actor lay down on the floor, his legs were also propped up, fully extended on the upstage wall. The top of his head was also toward the audience. His arms were by his sides.

Most of the performance was visually beautiful, however, the relationships were unclear, perhaps a love triangle? Throughout the piece the actors made sounds like the ticking of a clock, indicating time was a factor. The “chocolate frosting tears” moment stood out clearest to me. Toward the end of the piece the actor again revealed a large, chocolate-frosted cupcake, from behind one of the black acting blocks that she stood upon. Upon the block she was above her two scene partners and attention became focused on her, partially because of the height the block afforded her, and partially because her scene partners became still and focused their attention out toward the audience. The actor slowly dipped her index finger into the frosting, carved though a glob of it, and then raised her finger to just below the inside of her eye where she dabbed three small drops in a vertical line moving down her cheek and away from her nose. While I did not understand the overall story, I immediately connected to the artistic expression of sorrow; although, I could not have explained the need for the cupcake. After the piece ended Stein turned to me, the only person in the room who had not seen the piece before, and asked if I could discuss what I got from it in terms of story. I had arrived in Rhode Island just several hours before from a flight that left Colorado at 3am and I had driven straight from the airport to the school, I was not at my analytical best I admitted. However, I had to be honest, the story was not discernable for me. Apparently, I aided in a larger point of Stein’s. There is abstract and

there is abstraction. These students had moved so far on the side of perpendicular that the story was no longer discernible. If the point of the exercise was “to have the ambiguity unfold” through the action of the piece, they had sadly only created deeper ambiguity through their overemployment of metaphor and a lack of recognizable pattern.

The second group created a stunning visual spectacle, just as the first piece had; however, their storytelling was much clearer. Rather than focusing on metaphor, they allowed metaphor to be employed through their engagement with Stein’s three rhythms. In this piece, the students moved to the far end of the slanted, rectangular studio that served as their classroom. At that end of the room a structure was constructed of two thick walls, which met at a right angle. The walls stopped about eight feet up in the air but were thick enough to sit on for the duration of the scene, which is precisely what one of the male actors did. The other actors were both on the floor level with the audience. All three had cell phones with them. As the scene began the actor perched on the wall began writing, he was dressed in a business suit, and appeared to be working in an office, although he never moved from his seated position. The other actors established themselves as being in a city. They moved brusquely against an unseen crowd and wore similar business attire as their scene partner seated above them. However, the recorded sound track that they employed, although abstract noise, turned unnerving at one point and all the characters’ movements gained weight and a sustained quality, implying gravity. As the cacophony of sounds swelled to an apex the character sitting above the others frantically attempted to call the other two. They answered the phone; there was an air of panic to their movements as everything turned to slow motion. The two characters on the floor slowly, full of control, descended to their knees while their faces contorted in a wide mouthed silent scream.

Simultaneously, the soundtrack turned to the dial tone of a telephone line gone dead and the actor perched above the rest poured water down the side of the wall and let go of the stack of paper bits he had been holding onto creating a spray of little bits of paper in the air. The combination of the expression of the two actors on the ground with the telephone signal and the papers floating down into the water created an abstract image of the 9/11 tragedy in New York. This creation was not mere happenstance; Stein pushes his students toward this approach to exploration:

You're doing something that doesn't even exist and it's an archetype. WOW!
One would have thought an archetype had to be taken from the real, well it is.
But then we're boiling down the real and seeing what its essence is and then we're showing that and it doesn't look like the original. It's like tomato paste.
You boil a tomato long enough it doesn't look anything like a tomato [...]
Because it's this thick paste and you go WOW tomato! It doesn't look like a tomato, it doesn't taste like a tomato, it doesn't have the consistency of a tomato, it's the archetype of tomato, and everybody goes I understand that.
Well, how do you do that with everything? How do you make a reduction of anything? And then how do you play with that reduction? How much are we going to dilute that concentrate to the point where it's almost indistinguishable? (Stein Personal Interview)

The students of the second piece did not explicitly make the connection for the audience, nor did they create a piece that was so obtuse that the patterns were unrecognizable. These images were essences, like Stein's cubist chair, associations that when combined in a particular order created a new sense of a familiar event, or an archetype. Pattern combined

with [r]adical changes in the direction of energy, are a way to create something for the audience to push off against (“Poetic Dynamics Lecture 2 Part 1).

Stein remarked, “in Decroux’s book *Words on Mime*, the last sentence is ‘There is a lot left to be done.’ He started the first class I ever had with him with, ‘I’m not going to teach you what I know, we’re going to investigate what I don’t know together. And when you’re done, you have to continue investigating what you do, forever.’” (Stein Personal Interview). Decroux certainly continued to investigate the art of mime and physical expression throughout his life. Stein’s work continues to explore questions of how to create essence, work with metaphor, telling story, and character creation, while also investigating the value of this work to life.

Conclusion

Contemporary representation of mime in television and film tends to parody the art form, reducing it to a punch line about silence or as an antiquated form. These types of parodies tend to boil the art down simply to a representation of that which is not there and can diminish the contributions of mime. Contrary to this negative and reductionist view of the form, mime exercise and exploration of the physical art of acting through the lens of mime and questions raised by Stein, Walker, and Decroux continue to advance and evolve physical actor training. Despite Decroux’s purist view of mime as its own art, training to focus the body without words challenges the actor to explore physical communication that can be an effective approach to movement for actors.

This conclusion begins with Decroux’s language and pedagogy and will expand to the evolution of the language and pedagogy by Walker and Stein. Both men have continued to develop the explorations begun by Decroux while inserting their own unique

perspectives into the conversation. Decroux's language starts with defining **corporeal mime**, where Decroux departed from Copeau and began his focus on physical exploration with special attention to the trunk, the core of the body rather than facial expression and gesture of the arms and hands. Bodily attitude and articulation are developed through exercises in **isolation** and gymnastics. Physical strength and flexibility are two of the most important tunable skills for Decroux's corporeal mime; both are integral to the two subcategories of corporeal mime, **objective** and **subjective**. While both incorporate imagination and poetic expression, subjective mime focuses more deeply in the **abstract**.

In the way that Decroux took what he learned from Copeau and expanded and adapted the work to suit his own purposes, Stein did the same with what he learned from Walker and Decroux. Stein does not ascribe to a strict adherence of Decroux's ideology and approach. Stein developed Decroux's concepts into a language of his own, Poetic Dynamics. The sum of the major elements of Poetic Dynamics tends toward a clarification of the work on which Decroux focused, while adapting it distinctly for the stage actor. Stein's examination of the need for conversation and interplay between the **physical** and **metaphysical** worlds develops clearly from the Decrouxian triad: body of a gymnast, mind of an actor, and heart of a poet. The physical obviously takes the form of the body and the mind of an actor and heart of a poet representing the metaphysical.

In order to further dissect the creation of character physically and mentally Stein investigates the relationship of the **medium**, or delivery system of the art. Influenced by Decroux, the abstract, essence, or metaphor must necessarily be infused into the medium, but in moderation and with care; too much metaphor moves toward obscurity. This can be tempered with the addition of parallel or recognizable **pattern**. Stein's **three rhythms**

provide forms to explore and constraints to work against in devising work and creating character. **Tempo, dynamic,** and **architecture** make up some of the major principles of Stein's exploration of character creation and storytelling. Decroux uses the term dynamics differently, than Walker does as a synonym of energy; however, they get at the same conclusion: vigorous changes in energy effect perception and stage relationships. Repetition and revision, tension, and spatial relationships are major types of physical and mental relationships between characters on stage.

The bolded words form the beginning of a language that reflects not only Decroux's corporeal mime, but also Stein's work in Poetic Dynamics. Both men aim to aid the actor in conditioning his body as well as his mind. Stein's actor training approach, while based in the work of Decroux, moves away from the pure focus on mime and incorporates a larger focus on the art of storytelling and performance.

CHAPTER IV

EXPRESSIVITY & LABAN MOVEMENT ANALYSIS

Rudolf Laban created one of the most comprehensive languages for the analysis of the art of movement. His work encouraged the movement student to develop analytical skills, deepen her understanding of the body, and experiment with one's own movement patterns so as to cultivate a range of bodily expression. Complementary to his analysis, Laban produced a system of symbols to use in recording dances not only step for step, but also the dynamics and texture of the movement. This system, Labanotation, served as a means of recreating dance from paper notation of the original piece. Although the system eventually became outmoded by the development of film recording devices, Laban's research and work developing Labanotation helped inform his movement analysis method. His interest did not solely lie in developing a movement language, but rather to use it in movement studies, which led to a practical exploration of the body, its relationships with objects and others through shape, moving through space, and the varying degrees of effort employed. Laban's language holds value for the student needing an introduction to movement analysis and looking to expand his physical expression.

While much of Laban's work was focused on performance, his research interest progressed beyond the stage. He studied the movement of workers and children, the psychology of movement, and other movement applications. Although much of Laban's artistic interests revolved around dance movement he considered theatrical movement and character creation in developing his ideology and he understood the importance of one's internal life fueling the exterior representation. Expressivity lives at the center of Laban's

investigations and this can continue to be seen in his ten published books, countless articles publishes in different languages, several schools in Europe and the United States, and a method of analysis which continues to be taught today as a way to analyze and engage with an array of dance and movement styles.

Laban – The Artist & The Work

Rudolf Jean-Baptiste Attila Marquis de Laban de Varalja was born in 1879 in what was at the time Pressburg, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and today is known as Bratislava, a city in Slovakia. The complicated history and displacement of Laban's birthplace matches that of his own. After World War I changed the borders, he became a man without a home country and he lived a migratory lifestyle from childhood. Laban's full name indicates his elevated, social background, coming from the upper middle class. As the son of a military officer, Laban lived a privileged youth and was able to travel with his father, who was stationed in Sarajevo and Istanbul. Early experiences traveling abroad introduced Laban to Eastern philosophies and culture including Sufism and Dervish dancing. As observant young man with an active imagination, these experiences influenced and shaped his approach to his life and the world of art.

Laban's imaginative tendencies blossomed during his youth in his drawings and the creation of plays. Although his father had aspirations of a military life for his son, he continued to support Laban throughout his artistic career (Bradley 6). Laban's artistic endeavors included work in both the fine and performing arts. He moved to Munich in 1898 as an art student, during the height of the Expressionist movement in Germany, to set up a home with his first wife Martha. In 1900 the couple moved to Paris; according to biographers, Laban's artwork and architectural drawings from the time display trained

skill, but his name cannot be found on the lists of enrolled students from the art schools of Paris (Preston-Dunlap 10). Living in *fin de siècle* Paris afforded Laban the opportunity to mingle with the artistic bohemians that patronized the cafes and salons. While he is said to have developed distaste for the company of the Paris socialites, Laban nevertheless frequented events and experiences sponsored by artists and the social elite. Eventually he enrolled in the *École des Beaux-Arts*, where he studied costume and theatre design and it is noted he began examining the major dance writings of his day (Hodgson 21).

Laban lived in Paris in the early 1900s, during the height of the *fin de siècle* art and avant-garde culture. Montmartre artistic life thrived in the dance halls, café-concerts, and the studios of unconventional artists such as Edgar Degas, Eduard Manet, and Henri Toulouse-Lautrec. Yet, Laban left Paris after his first wife died in 1907. “He essentially dropped out of the society in which he had been involved, and left no tracks” (Bradley 8). In 1910 he reappeared socially with his new wife, opera singer Maja Lederer. They met at a concert of hers in Vienna, married and moved to Munich (Preston-Dunlap 17). While living in Munich, Laban began to have a social life similar to that of his in Paris. It was during this interval when Laban began to develop his theories and research in dance and human movement. His artistic friendships in Munich included Viennese avant-garde composer Arnold Schoenberg, artist Wassily Kandinsky, and Suzanne “Suzy” Perrottet, “a Dalcroze star pupil and teacher” (Preston-Dunlap 22) who later became one of his mistresses and bore several of his children. Schoenberg and Kandinsky were exploring their music and art respectively and questioning what the essence of those forms were when considered against the history of the form. Laban became interested in looking at the essence of dance-movement against the traditional ways in which dance was taught and practiced.

Laban deepened his experimentation and research while working with other artists, dancers, and choreographers in movement studies during a summer at the Monte Verità hilltop commune in Ascona, in Switzerland near the border of Italy. Scholars compare the 1913 summer in Ascona to the hippie movement in the United States in the 1960s. By the summer of 1913:

the 'Mountain of Truth' [...] was established as a center for experimental living according to artistic, spiritual, and anarchistic principles. It had arisen as an antidote to the bourgeois intellectual society of *fin-de-siècle* Europe. In its promotion of alternative ways of thinking, Monte Verità shared a common philosophy with Munich/Schwabing as a place where life was lived in the spirit of the artist's life, life itself becoming a work of art. (Preston-Dunlap 28)

It was in Ascona where Laban first began to work with former Dalcroze student Mary Wigman and where Laban experimented with his first movement pedagogy *Tanz Ton Wort* or Dance Music Word. In letters to Suzy during 1912, Laban displayed the formation of a movement ideology and his thoughts about removing the "impression of music" from expressive movement (Preston-Dunlap 23). A second summer in Ascona was cut short because of the outbreak of World War I. Although Laban continued to live and work there, the majority of those he had been working with returned to their home countries amidst the turmoil. Laban focused his energy on creating his own pedagogy.

Continuing the work he had begun in Ascona, Laban moved his family to Switzerland where he opened his first school, *Labangarten*, with the help of Mary Wigman in the small village of Hombrechtikon, about 15 miles southeast of Zurich on Lake Zurich.

His focus with *Labangarten* was on “artistic training in dance-sound-word and form,” while including training in practical skills like homemade crafts, cooking, and gardening (Doerr 49-50). The school and its approach were in keeping with the communal lifestyle and approach to art that Laban learned and embraced in Ascona. Laban’s school struggled to attract and maintain students because of the conscription of many young men into the war, as well as the novelty of the school’s approach. During WWI Laban continued his fight for a balance of success over failure. He moved every few years and battled several illnesses. Laban’s itinerant lifestyle drove his second wife Maja Lederer away, literally moving with the children in 1918 and officially divorcing Laban in 1923 (Preston-Dunlap 51-52). With every move Laban continued to further his research working mostly with amateurs in movement choirs in the early 1920s. His movement choirs consisted of large groups of untrained dancers exploring modes of movement and rhythm. According to former student and devoted Laban colleague Irmgard Bartenieff, “the emphasis was on the experience of the joy of movement in groups” (Bartenieff 139). They were most effective as a way for Laban to move beyond the confines of traditional dance and experiment in movement with people who had not been trained to understand movement as a codified genre of dance. He started several different schools in his travels and, perhaps most importantly, began developing his research and pedagogy of movement through practice and writing.

Biographers suggest that Laban became acquainted with François Delsarte’s System of Oratory during his time in Paris in the early 1900s. Delsarte, primarily a vocal and instrumental instructor, developed a system of expression focused on codifying gesture into systematic combinations with oratory style in order to create a specific result of emotional context or meaning in the speaker. According to Delsarte gesture is defined as

“the revealer of thought and the commentator upon speech[...]gesture is the chief organic agent” (Zorn 71-72). Delsarte died in 1871, before Laban was born; however, his work continued to be practiced and taught by former students of his.

While Delsarte and Laban were both interested in body movement and the expression therein, publications of Delsarte’s system focus on attributing specific emotional context to specific gestures. This system attributed to Delsarte specifically codifies gesture and movement whereas Laban’s work encourages an exploration of movement qualities. For example, Delsarte’s system classified a certain position of the head as containing veneration, while under his system another head position displayed suspicion, making it specific to Delsarte’s time and European perspective. An important point of consideration is that others published Delsarte’s research after his death.

Therefore, his words have been edited and presented by others.

Another artist experimenting with movement and rhythm during this time was Emil Jacques-Dalcroze. Jacques-Dalcroze taught his brand of somatic studies called Eurhythmics at his own school in Munich in the nineteen-teens and Rudolf Laban was invited to dress rehearsals and performances when was he living there. Eurhythmics took inspiration from music and relationship to rhythm to motivate movement. Jacques-Dalcroze employed marching, ear training exercises, and other approaches all relying on musical accompaniment to train students in effective rhythmic detection and practice as a means of expression. Laban’s interest in movement came from within, that which compelled movement internally like impulse and psychological connection, rather than from external sources, such as music. Dalcroze’s dependence on music caused students like budding German modern dancer, Mary Wigman to leave in a desire to free dance from the

framework of music (Bradley 12). A marker of the strong dependence to music is that Jacques-Dalcroze's Eurhythmics is still used in music and elementary school classrooms today. Laban's movement studies partly aimed at removing the dependence on music in exploration of rhythm. Experiencing Jaques-Dalcroze and Delsarte's approaches helped Laban understand some of the contemporary research into movement illuminating the need for expressive physical exploration and investigation of personal rhythms. Rather than external rhythm, Laban wanted to investigate the internal rhythms of the dancer and of life in general. Biographer Valerie Preston-Dunlap additionally suggests that Laban may have not accredited Jacques-Dalcroze or Delsarte's work as influences because he completely disagreed with their approaches. "He did not mention Emil Jacques-Dalcroze as an influence because, although he saw his work, he heartily disagreed with it. Perhaps it was the same with Delsarte" (15). Because both methods represented that which he did not want to be a part of his approach, he may have thought less about such an effect on his work.

Laban elucidated his ideology through his prolific writing. From one publication to the next, Laban's major ideas did not change greatly; however, in each book he advanced the depth and focus of his application of these ideas and their approach. In his initial work in German Laban investigated the body's relationship with space, effort, and expressivity, and the fluctuations thereof. His first publication, *Die Welt Des Tänzers (The Dancer's World, 1920)*, concentrates on explaining his beliefs regarding the ethics of dance, rather than being a book on technique, and includes an introduction of some of the characteristic research concepts that continued to guide Laban's work throughout his life such as: harmony, rhythm, effort, space, direction, weight, and time (Hodgson 118-120). After this

successful publication his reputation began to spread. He became Ballet Master at the National Theatre at Mannheim in 1921 (Bradley 17-18), started his own dance company in 1923, and he continued choreographing professionally while keeping up his movement choir work which encouraged amateurs to explore and embrace new movement. As Laban's work became more recognized opportunities grew for him.

Nineteen twenty-six was a productive year of writing for Laban. He had fallen off the stage while performing that year, which resulted in an injury that kept him from the stage for the rest of his life, potentially contributing to a focus on expanding his theories in written form. He published three books in German in that one year, *Des Kindes Gymnastik und Tanz (Children's Dance and Gymnastics)*, *Gymnastik und Tanz (Gymnastics and Dance)*, which focuses on adult body use), and *Choreographie (Choreography)*. Writing *Children's Dance and Gymnastics* was spurred by a need expressed by teachers of dance and gymnastics acquainted with Laban (Hodgson 122). In the book, Laban stressed that movement training for children should be developed out of natural children's activities and movement. Actively engaging the child's imagination through playful training based on demonstrated movement theory was more important to him than their introduction to movement theory and technique. He continued this line of thinking in *Gymnastics and Dance*, but rather than focusing on children he "considers the need for all to 'learn to use, see and understand their bodies'" (Hodgson 125).

It is surely no coincidence that his publication *Choreography* occurred in the same year that he founded the Choreographic Institute in Würzburg, Germany. The aim of the institute was to develop and research the art of movement, choreography (McCaw122-125). His writing in *Choreography* differs greatly in style and focus from the previous two

books. Rather technical in approach, *Choreography* examines the relationships of physical forms in dance and movement. In this book, Laban begins a discussion of his theory of spatial relationships while referring to ballet and fencing positions. It was also the first publication of Laban's dance notation system (known as Labanotation), a written language of symbols that he continued to perfect and employ throughout his life to record not only choreographic positions and movement, but also to assess and capture the dynamics of the movement being recorded. A purpose of the notation work was to enable the recreation of a notated dance with the same structure and expressive quality as was contained in the original performance strictly from paper. Again, with the advent of video recording Labanotation eventually became outmoded. However, the analysis involved in developing Labanotation, influenced Laban's attention to the undercurrents of and how he analyzed movement.

Amidst growing tensions in the 1930s, as Hitler came to power in Germany, many artists were compelled to leave the country. Fellow choreographer, and former student, Kurt Jooss left Germany for England in 1934. Laban continued on. Some called him naïve, others ignorant, while others still assumed him a Nazi collaborator; however, Laban did not leave Germany until 1937 when he escaped to Paris. While in Germany, Laban published his final book there, *Ein Leben für den Tanz (A Life for the Dance, 1935)*. This book seems to focus mostly on his own life and dance experiences, although in a very vague way. He avoided naming people directly, but each chapter appears to cover a period of his life and the dance experiences he gained at that time (Hodgson 129-130).

In 1938 Laban began writing *Choreutics*; however, after fleeing to Paris in 1937 and leaving his research notes behind, this work remained incomplete and subsequently

unpublished until the mid 1960s (after Laban's death). He moved to England in 1938 upon an invitation from Jooss. Laban was neither well-known nor respected in England; he was simply another war refugee. Jooss gained a reputation abroad when he created the provocative, anti-war ballet *The Green Table* (1932) one of the most referenced and recreated works in modern dance history. Jooss had moved his company to England and with his colleague, another former student of Laban's, Sigurd Leeder, and began a school there with the assistance of wealthy artist and philanthropist Dorothy Elmhirst (Moore 26). Laban had not been particularly excited by the prospect of teaching at an institute that was not his own or focused on his ideals; although, many of Laban's concepts were incorporated into the pedagogy. He, however, needed a job and an artistic outlet in England and was therefore compelled to take the work. Additionally, it was at the Jooss/Leeder Institute where he met the young teacher Lisa Ullmann who was to become his companion and partner in work for the next twenty years. Ullmann had been very familiar with Laban's work. She had trained at several of his schools, although mostly with other instructors. While at Laban's schools she became familiar with Labanotation and worked with non-trained dancers in the movement choirs (Preston-Dunlap 206). Ullmann and Elmhirst encouraged Laban to continue writing and publishing on his movement research and ideology in England. It was Ullmann who went on to publish *Choreutics* after Laban's death. In the preface, she cited the purpose of the book as an introduction to Laban's philosophy of movement to an English speaking audience. Yet Laban published several of his books while he left *Choreutics* incomplete. It is important to remember that he did not attempt to publish *Choreutics*, as many of the inherent ideas became fleshed out more coherently in his other English publications.

As WWII escalated in the 1940s, some artists fled England with the increasing threat of bombings, plus many feared German occupation as had been seen in other European countries. Laban, now in his 60s, had no intention of leaving, especially since his ideas were taking off in England in the form of articles, lectures, and his teaching at different institutions, thanks to the urging of Elmhirst and translation by Ullmann. As the country focused their attention on the war effort, Laban drew his research attention to the meaning and application of effort and its uses in and effect on the human body. “From Laban’s intense study at this time two strands of analysis emerged: the patterns of the job to be done and the habitual patterns of the worker’s personal behaviour” (Preston-Dunlap 223). While Laban continued his general research in movement exploration his focus moved to physical effort in industrial labor.

Laban’s research of industrial impact on physical labor yielded a publication in 1947 titled *Effort*. Laban analyzed the evolution of human movement patterns from a former societal age of agricultural guilds for specialized crafts and social forms of movement display that were mostly communal and religious through to the post war, mechanized industrial age in which he lived. In *Effort*, Laban made the point that societal effort is made up of individual effort. Effort was clearly defined by Laban in his final, unpublished work *Effort and Recovery* as, both an “[e]xertion of Power, physical or mental [and] a production as of art or oratory” (McCaw 198). In an interview with the Laban Art of Movement Guild in 1951, Laban cited the “quick decay through the impact of modern civilization” as a major impetus for his initial study of movement (n.p.). He balanced both defining his terminology and his conception of effort and its components with an investigation of the modern industrial changes in human effort and physical use during his time period. He began to

explore what could be done to bring human movement to a place of natural harmony and postulated that understanding the structure of man’s movement and balance of bodily rhythms held the answer. In order to dissect the dynamics of movement, Laban chose to analyze motivations in pedestrian movement in order to compare it and apply it to performed movement.

In *Effort*, Laban used his breakdown of bodily rhythms of effort and space to analyze human movement in the environment of industrial labor. He concentrated his analysis on the rhythm of effort within which he placed the spectrums of his four “motion factors.” Laban’s “effort” consists of the motion factors: flow, weight, time, and space, each of which fluctuates on a spectrum of yielding to fighting. As can be seen in the chart below:

Motion Factors	Yielding to:	Fighting Against:
Weight	Light	Strong
Time	Sustained	Quick
Flow	Free	Bound
Space (Focus)	Indirect	Direct

The motion factors are at the core of Laban’s research and movement exploration. These concepts had been explored in his earlier works in German, but this was Laban’s first book published in English and he took the time to further flesh out his earlier ideas on effort for his new audience and within his new focus. Laban’s motion factors are one of the major tenets of his philosophy of movement, which will be discussed in greater detail below in the *Mastery of Movement* discussion.

Laban’s *Modern Educational Dance* (1948) asks teachers of dance to consider the circumstances and society in which dances originate. Many past styles of dancing, from Laban’s Europeanist perspective, required perfection of a series of steps, rather than an

embodied flow of movement. The new embodied style, how he refers to modern dance, according to Laban can aid the student of movement to:

- Strengthen spontaneous expression
- Elucidate the principles governing movement
- Foster artistic expression
- Comprehend the movement of human activities through observation
- Recognize movement deficiencies

For Laban the point of dance education was not to perfect a technique or style, but rather to further exploration and investigation of movement and the effects of such creative activity on the cognition of the dancing pupil. Laban did this by expanding on the ideas he espoused within *Effort*, while focusing his discussion from the point of view of those working in educational dance. In *Modern Educational Dance* Laban concentrates on the art of the dancer, rather than the average person moving as a natural part of their life. In keeping with his artistic approach he broadens his work from specific exercises to exploration of movement patterns. “The impact of movement on the mind has been studied, and it has been found that bodily movements consist of elements which create actions reflecting the particular qualities of the inner effort from which they spring” (25-26). It is this inner effort that Laban aims to investigate through a dissection of its components.

In *Modern Educational Dance* the need for training in, understanding of, and ability to execute a spectrum of effort expressions are discussed as a way to introduce a bodily sensation of movement. Dance is the language of action and emotion, or thought combined, for Laban. The variances of effort in movement patterns can be analyzed to elucidate the

expressive qualities inherent within the movement. He lists several factors that contribute to the expressive content; effort is only one of those factors, others include body and spacial location (46). Each of the bodily rhythms combine to create complex movement when each of the basic components are analyzed dynamic fluctuation can be deciphered that lead to qualitative descriptions.

Within this book Laban introduced eight basic effort action terms: glide, slash, float, wring, dab, punch, flick, and press, which are each made up of configurations of the major motion factors of weight, time, and focus (again the term “focus” here distinguishes between Laban’s different concepts of physical spatial relationships versus the motion factor of space). For example, the effort action of “dab” consists of light weight, quick time, and direct focus. It is a purposeful, yet nimble action. While the opposite, “wring” combines strong weight, sustained time, and indirect focus. Wringing movement contorts the body in some way and needs care to keep it from causing harm to the mover. Within *Modern Educational Dance* Laban elaborates on his effort actions and discusses other types of actions such as “exaggerations” of the effort actions including groping, fumbling, disentangling, etc. and “simple” effort actions falling, rising, growing, shrinking, etc. (84-85). Laban recognizes that his eight effort actions are not complex; however, he also makes the point that they are essential to experimenting with movement especially in all that can be learned from the transitions from one to another (80). His effort action terms are not meant to be binding, but rather are meant to serve as guiding language for stimulus in the practical movement study and language for analysis.

Later chapters in *Modern Educational Dance* expand his concept of the sphere of movement, or the movement through and possible directions that can be traveled through

in space, which is part of his rhythm of space. Here Laban expands on the kinesphere, or the personal sphere of movement within the range of a dancer's body, as in his reach without traveling; and dynamosphere (also referred to as general space) or the space that a dancer can reach only when traveling out of his kinesphere, a difficult concept in that every time the dancer travels his kinesphere travels with him. Laban uses the spheres as a starting point for the discussion of physical movement and the planes on which the body can move, Laban's icosahedron. An icosahedron, best illustrated on a twenty-sided die, has 20 faces, 30 edges, and 12 points. Laban uses the icosahedron to explore what he sees as the 12 pathways (or points) of the human body in motion. If the body's center of gravity were a fixed point the body would be segmented into an upper portion, the center, and a lower portion. Each of these three portions can move into the space around them on the vertical or horizontal axes left, right, or center; on a diagonal axis through the left, right, and center; and through the space in front, center, or behind. Laban considers this one of the fundamental breakthroughs from his study of movement (Laban Art of Movement Guild n.p.). His icosahedron became the basis of the exploration of physical progression in space.

Laban's dissection and definition of space and effort are most clearly articulated with an attention to the performing artist in *Modern Educational Dance*. As a book with an educational focus, the structure and content of *Modern Educational Dance* lends itself more easily to understanding his pedagogical practice than some of his other works. Culminating his life's work *Mastery of Movement* (1950), the final work published by Laban, combines all of his theories and research from previous books and articles and synthesizes them within his most comprehensive account.

Mastery of Movement

Laban's foundational concepts do not tend to change from book to book; rather, in each work he further investigated his concepts and research within the creation, use, and analysis of movement. The final book that Laban published, *Mastery of Movement* (1950), concentrates many of Laban's preceding research and theories combined with his interest in movement for dance, as well as drama. He begins by considering the purpose of movement in any given situation. "It is easy to perceive the aim of a person's movement if it is directed to some tangible object. Yet there also exist intangible values that inspire movement" (1). Intangible movement inspiration can be perceived but, as Laban suggests, not as easily. By intangible movement inspiration, Laban refers to the thought process that the mover may or may not be aware of depending on whether it is conscious or unconscious. The observer of movement can use tangible aspects to speculate on the perceived movement. When employing Laban's manner of analyzing movement focusing on the quality of effort helps to give insight into these intangible values. To elaborate on this concept Laban engages in a discussion of his four different motion factors, or qualitative measurements of movement.

According to Laban, effort is manifested in bodily actions through the four motion factors discussed above: weight, time, space (focus), and flow. "Action is characterized by performing a function, which has concrete effect in space and time through muscular force. Actions contain expressive elements" (68). As was discussed above the motion factor consists of two opposite ends of a continuum effort of expressivity, see the above chart. Former student Irmgard Bartenieff clearly synthesizes these Laban concepts with an

example of someone walking down the street, casually waving to a friend, then avoiding a group of children that run across his path.

Even before any visible movement manifestations, there were inner impulses toward these preparations. First, an inner impulse to attention to the space around him and what it included; second to the sense of his own body weight and the intention of the force of its impact; third, to awareness of time pressing for decision. All of this inner participation interrelated with the flow of his movement whose inner impulses fluctuated between freedom and control. Such inner participation is a combination of kinesthetic and thought processes that appear to be almost simultaneous at different levels of consciousness. (Bartenieff 51)

Bartenieff explains the factors Laban found existing in any series of actions. Those visible factors can aid in the assessment of movement. Focused attention, conscious physical weight, awareness of time, and fluctuations of flow control combine to create dynamic movement. Neutrality may exist in the motions, which would result in a functional objectivity to the quality of movement.

In Chapter Two, “Movement and the Body (Part I),” Laban breaks down his concept of Flow within the spectrum of “free” to “bound” in an examination of the Motion Factor in relation to bodily actions. He begins with a discussion of simple movement, or those movements “in which neither simultaneity, nor other correlation of limbs, such as touch and grip arise” (49). As the chapter progresses, the complexity of the movement analyzed from the perspective of flow also gets more in-depth. Laban layers his discussion with integration of the other three motion factors, mostly focusing on their relationship with

Flow. Flow for Laban is the overriding motion factor, which has a natural harmony, or balance, of the other three factors. Flow can be seen as how much one indulges in or conversely fights against any of the other three motion factors.

It is important to remember that these are the terms chosen by Laban to help synthesize the concepts and experimentation with the motion factors; however, these are not the only terms which could be employed they are a single set. The mover creating the motion, and the observer viewing and analyzing it, can employ any series of synonyms that represent the experienced or perceived quality. The main point therefore becomes experimenting within the spectrum to discover the myriad ways of moving to enhance expressivity.

Chapter Three, “Movement and the Body (Part II),” goes deeper into the motion factor discussion through an analysis of more complex bodily action. Complexity doesn’t simply mean difficult to achieve, rather the addition of imaginative awareness and the psychological/emotional inspiration for the movement aid in the creation complex expression for Laban. Throughout the text Laban explains the importance of comprehension and experimentation with the motion factors in gaining dexterity in movement. Mastery of focus correlates to a mastery of “attention,” or the ability to move throughout the spectrum of focused and unfocused direction. Expertise of weight, for Laban is the mastery of “intention.” Controlling the use of force between strength and gentility gives a sense of aim. Knowledge of how to employ time gives the mover ability to express “decision.” “Attention, intention and decision are stages of the inner preparation of an outer bodily action. This comes about when the flow of movement effort finds concrete

expression in the body” (81). It is within this chapter that Laban begins to consider the difference between measurable and classifiable aspects of movement.

Laban explains the difference between the measurable aspects, or objective function of the motion factors and their classifiable aspects, or the inner and outer interpretive movement sensations, the tangible and intangible values he referred to in the beginning of the book. Expression in movement can be automatic response or it can occur as a product of inner impulse. Laban admits, “[w]hile in functional actions the movement sensation is an accompanying factor only, this becomes more prominent in expressive situations where psychosomatic experience is of utmost importance” (73). According to Laban when the psychological and/or emotional experience of a person is the primary impetus for their movement it causes a change in the emphasis of which motion factors appear most prominent. An example of psychosomatic influenced movement would be a young man in love appearing to walk with a floating quality, the lightness in his heart therefore affecting his weight of movement. This is opposed to objective functional movement, automatic responses such as picking up a dropped pencil or walking across the room to wash your hands. However, these objective functional responses can be influenced from a psychosomatic experience as well. Laban acknowledges this fact; however, he does not elaborate much on the nuances that arise outside of the categorizations of measurable versus classifiable aspects. What Laban does recognize is that these terms can be useful in beginning a conversation and exploration of movement, yet they need to be as flexible and dynamic as the movement that they are attempting to articulate. This is what Laban aims to create.

Chapter Four focuses on “The Significance of Movement.” In his discussion of movement sensations, Laban explains the interconnectedness of effort combinations. For example, relaxing after a long day of work may be described as heavy, indirect and sustained. Actions, such as relaxing, are made up of multiple motion factor qualities on the spectrum. Differing degrees of relaxation can come in forms of someone being tired, exhausted, or simply stretching during a short break. Each may have a different appearance depending not only on the degree of relaxation, but also on the situation. Here Laban’s language can be used for both the dancer and actor experimenting with movement sensations, as well as for the observer of movement. The observer processes it and in analyzing the movement can attribute corresponding levels of the different motion factors. In this chapter, Laban stresses the importance of performers observing, analyzing, and training the body in the difference between expressive and mechanical movements. Such a focus is a means toward Laban’s end goal of broadening one’s “thinking in terms of movement” (22). The actor’s tools are her body and her imagination.

In the later chapters of the book, Laban discusses various types of performative movement: dance, mime, and acting included. In Chapter Five, “Roots of Mime,” rather than a history of the art, Laban frames his analysis of movement on the situations and characters of the stage. He relays the need for physical clarity of:

- a) The characters of the persons represented.
- b) The sort of values for which they strive.
- c) The situations developing out of the striving. (99)

He employs his method of analysis to support the need for refined expression of movement on stage. Chapter Six, “The Study of Movement Expression,” offers exercises and guidance

for the student to investigate scene work through a Laban lens. His final chapter, “Three Mime Plays,” employs mime scenarios as a foundation from which to build an exploration of physical character.

As discussed above, Laban studied theatre arts from a costuming and stagecraft perspective while he was in Paris. In *Mastery of Movement* his discussion of theatrical performance portrays similar strains of thought to other movement-based practitioners included in this study. His writing displays a distaste for the prevailing naturalistic acting of his time.

It is not so long ago that the fashion in acting suddenly changed from pompous gesticulation to a naturalism devoid of any movement expression at all. Playwrights, actors and producers became bored with the dancelike overacting of an epoch saturated by melodramatic sentimentality and turned to the imitation of everyday life on the stage. But they were unable to appreciate the almost invisible finer movement tensions between people conversing in everyday life, and the immobility which they cultivated gave birth to a dead style of acting. (92)

In order for movement to include expressivity certain conditions must be met. According to Laban a wide range of movement knowledge must be perfected (as in the exploration of and training in the motion factors) and a careful composition of movement needs to support the story on stage. The inner emotional and psychological life of the actor must be drawn upon to support to the action and story (142-143). *Mastery of Movements* combines the defined language and movement analysis method that Laban had been working on for

decades and applies it practically to training for stage performance in an effort to convey the need for expressive training while proposing an approach.

Laban's Influence

Every movement specialist in this study has developed a following of students and the work of each carries influence beyond their own time. However, Laban's work reaches outside the scope of the others in its documented application and uses outside of the arts and performance. In the introduction to Barbara Adrian's *Actor Training the Laban Way* (2008), which will be considered in more detail below, she lists the wide array of uses Laban's work has been put to over the years. As was discussed above, Irmgard Bartenieff applied Laban's work to physical and dance therapies. Adrian references psychologists, sports trainers, industrialists, animators, and even a consultant for the government of the United States who "used LMA to analyze the movement signatures of notables such as Saddam Hussein to establish evidence of truth and lying" (5). Because of the flexibility of Laban's language and approach, as well as his own varied interest and application of his research, it is easily adaptable to all kinds of movement work.

In her book *Body Movement: Coping with the Environment* (1980), written with Dori Lewis, Irmgard Bartenieff applies her physical awareness and therapeutic techniques, known as Bartenieff Fundamentals™, to Laban's work in effort, tying her own movement legacy to his in the continuation and expansion of his work. Bartenieff expands on Laban's work in effort and Laban protégé Warren Lamb's concept of shape, which "addresses the changing relationship of the mover to him/herself and/ or an object outside the self" (Bradley 91). Bartenieff applied the lens of body awareness and physical use in her consideration and practice of effort and shape. Much of her work includes careful

investigation of the effect of energetic activation of one part of the body, as well as the whole and the ways in which the body engages in efforts, often, in the early stages of her work, on a micro-muscular level.

Bartenieff began working with Laban in Berlin, Germany in 1925 at one of his schools. She recalls, “His work was a logical focal point for my background of swings between biology, art, and dance” (Bartenieff ix). Bartenieff continued to work with Laban and others who had trained with him until fleeing to the United States in 1936 with her Russian-Jewish husband Michail. In America she worked with modern dancer Hanya Holm and introduced Labanotation at Holm’s studio. Joining the community of former Laban students Bartenieff became a member of the Dance Notation Bureau in New York and in 1965 she helped create the Effort/Shape department there. It was with the faculty from this department that she founded the Laban Institute of Movement Studies, today known as the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies (LIMS®) in New York (Bartenieff xi-xiii). It would be difficult to study Laban analysis in the United States today and not get a heavy dose of Bartenieff Fundamentals™ because of how prominently intertwined Bartenieff’s language and work has become with Laban’s.

While there are several schools devoted to Laban’s work in Europe and North America, the major Laban School in the United States is the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies (LIMS®) in New York. Although Laban himself did not create the institute, those students of his devoted to furthering his research and expanding the pedagogy did. The instructors discussed later in this study have been either certified from the LIMS, or studied with those who were. The LIMS prides itself on the diverse fields their graduates continue to apply their movement work within. Their certification program can

be done as a yearlong course in New York or they also have modular programs in the United States and five other countries throughout the world. The mission statement of the institute lists goals, which reflect Laban's concerns for the inner life of movement:

LIMS is deeply engaged in making people aware of the value of seeing movement more clearly, of perceiving that being alive is being in movement, of moving with greater consciousness and of understanding the connections between movement and its wealth of meanings. (*limsonline.org*)

According to the institute over 1000 Certified Movement Analysts (CMA) have gone through their program and continue to work throughout the world.

Theatre Movement Professor Barbara Adrian employed what she learned becoming a CMA from LIMS and combined it with her background in voice and speech to create an integrated approach to actor training where each of these three elements are treated as equals. Her book, *Actor Training the Laban Way*, leads the reader first through introductions to Laban and Bartenieff based movement work merged with voice and speech and then through more advanced work for the practiced mover. Early chapters look at specifics of training to build not just strength but also flexibility and range both vocally and physically. Speech articulators and vocal resonators get their own workout as well. As the reader progresses through the chapters, the exercises and concepts gain depth and contain a practice for growing one's approach to actor training. In later chapters on effort Adrian reminds the reader, "keep in mind that you are not moving for moving's sake; the movement must have the potential for purpose and intent" (116). In order for the movement work to impact the actor's performance it must be grounded in commitment and conviction of purpose, otherwise it may simply remain empty gesture.

Toby Hankin & Erika Randall - Laban Movement Analysis

While teaching as a professor of Dance at The Ohio State University Toby Hankin came into contact with several instructors who were well versed in the work of Rudolf Laban. That was where she began to hear Laban's language employed practically. Her interest was piqued while attending a Laban workshop put on by one of the faculty members. At the time, Hankin had been hired as one of the technique professors. Hankin recalled, "[t]he advice I received from mentors was to get another area of expertise because everybody can teach technique" (Hankin Personal Interview). In 1981, while working as a Professor at University of Colorado Boulder, Hankin began traveling to New York during academic breaks, in the summers and during winter, to get certification at the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies. According to Hankin she began working toward the certification as a practical career choice, rather than a love of the Laban research and language.

I always say that the Laban words are not my favorite words, but they're good words for communication. When you have this shared language you know what you're talking about. But if I'm teaching this material, I try to use a whole bunch of other words that can enrich the understanding of what we're talking about, the feelings. (Hankin Personal Interview)

This usefulness of a shared language at the center of movement exploration and study that Laban stresses in his writing makes his pedagogy appealing for many instructors of dance and acting.

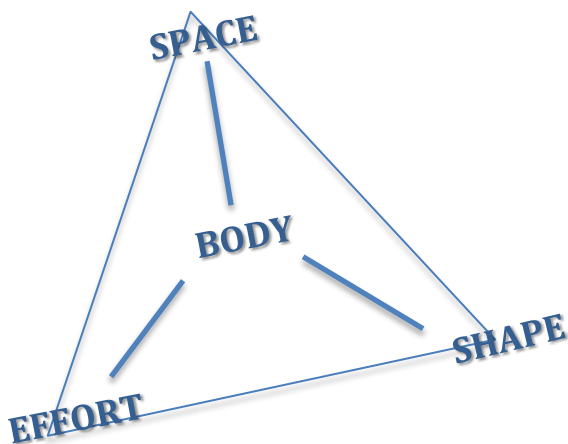
In the fall of 2012, Hankin returned to the University of Colorado Boulder to co-teach a semester long course in Laban Movement Analysis with Dance Professor Erika

Randall. During Randall's undergraduate training at Julliard she got her first introduction to the Laban Movement Analysis and Bartenieff Fundamentals™ work. According to Randall, she didn't care for the work when she first began to learn it, "I hated it because it was on the floor and slow and theoretical and micro" (Randall Personal Interview). After an injury to her hip, the Bartenieff work was some of the only work Randall could continue with at the time. However, it was not until she transferred to the University of Washington at Seattle, and the work with her professors there, did the Laban language start to coalesce with the work for Randall. "The use of the language as a way to teach 'technique' not just styles helped me to start to find this kind of ubiquitousness nature of the language" (Randall). Application of Laban's language within the classroom was more appealing to her than the Bartenieff work as a style.

Randall's experiences at the University of Washington and the connections she made there deepened her appreciation and understanding of Laban's work from a teaching perspective. When she began graduate work toward her MFA in Dance at The Ohio State University she got further immersed into LMA, Labanotation, and Bartenieff Fundamentals™. "I had never thought of Laban in terms of choreography, only teaching it like to clean it up, but not as a point of genesis for either shifting or really informing" (Randall Personal Interview). Her graduate coursework with Professor Vickie Blaine concentrated an in-depth study of a single motion factor, specifically weight, for the length of the term. Randall's study of weight resulted in an epiphany. She learned how much impact weight had on her perception of dance as not only observer, but as choreographer and performer. Although she has not gone for certification in movement analysis, Randall's experience with LMA, both in her formal schooling and in her work with other dancers,

helped foster an appreciation and knowledge of the system that she has found essential. After accepting a position as a professor of Dance at the University of Colorado Boulder she found a kindred spirit and mentor in colleague Toby Hankin. “I think of Toby as another teacher in it, because she really taught me how to teach it by sharing with me her structures” (Randall Personal Interview).

Randall and Hankin’s different perspectives and background within the work gave their semester long introduction to Laban Movement Analysis a fuller range of possibilities to the students at University of Colorado Boulder. I enrolled in their Fall 2012 course as a graduate student looking to become acquainted with Laban’s pedagogy. The versatile nature of Laban’s movement work, and varying interpretations by those teaching, informs the purpose of the work, an exploration of the foreign and finding new ways to think about one’s own relationship with movement. Randall and Hankin approached the class as a combination of observation and exploration. They introduced personal space and the ways of moving though the kinesphere, without using that specific term or by employing the geometric image of Laban’s icosahedron. Instead they began with a tetrahedron framework:



Within this framework, the body of the mover travels through space, while creating relationships between objects and other moves that affect shape and can change in tone or quality through fluctuations of effort. Each of the four parts affects and is affected by the others simultaneously as a person moves. In order to expand the way in which the students considered how their bodies move Randall and Hankin used this framework to introduce a contemporary Laban-based pedagogy and the complex concepts therein.

Before delving into those factors that affect the body one first must explore the body itself and how it moves. Categories of body and shape were combined in the class, as they are difficult to discuss separately. Randall and Hankin asked participants to move across the long dance floor (such exercises will henceforth be referred to as “across the floor” exercises), in the rectangular shaped room, while experimenting with different points of initiation. Participants could explore what it felt like to lead from the right hip, then from the left knee, and then from the center of the ribcage for example. A binary, bodily relationship had been introduced, the difference between proximal, or from the center or core of the body, and distal, or from the peripheral parts of the body, such as the head, hands, or feet. As a participant this exercise aided my understanding of how the physical initiation of a given movement affects the rest of the body. An attention to how leading from the left ankle, for instance, affects not only one’s balance, but also the effort of the other parts of the body. Finding varying means of control when moving a given body part in different directions expands a mover’s knowledge of her personal relationship with her body and manifest efforts.

While the students continued to make their way across the floor Randall asked them to consider if the movements leading them across the floor were successive or sequential.

Successive movements require the body part in motion to move as a unit. An example of a successive movement would be a tendu in ballet where the entire leg moves out and in. Even though the movement is led by energy in the heel of the foot pushing out, the leg moves as a whole unit. Sequential movements are those in which parts of the body move consecutively in portions. Many kicks in Karate are sequential in that the leg rises first from the hip bringing up the knee. Once the knee is raised the energy flows through the lower half of the leg, kicking the ankle and foot out. The sequence is therefore hip to knee, knee to ankle and foot, rather than the entire leg moving at once. As students traveled across the floor, Hankin and Randall did not only ask students which way they were moving, but asked them to recognize their movement pattern preferences and then challenged them to explore other ways of moving. Throughout the semester, this seemed like an unspoken goal of the course, asking the student to first recognize her movement proclivity, then challenging her to find other ways of moving in order to expand her potential for expressivity and growth.

Within the course Randall and Hankin balanced physical exploration of Laban-based concepts with observation and analysis of famous dance pieces. During the exploration of bodily initiation Randall showed a recording of Martha Graham's *Errand into the Maze* (1947) to foster discussion and analysis of how initiation can be used and analyzed within movement work. Graham employs the mythological story of the Minotaur and the maze to explore Ariadne's role of arranging rope throughout the labyrinth so that Theseus could find his way out. However, in Graham's dance Theseus is absent and the focus is on Ariadne's inner psychological struggles with herself and physically as well as emotionally with the Minotaur. In an online recording of a remount of Graham's famous piece, the

dancer portraying Ariadne captured the essence of the work. During the beginning sequence Graham's prominent contract and release style made the dancer's movement appear as a struggle from the core of her being, literally and figuratively. Her stance was not fully upright; her chest drew toward her pelvis in a tightened crunch. Pain appeared to overtake her body. Even as her head whipped to the sides and around, the point of initiation started in her chest and the energy ran sequentially up her neck into her head, as though it were searching for an escape through her orifices.

When she traveled with large strides, she continued to do so from the stance of contraction where she began. Punching her downstage leg forward as she traveled, her core led the movement and her appendages followed; it was as if something inside her was compelling her to move and she attempted to fight against it with jerking reactions. Next, her upstage hip led the leg in a circular step that forced her from a profile to a full front stance as she traveled horizontally across the stage. An explosion of distal initiation came about two and a half minutes in after she had followed the first length of rope. At first, her core controlled the right-legged kicks that swept around the front and to the back of her in a figure eight-motion with her left arm mirroring the movement in a counterbalance type of way. Gradually her limbs broke her out of her contracted stance; she extended her torso fully as her hands reached up and her left leg elegantly kicked to the side with diagonal extension and a pointed toe. The dancer no longer appeared to fight against herself, but rather she succumbed to the movement. Movement initiation can change the perceived emotional state of the mover. In employing opposing types of initiation in this dance the struggle of inner conflict materializes. Physical initiation controls a movement dynamic making it a point of analysis in the study of expressivity.

Effort.

As explained above, Laban's effort contains the ingredients of the four motion factors. In class, Randall compared interpreting effort in movement analysis to tasting a snickerdoodle cookie. She specified snickerdoodle over a chocolate chip cookie because the main flavor in the chocolate chip cookie is the chocolate; however, within a snickerdoodle there are many other spices and flavors such as nutmeg, ginger, and cinnamon. If the flavor of a snickerdoodle doesn't come out as expected or when it comes out perfectly, a discerning palette becomes important to deciphering the ingredients and the amounts used. Randall employed this allusion to the Laban analysis components of effort, light and strong weight, quick and sustained time etc., to illustrate the essential relationship of effort and physical expression.

Motion Factor 1: Flow. Randall and Hankin chose to begin the study of effort with the motion factor of flow. Personally, I find flow to be the most difficult of Laban's effort qualities to succinctly describe or focus on in movement analysis. Hankin explained why flow could be a difficult concept:

Flow is happening all the time, by definition [...] as flow becomes more and more restricted it tends to grow stronger, as flow becomes freer and freer it also tends to get stronger. When flow changes abruptly from free to bound there's a tendency toward quickness. When there's a gradual change in flow there's a tendency toward sustainment. It's difficult to tease out, that's why flow is tricky, because it's so mixed up with the other efforts.

Again, flow can be seen as how much one indulges in or conversely fights against tension in any of the other three motion factors. Because flow is an overriding factor it doesn't tend to be as apparent and defined, in terms of expressivity, as some of the others.

To give the students a sense of flow Randall started class with an across the floor exercise set to music. She gathered the students to one side of the room and her only instruction was to let the music influence their excursion across the floor. As the iconic first funky chords of the disco classic "Stayin' Alive" rang out throughout the room, after the initial giggles, many students in the class adopted a longer stride and limbs bounced loosely in time to the music as they progressed across the room. Some stopped at the center of the room and let their knees wiggle like jelly while their connected hands moved an impulse sequentially back and forth from one arm to the other. A few adopted ubiquitous Tony Manero poses with arm extended pointed a finger diagonally upward and moving across the body diagonally downward. However, the main point of the music was to evoke a free and easy vibe. Most students moved with ease across the floor, with a fluid attitude emblematic of the 1970s, disco sound.

After the song came to an end Randall switched tracks and electronic tones and record scratching gave way to the kind of shouted rapping characteristic of the Beastie Boys; the song was "Super Disco Breaking." Even if one had not been familiar with this song previously, the style and tone were so vastly different from the prior track that responding to it physically garnered a change in reaction. The scratches and imposing electronic beat created more staccato and sharp movements amongst the participants. Those who knew break dancing progressed across the room doing so. Never much of a b-girl myself, I made my way moving with more core initiation than in the prior trip across

the room. The previous ease was replaced with tension in my limbs so as to move them more precisely. Within this exploration across the floor my movements were more jerking and sudden, rather than flowing as in “Stayin’ Alive.” The name of the song/dance style itself “Super Disco Breaking” provides insight into the type of movement inspired. The title creates an appropriate word play enhanced by Randall’s pairing, the easy flow of the disco moves broken by the control and tense of action required for break dancing. Flow, as a motion factor, ranges from tension and control on the bound end of the spectrum with fluidity and ease of the free side.

Motion Factor 2: Weight. During the semester, in an attempt to further expand the movement vocabulary and way of thinking about movement, Hankin and Randall worked with the students to create word lists for each of the different effort elements within each motion factor category. As part of another across the floor exercise, the class was divided into two groups. As the first group crossed the classroom the second group observed and wrote down the various words that they felt described the movement of the traveling group. Words associated with lightness included lofty, delicate, uplifted, breezy, floating, suspended, and airy. For heavy weight the words included, strength, firmness, squashing, commanding, grounded, and driving. A plethora of terms were used to describe movement from the same initial assignment, demonstrating both the myriad of ways that movement can be not only perceived but also approached. The movement lists also helped to give the students a sense of the number of possibilities and choices existing between one end of the motion factor spectrum and the opposite end. Explorations should move beyond the two extremes.

Differing interpretations of weight abounded in the assignment to create a study in weight that Randall and Hankin assigned to the class. In the study students were to explore variations of lightness and then separately the variations of heavy weight. The amount of variation within the personal studies of each student further brought to life the vastness of Laban's spectrum. Students performed light aerial leaps and appeared to defy gravity in the softness of their spring into the air. There also existed a weightless to their landings demonstrating the importance of ease of limbs in order to create the illusion of a buoyant touchdown onto the floor. In order to maintain a look of lightness, as can be seen in many balletic moves, a high degree of physical control is needed. This study of weight demonstrated the interconnection of flow into the other motion factors. In order to achieve varied degrees of lightness students fluctuated between ease the appearance of buoyancy and the bound control of making the limbs appear suspended. For heavy weight at its extreme, I chose to explore the stance of a sumo wrestler. Grounding through bent knees and expanding the limbs outward in order to take up as much space as possible gave the impression of an immovable obstacle according to others from the class. An initial trap of the introductory student of this type of work can be getting stuck in a particular mode rather than exploring levels of nuance and variation. My study included a stereotyped understanding of weight. Other studies of heaviness gave some movers a primitive or animalistic quality, as the instinct of the student to ground herself into her weight caused the student to move more closely to the ground, lessening her human appearance. In observing other studies I gained insight into the lack of depth I found in my own.

An Introduction to Laban Movement Analysis workshop was offered by Hankin to the Theatre and Dance graduate students at the University of Colorado Boulder during the

spring of 2015. She began with weight and an across the floor exploration of weight where she engaged sound as a means to further dive into the visceral experience with the movement. Participants were asked to feel their own weight and power as they pressed their way across the floor with a heaviness of the effort of their weight and to express the sensation orally as well as physically. When they felt inspired to move through the spectrum, participants were instructed to do so toward the side of lightness, experiencing not just the extremes but finding many shades of the possibilities within the weight continuum. Trios of participants traveled across the floor, not only exploring their own weight, but also responding to the weight exploration of the other two with whom they traveled. The breathing of many became labored while huffs and thuds echoed throughout the space, denoting a focus on the strength end of the spectrum. As the cacophony of grunts and roars died down, wisps of breath could be heard with high pitched sighs indicating a transfer to lightness. Hankin asked participants: "Do you feel the shift in your inner life as you reach into it? I love that, as a dance teacher. That's what's so important to me. That when I teach a phrase, that students are not just imitating shape, but that they're feeling something." Hankin fostered the exploration of inner reaction by asking students to employ vocal quality and by working in groups.

Group work served an important purpose for Laban in helping dancers and actors to distinguish between simply physically exploring the space and emotionally sharing the space (Bartenieff 137). Hankin's guidance clarified how exploring movement as an individual can make it easier to fall into one's typical patterns of movement or a single mode of exploration, as I did in my weight study. Conversely, physically responding to movement while within a group requires attention and a physical conversation with the

others, creating a give and take as to the attributes of movement being explored. An actor might have a tendency for lightness but when he is paired with a dancer who prefers more firm weight, he may then find more variance of his own movement as he transfers in and out of his typical way of moving through response to his partners.

Laban's work stressed an exploration of movement rather than a prescribed series of exercises. During the workshop, Hankin asked participants to consider how everyone has their favorite ways of seeing movement, moving, and responding to movement. It is natural to have a preferred way of moving; however, it can lead to repetition and artistic monotony if one does not explore the myriad of possibilities within expressivity. An introduction to a Laban-based approach to practical movement research therefore begins with not only an introduction to Laban's concepts of the kinesphere and the spectrum available in his motion factors, but also a reminder to stay connected with the work and attuned to one's movement preferences. The mover must challenge herself to explore the possibilities rather than remaining only in her inclinations. It is here that the teacher of Laban-based movement becomes the interpreter/creator. Rather than teaching Laban exercises (which is not where Laban's writings and work focused) she must interpret Laban's pedagogy through the creation of her own approach of leading the exploration and gaining a sense of the needs of the students and how they find their own creative movement.

Motion Factor 3: Time. During Hankin's 2015 workshop, she gave examples of how the same amount of time can feel differently depending on context. She began with the example of waking up on the morning of an interview, realizing that the alarm hadn't gone off, and having only ten-minutes to get across town to the interview. Participants in the

workshop were asked to physicalize and/or vocalize their reactions this situation. Quick banging, loud shouts, and expletives filled the air as participants flailed and thrashed around in almost indiscernible sharp, fast movements. Hankin contrasted this to getting to a meeting ten-minutes early with a friend at the beach, on a warm, sunny day. Again she asked participants to physically and vocally display their reactions to this situation. Sighs and deep breathes were emitted by the students who stretched their limbs out languidly and gazed toward the ceiling, as if they could feel the warmth of the sand and sunrays while in the classroom. The amount of time was the same in both instances; however, each ten-minute span would probably have a very different feeling and will be filled with divergent reactions within the same amount of time, making the time itself feel as though it were different lengths. This demonstration is the distinction in Laban's ideas of urgent time as opposed to languishing in time. Hankin clarified, "when we talk about time in the Laban framework, we're talking about not a sort of rhythmical time, rhythmic time, in the way that you know metered time. We're talking about how we feel about the time that we have." This feeling creates wavering senses of urgency or indulging in time, depending on the context, circumstances, or inner drive of the moving person. As it is important to explore varying ways of moving through the efforts, it is equally important to fill that exploration with a psychological connection to the work.

Erika Randall made an important clarification regarding the sustained effort element during the class she taught with Hankin in the fall of 2012. Some students questioned the difference between sustained time and slow motion. Hankin and Randall referred to sustained time effort as languishing in time. According to Randall, slow motion is more of an application of bound flow, exerting a high amount of tension and control in

order to make the motion slow down, rather than enjoying or allowing time to exist without fighting against it. This explanation serves as an important reminder as to how Laban employed his pedagogy. Each of the effort actions as identified by Laban consists of expressivity and something of the inner life of the mover. More often than not, slow motion serves as an effect as opposed to honest emotional reaction or display, differentiating internal versus external drive.

Motion Factor 4: Space or Focus. Laban uses the term “space,” but the term “focus” helps alleviate confusion regarding his use of the term “space” in regards to personal space of the mover and the space the mover travels through while in motion within his dynamosphere, kinesphere, and icosahedron work. One can think of focus in terms of a camera with zoom to focus versus using a panoramic lens to survey a large area. However, focus does not simply refer to vision or the eyes. Randall asked students, in the 2012 class to spread out in the room and to consider if the various parts of the body being moved had an eye, for example an eye of the elbow, an eye of the stomach, an eye of the knee, etc. Focusing the various eyes of the body toward a single direction or point results in a sense of directness. While multiple foci with every eye of the body facing different directions creates a physicality that appears unfocused or indirect. A person feeling unfocused may portray this as being pulled in different directions, literally. Whereas someone who makes a beeline for something has a direct aim and purpose, putting all of their effort into attaining a very specific object or goal.

Laban’s eight effort actions.

Three different effort qualities employed at once are the ingredients that create one of Laban’s eight “effort actions.” The three effort qualities are always elements of weight,

time, and focus. Randall explained that there was no flow in the effort action ingredients because it becomes subsumed in the midst of the movement. As was explained by Hankin, flow is so intertwined with the movement that it does not typically appear as prominently as the other three and therefore does not factor into Laban’s eight effort action ingredients, because flow continues to fluctuate within each of them while there is a dominant mode of weight, time, and focus, see the table below:

Direct – Light – Sustained	Glide
Direct – Light – Quick	Dab
Direct – Heavy – Quick	Punch
Direct – Heavy – Sustained	Press

Indirect – Heavy – Quick	Slash
Indirect – Heavy Sustained	Wring
Indirect – Light – Sustained	Float
Indirect – Light – Quick	Flick

During the class where the eight effort actions were introduced, Hankin and Randall listed the motion factor ingredients and asked the students to come up with some of the characterizations and words that the movement inspired. For example, during the combination of indirect, sustained, and light movement the class first progressed across the floor and many participants moved with varying qualities, although a similar overall essence. When asked what the participants observed as they were moving some of the descriptions included moving in outer space, underwater, a faerie, a geisha, and a hippy. Indirect, sustained, and light movement combine to make what Laban calls the effort action of “float.” Each effort action, because it is made of motion factors, has an opposite in the spectrum of movement qualities. Float, comprised of indirect, sustained, and light movement, would be the opposite of direct, sudden, and heavy movement. When students traveled across the floor in the motion qualities of direct, quick and heavy movement

descriptions included pushing someone or something, a super model, and Irish step dancing. Laban's word for this effort action is "punch". Just like with the word lists for the motion factors finding variant ways of describing the effort actions helps to keep the students from not only gaining a narrow view within their movement exploration, but also continues to help see the range of possibilities from perspectives outside their own.

It is important to note that the eight effort actions were not introduced in the class with Hankin and Randall until after the students had a grasp of the ingredients that make up these actions. Studying the effort actions tends to be more effective once the student already understands the inner organization of Laban's theories. Structuring the dissection of Laban's language in this way proved important for the class. Laban's language was meant to serve as a guide for the exploration of various ways of moving. Laban himself used this very same reasoning in his *Modern Educational Dance*. Laban's goal for the student studying movement was to broaden the way that she thinks about physical expressiveness. Different parts of the body express effort actions in distinctive ways; the head and core float differently for example and each has a myriad of possible ways to float. There is not only one body part with which to punch, the fist may be perhaps the most obvious to choose, but that is a movement pattern. Progressing across a room while employing direct, heavy, and quick movement with the legs can result in the appearance of punching with the feet, not so dissimilar to the look of a supermodel, runway walk. Having access to a wide range of descriptors and ways of moving will give the person moving a more comprehensive range of physical communication and expression. Effort conveys something of the dynamic and texture of the mover. Understanding the levels and nuance that combine to create effort opens the possibilities of exploration and analysis.

Space.

In Laban's study of movement, space consists partly of geometric descriptors, including vertical (side to side and up to down) – horizontal (side to side and front to back) – sagittal (up to down and front to back) as well as high front, left and right. After moving through each of these patterns in space, Hankin and Randall created groups consisting of four to five students. Each student was to create her or his own set of warm-up exercises with the purpose of moving through several of Laban's spatial planes. During the next class the groups came together and each student took a turn teaching their warm-up to the others. Again, the instructors considered preferred movement patterns. Naturally, many of the students created warm-ups within their preferred range of motion. Learning from one another in groups required the students to move through the planes in ways they may not have originally thought of.

In addition to space being a medium to move through it also can be an indicator of character. Arlington, Virginia based Synetic Theatre company is known for their physically intriguing, silent productions of classic works like *Alice in Wonderland* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*. In the online trailer for their Summer 2015 remount of *Midsummer* Alex Millis, who played Puck, displays how moving through space could be a choreographic device for developing character. The meddling faerie Puck works under the employ of Oberon, King of the Faeries. In part of the clip, Millis, as Puck, traveled on all fours toward a flower on the floor of the stage. He approached the flower inquisitively, leading from his head. However, when he got close to it his core pushed backward and an arm twisted up through the air above his body. He swiftly picked up the flower, but seeming surprised by the feel dropped it as quickly. His shoulders led his torso

up and back bringing him up to his knees as his wrists wrung around through space. Then he brought his arms to the center of his sides in a defensive posture. While there are clear effort qualities of speed and direction the paths through space that he chose physically helped the viewer identify his character as beyond human. Millis, playing a faerie, chose atypical spatial patterns through which to move and to explore his environment, distinguishing him from the human characters within the production.

At the conclusion of the 15-week course in Laban Movement Analysis, Hankin and Randall asked students to present a study of Laban's principles as it could be applied to their own performance work. Some students used Laban's pedagogy to analyze famous dance pieces while others created their own pieces or a movement class employing a Laban focused pedagogy. As a participant in the class I chose to analyze four of William Shakespeare's female characters, attempting to identify inherent motion factor language in the text that could inform their movement on stage. By connecting the language of the characters to effort qualities and motion factors, I analyzed a possible physical life for some of Shakespeare's heroines.

Because of their varied backgrounds and unique experiences with the Laban work, Randall and Hankin were able to offer the class different perspectives and potential movement work that thrived on varied perspectives and experiences. Randall admittedly did not have the depth of knowledge of Laban Movement Analysis that Hankin did, because Randall had not become a CMA. Conversely, for a one-semester introduction to the course Randall's knowledge, supplemented with that of Hankin's, helped distill the work to a manageable course. As Randall stated:

Sometimes knowing so much can be a detriment because there's so many layers and so many things to unpack. When you only know as much as I do you can simplify things in a kind of way that when you are teaching a one semester class to students to give language, some of my not knowing was maybe simplifying in a way that was perhaps effective.

Since the work was meant to serve as an explorative approach to creating and analyzing movement on stage, a basic introduction to the language, and ways to find the possibilities beyond for themselves, was all that many of the students needed. It served as an initial point of reference and expansion of their own movement perspective giving them a sense of the array of applications within movement work that a Laban-based approach can help to illuminate.

Conclusion

Laban's language and research defies simple categorization, and any attempt to synthesize it will undoubtedly result in a distillation and loss of certain aspects of his research. I, like Erika Randall, am not a CMA but have studied Laban's movement inquiry, pedagogy, and language with CMAs. This helped to crystalize the basic foundation of his work in a clear way. Laban's interest began in movement training from natural, or every day activities, rather than solely artistic creation of movement. He viewed training as a necessary exploration of one's own inclinations and experimentation with movement outside of one's typical approach. Gaining flexibility and understanding served a higher purpose for Laban's study than the gaining of strength and movement for movement's sake, which tends to become mechanical. **Expressivity** comes from movement that contains an inner drive.

In Irmgard Bartenieff's application of Laban's work she considers what the **body** can do, how it does it – **shape**, how it relates to **space**, and “how the quality of its movement affects function and communication,” **effort** (Bartenieff viii) [my emphasis]. The relation and interaction between shape, space, and effort as explored through the body, when driven by inner impulse and emotion create the expressivity that Laban aimed to analyze. His analysis distinguished between functional action and movement sensation. Laban concedes that there are intangible sensations at play that the observer, and at times the mover, cannot always detect; those are the inner (sometimes unconscious) movement drives. These tangible sensations inform the mover's reactions and expressiveness.

To begin in movement experimentation and analysis from a Laban perspective one must first consider the **rhythm of effort** that consists of four **motion factors** – **flow**, **weight**, **time**, and space, or **focus**, as employed by Hankin and Randall. All of the motion factors contain a spectrum of **fighting** to **yielding** qualities of movement within the given motion factor. The flexibility of Laban's movement language can be seen most clearly in the myriad of terms used to describe the quality inherent in an individual's work within the movement factors. As indicated in the table on page eleven, time has the spectrum of **quick** on the fighting side to **sustained** on the yielding. However, even those definitive ends of the spectrum are flexible, some employ the terms sudden, fast, or rapid, rather than quick. Every different word represents different descriptors for the observer and different explorative qualities for the mover. However, it must be understood that Laban's motion factor is not attempting to scientifically measure a rate of speed, but rather seeks to capture the essence of the mover's inner reaction to time, in the above example the way in which she fights against time. The opposing ends of the spectrum are also just that, two possible

opposite ways to interact with time. There are countless potential descriptors, or qualities, from the entire range of the spectrum of time at the disposal of the mover or observer. Instructors like Hankin and Randall help their students to identify the affinities that each has for specific ranges within the motion factors and descriptors and then challenge them to move beyond those favorites through group work and interaction with other new ways of moving outside of one's own habits. In particular they did this by first introducing the movement work as **experimentation** and **exploration** rather than immediately giving the students the Laban vocabulary that might constrict their view to that particular set of terms. An attempt to foster discerning attention to detail in movement, as one would need to identify the ingredients in a snickerdoodle, develops enhanced ways of thinking about movement. Such an attention to detail should be expanded to shape in a consideration of the body from the perspective of points of movement **initiation** and physical concentration on origination. Two main types of initiation are **proximal**, from the core, and **distal**, from the extremities. Concepts of shape and initiation cultivates an understanding of the relationship between the physical action within the body and how effort becomes manifest within it.

Various motion factor ingredients combined create what Laban identifies as the eight **effort actions**. The effort actions flick, dab, punch, wring, float, glide, press, and slash demonstrate typical groupings of effort elements. However, like the elements that make up the motion factors, there are innumerable possibilities of how one can embody the effort actions depending on not only the inner drive of the mover at a given time, but also the part of the body engaging in the movement. Such variance will effect the movement of the rest of the body. How a person moves through space will also affect the sense of the effort

action. Laban differentiates between the space immediately within reach of a person, who is not traveling, as one's **kinesphere**, or personal space. General space, or the **dynamosphere** is therefore the space that one extends through while traveling. Within each of these spheres of movement Laban considers the inner drive of the person moving through space and the affect that space can have on perceived expressivity. Leaping backwards at a high angle contains a danger factor that a low forward roll does not; however, the spatial factor must also be considered along side with the displayed rhythm effort, hence the interconnectedness of the body, shape, space, and effort elements central to the Labanese pedagogy.

Laban's approach to movement thrived in the potential of exploration and an ever-expanding language to help demonstrate the possibilities therein. Therefore, this chapter has fewer exercises described within it and less clear delineation between which practitioners added what to Laban's language and how it evolved. This is because Laban preferred exploration and experimentation in his movement pedagogy and practice making it malleable and inventive for those teaching from his style giving them a structure while inviting them to create their own set of exercises and point from which to interact with the work based on their own purposes and needs. He used geometry, science, and industry in his work further removing it from a strictly artistic language. Laban's work is most strongly introduced when the instructor leading the work allows the students to find their own connections and language through exploration rather than prescribed exercises helping the student expand their way of thinking about and engaging in movement.

Chapter V

INTEREST & BOGART'S VIEWPOINTS

Asking about the origins and significance of Viewpoints³ yields a complicated answer. First, one must distinguish between dancer/choreographer Mary Overlie's Six Viewpoints and the Viewpoints approach that director Anne Bogart developed after working with Overlie. While Overlie has been credited by many as the creator of Viewpoints, she modestly uses language that suggests Viewpoints had always existed and that she put language and research into what was already there. Overlie specifically uses the words like "found" and "developed" vs. "invented" or "created" in discussing her origins with the work. Anne Bogart's work as a director and cofounder of the Saratoga International Theatre Institute (SITI Company) gave her a widely known reputation in the theatre. SITI Company's use of Viewpoints, not only in their own training, but also in their touring, training workshops, and master classes that they hold both in NY and all over the world, made the name "Viewpoints" synonymous with the organization. Bogart's development of Viewpoints has become a well-known system used for theatre training. Anne Bogart and Tina Landau wrote the only complete book on Viewpoints to date. It is for all of these reasons that Bogart has become identified with the approach. Because the SITI training workshops are so widely accessible and one of the most direct ways to study and practice Viewpoints, I decided to focus this chapter on Bogart's approach. However, it is

³ The approach to training known as Viewpoints is always capitalized when written about by both Overlie and Bogart. Therefore throughout this dissertation, whenever the training is referred to it will be capitalized. Additionally, the individual Viewpoints of both systems, Shape, Time, Space, etc., will also always be capitalized as that is the convention set up by both Overlie and Bogart as well.

insightful to begin with Overlie's work as it provided the foundation for Bogart's Viewpoints.

In interviews, articles, and books, Bogart very plainly identifies Mary Overlie as the developer of the original Six Viewpoints. Overlie and Bogart met as colleagues at New York University's Experimental Theatre Wing in 1979. They worked together as instructors and on productions. Bogart found enlightenment in Overlie's process. After Overlie left for Europe for several years, Bogart continued working within this approach, expanding and evolving it to meet her own needs as a theatre artist. In Bogart's words, "The difference between us is that Mary is an innovator and inventor and explorer. She goes into herself and comes out with something truly original. I'm a scavenger. I look around and go, 'I like that. And I like that and that, and I think I'll put them all together' " (*Conversations with Anne* 471). Overlie first articulated the system known as The Six Viewpoints, Bogart expanded that system with Tina Landau and the SITI Company, making an approach that is rooted in Overlie's work, but contains expanded and added elements.

Mary Overlie - The Six Viewpoints

Overlie's experiences in dance heavily influenced her perspective and approach to training and artistic creation of performance. Born in Bozeman, Montana in 1943, Mary Overlie began studying dance at the age of nine. Her selective ballet teacher chose to work with Overlie and only another student or two at a time. Rather than classical ballet across the floor patterns, he focused their training on barre work and improvisation. Speaking about this experience Overlie remarked:

[H]e only wanted the purest movement dictated by our emotions or our heads. So the subjects were: “Color. Choose one: red, yellow, black, and do a dance to it;” or, “Create steps that move you across the floor that evoke a birdlike image. Count them and do them.” It was amazing. We were not required to use the ballet vocabulary. He would have killed us if we had tried it. (qtd. in Sommer 48)

According to Overlie, this type of training impacted how she approached dance throughout her life. Improvisation continued to play a major role in her own creation and collaborative works. At 17, Overlie left Montana for California and sporadically took dance classes while working at a bakery. Meeting Barbara Dilley and Yvonne Rainer, who were touring through California from New York, helped set Overlie on a new trajectory.

In discussing the origins of the Six Viewpoints, Overlie spoke about deconstructing dance in the 1970s while working in New York with Dilley and Rainer in the group The Natural History of the American Dancer. Through composition work with the group, Overlie began to find her own way of creating choreography through exploration of both pedestrian and artistic movement. Her work with the Judson Church Theatre, and other artistic deconstructionists in New York, further developed the belief, which grew from her early training in Montana, that the choreographer or director did not have to be the only creator in the room of artists (*Conversations with Anne* 475-477). Her work at this time involved deconstructing dance and seriously asking questions such as “what is dance?” and “what type of movement constitutes dance?.” Improvisation, a dancer’s license as creator, and deconstruction were the major concepts that not only informed Overlie’s personal

working style, but also how she wanted to create work with other artists. Eventually, she labeled her approach “The Six Viewpoints.”

Overlie aimed for The Six Viewpoints “to help artists develop their own aesthetic perceptions by isolating six basic theatrical materials, so that each can be explored while the artists focus on developing their perceptual and interactive abilities” (qtd. in Barlow 190). The Six Viewpoints include: space, time, shape (design), emotion, movement, and story (logic). Overlie defines The Six Viewpoints as:

a theatre study that establishes and expands the base of acting by including the vocabulary of the basic materials that are found in the creation of theatre. This work is accompanied by a set of practical exercises, known as the Viewpoints Practices, that aid in the expansion into this vocabulary and offer a thorough elaboration on the philosophy of postmodernism expressed in this work. (“Manifesto for Reification” 129)

In practice, each of the separate Viewpoints is meant to serve, at first, as its own exploration. Because the work is based in deconstruction, exploring each viewpoint individually allows the performer to concentrate on a single aspect and have the chance of discovering within the focused lens of deconstruction. In a postmodernist collage fashion, Overlie isolated aspects of performance into six essences which each deserve undivided attention.

For instance, in a Space exercise, the artists would begin by simply walking around the space in which they are training, observing everything about that space. Overlie writes about the “Walk and Stop” practice, which works exactly how it sounds: actors walk around their space and stop to observe and consider what they see. “This extremely minimal set of

instructions helps actors avoid the temptation to elaborate on performance possibilities, such as adding body shapes, adding timing, or working with any of the languages in a way that might confuse their discovery of basic spatial principles” (“The Six Viewpoints” 197). Overlie believes that the more the performer is aware of their space, the better she or he will be able to engage with it in performance.

Shape exploration, in Overlie’s approach, can begin with an individual shape created by the performer or can be a dialogue of shapes where one performer creates a shape and the next responds with a shape inspired by it. Attention to what the actor’s shape inspired adds a level of observation, analysis, and physical conversation to this work. Overlie’s Time considers many aspects including: speed, tempo, duration, rhythm, and impulse and does so through a practice similar to the “Walk and Stop” in Space; however, this time with renewed focus. With a focus on Time, the student can become attuned to speed and duration of pauses and walking. Overlie connects the study of Time to the performer’s ability to respond. Perception and presence play an important role in all of Overlie’s Viewpoints but especially that of Emotion. This term does not necessarily mean Emotion as in fabricating emotional response but, rather it focuses on presence, awareness, and being open to the emotions that come from honest interaction and engagement with others. “The basic practice for emotion work is presence work” (*Conversations with Anne* 484). Movement exploration is perhaps the most obtuse of Overlie’s The Six Viewpoints, as it has to be isolated from Space, Shape, and Time. In the Movement Viewpoint, Overlie aims for the performer to dissect action into its many components including balance, kinesthetic response, and sensation. In order to do this, the performer must move beyond the “sculpturing of movement found in dance or other physical training” (“The Six Viewpoints”

205). Overlie's final Viewpoint, Story, or the basic organization of information, attempts to deconstruct the hierarchy of storytelling. In exercises that relate to devising a piece, the performer works through imagery and creates a story that is dictated by the images that come to him. As he connects a new image to the previous one through his logical train of thought, he follows the new image in his action and therefore the new story. Story integrates abstraction while challenging the performer to display logic.

Overlie's approach was the foundation for the Viewpoints that Bogart eventually developed; however, differences between Overlie's and Bogart's approaches begin with distinctions in structure and focus. Overlie's process investigates six aspects of performance in more open-ended terms by comparison with Bogart's nine physical and three vocal Viewpoints. Bogart deepened the organization of terms in her Viewpoints by articulating two categories of her physical Viewpoints, Time and Space. Her terms deconstruct these relationships further by dividing into subcategories the Viewpoints of Time: Tempo, Duration, Kinesthetic Response, and Repetition and the Viewpoints of Space: Spatial Relationship, Topography, Shape, Gesture, and Architecture. While Bogart's Viewpoints are more codified than Overlie's, both approaches remain somewhat open-ended, which is not to say that Bogart's are a rigidly defined system. However, from my perspective as a student and observer, Bogart's approach has added accessibility in her further development of the language and her categorization of the terms for theatre training and creation.

In addition to the cognitive accessibility, Bogart's Viewpoints is, literally, physically accessible as it has been more successfully branded than Overlie's. Bogart does not perform the training alone, SITI Company members teach this approach in several sessions

throughout the year in New York where they are based, in addition to teaching workshops throughout the United States and the world. In order to engage with Overlie's Six Viewpoints one would have to contact Overlie directly. Therefore, for reasons of this study's concentration on language and pedagogy, the development brought about by Bogart's contribution, and the availability of the SITI training workshops, this chapter will continue with a focus on Viewpoints as taught by Anne Bogart and the SITI Company.

Anne Bogart - The Artist and the Work

Anne Bogart was born on September 25, 1951 in Newport, RI into a naval family. As a military child Bogart moved all over the world. From an early age, theatre became a constant solace in her peripatetic life. In the tenth grade, one of Bogart's teachers noted her aptitude in directing and took her on as an assistant director for the high school production of Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano*. When her teacher fell ill at the last minute, Bogart took over. Bogart admits that if the production had not gone as well as it did, that might have ended her career as a director before it had really begun (*A Director Prepares* 8).

In applying for college Bogart originally hoped to attend one of the Seven Sisters Schools. She aspired to be a director and additionally applied to conservatory programs where she could focus on her passion. When she did not gain acceptance into the schools to which she applied, Bogart decided to attend college in Greece where she studied art, architecture, and theatre. After completing a year abroad she returned and gained admittance to Bard College. "At Bard in those days, and I think it's probably still true, you could do whatever you wanted and I just directed plays like crazy, with people who just wanted to make plays with me. And that was complete paradise for me" (Downstage

Center 2009). At Bard, Bogart's Composition Professor Aileen Passloff encouraged students to create work from whatever inspiration they might find in their lives while urging students to "investigate the creative role of each performer" (*The Viewpoints Book* 5). Experiences such as her time in Greece and at Bard informed Bogart's attitude toward art and training. Her work continued to meld perspectives and drove from a collaborative spirit that does not prize any one person over another in the rehearsal room.

After graduating she remained at Bard working for an extra year before moving to New York City to continue her creative work. In the late 1970s, she obtained a Masters of Arts degree in Performance Studies from NYU. Her work gained the attention of the faculty of the Experimental Theatre Wing at NYU where she was subsequently offered a job and where she met and worked with Mary Overlie. Bogart learned Viewpoints from Overlie while together at NYU, which makes the language of their approaches and some of the exercises very similar. However, in directing productions and developing her approach to actor training, Bogart expanded the Viewpoints she learned from Overlie, partly because she could not remember all of Overlie's Viewpoints once the two were no longer working together. Often when artists work in an approach, the approach gets adapted to a particular artist's style and to the needs and goals of that artist's work. This certainly was the case with Bogart.

The late 1980s were an auspicious if not tumultuous time for Bogart. While directing at the American Repertory Theatre in Massachusetts, she met the woman with whom she collaborated and refined Viewpoints, fellow director Tina Landau. With Landau, Bogart went on to write *The Viewpoints Book*, with a focus on the practice of the work rather than a pedagogical or analytical study of the approach. This seminal work defined

the approach for many theatre artists engaging with Viewpoints. In 1989, Bogart, looking to create with a company of her own, joined Trinity Repertory Company in Providence, Rhode Island as the Artistic Director. Following a single, volatile season fraught with inherited budget concerns and low attendance, she resigned. Bogart understood now that she needed to start her own company.

In 1992, two years after stepping down from Trinity Rep, Bogart along with Japanese director Tadashi Suzuki came together to form the Saratoga International Theatre Institute Company, known as SITI Company. As if by kismet, Bogart had been talking about wanting to form her own company and Suzuki approached her with a proposition to begin a theatre company together. The original company included actors who had trained with Tadashi Suzuki in Toga, Japan and others who Bogart had worked with in the past. Suzuki felt it imperative that actors with a strong history of training in his method join the company, as Suzuki himself informed Bogart that after four years he would leave to work on other projects (Downstage Center). A major emphasis from the company's origination was actor training and it took the shape of Suzuki's form based, grounded Suzuki Method, that focuses on power and energy through the core and legs with a relaxed upper body, and Bogart's exploratory Viewpoints.

SITI Company's training philosophy succinctly relays the importance of the dual process. "It is through the dialogue between Suzuki and Viewpoints, two very distinct yet complementary approaches to the art of acting, that the philosophy and technique of SITI Company is continually explored, revitalized, and articulated" (*siti.org*). Bogart and other SITI Company members remarked on numerous occasions how important the two separate training approaches are for them, not one approach that meshes the two, but two systems

of training taught as independent systems to the same group of actors in order for the systems to complement one another and expand the range of those in the training. Bogart refers to the combination as training “alchemy” (*Conversations with Anne* 499). Bogart and Suzuki did not set out to find a magic combination of approaches that would create such a balanced system, but the company continues today teaching and training themselves everyday in these same systems because they work for them. Bogart has written extensively on directing and her work with the SITI Company; however, her focus when writing about Viewpoints has typically been her practical experience of Viewpoints rather than the theory behind Viewpoints. As stated in their mission, through the training and teaching the philosophy becomes manifest.

The Viewpoints Book

“Viewpoints is an open process, not a rigid technique” (xi *The Viewpoints Book*). For this reason Bogart’s Viewpoints so appropriately complements Suzuki’s strict method of form and groundedness. But exactly what is meant by the term “viewpoint?” Definitions of the term include, “a mental position or attitude from which subjects or questions are considered” (OED) and “a way of looking at or thinking about something” (Merriam-Webster). Consequently Viewpoints offers a method of exploring different aspects of performance both individually and within relation to others. A concentrated study of each aspect creates experimentation with possible fluctuation and broadening the performer’s way of thinking and ability to engage with each aspect individually. Analysis of the Viewpoints vocabulary undoubtedly must begin with the specific terms used to categorize each one. As stated above, the nine physical Viewpoints fall into two categories,

Viewpoints of Time: Tempo, Duration, Kinesthetic Response, and Repetition; and
Viewpoints of Space: Spatial Relationship, Topography, Shape, Gesture, and Architecture.

The Viewpoints Book consists mostly of exercises and practical application of Viewpoints work from the perspectives of Bogart and Landau. Early chapters briefly contextualize this work for the reader. The writers begin with a brief history of the work which is followed by a list and brief definition each of the Viewpoints as well as by a description of the practice of Composition, “a method of creating new work” that one can employ after gaining an understanding of Viewpoints (12). Finally, the book discusses the role of Viewpoints and Composition as an alternative to traditional actor training methods in the United States and the value that the authors feel that it has to the contemporary theatre in general. Like the other artists included in this study, Bogart and Landau write from the perspective of pioneers moving against a tide of realism in acting.

“How to Begin” provides an introduction essential to Viewpoints’ concepts from a practical point of view. Initial practical concerns to consider before delving into the work include the need for open space to work in free of furniture and obstacles, bare feet to keep from slipping, and if, possible, a wood sprung floor. Active warm-ups are suggested to prepare physically for the array of actions that will be explored, from running to quick changes of direction initiated from various parts of the body. In order to cultivate an awareness of the group and the workspace the book also introduces the concept of Soft Focus. Soft Focus relies on peripheral vision and heightened responsiveness. Later in the training members of the group may be running, rapidly stopping, and changing directions making it important to always keep a sense of where everyone is and how they are working. An exercise that develops Soft Focus begins with the group walking throughout

the space. Participants choose a person within the space, without letting them know that they have been chosen. Each person keeps track of their chosen person by employing their peripheral vision and using Soft Focus rather than looking directly at that person the whole time. The challenge comes in keeping the person in one's field of vision without losing a sense of the whole group and oneself within that group. Bogart and Landau discuss the reversal of conventional focus that comes with a Soft Focus practice.

“The exercise asks us not to go *out* toward what we want, searching for prey, but rather, with *soft focus* to reverse our habitual directional focus and allow information to move *in* toward us [...] When the eyes, which tend to dominate the sense, are softened, the other senses are given equal value.”
[authors' emphases] (32)

Challenging the typical use of the senses helps build awareness.

An additional engagement with Soft Focus comes in the exercise Twelve/Six/Four, which enriches personal listening and improves group synchronization. In Twelve/Six/Four the entire group of participants begins walking or running in a circle together. Action options for the group involve: change of direction, jump, and stop. Bogart and Landau explain that the jump and stop can be introduced by an individual in the group; afterward, the group, without talking or signaling, must resume the walking or running as a group. The first option, the change of direction, needs to result from an entire group initiation. Eventually the exercise builds to the group doing twelve direction changes, six jumps, and four stops all at different points, but all in synchronization. Changes should be instantaneous and precise rather than languid and uncertain. Decisiveness and whole body listening are essential to this exercise. These and other introductory exercises begin asking

participants to engage all their senses completely, remain physically and psychologically responsive, and to give as much as they receive, all necessary for active engagement.

In introducing the individual Viewpoints Bogart and Landau begin with Time. For Bogart time is the substance from which theatre is made, “a sculptor has clay, a visual artist has paint, we have issues of time, so that’s what we’re molding” (SDCF interview 2015). An ability to distinguish between moments of time and changing the perception of one to another for an audience marks a skillful actor for Bogart, molding time while carving through space. Within Viewpoints, Time can be approached within the subcategories of Tempo, Duration, Kinesthetic Response, and Repetition.

Tempo specifically focuses on rate of speed. “In working on Tempo the focus is not on *what* the action is but on *how fast* or *how slow* the action is performed: awareness of speed” [authors’ emphases] (*The Viewpoints Book* 36). Performers might typically work in a medium pace, in other words the most comfortable rate of movement to them. When first working in Tempo, exploration of a range (in the case of tempo from the fast extreme to the slow) is vital to growth. Rather than judgment of the tempo that the actor tends toward, Viewpoints work asks participants for an awareness and subsequent consideration of further possibilities. While working the actor might find that he continually drops into a medium pace, when his focus moves away from Tempo. He therefore might need to find ways to engage in a variety of tempos.

If Tempo is the speed of Time then Duration is the length. Bogart and Landau suggest finding a constant action to perform while working in Duration. The key to the Duration work is not what precisely the action is, but rather how long the performer continues within that same action pattern. “As with in all the Viewpoints, we tend to live in

a *medium* area with Duration, a gray zone, in which things last a comfortable, average, seemingly coherent amount of time” (41). Duration work involves actions lasting for a very long time, or for too short of a time. Although these times are relative, the key is the comfort level. Challenge comes from engaging the in feeling of being in those uncomfortable durations.

In Kinesthetic Response attention is placed on the “spontaneous reaction to motion which occurs outside” of the actor (8). It is a sensory experience where an outside stimulus causes a physical effect. An example would be, when driving a bird flies straight toward the car windshield and flies up and over the car at the last minute. The driver might duck in an instinctual effort to get out of the way of the object coming toward him. Logically, he knows he is inside of a car and that there is glass between him and the object. Also the aerodynamics of the car are likely to encourage the bird to fly up and over the windshield. However, his instinctual, physical response was to duck. At the time of the occurrence it served as his initial reaction. Attention to one’s kinesthetic responses provides valuable information to the actor about himself and his relationships to that which is around him.

Repetition in Viewpoints simply involves repeated action. Bogart and Landau list two classifications of repetition, internal (movement from within the performer’s own body) versus external (something that the performer experienced from outside herself) (9). Repetition involves the deepest level of interaction with the other Viewpoints in its investigation of movement as the repeats often include duration, tempo, shape, etc. It is important to remember that even though Kinesthetic Response and Repetition involve a level of shape, they fall under the Viewpoints of Time for Bogart and Landau, as Shape is it’s own category under the Viewpoints of Space. Therefore, in Viewpoints rather than

focusing on the physical articulation of the response or the repeated shape focus should remain on qualities of Time.

The Viewpoints of Space include Spatial Relationship, Architecture, Shape, Gesture, and Topography. Spatial Relationships reveal dynamics of a group of people. In general, when asking a group of students to form a circle they do so with even space between one another. An exception typically is the instructor, around whom students tend to leave extra space. The extra space indicates of a certain relationship between students and instructor that displays them as not equals. Whether purposeful or not the space between, or lack thereof, communicates information. Spatial Relationship gets explored through “grid” work in Viewpoints. Grid work serves as a exercise to engage with several Viewpoints individually or together. When first introduced to the grid participants begin to move as if the room were laid out in lines and intersections. Travel in straight lines and angles mark typical early exploration phases of the grid. At any point people cross one another’s paths and create visual relationships to one another. If in Architecture the actor explores the physical space and attributes of the space, then in Spatial Relationships she concentrates more on the space between people. While Viewpoints is training rather than performance, a study of connection and perception that comes with an exploration of physical proximity inevitably carries interpretative quality.

When introducing Shape, Bogart and Landau list different properties height, depth, and width, for example. They remark that in an introductory setting the tendency of those working might be to work at a safe neutral point. This is typically encouraged throughout the book as a way to understand one’s personal starting point. However, the authors list different properties to expand cognition and engagement with Shape in order to develop

the work. Exploration of any of the Viewpoints, when approached individually, moves between the macro and the micro. Inevitably when attention comes to one aspect, for instance personal curvilinear shape, the actor might lose sight of the entire group shape. Part of the training asks the actor to focus on his particular shape while keeping a sense of the whole and additionally finding the variations or levels of change that occur within the minutia of the detailed work.

Gesture and Shape, like many of the Viewpoints, are intrinsically connected. Shape is more than Gesture, but Gesture is always Shape, albeit moving Shape, but nonetheless Shape. *The Viewpoints Book* breaks Gesture down into two categories, Expressive and Behavioral. Bogart and Landau suggest starting with Expressive when approaching Gesture after already working in Shape. Two distinguishing characteristics help define Expressive Gesture. First, the movement consists of a beginning, middle, and end; second, thought or emotion informs the movement.

Topography is the final Viewpoint of Space. Other terms used to describe Topography include paths of travel or movement mapping. Most obviously seen in grid work, Topography consists of exploring the ways in which movement materializes on stage. Remove the linear grid construct and a personal topography can be mapped. Such literal pathways can be investigated through the imagery of having paint on the soles of the feet, as laid out in *The Viewpoints Book*. After traveling through the room the leftover paint would create a map of the routes explored on the floor. Heavy areas of paint would display the most frequented paths while single discernible prints would show the roads less traveled. The paint experiment would map out the horizontal movement across the floor and provide insight into the travel patterns of an actor; however, Topography also

examines all of the physical patterns that the three-dimensional body makes in Space including surface area, height, and depth. It is the culmination of the study of Space, physical pathways traveled by a moving body in response and relation to the people and objects that make up the room. In *The Viewpoints Book* the authors' point out that of necessity some attention should focus on the Viewpoint of Tempo while working on Topography as rate of speed affects the way in which the body moves through space.

The Viewpoints Book describes a plethora of exercises and ways to engage with the practice of this work from the perspectives of an actor rehearsing a play to those who work toward the devising of their own original work. Like the Laban work, Viewpoints is putting language to physical action and relationships on stage. The work translates best in physical interaction and/or observation. Below I continue the analysis of Bogart and SITI Company's engagement with the Viewpoints from the perspective of one of their Master Classes.

Viewpoints in Action

During the summer of 2015, in one of their many trips to conduct training outside of New York, SITI Company members Gian-Murray Gianino, an actor in the company and Leon Ingulsrud, one of the company's three artistic directors, traveled to Boise, Idaho to hold a one-week Master Class in Viewpoints and Suzuki at Boise State University. For the purposes of the training, each of the five days of the session was split into two halves. On the morning of the first day, training began with Suzuki Method and in the afternoon the focus of the work moved to Viewpoints. Every subsequent day they would switch which came in the morning and which one came in the afternoon. This balance of Suzuki and Viewpoints served as my initial introduction to both of these training systems.

Although *The Viewpoints Book* introduces Viewpoints with Time, the Viewpoints portion of the 2015 Master Class in Boise began with Space. Space, in the theatre world, often feels more concrete than time. The same can be said about the Viewpoints of Space, which consist of Shape, Gesture, Architecture, Spatial Relationship, and Topography. In introducing the group to Space, the instructors asked everyone to imagine themselves as points in space. Additionally, they asked the group to consider the entire room in which we were working as being a series of possible points of location. If viewed from above, any onlookers looking down at the group would discern a certain group shape. Consequently, as each person stood there his or her body created a specific shape. Attention became focused on the shapes of individuals, as well as of the overall shape of the group. Consideration without judgment was brought to these shapes made up of lines, curves, or a mixture of both. The experiment had begun. Instructors encouraged an exploration of different types of physical shapes. Evolution of shape, traveling shapes, and group shapes were all explored.

The SITI instructors conducted an exploration of Shape similar to Overlie's listed above. Participants moved around the room, if instinct led the actor to stop, and create a shape she could do so. However, instructors began introducing the language of being interested versus being interesting. Since Viewpoints has an open-ended nature it is easy to feel uncertain of how to approach the training. Instructors encouraged the group to be curious and find inspiration within what was happening around us rather than simply working alone to produce something. Being interested versus interesting is fundamental to Viewpoints. Participants could choose to follow an impulse, or not. If someone came into a shape, or posture of some kind, others could observe that and be informed and inspired by

it. If the observing actor felt inspired she could create a physical shape with the actor who inspired her. The group had been instructed that if this happened, both participants should remain still together until the originator of the shape felt like moving, but upon moving that person should observe what they inspired. Eventually, one could no longer tell precisely who began the shapes as they turned into a series of responses and a collective ownership of the work commenced. However, it never felt like creating performance, but rather an experiment, a place to observe, to attempt, and to catalogue those experiences. At first the student might manufacture her movement exploration because she has been told that investigating Shape is part of the exercise. Reminders to be interested in what others do and to respond worked the group toward a physical conversation with focus on letting Shape inspire and grow.

Using the imagery of a space purposely created to be scrutinizingly explored, the instructors introduced Viewpoints of Architecture and Spatial Relationship. On the first day of the Master Class the instructors informed the participants that we would be going to an art installation on campus as part of the work. They prepared us by explaining how the nearby installation would serve as the perfect training ground because of the specific planning of the project. An impressive budget afforded the artist the ability to create without reservation. The group was led out into the hall of the building in which the workshop was taking place. Once everyone was out of the room, instructors looped the participants around and began making their way back into the very room that the group had just vacated. As participants slowly filed back into the room, we were asked to remain open and observant to the remarkable experience the group was being afforded and to take in all that the installation had to offer. Participants explored the room they had spent

several hours in that morning with new alertness and consideration. Details of a room often become dulled by a sense of commonplaceness.

After almost two months of a semester teaching undergraduate students in Acting I at the University of Colorado Boulder, I tried this exercise. I explained to my students that we would be taking a field trip to an art installation that had just be set up in the Theatre Building. Using a similar description to the one the instructors gave the participants of the Boise Master Class, I prepared them to leave the room that we had been working in for the entire semester to enter a space ripe for exploration and discovery. At first the Acting I students were disappointed that they were led back into their “boring” classroom. However, with a little imaginative goading they began to investigate their “ordinary” space. A piece of tape high on one wall with a bit of colorful papier-mâché attached made one student question, what had been celebrated in the room? One student laid on the floor staring up at the ceiling and commented on the squares of thin, black felt that were evenly spaced out on the painted black ceiling with large spaces in between. She pondered whether they were a poor attempt at soundproofing between this room and the room above. Another student became interested in a piece of rope coming out of a strip of grate in the wall. The rope had been painted the same color as the rest of the wall. The student wondered how long the rope had been there and why it would not be removed before someone attempted to paint the wall. He became invested and slightly emotional about the lack of care that had been taken. All of these features of the room had been there since before our first class. However, none of the students ever took the time to engage with the details of their workspace before. During a scene presentation a few weeks later, a student played a character remarking on the disarray of the house they were in. She pointed up to

the taped up papier-mâché on the wall referencing it as part of the mess. A simple result from the work, but nonetheless the first time acting students became more attuned to their surroundings.

During the Boise Master Class, interest in the space outside of ourselves was fostered through an exploration of the people with and literal environment in which we were working. Instructors turned our attention to how our inner lives manifest in our personal physical shape through Gesture. In an exercise to investigate Gesture, instructors asked the participants to form a circle facing outward, away from the other participants. They listed emotions such as elated, saddened, and revolted and asked everyone to turn around together and physicalize that emotion through Gesture. They commented on physical trends amongst the group. Sometimes the physicalization related back to personal preference and strengths. At other times it indicated cultural or societal ideas related to the given word. For example, the word grief tends to cause people to round their shoulders, and become more physically insular. Whereas someone might find a rounded shoulder attribute in all of their movement because it is part of their personal physical identity. Bogart and Landau explain that Expressive Gesture tends toward the more abstract, while Behavioral Gesture tends to be more tangible; however, both can come from personal habits or social custom.

It is important that as the group is led through generating a mass and variety of gestures [...] that they are pushed to do so quickly, without premeditation or judgment. Undoubtedly, what will emerge from this initial pool of gestures will be full of cliché and stereotype. That is not only ok, it is encouraged. It's important that we begin with exactly who we are, what we

think, what we preconceive, rather than some notion of who we *should* be and how we *should* think. (*The Viewpoints Book* 50)

Viewpoints training obliges the actor to get out of her own way. “Act before you can think” is an often quoted Bogart-ism. What is important to the explorative process is awareness and cataloging of the impulsive responses in order to recognize where they are coming from. This can turn into an effort to move beyond the habitual and discover the new. In order to expand her creative expressivity, an actor must first understand from where she begins.

Comfort creates patterns of movement. This can result in maintaining a medium pace while walking or changing shape at equal intervals while working. In the Shape work performed by the group during the Boise Master Class, SITI Company members leading the training guided the group by calling attention to various Viewpoints of Time as we worked. While the group explored Shape, instructors would bring attention to Duration, the idea of holding a shape for longer than feels necessary, or changing before feeling ready, for example. Participants were encouraged to become aware of the Duration of their movements or of their stillness, as the case may be. Those new to the training may feel as if they must continue to move, act, and do. Viewpoints training aims at helping the performer to discover physical and connective possibilities and as such requires allowance of instinct, rather than formulated plans.

Duration and Tempo are manifestations of movement in time. Spontaneous physical response to movement outside of oneself is Kinesthetic Response. For those just starting to explore Time, Kinesthetic Response functions as the initial reaction to what is happening around the actor. Just as grid work elucidates the Viewpoint of Topography, lane work

does the same for Kinesthetic Response. Like the lanes found in a swimming pool, participants in the training line up one per lane, creating lanes of about three or four feet in width keeps participants from hitting one another with any large movements. The length of the lanes needs enough depth for the participant to be able to run safely.

During the Boise Master Class four to five participants worked in lanes at one time. The instruction given was to respond to the movement of the others. Movement options included standing, jumping, running, laying down, stopping, and turning around, all explored in one's personal lane. We were not to cross into the lanes of others, as that becomes closer to the Open Viewpoints practice, which will be discussed below. Instructors encouraged participants to respond to the movement rather than manufacture movement. Limiting the action options encouraged deep exploration of a spectrum of opportunities of the Viewpoints, rather than focusing on creating action. At the beginning of the lane work, I felt the need to do something. However, Duration became a key aspect in lane work in order to move past the need to do and toward a place of pure response. The longer I worked in the lanes the more my movement became a series of responses to what the others were doing. After a while the planner in me quieted down. I needed a longer interval in the lane work to concentrate on responding rather than doing. Others also continued to respond to me and to one another. Once I began reacting to what was happening around me, I found myself experimenting with other Viewpoints like Tempo and Kinesthetic Response more naturally.

The lane work as described above, by design, encompasses all of the Viewpoints. The rate of speed in the movement can fluctuate, as can how long the different ingredients for movement are explored. As was discussed above action generates a physical reaction.

The lanes themselves are a mapable structure, as is the travel back and forth within the lanes. Fixed distance is a construct of the work; however, the distance between people fluctuates throughout the exercise adding a level of Kinesthetic Response and Spatial Relationship to the work. Gesture and Architecture play a less prominent role in the lane work, but the final Viewpoint of Repetition informs the exploration in the interaction with others.

Repetition relies greatly on each of the other Viewpoints as the recurring action must be based on something. In the lane work, the actor can repeat the action she has seen someone else do during the work, or she can repeat her own action. The exploration comes in the changes of the other Viewpoints within the repeated action. Fluctuations of speed and time spent performing action can completely change the sensation and impression of the original action. A method of advance Repetition study is laid out in *The Viewpoint's Book*, "repeat off two people instead of just one. Work with repetition of one person's *floor pattern* and another person's tempo" [authors' emphasis] (43). Repetition does not need to occur immediately, but can occur long after the initial observation of an action.

Composition is the next step after a student has been training in Viewpoints for an extended period of time. Although Viewpoints serves as a training approach, Composition employs Viewpoints training in an effort to begin creation of performance. There was not enough time for Composition in the five-day 2015 Master Class, in 2016 they have added two additional days to include a Composition component. Bogart and Landau devote Chapters 11-16 of *The Viewpoints Book* to introducing and elaborating on Composition and its various employments in making performance. They define composition as "the act of writing as a group, in time and space, using the language of the theatre" (137).

Composition can be used to engage with either a script or to generate an original work. Engaging with imagery, metaphor, and story, related to the piece being devised or rehearsed, are combined with experimentation, which includes approaching the work from another point of view while still conveying journey. The book elaborates on many different exercises and approaches to Composition; however, an essential element is that the group has a working knowledge of Viewpoints from which to build.

Open Viewpoints may seem similar to Composition, yet it does not have the same performance and story focus, although an observer might discern story from their own perception while watching Open Viewpoints. Open Viewpoints, as defined in *The Viewpoints Book* is “a freeform version of Viewpoints training, where floor patterns, such as the lane or grid are not predetermined” and goes on to explain that participants, “by employing extraordinary listening, generosity and artfulness, find a way to begin an improvisation using fully their Viewpoints training” (71). During an Open Viewpoints session, while engaging with all of the Viewpoints in conjunction with one another, there are a myriad of considerations as to whether or not habits are being indulged, if planning is occurring instead of spontaneity, and the ever present question of being interested vs. interesting. Guiding questions from the Boise Master Class address these issues and push the participant toward an attention to how they are working: What am I doing? Why am I doing it? What is the group doing? Why are we doing it? How are we responding to the space? How am I responding to the now? And am I adding something that is needed? Such questions are not easily answered when one begins in this work. Obsessing over the questions will not help the actor, but an honest engagement with them will help him become attuned with the range of opportunities available. All of these questions and

considerations show just how much guidance in the training is needed before an actor could engage in this kind of work on their own.

The above questions ask the performer to consider the impetus behind her choices in the deconstruction of the now and the where of her work. Viewpoints, like all of the other approaches studied in this dissertation, is not outcome based. On the use of the Viewpoints training SITI Company member Tom Nelis remarked:

The training, ultimately, gives you the freedom to know who you are on stage, freedom to have aesthetic choices, about how this thing might be better. You study those techniques for a while, and then you go outside of the company and do something, and you have the technique and wherewithal to go after ideas somebody throws out at you." (*Conversations with Anne* 498)

There is not a specific movement skill that one will gain from training in the Viewpoints. And while gaining self-awareness is a major aspect of the experimentation in the early stages of the training, in general SITI's Viewpoints training employs a physical exploration of theatrical aspects focused on ensemble cognizance. Overall, one can surmise that the examination of the aspects of performance known as Viewpoints requires the actor training in this approach to heighten his overall awareness and presence of himself and those with whom he works. Over time the student of Viewpoints should gain confidence in his ability to react and create spontaneously. SITI Company members foster this confidence in their encouraging approach to teaching. During the Master class Ingulsrud and Gianino took turns working as participants in the training. Both remarked on how they continue to find enlightenment and discover the new in the training as they engage as students.

Jeffrey Fracé – Viewpoints Beyond SITI

Traveling on tour with SITI Company involves not only regular training, but also learning to conduct workshops in the training of local performers. This experience fosters a depth of engagement and makes it a valuable teaching approach. Jeffrey Fracé studied with SITI Company Co-Artistic Directors Anne Bogart and Ellen Lauren in the MFA program at Columbia University in 1994. After graduating he continued to attend workshops and classes with SITI whenever he could. In 1998, as the company was about to go out on tour they lost an actor to another engagement and Fracé stepped in to fill the opening. This began a ten-year working relationship with SITI Company for him. When the University of Washington's School of Drama was looking for an artist in residence to teach Viewpoints and Suzuki, the outgoing instructor mentioned Fracé's name to the head of the acting program. "A few months in they said, why don't you apply for the tenure track Assistant Professor position?" (Fracé Personal Interview). Fracé declined, he had been sure he would return to New York at the end of the academic year. A few weeks later he decided to apply for the position on a whim and he got it. During the first week of their autumn quarter in 2015, I traveled to the University of Washington's School of Drama to observe Associate Professor Jeffrey Fracé's instruction of the first through third year MFA Acting and Directing students.

While Fracé occasionally teaches the undergraduate students, his teaching focuses on Acting classes for the MFA Acting and Directing Students in all three years of the program. Fracé teaches acting courses, many based in Suzuki and Viewpoints but he also teaches courses in Melodrama and Collaboration. He begins with the first year students by giving them a strong Viewpoints foundation, before introducing them to the Suzuki

Method. When asked about this choice to space out their introductions to the two rather than teaching them in conjunction, as they would be taught by SITI, he replied with a practical answer regarding preparing the students physically for the work.

They're just not conditioned to go straight into Suzuki. The other thing is that it's fun and it gets them playing together. And in a few weeks they can get the basic Viewpoints vocabulary, so that when we start doing introduction to Suzuki the Suzuki part will be painstaking, and intense, and slow and rigorous. And it will be so nice to go, "...and open viewpoints." Then the Viewpoints part of class doesn't have to be painstaking and slow. They have vocabulary, they just worked very hard at Suzuki and now they can have structured playtime. (Fracé Personal Interview)

Fracé recognizes the intensity of the Suzuki Method and has deviated from the SITI model of teaching both together each day in order to better serve the needs of his students. The group of artists who make up the SITI Company have worked with one another for years. New company members join and others leave, however, those who join have probably worked and trained with SITI Company in the past and are ready for the level of physical rigor required. A new group just getting to know one another and beginning this type of training might be better served to first become comfortable with one another and build confidence and strength before diving into the physically intense Suzuki work. Additionally, the vocabularies of both training systems are complex and to learn them in depth requires time. Introducing one at a time helps keep the students from getting overwhelmed in terminology and remain open to the physical exploration of the work.

On the first day of the quarter Fracé gave the students some of the history and context of Suzuki, Viewpoints, and SITI Company. “I like to tell the story, they get a story, they get a context, kind of like a mythology of what it all means” (Fracé Personal Interview). He stressed that he is not trying to make them into SITI Company actors; however, his belief in the value of the system means that he introduces the work in a fairly traditional way. On the second day of class he got the students up and moving with Viewpoints. He began class by laying down some ground rules for the students and their work with him throughout the quarter. These rules were simple:

1. Commit
2. Take care of yourself. You know where your body is at don't go to places where your body can't go. Take care of each other.
3. Work with an open heart

These basic rules summarize the heart of Fracé's approach to the training, openness and awareness. Rules one and three incorporate openness. Commitment requires sincerity, vulnerability, and an open attitude that anything can happen and a readiness to accept and participate. In improvisation training this is known as “yes and” and is vital to ensemble work. In agreeing the performer recognizes the validity of her ensemble members' contributions. The “and” signifies her own contribution to the work, rather than sitting passively allowing those around her to create without adding to the work. Rule two asks for awareness, a consciousness not only of how she acts and reacts, but also how others in the group are using themselves. This rule sets up a group responsibility for attention to care.

Having students at three different levels of experience complicates the training in some ways. For the second and third year students, the work will inevitably involve a level of repetition. Fracé asked the seasoned students to approach the work with a level of curiosity and discovery. While the first year students should focus on figuring out the work, second and third year students were encouraged to work with specificity and awareness. In most of the actor training workshops that I have attended for this dissertation the instructors pointed out the unique experience that comes with approaching the work for the first time. It may sound like an obvious statement, but an actor can never approach the training from this place again, and it should therefore be valued. However, these instructors also motivate those coming back to the work, to try to find that place of discovery, of finding something new in the work for themselves. Working in conjunction with students at different levels informs everyone. The newcomers can find comfort in observing more experienced students. The veteran students get reminded of their first exploration and the insight that comes from first approach. Mechanical repetition never serves the actor training, complacency stymies growth.

With an attention to the group's physical well being, Fracé asked the students to warm themselves up briefly before he led the group in a more structured warm-up exercise. His physical warm-up on the floor consisted mostly of students lying with their backs on the floor while allowing the legs to sweep consecutively one after another and from side to side, progressively energizing through the spine through a steady build of momentum. Eventually the build of momentum led to them briefly laying on a side before the legs, continuing their pattern, brought them to their other side. As the momentum continued eventually students rose into a seated position between leg swings and then

advanced to a squat before culminating in a standing position. Fracé and his students looked like ragdolls throughout the warm-up, letting their limbs loosely follow their core initiated movement. This type of warm up gives students the chance to begin by letting gravity take their weight as they work from the floor and as they progress they can become attuned to the sensations of taking their weight and giving it back to gravity, building a physical awareness unaddressed specifically by Viewpoints, weight and tension.

After leading the students through the floor warm-up, Fracé got them on their feet. Throughout all of the warm-up work, he introduced questions of groundedness to the students. “What does it mean to be truly connected to the floor, or earth?,” he rhetorically asked. Fracé laid a foundation of introductory concepts of physical awareness and grounding, without getting into the depth of the Suzuki Method and language. Rather than beginning with specific vocabularies, Fracé helped to make his students more kinesthetically aware.

In fact, the early vocabulary that he employed with the students had little to do with the Viewpoints either, although some of the exercises were based in the introductory Viewpoints work. As students briskly walked around the large, open, wooden-floored classroom, Fracé encouraged them to reach out and make contact with one another, without changing the other person’s course. Tangible interaction adds a level of physical awareness to the individual moving in a group. Fracé’s guidance of the working students involved helping them find physical ease and remove unnecessary tension. Reminders to the group included, “let your head float up,” “release the knees as you walk,” and “find your martini sit.” He explained that the term “martini sit” comes from a choreographer colleague and friend Pavel Zuštiak, founder and artistic director of the New York-based

performance company Palissimo. In the martini sit, “I’m always about to relax into my sofa with my martini,” (Fracé Personal Interview). Fracé expands the Viewpoints work by adding attention to how the body is being used, not with a focus on Time or Space per se, or from a place of judgment, but rather from personal standpoint in order to stay attuned with the group.

As Fracé added backward walking into the group work he noted that they would probably begin to bump into each other. He asked students to remain physically soft to keep from injuring one another during any collisions. Kinesthetic awareness training methods such as F.M. Alexander Technique and Feldenkrais train participants to keep from tensing when startled. Tension in the body creates muscle strain whereas ease allows for greater range and more flexibility of motion. Fracé urged students to think about softening down, going back to his earlier work on groundedness and floor connection, rather than tensing up. Add Soft Focus to this kinesthetic awareness and the students become active physical listeners, engaging with multiple senses to remain attentive physically. Fracé used the SITI Soft Focus exercise that asks students to focus on someone moving in the group, as was discussed above. The exercise expands and becomes challenging as it asks participants to continue to follow an added person. The field of vision must become wider to encompass multiple people in separate paths of movement. Eventually, the exercise asks participants to keep track of up to seven different people, which requires a well-developed Soft Focus practice.

A final warming of the group’s awareness, unique to Fracé’s introductory work with these students, was one of the simplest sounding statements he made that whole week. “In these exercises use your hands as hands. There is no form for the hands in Viewpoints, as

there is in Suzuki.” Fracé remarked, “if I use my hands as sensory organs, I have sight, I have hearing, and I have feeling.” Such an obvious statement when spoken; however, while in the work, it may not be as obvious to those who are trying to keep track of a slew of new principals and aspects of the training. At times Viewpoints focuses so deeply on the various aspects of Space and Time exploration that the new trainee can lose the sense of herself as a human being.

This was how he prepared the students for the Viewpoints and Suzuki work. After warming up and acquainting the students with concepts of Soft Focus and kinesthetic awareness, he worked with the groups in a grid. Fracé asked the third year students to remain on the floor and for the second and first to sit. Observation provides an enlightening experience when working in the Viewpoints. In the 2015 Boise Master Class, Instructors encouraged participants to take time to sit and observe the group working at various moments throughout a session. People typically focus differently when engaging in action as opposed to observing the same action. Observation can be a barometer to help the actor gauge his engagement without the immediate need to respond. Amongst Fracé’s MFA students, this served the additional purpose of acquainting the first year students with the work through physical observation, rather than verbally.

Instead of easing the students into the Viewpoints one at a time, Fracé allowed the new students to first experience them by diving in headfirst. During the third year students’ session he began by having them continue a personal warm-up on the grid. Fracé guided the group, not with constant remarks, but with well-timed input that marked him as one who has been engaging with this training for over a decade and knowledge of what it means to work with students at each stage of the three-year program. Eventually he

transitioned them from grid work into Open Viewpoints. With the third year students he gave the least guidance, reminding them of specific Viewpoints like Duration or Spatial Relationships when it was necessary. He reminded them that in the early stages of the transition from grid to open viewpoints that it was their laboratory. More than anything, during the third year work he turned to remark to the seated first and second year students asking them to notice how the third years were “warming up all of their tempos,” “expanding all of their possibilities,” and he urged them to “start to get the sense that everything is connected.”

Fracé’s guidance relates to the questions from the Boise Master Class: what am I doing, why am I doing it, what is the group doing, why are we doing it? More than just physical commitment to the training there needs to be psychological interaction as well that includes engagement with choices, not judgment, but honest consideration about the work being done. An actor could ask himself, “Am I doing this because I think it will look cool or am I trying to provide something that the group needs?” But what does the group need? The best way to learn is by developing awareness and whole body listening through the connection with the group in the training. Part of the training is simply developing that connection. Fracé also discussed the importance of precision when guiding the third year students. The more practiced student of Viewpoints should aim for exactitude and lack hesitancy in their responses.

With the second and first year students, Fracé’s guidance involved more direction and support, which the newer students needed. Remarks included, “try not to direct or question yourself”, “yes and”, and “what does the room need?”. In general the second year students needed more reminding that there were others in the room, not to get sucked into

their own personal exploration of the Viewpoints, but to work as an ensemble. While the first year students resorted to what Fracé refers to as Fascism. Fascism for Fracé consists of stomping, banging, yelling, and in general one person making themselves a leader of sorts and attempting to get the group to make something particular with them. Such Fascism typically develops from a place of fear or newness with the training rather than self-promotion or trying to be important. The ease that Fracé attempted to get the students to attain with their bodies during the warm-up is also needed with the mind in Viewpoints. Viewpoints at its best has an inquisitive, organic creative spirit to the work. Participants should remain openly aware of what the group does and what the group needs. Remaining attentive and engaged with the rhythms of Time and Space that are occurring with the group will help the individuals to know when the group needs change and what kind of change is necessary to continue in their group's explorative discovery.

Not all Viewpoints' explorations are a harmonious perfection of action and experiment. However, the more a group works together the more they can become attuned to the group's individual rhythms and dynamics and the more they all can expand the possibilities together. New students may have a difficult time turning off the need to manufacture, to do and to act. To overcome this fear they tend to overdo and over act, resulting in the Fascism that Fracé speaks of. Fracé ended the session with some overall advice for the next few weeks. "At this stage I'm way less interested in seeing you do cool things and I am way more interested in seeing you engage with what is specifically happening in the space. The reason your body is doing things is to be more aware of exactly what is happening in the room." Informed response creates the action.

The next time that these students would broach Viewpoints with Fracé would be through a more traditional approach, exploring one Viewpoint at a time, as he had learned from Bogart, Lauren, and the SITI Company. Fracé believes in a manner of instruction that teaches physically rather than verbally and allows the students to learn for themselves. That is not to say he doesn't speak to them or instruct. However, he tempers their physical experience of the training with guidance when needed. Fracé discussed his teaching method:

As opposed to telling an artist what to do, which creates a little copycat, just tell them what not to do. It's like pruning a plant as it grows. A plant will find it's way, but if it starts going this way clip it so it keeps going the right way, but it's doing the growing itself. So similarly, there's a lot of things I won't jump on right away when they are happening, but I'll notice them and they'll get notes in time. (Fracé Personal Interview)

Fracé employs the apt analogy of pruning to describe how he works with the students. This helps to clarify his choice to introduce Viewpoints work physically with grid work and Open Viewpoints before dividing them up and dissecting and investigating them one at a time. He allows the students to grow and make some of their own discoveries, which tend to be more powerful than being given information. Allowing students to make their own mistakes and detections can additionally inform him as to how each person is going to approach the work while providing insight on ways to help them grow as they continue to work and learn. Their work helps discern some of the issues that will only come up when engaging with Viewpoints.

When asked about his overall trajectory for the students Fracé replied, “a good awareness of the group, and then also some sense of the rigor” (Fracé Personal Interview). After the interview we conversed informally about the relationship of this training to acting and performance and how it fits in with scene study, script analysis, and other traditional types of theatre training methods. He and I have similar feelings on the subject. If actor training aims at developing dynamic presence onstage while engaging with the material, the other actors, and the audience then this type of practice is vital. After the student trains in Viewpoints over an extended period of time the practice evolves as a means of devising performance and engaging with text in the form of Composition. In a personal statement on his teaching Fracé further explains: “I do not accept the dichotomy of verbal versus corporeal expression. Speaking is a physical act; the body has intelligence. I am interested in a theater of multiple discursive elements, including physical movement.” Fracé provides his students not only a method of engaging in these multiple discursive elements, but also the means to create their own.

Fracé’s approach has not radically evolved from the work being done by SITI. He expanded some of the language and exercises to include concepts from his Modern Dance experience. Similarly, SITI continues to approach their training and work through lenses of other companies and styles that they encounter. During the 2015 Master Class instructors talked about a recent training exchange they had done in physical-based work with Double Edge Theatre in Ashfield, MA. In interviews Bogart mentions a partnership that formed with the Martha Graham Company in New York about five years ago. Unlike the other approach “originators” in this study, Bogart is a living, working artist whose style has been adopted by her company. SITI Company’s continued immersion in training, teaching, and

their perspective on the training as a developing process rather than a finished technique will continue to evolve and progress Viewpoints both within the SITI rehearsal room and through those who have learned from them. SITI Co-Artistic Director Leon Ingulsrud “encourages all SITI alumni to go on and create their own performance styles—‘We don’t want to make artists who make work that looks like ours,’ he says” (Smart n.p.). They introduce a new way of engaging with the art of acting; it is up to each student to decide what they will take away from the training.

One question that arises from the work: is Viewpoints more effective with a company or more ideal for those who consistently work together? Yes and no, but it surely helps to have that consistency in the training. Those working in Viewpoints must remain open to the new and the possibilities. Viewpoints work is benefitted by some comfortability amongst a group of practitioners. Viewpoints won’t be as helpful for students who don’t have the attitude: “I can try anything and fail comfortably in front of my co-actors.”

Conclusion

In identifying a Viewpoints pedagogy and language for this study I first would like to distinguish between the names of the individual Viewpoints and the informative language of the larger concepts that the work approaches. Categories such as: Duration, Shape, Gesture, etc. make up the language of the Viewpoints practice. Grid, lane work, and Open Viewpoints serve as forms or rules that the actor can employ and work with to approach and experiment with their bodies in Time and Space. However, I aim to dig beyond the categories and dissect the language of the pedagogy of Viewpoints, which revolves around interest, engagement, and response.

Leon Ingulsrud defined Viewpoints during the 2015 Boise Master class as, “the phenomenology of the deconstruction of performance in real time,” a complex, yet eloquent definition of the practice. Embodied experience and developed awareness exist at the core of the dissection of the now and where of performance titled Viewpoints. A Viewpoints-based pedagogy begins by challenging students to find **interest** and inspiration in everything around them. This interest is fostered through an exploration of the fabric of performance, which in Viewpoints is **Space** and **Time**. The physical interaction and dissection of the aspects that make up Space and Time requires focused attention and a devotion to curiosity of exploration. In the training the adept actor engages in the experience and responds with her entire being.

In *The Viewpoints Book*, Bogart and Landau discuss the strenuous effort involved in **whole body listening** and **response**. It takes a lot of energy and focus to process everything occurring around oneself, but this is required if the actor wants to fully engage. Listening with only the ears, gives an actor only the tools of hearing and text. Listening with all of the senses advances the possibilities for inspiration and response. To assist in the development of a high level of absorbing and reaction a **Soft Focus**, is suggested which relies on peripheral vision to keep the eyes open to everything rather than direct concentration. Additionally, Bogart and Landau place value on **self-awareness** and considering the form that one’s responses take, without judging the initial responses. When first approaching Viewpoints, self-awareness will be one of the major benefits to the new actor in the training. In addition to these types of listening Fracé adds a reminder of the **hands as hands**. His vocabulary includes concepts of body as another sensory organ, grounding down rather than startling up in collision, and ease within the limbs bolstered

by employing the martini sit. His additions bring attention to bodily tension and further develop kinesthetic awareness in his students.

As an actor approaches Viewpoints training, he will do so from a particular point of view and with certain comfortable tendencies and ways of engaging with each individual Viewpoint. Understanding one's neutral or starting point is an important part of the process that elucidates patterns of the self. Often in *The Viewpoints Book* a neutral mode of engaging with the Viewpoints is referred to as medium pace, medium height or medium speed for instance. However, the medium level of neutrality is simply a **pattern** of the actor's comfortable range. Extremes and nuances exist, but require discovery and experimentation if an actor wishes to move beyond personal patterns and find a range of responses.

All of this personal listening and response builds to a physical interaction with Time, Space, and body that employs the language of Viewpoints to investigate questions asked by the training: How am I responding to the space?, How am I responding to the now?, and What does the group need? In order to engage with these questions the actor must be processing everything around her. The answers are manifest in the environment. Action occurring around her leads her to reaction, or perhaps she responds to the lack of action. Everything whizzing by her at rapid pace for a long duration, might cause her to react with a contrasted deliberateness that changes the tempo. Or perhaps everyone in the group needs to be together in that rapid pace.

Heightened awareness of the group allows the performer to engage in the physical conversation that the group is having at that moment in that place. Developing the range of possibilities in each of the Viewpoints provides the artist with the independence to make

aesthetic choices in engaging with and creating performance. Such an **artistic independence** has been consciously developed into Viewpoints training from the empowerment that Overlie and Bogart both give to all parties involved in creating performance. For these women, actor, director, choreographer, designer are all equal partners in the collective ownership of the work they make together.

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I set out to compare the vocabulary and pedagogy of well-known movement-based actor training approaches. My aim: to discern a starting point for a movement-based performance language in order to facilitate discussion and analysis of movement on the theatrical stage amongst theatre students, educators, and audience members. I intended to answer the following questions: Where are the commonalities? Where are the differences? Where are the entry points? Is there common vocabulary existent in the myriad of movement-based actor training forms? Below I expound on the pedagogy and language of each approach in relation to one another and analyze each in the frame of these questions.

In each of the four body chapters, I explored a particular training approach beginning with the history and perspective of the person associated with the establishment of the particular approach. I followed the evolution of the pedagogy and language being taught by theatre artists working in that approach today. Chapter Two investigates Jerzy Grotowski's physical-based approach to actor training and explores it as a psychophysical approach. This chapter includes how the Grotowski-based exercises, language, and pedagogy taught and progressed by the practitioner-instructors at the Acrobatics of the Heart workshop reflect and promote a body, mind, and vocal unity. Chapter Three examines Etienne Decroux's corporeal mime and the balance of abstraction and recognizability when creating performance. It expands the conversation from the point of view of Daniel Stein, his time as a student with Decroux, and his Poetic Dynamics. Chapter Four considers Rudolf Laban's approach to Movement Analysis and employing that

language from the perspective of the audience observing and the artist creating movement. As well as from the instructor's perspective as I engage with how LMA was taught at the University of Colorado Boulder to performers, asking students to not only recognize their movement affinities, but challenging them to explore a spectrum of expressive possibilities. Finally, Chapter Five analyzes one of the most recently articulated movement approaches, the Viewpoints, and reflects on the language and pedagogy of this approach that is only beginning to be taught outside of those who originated it.

By comparing these four significant approaches to movement-based actor training I have been able to identify some of the chief commonalities of language and pedagogy. Although the approaches employ different vocabularies and exercises the core essences are similar. Each essentially aims for the student to: gain an enhanced understanding of the self, continual engagement in an effort to expand their range of physical expression, and to assist them in developing an approach to actor training that they can carry with them to create art no matter where they go and with whom they work. My findings haven't all been directly relatable to a movement analysis language. However, concepts that don't fit as easily into the language still provide valuable insight for new theatre students on the complexity of the performer's task of developing dynamic character and portraying clear story.

Commonalities of Language and Pedagogy

Below I identify twelve terms, which combine prevalent concepts from each of the approaches analyzed in this dissertation. These terms are not meant to essentialize the approaches nor are they the only important concepts from this work. I have chosen these particular terms as encompassing some of the major common ideas and pedagogy of all

four approaches, which would be valuable to the creation of a language of theatre movement analysis. The terms are Psychophysical, Time, Environment, Self-discovery, Structure, Focus, Awareness, Presence, Pattern, Impulse, Image, and Physical Listening. Psychophysical.

Each of the approaches demands engagement of the whole actor: voice, body, and mind, with equal importance. Mind affects the body and body affects the mind. Both are interchangeably agent and performer of action and reaction. Such terms as “physical-theatre” and even “movement-based” put an emphasis on the corporeal; however, most approaches that are categorized in these terms involve training exercises and focus on developing the entire actor. **Psychophysical** approach becomes a more accurate term to describe how these trainings function.

Environment & Time.

Each approach asks trainees to engage in a psychophysical exploration of environment and time through their particular language and exercises. I employ the term **environment** rather than space, as it covers the Viewpoints of Space and concepts like kinesphere and dynamosphere from Laban, while including people that the actor may come into contact with. **Time** or some variation of the concept is employed in all of the training approaches. Grotowski-based training deals with these concepts most indirectly of the four. Especially in early stages of Grotowski-based work the focus is on the body, and as the student works additional areas of focus outside of the self are added in; however, almost always from the perspective of the actor’s body. In Poetic Dynamics the exploration of Stein’s Three Rhythms: Tempo, Dynamics, and Architecture effectively involve different ways of interacting with time and environment. In Laban Movement Analysis, the student

explores space, effort, and shape. In Viewpoints the exploration revolves around of the Viewpoints of Time and Space. In different situations a person's perception of time and environment will affect her reaction. For that reason, the approaches acknowledge a range of possible ways to interact with their labeled categories of time and environment. These approaches all include language or exercises that address psychophysical awareness and engaging the body and mind in an exploration of self-discovery to grow that awareness and physical vocabulary. By cataloguing personal reactions to both self imposed changes and those changes that occur outside of oneself, the actor engages in a dynamic relationship with his reactions and choices, rather than passively allowing them to happen without noticing.

Self-discovery.

All four approaches included in this study employ training that engages the actor physically and mentally in a way that requires self-discovery. **Self-discovery** in actor training evolves into character choice on stage, creating a readable dynamic and texture of movement that can be analyzed in terms of time and environment. In Poetic Dynamics, Laban Movement Analysis, and Viewpoints that self-discovery comes through codified exploration of the elements that affect quality of action in relation to different factors, such as dynamics, weight, tempo, etc. Grotowski-based training demands the same self-discovery; however, the training focuses more on the internal reaction rather than an exploration of external factors. However, they all promote self-discovery through experimentation and exploration, rather than training technique or a prescribed movement style. Each approach asks the actor to find her natural reactions to the work and progress from that informed point of view.

Structure.

Whether referred to as **structure**, exercises, form or the work, each of the approaches employs a specific framework for the actors to engage with and use as a method of experimentation and a marker of growth. Each approach provides a set of guidelines that gives the actor something to work against. When analyzed it can inform both the actor and the instructor about areas needing improvement or added attention, not just on the part of the actor, but also within the organization of the approach itself.

Grotowski's Corporeals and Plastiques provide a framework that displays valuable information about the actor's physical stimuli. Opening the chest and pushing the shoulders back may make her feel exposed and therefore vulnerable while lifting the head and lengthening the neck may make her feel powerful. Within these physical explorations the actor reacts to her inner responses to her outer movement. The Grotowski exercise the motions helps actors get in harmony with one another through the act of a group achieving a common goal. Environment plays a factor in the motions work, but the form is so rigid that the information provided helps the actor understand how her physical form adjusts and reacts in a somewhat specific context, but does not have much room for exploration. A unique self-discovery feature of Grotowski-based training comes in the advancements made by Erica Fae.

There is no precedent amongst these training systems for the exercises Fae labels judge work. All of the approaches, in one way or another, discuss the issue of negative or unuseful self-critique of one's training or work. Typically the approaches ask students to focus on exploring and experimenting rather than judging; however, Fae's judge work is the only practice in the approaches included in this study that had particular structure to

engage with self-judgment as part of and enmeshed within the language and pedagogy of the approach. Bogart specifically says “stop thinking, just do” in regards to Viewpoints, but some students might need a practice to quiet their thinking, or to distinguish useful thoughts from destructive ones before they can engage with being interested and sincere in performance. Stein discusses the importance of understanding the impetus for one’s actions. He also acknowledges the balance needed between recognizing the impetus and obsessing over choices and the how of acting. However, no training or exercises specifically address finding such a balance. Fae has created language and engagement with an issue that few to discuss, but every actor must navigate. Her employment of Grotowski’s forms to engage with the observer, experiencer, and judge relationship provides insight into a common struggle and attempts to alleviate some of the problem through additional self-discovery and acceptance.

Decroux’s structure begins with the isolation exercises of his scales. Expressivity for Decroux requires complete control over each area of the body as individually as possible in order to create a range of physical potential. While his pedagogy speaks of the body of a gymnast, mind of an actor, and heart of a poet, the written remnants of exercises do not expressly focus on how to develop of that poetic mind. Stein’s Poetic Dynamics asks students to develop what he titles their “visual listening” skill by engaging in a study of rhythms. He combines the scale work with a connection to communication and perception. Stein’s framework introduces the possibilities of interpretations that come directly out of the isolation work. In the isolation exercises students might discover a new way of moving. Stein asks students to consider who moves this way? How that movement might be

interpreted? What are the ways to clarify and refine the movement for use in creation of character and storytelling?

Viewpoints and Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) though very different in many ways, in essence both employ a similar exploration of aspects of performance in their respective exercises. Bogart and Laban respectively created languages of movement exploration. In Viewpoints and LMA the structure is the aim. In a study of time, for instance, that is what the student investigates physically. The difference between the two exists in the depth of the structure. LMA focuses more on the aspects of the performing body, while Viewpoints interacts more with the aspects of performance in general. Laban's structure can be obtuse and doesn't always correlate immediately or concrete to performance therefore and can feel like exploration for exploration's sake at times. Viewpoints, having a relationship with Composition and having been refined by a director in conjunction with a company, has a built in transition from practice to stage within the framework. As stated at the end of the Viewpoints Chapter, a difficulty in that structure comes from it having been cultivated by a company. While the training could be partially investigated by a solo performer, she would likely miss much of the depth that has been built into the training for a group. Additionally, many of the exercises simply cannot be done solo.

None of these approaches are perfect or all encompassing. However, all of the approaches offer endless possibilities of self-development through training in service of honest, spontaneous reaction to time and environment by the body and mind. For ensembles working together the Viewpoints develop an understanding of group dynamic

through exercises focused on reactions spawned from external observation and interaction.

Focus.

An unexpected commonality of language that I found in each of the approaches was **focus**. In Laban Movement Analysis focus pertains to the whole body and the ability to physicalize levels of directness. Stein discusses a similar concept; however his focus has been articulated with an emphasis on metaphor and investigates the perception inherent in different focus choices. Leading with certain parts of the body have different interpretations. Decroux developed exercises that would allow isolation of parts of the body giving them a prominence of focus. Both approaches develop ability for focus of any and all parts of the body. Focus in Viewpoints and within Grotowski-based training functions as a visual technique to build awareness. Both specifically call for a similar form of soft focus, that is to take everything in at once rather than directing attention on something specific to the disadvantage of the rest. Grotowski's focus practices within the motions challenges the student to employ a soft gaze while focusing on the group and personal flow of movement simultaneously. The focus of the body and mind manifest in varied ways and display valuable information to both the actor and the audience. Different ways of engaging with focus expand the range of the senses beyond their common everyday use, leading to an enhanced awareness. That point is true to focus in each of the four approaches, a refined interaction with focus goes beyond typical ways of focusing in daily life. In fact, many of these terms are familiar such as: time, environment, focus; however, the way they are employed in the trainings challenges the actor's familiar relationship with these words both physically and mentally.

Awareness & Pattern.

Just as time, environment, and body connect in a way that makes it difficult to separate one from the other in discussion, the same can be said about awareness and pattern. Each of the approaches developed exercises and language that looks at **patterns** of movement sometimes called habits or instincts. **Awareness** of these habits and instincts becomes important to both what they are, as well as why they are there, and where they came from? An additional consideration: when are they useful and when do they cause inhibition? In some interpretations of Grotowski work his statement, “the body vanishes, burns, and the spectator sees only a series of visible impulses” (16) gets interpreted to mean that the actor must lose all habits. However, the training, as the Acrobats of the Heart instructors interpret it, is more concerned with an attention and investigation of habits. Instructors discussed using the “already” that state that the actor is in when he approaches any stage work. Sometimes this state might be fear. Fear can be unhelpful to the actor who needs to portray bravery onstage. The mindful actor acknowledges his initial state of fear, and learns to use or train the energy that comes with his fear into a productive physical action that supports his character’s state of being. Yet, this fear, if it manifests in reoccurring judgmental thoughts that block or inhibit an actor’s responses, must be eradicated. Concepts like “the already” provide added understanding and appreciation for the work and insight into the way actors approach character for students who typically do not consider this point of view.

Habitual physical use in Viewpoints often manifests in students adopting a neutral engagement with the work, or a medium pace. Patterns are comfortable and safe. Bogart and Landau in *The Viewpoints Book* acknowledge the need for the actor to begin with a

neutral approach to the work. However, they add the challenge and, indeed, the purpose of Viewpoints is to become aware and move beyond the medium Tempo or the equidistant Spatial Relationship, or whatever comfortable range of motion that is his go to, in order move beyond it and explore the range of possibilities of expression.

Indeed, not all patterns are useful, and some must be abandoned for the actor to be able to move beyond his everyday to find heightened expressivity. One of the main purposes for exploration of movement dynamics in Laban-based training is to cultivate a range of bodily expression. Laban's motion factors have a spectrum of extremes, and he stressed the nuances available along the span of that spectrum. Hankin and Randall urged students to become aware of their movement proclivities and subsequently develop a wide physical and verbal movement vocabulary rather than relying on the Laban terms in order to expand the expressive range available to them.

Stein creates an exception to how the term "pattern" is employed in his movement approach, Poetic Dynamics. Pattern occurs within Stein's rhythm of architecture and relates to the repetition and revision of an element within storytelling. For Stein, the recognizable element can be a fun reminder to the audience of a past moment. The balance of abstract (perpendicular) and recognizable (parallel) keeps the audience member engaged through doses of easy connection mixed with complex moments that need further consideration and analysis. Part of the key to Stein's pattern is the revision, not simply repetition. In storytelling, as in movement exploration, a pattern repeated too often becomes dull and loses its appeal. Nuance and renewal within repetition create new perspective on a developed theme. Awareness of pattern, through self-discovery in

personal movement and careful crafting in the case of story, provides the actor with a beneficial tool once an understanding of how to use pattern is developed.

Awareness does not solely relate to pattern. Awareness relates to the recognition and attention of the actor to his psychophysical state and relationship with environment and time in the service of growth. Self-discovery fails without awareness and cataloging of the myriad of details that come to the actor while working. Although they used different methods, Laban and Decroux were not dissimilar in their desires for artists to have a wide physical vocabulary to pull from. To achieve this, Decroux asked his students to first develop the range of motion of each body part individually. Having controlled isolation of the body and an understanding of the limits of the body through an employment of his scales provides another frame from which students can employ their body within a reaction or response. Decroux's distaste for nineteenth century pantomime and subsequent focus on subjective mime ties back to a desire for the performer to do rather than represent. Representation is artifice while reaction and response can hold the weight of truth, especially when born out of the awareness of physical listening.

Presence.

Two attributes essential to honest, spontaneous reaction are awareness and **presence**. In *Towards a Poor Theatre*, regarding presence, Grotowski remarks, when approaching the training it "is not just one's compulsory presence in the place of work, but physical readiness to create" (261) insinuating that presence moves beyond being in attendance and into an active state of motivation. Awareness directly feeds into presence. In Viewpoints terms, a performer who remains curious about her environment and the now of the situation is interested rather than trying to be interesting. If she engages all of

her senses in physical listening in order to absorb what is happening all around, her she will always have something to react to. Honest engagement and reaction, for many of the artists analyzed in this study, creates presence. Decroux's mentor, Copeau, devoted an essay to the need for combined presence of physical being and mental/emotional feeling. For both men, the present performer remained physically and mentally agile. Amongst the artists in this study, Laban is the exception when it comes to presence, as his work neither specifically addresses nor investigates this concept directly.

While the word gets bandied about quite often, the definition for what gives someone presence is less easy to articulate. In 2010, performance artist Marina Abramovic created a retrospective of her work at the Museum of Modern Art in New York titled, "The Artist is Present." In this work, she sat silently at table daily as one of the exhibits and visitors could sit with her and gaze into her eyes as she gazed back into theirs. She discusses presence, in the film documentary of the piece, as the ability to "empty" oneself in order to be one hundred percent mentally and physically in the here and now. Abramovic states, "it doesn't matter what work you're doing as an artist, the most important is from which state of mind you are doing what you're doing. And performance is all about state of mind." An active state of mind is key to Abramovic's idea of presence. This is also true of actor/director Joseph Chaikin's concept of the term. Chaikin asserts, "[t]he ultimate value of theatre is the confrontation of all the live bodies in the room with the mortality they share: the visceral confrontation with the reality that one is living now" (qtd. in Pasolli 83). For Chaikin, presence becomes a collision of performer and audience's shared realities and the emotional reactions that are communally held between the two groups; their shared reality includes the world outside of the performance space.

For the purposes of this study presence can be defined as the quality of alert awareness that the actor engages in in performance to create connection. The present actor is able not only to emotionally connect with the environment, but also is able to convey relationships with one's whole body. The fully "present" actor is able to make the audience connect in some way to the performance through the depth of a determined attentiveness to the environment.

Impulse & Image.

Reaction and response as discussed above can also be referred to in terms of **impulse**. As was discussed in the Grotowski-based training chapter, in neuroscience, impulse is defined as the potential for action. An impulse can come from within the body or from the environment outside of the body. Viewpoints actors who remain interested readily receive instinctual information from everything occurring around them that manifests in the form of reactions. Impulses bridge the physical to the psychological through image, or association. **Image**, association, and metaphor are all words aimed at the same concept: an actor's the psychological connection to the work. For Laban, expressivity is movement that contains an inner drive. Laban's vocabulary portrays its own image for each person who interacts with it, a mental connection to or relationship with that with which the person has made sensory contact. Initiation in Laban-based work looks at where a particular movement compulsion begins in the body as providing information about how it exists in the mind. Grotowski's association, Stein's metaphor, Laban's expressivity, and Bogart's Composition all rely on encouragement from the actor's imagination. The audience doesn't need to see an actor's precise mental imagery, but if there is none, then it likely will be obvious. As mental imagery manifests itself, the actor

may desire to respond in a particular way. For instance, an actor might follow the imagery physically, such as repeating circular motions of the torso and pelvis for the “stuck in a loop” imagery I experienced during the Acrobats of the Heart Intensive. Another option would be to block the imagery by not responding at all. An additional response would be to indulge an emotional urge. For instance, returning to the “stuck in a loop” imagery, being stuck might give one anxiety and cause the actor to have an impulse to cry and search for a way out of the imagined loop out of fear. Imagined circumstances inform various stage situations as the actor adds internal responses and reactions through an embodied display of impulses that are being experienced.

Physical Listening.

A common goal of these approaches is to help the performer develop her range of physical expression by engaging in a psychophysical analysis of time and environment in an effort to display her inner life through her body. She does this through an engagement of all the senses: eyes, ears, (potentially taste and smell), as well as feeling, not just with her hands but also with her entire body. Fracé’s additions of tension and ease into the Viewpoints language helped identify another level of physical awareness essential to the work. An actor needs to understand her relationship with tension, focus, and imagination when engaging in psychophysical training. All of these concepts help her to develop what I will label **physical listening**. However, physical listening goes beyond the performer on the stage. If employed by the active audience member physical listening provides visceral interpretation of the action that observed onstage. If all of the above vocabulary builds to a culmination, it is that of physical listening. Engaging all of the senses in an effort to engage with the fabric of performance is a concern for each of the teachers that I have examined.

Active imagination cultivated by regular training promotes the ability for spontaneous creation on stage. All of these training approaches feature preparation for devising performance or physical interpretation of text and character, inherent in the challenge that comes from continued self-discovery and growth of expressivity. Many of the originators and instructors believe in the agency of the actor as creator and encourage creation from impulse and imagery rather than from a reliance on the director or choreographer. Stein's Poetic Dynamics reminds actors, through language of perspective, to keep the audience in mind as they balance their imaginative crafting between the parallel and the perpendicular. This language of perspective keeps the story at the forefront. What story am I trying to tell? How am I trying to tell it? How does this change the story? These types of question relate to the questions asked by SITI Company within their training. How am I engaging with the now? How am I engaging with the group? Essential questions such as: How is the actor engaging with the story, the other actors, and the audience?; How does character become created and conveyed through the actor?; How is the story being told?; and What is the possibility of theatre?; are all being asked, if not by the originators of these approaches, at least by those instructors engaging with training based in their styles. These questions are not specific to "physical theatre" or "movement-based" actor training; they rather, are questions all artists should be asking themselves while creating and engaging with any form of performance. It is the engagement with questions such as these that continue to enliven and cultivate powerful performance and works of art.

Additional Pedagogical Commonalities.

Some contemporary practitioners believe in the necessity of fidelity in their respective movement approach and only doing the exercises as they were created by the originator. I consider this an odd concept given that all of the “originators” found inspiration and value in exercises and concepts that they borrowed and adapted, either directly or indirectly, from others. Influential forms and practices include yoga, modern dance, Eastern performance and ritual, societal movement, sports, etc. A study of Grotowski’s five phases gives insight into the evolution of an approach over time. His work began with a focus on building actor training exercises. He moved away from traditional performance methods during the middle phases in favor of research into ritual, cultural traditions, and the human condition from a non-performative perspective. And yet his final phase revisited actor training albeit with new insight, relationships, and connections from his work outside of traditional Western performance practice. It is unreasonable to require fidelity of approaches that have been so greatly informed by other structures and practices.

Theatre investigates the human condition, a fluid, evolving topic. An approach that analyzes and engages with that condition must change. These trainings do not have an end; there is nothing to perfect. The concept of perfection is antithetical to the work. Just as they require self-discovery of their participants, instructors must be open to the results of that self-discovery in order to remain relevant. Part of that discovery should lead the participant into her own version of the training. Departing from the teacher makes one her own teacher. What is the purpose of training if not to discover a personal way to create and grow one’s artistic approach? Similar to a ballerina who practices at the barre, or a musician who practices their scales, theatre artists should continue to tune their

instrument, physically, mentally, and vocally each day to grow their range and expressive capabilities with their own methods. Moreover, Grotowski, Decroux, Laban, and Bogart continue(d) to experiment and develop their approaches throughout their lives.

Every instructor (past and present) included in this study views their training as a laboratory. They also instill this point of view in their students. Jeffrey Fracé discussed this concept with his students at the University of Washington; they had some astute insight. “It’s interesting though to think of this as a lab. Rather than looking for specific answers, it’s about gathering information.” In order to grow, one cannot dwell on results and completion; these approaches require an attitude of life-long learning.

Many of the MFA students currently working with these instructors have teaching fellowships in which they serve as acting instructors for undergraduate acting classes. Students acquire an added depth of learning through engagement with the approach from the perspective of teaching. Teachers who remain open to their students’ perspectives will continue to grow through the fresh experience of the student. Grotowski trained his students to a point where they could start to lead the training – SITI Company has the same perspective. Stein, like those before him, lives the artist’s life and continues to challenge his students to question their creation of story. Laban wanted his work to focus on experiment and exploration. This manner of thinking continues in instructors like Hankin and Randall who employ exercises to develop a wide array of language and movement that moves beyond traditional Laban terms. They also asked students to develop exercises and warm-ups to teach the class and expand their students’ perspectives on how the work gets conveyed. Decroux employed home studio recordings for his own personal growth and continued engagement with Corporeal Mime. He also used public showings at his school to

raise the stakes for his actors and as education for the audience through an experience with the work in progress. This last goal points back to the question of how we are educating the audience today.

Pedagogy in Practice.

Each of these training approaches shares both similarities and differences. The best illustration of this can be seen through the lens of the pedagogies in practice. An exercise developed from the work at the Acrobats of the Heart intensive is one of impact and impulse. In the impact portion of the exercise three to four students form a group. One student begins in the middle of the group, closes his eyes, and moves at steady, fluid pace (not too fast). The other students in the group give resistance to the parts of the body being moved by the student in the middle, without impeding his progress. The point of the exercise is to feel tension and move against it, or work through it. For example, the student in the middle might begin to bend sideways at the hip, letting his left shoulder and chest slowly ease toward the floor. Within his group, the students around him then respond by providing pressure against those parts of the body that have initiated the movement. One student would lightly give physical resistance to his shoulder, another his rib cage, and the final student would find a way to give resistance to his bending leg. Again, the students give tension for the person in the middle to work against, they do not try to change the direction of the middle person's movement or stop him from moving. Outcomes of this work include: cataloguing one's response to physically working against tension, deeper kinesthetic relationship with group members, and added awareness to differences in each person's responses to tension. Each student takes a turn in the middle as the impact receiver, and each student takes several turns as the giver of impact. This type of work

requires communication from the students as to any past injuries or sensitive areas that they might have, in order for the students giving resistance are aware and help to keep them safe.

The second half of the exercise, impulse, begins much like the impact exploration. Students are grouped together, one begins in the middle with his eyes closed; however, this time he does not initiate movement. This time, the student in the middle remains still until he feels the physical impulse to move which will be given by physical contact of those in the group. One at a time, students will give the actor a quality of touch on a body part. The student in the middle will then respond physically to that quality of touch, or impulse to action. It is up to the student in the middle to immediately interpret the impulse into an action. There is no wrong response so long as it is the honest, natural reaction to the touch received. First time students learning these exercises will often add extra qualities and movements and need to be encouraged not to perform the touch, but simply to respond. In the impulse work, students gain knowledge not only about their own movement tendencies and ways of reacting, but also learn about one another's ways of moving, which can greatly inform ensemble work.

Applying the lens of each individual approach to the exercise can change the focused outcomes. For instance, Grotowski-based work may fit the exercise best, as that is the work the exercise developed out of. With a Grotowski lens the work focuses greatly on allowing the body to react honestly to the tension and impulses given. Whatever emotional state or imagery corresponds to the reaction should shine through the student in the middle. It becomes a study of reaction from this perspective and the challenge is honest display of impulse and reaction in the now of the moment.

From a Decrouxian lens the focus shifts to the body. Allowing the body to be that of a gymnast. That is not to say that the mind is not engaged; however, the Decroux scales work first toward isolation while engaging the imagination to fill the movement study further. Applying the Decroux scales to the impact and impulse exercise makes it a study of physical isolation against outside forces. Students continue to gain knowledge about their personal responses and with focused coaching can turn the work toward Stein's creation of character by reading into the relationships created through the changing body dynamics between group members. The challenge for the students in this work becomes filling those relationships psychophysically.

A concentration on effort within the impact and impulse exercise gives it a Laban lens. Most obviously, weight and force guide the impact exercise as students play with levels of tension given and received. Weight can continue to be explored in impulse through the quality of touch, as various lightness and strength of touch will likely evoke different physical response within the receiver. Shifting to a focus on time will change the students' perspectives bringing attention to duration of contact with one another. Moving from one effort action to another would challenge students to concentrate on the transition between efforts and how they typically move between them. While effort tendencies are worth exploring, so are the transitional patterns that one has, but is unaware of.

Adapting the impact and impulse exercise to Viewpoints presented me with the biggest challenge because I am fairly new to Viewpoints and have yet to move out of the comfort of the exercises that Bogart and Landau describe in their book and the SITI company teach. However, just as with a Laban lens, the exercise focuses on effort exploration. Specific Viewpoints can be explored through this exercise. With a class of 20

students for instance, the exercise becomes an observation tool. One group works at a time while the others observe and analyze the work. Additionally, because of the group nature of the work it lends itself well to ensemble building if the guidance turns to cataloging how others respond to the sensations of impact and impulse that one is giving.

By employing a single exercise and applying the lens of each different psychophysical approach to its structure, the actor in the training gets a myriad of ways to interact with psychophysical work. Each actor will respond to the lenses differently depending on his or her particular way of learning. Personally, I found that while training in one approach I would gain perspective on something I had been struggling with in another. After experiencing all four, the actor chooses to employ whichever approach speaks most clearly to her, or creates her own approach from an adaptation of several of them. Meanwhile, the student benefits from gaining kinesthetic awareness through the process of physical listening. Additionally, through self-discovery the student becomes more psychologically aware of her emotional and logical reactions and patterns through an engagement with image and impulse.

Implications of this Work

The further in time we get from traditional works, such as Ancient Greek Tragedy and Comedy, Shakespearean plays, and folk tales from all over the world, the more interpretation, reimagination, and contextualization gets applied to them. The same can be said about these modes of psychophysical actor training. Training progresses from the originator to students, who disseminate it to others through the lens of other trainings and experiences allowing it to grow and evolve and pull from that which others have found useful. Evolution and influx of influence, distillation, further clarification, and practical

application with contemporary instructors continuing beyond the originator furthers the pedagogy, practice, and languages of the approaches giving them worth beyond their origination and individual significance for those who aim to develop their own training approach based on knowledge from a variety of sources. All of this insight and knowledge additionally informs the undergraduate theatre student who wants to engage with performance on an analytical level.

Above, I discuss the application of this work in the practical classroom from the point of view of teaching a single exercise and changing the frame of the approach to explore the similarities and differences within the languages and pedagogies of these four approaches. However, a question that arises from any actor training approach is: how is that work translated to the rehearsal room for production work? Because most of this work is not goal oriented the transition is not always obvious or apparent in the training. Viewpoints translates to the rehearsal room most clearly in composition work. In a similar way, Stein's Poetic Dynamics exercise "The Waiting Room" asks students to consider the creation of story from the point of view of his three rhythms. Both of these approaches therefore are most easily transitioned into rehearsals for a devised piece. The Grotowski-based work, if focused on character building, can have a similar affect to the self-discovery that occurs within the actor. If working in the structure of a corporeal and plastique river from the perspective of the character Laura from Tennessee Williams' *Glass Menagerie*, the actor investigating the role can explore new physicality for herself through Laura's imagery of the glass menagerie within her movement, such as fragility and delicacy.

While working on an adaptation of Plautus' Roman Comedy *The Rope*, I employed Labanese language and techniques to help the undergraduate student actors explore

different options in creating the ridiculous archetype characters and finding physical comedy that was unique to each. We ran a particular scene once while exploring movement in any way the actors wanted. Then we ran it a second time, however, at different intervals I would call out “time” and the actors would change their relationship to time within the scene. Suddenly a contrast was created between characters, one languishing in time and another trying to speed the situation up. Adding an attention to dynamosphere and kinesphere and how characters moved through space would challenge the actors to move out of their habitual levels and patterns of movement. Employing these types of exercises early in the process helped student actors move beyond their own personal, typical movement patterns and begin consider the character’s movement as something outside of their own.

Examining psychophysical actor training approaches to discover a language applicable to the acting classroom has obvious applications and benefits, such as the ones listed above. However, I believe that this language and pedagogy is just as useful for the theatre appreciation student. Undergraduate students who do not major in theatre may feel intimidated by the task of analyzing and writing about the performances that they attend. As in my example at the beginning of the paper, when students were asked to attend Rennie Harris’ *Heaven*, a hip hop version of Stravinsky’s “The Rite of Spring,” many were excited to get to see a hip hop show for class. However, once they were given a writing assignment, their attitude changed. Students came to my office hours complaining that because there was no dialogue they didn’t know what to write about. They were unsure if they understood the story and the characters. One student told me he wasn’t smart enough to interpret this “artsy stuff.” They all had plenty to say about the show in

my office, but they feared writing their feelings down. Through discussion they came to understand that their visceral experiences and reactions to the movement was just as valid as an intellectual analysis of dialogue. If I had a language, such as the one that I have developed from this study, I could have given them more a focused way to physically listen to the performance and process their own responses through as observers of life. Additionally, if they had been able to experience some physical work for themselves, it would have deepened their understanding and appreciation for the work being done onstage. Life onstage is not just characters being portrayed, it is also the life of the actors living as these characters and living through these experiences viscerally with the audience, a powerful lesson for an undergraduate student in a theatre course.

Sometimes artists want the work to stand for itself; however, some audience members and students want more instruction. Balance becomes necessary. How are future theatregoers prepared to engage with performance as viewers, as future scholars, and as potential artists? Language being developed through the analysis here provides a guide for instructors and dramaturges. A language of physical listening and physical conversation already exists in these training approaches. Physically employing the language gives insight into how the action results from these relationships. This study affords a valuable platform for educators to engage in these conversations with their students. Just as acting students engaging with these psychophysical languages for the first time alters their perspectives on familiar terms and develops an understanding of the dynamic life of psychophysical work, so too will the audience member who engages with this language from the perspective of an informed observer.

Where do we go from here?

This study provides an initial endeavor in the development of a language for movement analysis and pedagogical approach to introduce movement analysis in the theatre appreciation type of classroom. However, to get a more complete picture of psychophysical actor training language I plan to expand the study to include at least four more prominent approaches. Further chapters to develop would include: Jacques Lecoq-based training, Vsevolod Meyerhold's Biomechanics, Tadashi Suzuki's Suzuki Method, and Loyd Williamson Technique.

Jacques Lecoq created an approach to actor training rooted in a modern mime technique from the turn of the century and in his experience learning Commedia dell'arte in Italy during the 1950s. Lecoq's work continues to be taught today at his school *L'École Internationale de Théâtre* in Paris, at Dell'Arte International School for Physical Theatre in California, and at colleges and universities throughout the United States.

Vsevolod Meyerhold's Biomechanics suffered from Soviet suppression after being characterized bourgeois by the Soviet government. Meyerhold became imprisoned under suspicious circumstances and was killed in 1940. As a result, the approach did not reach the United States until the 1990s. Proponents of Biomechanics, such as Boston Conservatory Professor Emerita Jane Baldwin, describe it as "a holistic approach to actor training—the integration of form and emotion" (186).

An obvious complimentary chapter to Viewpoints would be a chapter on Tadashi Suzuki Method, briefly mentioned in Chapter Five. Originally, I had considered combining Viewpoints and Suzuki Method into a single chapter. This, however, would do a disservice to both approaches. The form-based Suzuki Method's seeming opposition to the freeness

of Viewpoints creates complimentary, yet distinctive methodologies that deserve separate attention to pedagogy and language.

Finally, Lyod Williamson Technique, also known as The Physical Process of Communication in Acting, focuses on three stages of the physical process of acting: sensory contact, experience, and behavior. Although the name might not be as recognizable as some of the others Williamson Technique has gained momentum since the founding of the Actors Movement Studio in New York City in 1975.

The addition of these approaches to the language that I have already begun to identify in this study would serve as a comprehensive guide for the language of psychophysical performance and physical listening. A pedagogical approach for those using this study would be best to balance giving students both a kinesthetic learning experience with textual engagement creating an embodied analysis and kinesthetic empathy in new students of theatre.

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