CROSSPOINTS: TOWARD AN INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORK

FOR ACTOR TRAINING, REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE

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by Stephen Atkins

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# Crosspoints:

Toward an Integrative Framework for Actor training, Rehearsal

and Performance

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Stephen Atkins

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# Abstract

The range of actor training methods used in most conservatoire-style curricula are derived from dramatic text analysis methods pioneered by Constsntin Stanislavski. Predominant shifts in aesthetics such as those ushered forth by postmodernism, new technologies, hybrid arts and cross-cultural collaboration present new problems for the contemporary actor. The broadening of the field of performance suggests that dramatic acting techniques are not universally suited to the expanding horizon of practices.

This research extends a tributary of actor training that is generally related to Jerzy Grotowski's work. It uses the term "source" in a way that evokes Grotowski's Theatre of Sources but is not directly connected to it. This research also incorporates pedagogical and sociological theory to outline issues such as symbolic control and "legitimate" versus "avant-garde" cultural production.

This work is an exegesis describing the development of the Crosspoints, exaining how it was inspired by the Viewpoints. It documents the process of creating the method through stages of ideation, the invention of exercises and the design of an instructional model (the "pedagogising") of the approach.

Through situated practice-based research across multiple sites, exercises were imagined, metaphors and illustrations were created, workshops were taught, and a handbook was written (and illustrated). Accompanying this paper is a handbook intended for actors, directors and teachers. It is the artistic artifact of the process and instructs the reader on ways to incorporate Crosspoints with current acting pedagogy. It also suggests future investigations to extend the system.

# Foreword

This thesis and practice-led project is explicitly methodological in its orientation. It is intended to provide a "fly-on-the-wall" observation/documentation of a pedagogical process with less attention paid to its historical, political and social orientations. The Crosspoints acting system evolved from the conditions of practice. Sites of inquiry emerged, sometimes, as a surprise to the researcher. These often came about through teaching in a postsecondary acting course. At other times, hindsight, reflection on past creative activities and peer conversations provided data. This thesis writes into territories of pedagogy, sociology and philosophy; disciplines in which the researcher confesses to having only peripheral knowledge and understanding. The description of the research design cautiously outlines the nature of this project as having an interactional, often personal meaning-making process. This is for the benefit of readers from other disciplines who may be more accustomed to research starting from a clearer vision of a wholly engineered solution.

The reader will soon note that the literature review is constrained to books on canonical methods of actor training, seemingly eschewing current academic articles and journals. There is a reason for this. In theorising the Crosspoints and documenting the methods that arose, there was a need for bold simplicity to articulate the concrete practice. Comparative cultural and historical analyses have been temporarily set aside to focus the theoretical lens on the immediate pedagogical events and interactions between the learners in real-world encounters. It is whole-heartedly acknowledged that all cultural production occurs within a historical, social and political context. This is even more acutely recognised considering the issues of diversity, representation, and the mental wellness of actors with which actor training is highly fraught. A widely read article by Amy Steiger, *Whiteness, Patriarchy, and Resistance in Actor Training Texts: Reframing Acting Students as Embodied Critical Thinkers* (2019) highlights the centring of whiteness and the male cis-gendered cultural perspective and how acting/directing texts uncritically reinforce systemic racism and patriarchy.

These issues are not absent in the research. Being a white, LGBTQ2IA+ male, I have been subject to and unwittingly propagated the system under question. It is also my personal belief that before creating statements about these issues, there must be a period of silent *listening*. The Crosspoints system attempts to "drill down" to the layer of symbols and the arrangement of ideas that one might call the *substrate* of an acting system. In other words, the morphemes,

heuristics and shibboleths of acting. It is presented as an *offering* with which further enquiry and research may be taken up by those with a genuine and authentic perspective on the important issues. This has been done with the acknowledgement that there is hubris in claiming it as "the" system rather than "a" system.

Throughout this work, the nouns actor/performer and verbs acting/performing have been used interchangeably. The researcher acknowledges that these terms bear specific, significant and separate meanings in contemporary scholarship. In *Performance Studies*, Richard Schechner proposes that "performing onstage, performing in special social situations (public ceremonies, for example), and performing in everyday life are a continuum (2004, page 143). The reason for conflating the terms here is to subvert them as binary opposites and propose that the tensions between acting and performance may be relaxed to "play" in manner that could potentially give insight to the continuum rather than the opposing ends of the spectrum.

# Part 1: Introduction to the Research

This research project follows the development of a new training, rehearsal, and devising system for actors. It was, at the beginning of the research, provisionally titled the *Embodied Acting System*. In the course of the study, it was titled *Crosspoints: An Integrative Acting System*. Both names are used in this thesis.

The research is led by the notion that contributions to knowledge exist in the unstable but theoretically rich space between knowing and doing. It follows the reasoning that experience and curiosity exercised through a reflective framework will produce valid sources of knowledge. The project is situated in lived, personal experience and can be broadly described as participatory action research through reflective practice. "The situation talks back, the practitioner listens, and as he [*sic*] appreciates what he hears, he reframes the situation once again" (Schön 1983, pages 131–132). This framework for critical practice allows one to externalise practical knowledge and tacit "know-how" that may otherwise slip from view.

This kind of research is widely applied in training and professional development for teachers. I, the researcher, have been a teaching artist for 30 years in postsecondary and private studios, concentrating mostly on acting methods and physical training for the actor. I have also trained in several complimentary and/or contrasting methods including, The Viewpoints, Suzuki Actor Training, Practical Aesthetics, Meisner Technique and Meyerhold's Biomechanics. My early actor training was given to me by Dr. Marc Diamond, Penelope Stella and Linda Putnam, whose methods were inspired by Jerzy Grotowski, Joseph Chaikin and Richard Schechner.

My individual practice as an artist and a teacher, and the insights or biases it provides, is the basis for a reflective framework for questioning pedagogical assumptions, dominant ideologies (*i.e.* what is taken to be common sense) and latent hegemony *(i.e.* the actions and structures of power). This thesis places equal attention on the two subjects of study. On the one hand, it focuses on personal, practical knowledge gained through the structured reflection in professional practice. On the other, it records the emergent structures of the *Embodied Acting System*, which are abstracted and generalised from the practice to form a handbook for students and teachers.[1]

The research was conducted through classroom teaching, rehearsals, and workshops. However, because it was not part of the established curriculum of legacy acting methods,[2] it was subjected to "make-do" research design, using ad hoc frameworks for collecting data. This research documents the unsure "first steps" of a new approach gradually gaining substance and "voice" as it formed through more supportive and inclusive teaching contexts over time.

This research aims to balance the scholarly demands for precision and accountability with the practical needs of the actor, director and teacher. Hence there are two written components. One is this paper, an exegesis of the process that went into developing the *Embodied Acting*

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[1] At the core of writing the handbook is an ever-present reluctance to create *Doxa* or a dogmatic view of how the practice "should" be done. The handbook might easily be called a "playbook" of strategies, ideas and prompts for creative exploration.

[2] The term "legacy acting methods" is an umbrella term which generally refers to the canon of techniques considered to be essential, foundational knowledge in the majority of western academies. It is, admittedly, a very broad term failing to reflect the many differences and contours of each.

*System*. The second is a handbook for practitioners to incorporate the system into their own work. The two documents have complementary approaches and voices.

The exegesis (which you are now reading) contextualises and gives insight to the choices made while theorising the system. The writing here offers as transparent a view as possible on the contingent, unstable and improvised nature of data collection and their analysis in reiterative action cycles.

The handbook has a contrasting role, synthesising the research in instructional units. It is intended to inspire creative exploration, aimed at a general audience of practitioners. These may include performance practitioners and teachers, but may also include any combination of hybrid professions. The handbook "thrusts coherence" on the work in a way that effaces its intangible, situational qualities. There is a third process present in this research, that of actually designing the layout, graphics and order of points for the handbook. To give the reader as much insight on this as could be managed, the exegesis and handbook are linked by boxed text in italics (as seen below).

## Cross-references to the Handbook: How they are Formatted

Text blocks such as this one (with dashed-line borders) cross-reference the exegesis and the handbook. These were written after the final draft of the book to provide candid commentary on the final stages of the research. These notes were added to the exegesis at different stages during the writing of the handbook.

It is the reader's choice of how to progress through the two documents; sequentially or not. One is a patchwork of background, narratives and revelations tied to literature and theories. The other is a more sleek, refined product, intended to inspire enough confidence that a reader will risk trying the work out.

Following is an outline of how this system came to be and how it was influenced by my past training and current readings:

- the *Emblem* work of Penelope Stella[3], the *Source* work of Linda Putnam, and their influences including Jerzy Grotowski's exploration of *Physical Actions* (T. Richards 2003) and Tim McDonough's *Story, Sound and Shape Sense* (McDonough 2002),
- the *Viewpoints* theory created by Mary Overlie (Overlie 2016) and its adapted form(s) used worldwide, most notably Anne Bogart's and Tina Landau's *The Viewpoints Book* (Bogart and Landau 2005a), the work of SITI Company and Tectonic Theater's *Moment Work*.
- key concepts in sociological and pedagogical theories that have influenced the taxonomy and theory behind the *Embodied Acting System*
- the participation and feedback of participants, co-teachers and peers.

The use of the verb phrase *"how it came to be,"* above, is considered and intentional. The study has evolved in response to situational pressures, conversations with peers, participant input and happenstance. Donald Schön calls these situations *of practice*. He characterises them as "the complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflicts which are increasingly perceived as central to the world of professional practice" (Schön 1983, page 14). Situations of practice create the experiences that (re)form theory. Brad Haseman has

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[3] Emblems originated through Stella's extension of McDonough's work on "image scores."

extended this notion into a research paradigm he calls Performative Research. Haseman characterises it as "intrinsically experiential and comes to the fore when the researcher creates new artistic forms" (Haseman 2006, page 3).

Haseman further describes Performative Research as emerging from experiential starting points from which the practitioner dives in, allowing the practice to follow questions that flow from within the action of practice. Results are acknowledged as individual, idiosyncratic and local, but this form of research is not without consideration of broader applications and contexts (Haseman 2006, pages 3–5). The Performative Research process involves making disciplined frames of analysis through a phenomenological lens. It acknowledges that data and one could also say theory, may be encoded in ways that are different from, but not necessarily at odds with, quantitative and qualitative forms of data. Practice freights data as experiences, physical movements, gestures and ways of handling materials. It is often guided by intuition and feelings. These are in their most authentic state when caught in the act (*i.e.* performed).

## Researcher Background

The Pronoun "I"

Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln describe qualitative research, as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world" and uses a network of interpretive practices to collect empirical materials,[4] making the world visible (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, page 4). This is the crux of the "crisis of representation" and the struggle of researchers to locate their

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[4] These include field notes, interviews, life story, reflections, introspection and artifacts of creative practice.

subjects and themselves in their research and their reflexive texts. Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger observe that learning is a situated process of participation. Rather than seeing situatedness as a simple empirical attribute of activity, they propose a comprehensive understanding of the whole person and view the agent, activity and world as mutually constructed (Lave and Wenger 1991, page 33).

My position as researcher and participant is articulated by the pronoun "I" and possessive "my." These are used in this paper alongside more distancing third-person terms like "the researcher" or "the practitioner." This is intended to preserve the situational and contextual factors in the research and transparency about my positionality, history, biases, my position of power as an instructor and my aesthetics.  I am speaking from overlapping roles as the researcher, a constant participant and, at times, the subject.

## I Am A *Bricoleur*

I am best described by the term "*bricoleur*" and what I do is a "*bricolage*." *Bricolage* in the arts refers to a work constructed of diverse materials and found objects that are at hand. It defines a way of creating as well as the creators themselves (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, page 9). Central to the concept of bricolage is the absence of a wholly engineered solution. Instead, a solution is found by using "whatever happens to work" or "fit" at the time.

The term *bricoleur,* in ethnographic research, is attributed to Claude Levi-Strauss who uses it to define a thinking-and-doing researcher. A *bricoleur* will use "devious" methods compared to a craftsman, whose work is limited to predetermined tools and materials (Levi-Strauss 1966, pages 16–36). The *bricoleur* deviates, using logic of continuous trial and error. The solution could not have been preconceived, because each trial or addition may potentially

reorganise the whole structure. *Bricoleur* practitioners are also given the name "jack of all trades."[5]

My background in performance is a *bricolage* of different schools of thought, practice and methods. Like many performers and teachers, I draw upon multiple methods, metaphors and exercises simultaneously. These may deviate from the way I learned them and are often inflected in my unique way to meet the situation at hand. My relevant areas of knowledge are briefly listed at the end of this paper.

## I Am Biased Toward Learner-Centred Teaching

The "learner-centred" curriculum model focuses on the goals of the student. This approach has historically troubled or aggressively opposed the "knowledge-centred" approach which sees curriculum as the delivery of knowledge. It positions the learner as a receptacle of information. The knowledge-centred curriculum has been accused of freighting unhelpful attitudes towards learning,[6] whereas learner-centred approaches tend to be valorised in educational reform. A learner-centred curriculum model is geared toward creating incidental learning. That is, learning that is a result of an event or in pursuit of a goal rather than to memorise and comprehend concepts (or in the case of psychomotor skills, being competent

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[5] The idiom in its complete form is pejorative; "A jack of all trades, master of none." Denzin and Lincoln use the term more positively, suggesting that a person with a breadth of practical knowledge, armed with multiple theories and methods, makes for an effective researcher (2013, page 7). I would assume, as they are writing from an American perspective, that the term "Renaissance man" is a metaphor that does not work as effectively.

[6] Examples that come to mind are "sage on the stage" teaching and taking a deficit view of students, imagining them as "empty vessels" into which knowledge is poured.

with the mechanism of the skill)[7]. Learner-centred approaches also focus on the self-growth of the learner to follow learner interests and goals and evaluate success in ways that are learner-initiated and formative in nature[8]

Though it may seem that this model is essential to the training of an actor, and is often the idealised goal of a performing arts curriculum, it can be easy for a teacher or director to construct a knowledge-centred model. Such is the case when an expanding volume of content must be taught within a fixed span of time.[9] This is a pervasive issue in all disciplines and has been referred to as an "information explosion" precipitated by networked computer technology.[10]

Often called "content-overload," the annual increase of new material leads to student exhaustion and a race to a semester's finish line. There is less time for the integration of skills and reflection. In the case of my own teaching practice, I decided to confront this problem by making at least one class as integrative as possible.[11] This is where most of the early experimentation and creative work on the *Embodied Acting System* took place.

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[7] Memorisation, mechanistic competence and comprehension refer to lower-level learning goals defined by Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning in the psychomotor domain, modified by Simpson 1972 (Clark 1999).

[8] The bullet points are derived from Arthur Ellis's *Exemplars of Curriculum Theory* (2004, page 41).

[9] In the case of program cuts, content must be covered in a *decreased* span of time.

[10] A detailed discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of this paper. Broadly put, this situation has led to a branch of teaching practice that "curates" knowledge. Assessment strategies are shifting from measuring the performance of knowledge to assessing the student's ability to find, critically analyse and make appropriate use of information.

[11] This is greatly expanded upon in the section titled *Socialisation* where the first team-teaching experiments are outlined.

## My Provocation or "Gap Identification"

One of the first stages of a study of practice, according to Stefinee Pinnegar and Mary Lynn Hamilton, is "Provocation" which they define as a living contradiction, a puzzle or wondering about where we want to "be" in our practice. Provocation may come from the reading we do or from something we consider to be an issue and may "bump up against our ontological stance" gently or jarringly (Pinnegar and Hamilton 2009, loc. 2425).

Pinnegar and Hamilton acknowledge that practical knowledge is personal. It involves the past history of the practitioner as well as the constraints on the practice that emerge from the context itself-- and others in that context--to produce relational responses (Pinnegar and Hamilton 2009, loc. 716–718). The provocation that prevailed in this research arose from the significant reduction of Voice and Movement training in our curriculum. The consequences of this are outlined in the section titled *Socialisation*, where the first research activities are documented. With the dramatic reduction of training hours, and the race against time to teach "content," the primary concern of my practice was to resolve a value conflict. I had to reconcile teaching students a group of skills versus enabling processes to be developed from those skills.

Haseman describes practice-led research as stemming from enthusiasm, "something which is exciting, something which may be unruly, or indeed something which may be just becoming possible as new technology or networks allow (but of which they cannot be certain)" (Haseman 2006, page 3). These enthusiastic provocations may stem from overlapping, yet incongruous areas of knowledge.

During this study, I sought out situations where it was possible to model "learning to learn," relating new knowledge to past experience and self-development. What began as a need for a practical solution ("how do I teach so much 'stuff' in so little time?") developed into a new perspective on the structures of the curriculum ("do they need to be separate and sequentially scaffolded?"). The study evolved through responsive refinement that did not go unchallenged by peers and heads of faculty. The gap that this research aims to address is one of adaptability and exchange by proposing a more holistic, relational model of actor training. The desire is to create a method that aligns more closely with the values of 21$^{st}$-century teaching practices[12] while maintaining quality and rigour.

## My Biases Expressed Within a Practice-led Paradigm

Carole Gray summarises practice-led research as being initiated in practice, retaining the questions and problems that are formed by the needs of practice. She foregrounds the complexity of the researcher-practitioner role as a grey area between black and white dualities, embracing the tensions between "subjectivity versus objectivity, internal versus external, doing versus thinking and writing, intuition versus logic" (Gray 1996, page 7). These values, which may seem, in a postmodern world, to be outdated modernist reductions, are able to be integrated when difference is permitted to coexist. Above all, research and a practitioner's methods should be mutually supportive--one becoming an extension of the other--synthesised through critical dialogue.

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[12] 21st- century teaching practices are more fully outlined in Part 3 of this study.

It has been a primary goal that this research be a natural extension of practice, as much as the situation would allow. Care was taken to insert this research into the syllabus of existing studio classes without "shoehorning" and to preserve the learning goals of the students.

- The study was not artificially separated from the regular day-to-day practice.

- The experiments in the *Embodied Acting System* were used to support a learner's curiosity and questions of practice, not to achieve a predetermined research goal.

- Data consisted of "whatever arrived" through reflective conversation amongst participants.

This spirit of "covert" experimentation[13] motivated the work in ways that operated beyond the typical classroom case study or curriculum evaluation.

## Research Questions

The questions in this research are not hypothetical in a rationalist sense of the term. That is, they were not prefigured and subsequently proven or disproven through the actions of the study. Questions were formed at different times and with different priorities, allowing the research to have an open, reciprocal relationship to the emergent and evolving study.

### Research Question 1

Can the system provide actors with a means to synthesise their training and rehearsal methods from the various subject divisions in their education? If so, how? If not, why not?

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[13] To dispel any concerns regarding the ethics of human participation, all students were informed that we were exploring concepts from my research. They were also informed that their input and feedback would greatly help my publication and that feedback was optional.

## Research Question 2

Can the system be of service in giving actors a point of access to the expanded field of performance? Does it enable valency between acting methods and new technologies or new contexts such as interdisciplinary and intercultural exchange? If so, how? If not, why not?

## Research Question 3

Does the system incorporate and occupy "the present moment" that performance is in? That is, the post-structuralist, postmodern moment? If so, how? If not, why not?

## Research Question 4

Is the system modifiable? Does it enable the recasting of concepts into new constellations, forming new rehearsal methods, generative metaphors and individual questions of practice? If so, how? If not, why not?

## Research Question 5

Could actor training adopt the values and goals expressed by new models of the curriculum? Like many creative disciplines, actor training already enacts many of these in ways specific to the job of an actor. These learning activities may enhance the goals of other areas and disciplines. Is there a way to generalise these into learning objectives and assessment practices across the academy? If so, how? If not, why not?

This last item is a compound question and is ambitious in scope. It outlines some of the living contradictions of practice in the university setting. Even if it is not fully resolved or answered, it may provide incipient answers or engaging questions and frameworks for ongoing research.

# Methodology

Practising Toward a Solution

Brad Haseman observes that practitioner research in the arts "asserts the primacy of practice and insists that because creative practice is both ongoing and persistent; practitioner-researchers do not merely 'think' their way through or out of a problem, but rather they 'practise' to a resolution" (Nelson 2013, page 9).

Pierre Bourdieu suggests that practical logic is paradoxical, it is "caught up in 'the matter in hand', totally present *in the present* and in the practical functions that it finds there in the form of objective potentialities, practice excludes attention to itself (that is to the past). It is unaware of the principles that govern it and the possibilities they contain; it can only discover them by enacting them, unfolding them in time" (*Ibid*. 2013, page 92, italics added for clarity.).

This study takes the position that understanding and knowledge of practice are made knowable through intertwined avenues of understanding--experience, practice and theory. Polanyi (2009) suggests that experience is synonymous with tacit knowing which involves two terms; recognising a stimulus and responding to it. Knowledge becomes tacit when we focus on our response rather than the stimulus itself (Pinnegar and Hamilton 2009, loc. 517). To include this notion with practice-led research for teachers, Clandinin and Connelly (1988) combine Polanyi's notion of the tacit domain along with John Dewey's (1938) theory of

experience[14] and Joseph Schwab's (1978) idea of the practical.[15]  They call this network of concepts "personal practical knowledge." Personal practical knowledge encompasses and links professional experiences with personal ones. It acknowledges interactions with others and takes into account the formal and informal education that become practices in our work (Pinnegar and Hamilton 2009, loc. 592).

## Using a Reflective Framework

Placing attention on personal experience and practice involves making it noticeable through a reflective framework. Donald Schön calls this "reflection-in-action", which tends to continuously frame and reframe problems. "The process spirals through stages of appreciation, action, and reappreciation. The unique and uncertain situation comes to be understood through the attempt to change it, and changed through the attempt to understand it" (Schön 1983, page 132). This model prioritises the "unknown" as a valid starting point for creating a research problem. Planned and unplanned changes are given equal value because a practitioner's moves may also produce unintended changes which give the situation new meanings and new possibilities.

This study takes the view that theory, experience and practice are interrelated and they take priority differently as a situation changes. Theory may guide practice for long periods of time. At others, practice is better at guiding theory. Experience can be seen as a context for both (Pinnegar and Hamilton 2009, loc. 805).

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[14] Briefly, that all experiences are educative or "mis-educative" and they form a continuum of experience.

[15] The practical is an encompassing, inclusive view of education involving, not just curriculum, but curriculum within the interactions between learners, teachers, subject matters, and (sociocultural) milieux (Schwab 1978, pages 339–340, 366–368).

## Influenced by Grounded Theory

Practice-led Research carries a network of ontological, epistemological and methodological premises that create the practitioner's interpretive framework (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, page 26). Because practice is not devoid of personal history, local tensions and complexities unique to its site(s), documenting it requires "thick description" (Geertz 1973). In this case, a thick description is generated through the repetition of the developing process to teach the *Embodied Acting System* across several sites with various participants. Because of this, it has accumulated similarity and generalisability.

## Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices (S-STTEP)

The particular strain of Practice-led research employed here is Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices (S-STTEP). It was developed to delineate research from the perspective of the practitioner's own narrative of understanding. This places a large part of the study's activity in the arena of auto-ethnography and auto-phenomenology, which turns the work from a socially-oriented frame to an ontological one (Pinnegar and Hamilton 2009, loc. 199).

The term "self" in the S-STEP method can be misinterpreted as psychologically-oriented research of self. Even though S-STTEP is heavily focused on practitioner narrative, it does not obviate the social and political world. It nominates reflection on narrative as a way to improve practice because it is harmonious with it. Stefinee Pinnegar and Mary Lynne Hamilton (2009) are clear about how the "self" interacts with the research by stating that self-focus is not a privileged, centralised "I" with a stable point of view. It is characterised by concentrating "not [on] the *self* but the self and *other*" in the social context of practice (2009,

loc. 1773). It is an orientation that identifies the self as the initiator of the enquiry as well as how the self is positioned by students, institutions and colleagues. Producing trustworthy findings relies on the personal stakes and accountability that the practitioner accepts in service to the "others" in the practice. Using the term "self" marks publicly that the responsibility for both the findings and the enactment of improving practice through them lies squarely with the practitioner.

## Producing Trustworthy Findings

Trustworthiness is not claimed  but left to the reader to ascertain by finding the correlation between the research and the reader's (your) own world of practice. The research is intended to be a dialogue between your ontological values and mine. Pinnegar and Hamilton suggest that an ontological framework is preferred in order to focus on what is "real." That is to say, what really matters to you, the reader, as a practitioner and teacher (2009, loc. 249). To convey the complexity and dimensions of practice, the research relies on interactions and dialogues:

- with literature
- with colleagues, students and peers
- in the immediate present
- in the reconstructed memory of past interactions [16]

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[16] Adrian Holliday discusses data reconstruction. It is a process that draws peripheral data from fluid, informal situations such as a network of workplace conversations. While this certainly raises issues of representation, layering voices may also give the data more complexity and depth. Holliday cites a study (Wu 2002) of English language teachers' discourses in a Chinese university. The reconstruction of data was not invented but collaboratively constructed with the people involved. Wu calls these "stimulated recall discussions" (Holliday 2007, Loc. 2434).

S-STTEP synergises well with Grounded Theory by virtue of its phenomenological stance. Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss (1967) originally offered four standards for the assessment of grounded theory research. They correlate to the research questions articulated previously in Part 1 of this thesis:

1. The fit between the findings and the world the research purports to represent,

2. The workability of the findings,

3. The relevance of the analysis to key problems/issues,

4. And the modifiability of the grounded theory over time to accommodate the change.

Kathy Charmaz describes Grounded theory in ethnography as;

> [Giving] priority to the studied *phenomenon* or *process*—rather than to a description of a setting. Thus, from the beginnings of their fieldwork, grounded theory ethnographers study what is happening in the setting and make a *conceptual* rendering of these actions. A grounded theory ethnography likely moves across settings to gain more knowledge of the studied process (Charmaz 2014, page 22).

I have focused on this in order to make the reader aware of how the dispersed, widespread sites where data collection occurred are a benefit to the research rather than a detriment. The "casual" way in which data were encoded and analysed through repetitive practice produced a grounded "embodied" theory that was connected to my students and their immediate goals.

Norman K. Denzin has written about a similar journey whereby he "contorts" pure Grounded Theory. In his paper, *Coffee With Anselm*, Denzin narrates his own frustrations with the

method because the process of typing up field notes, making levels of codes, themes and matrices, produced a theory that was "no longer connected to the kids" (Denzin 2011, loc. 59). He eventually called his adaptation Interpretive Interactionism.

Denzin's adaptation preserves what a particular interactional moment means to its participants (including me, the researcher). The participant's ability to speak to moments like epiphany, discovery and crisis are preserved because of its biographical stance. I draw upon this to articulate the frame of this research within the domain of educational research. Normally, educational research calls upon longitudinal studies of a particular group of students in a particular social context. This is not that kind of research.

Instead, "sophisticated rigour," utilises diverse empirical situations and interpreted (self)narratives of lived experience (Denzin 2001, page 42). Data, in this sense, are "storifications" of workshop scenarios supported by photographs, questionnaires, peer reflection and participant feedback. They have been subdivided into key experiential units[17] in order to frame the "epiphanies" along the way.[18]

The prioritisation of an ontological lens in this research looks to story and storytelling to provide discourses. This is eventually converted into the "incomplete" story found in the handbook. It is a story in which the reader becomes the central character and the events of the narrative are reverse-engineered from the thorny, unstable, provisional conditions of the studio. The handbook is, in many ways, an illusion. However, it is a necessary one in order to

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[17] The research is represented as units of an action cycle. See Moving Into Themes (below) for a description of the SECI model of knowledge management.

[18] Denzin uses the term "epiphany" to describe an event that turns a life, or in this case a process, around. They are remembered interactional phenomena. Therefore, stories may be told about them (Denzin 2001, page 40).

lead a practitioner into the practice. One does not follow a direction that is not clearly indicated.

# Part 2: The Research

## Moving Into Themes

Structuring a discourse from the research activity has involved a move from a chronological treatment of the material to a thematic one. The themes I have chosen came from a conceptual model of action research that coincided with how I saw actor training from an early stage in the project.

### The SECI Model of Knowledge Management

SECI is a model of knowledge creation and management (Figure 1) developed by Ikujiro Nonaka (2008). The acronym stands for Socialisation, Externalisation, Combination and Internalisation. This arrangement of themes is intended by Nonaka to explain knowledge creation in a company by seeing it as a creative community of practice. SECI and the model of a creative, knowledge-generating company relates to actor training because of the collaborative and cross-disciplinary context in which performance is developed.

The SECI model is not an individualistic reflective framework. It is not the undertaking of a single practitioner to manage and distribute knowledge. The process of knowledge creation moves between individuals, throughout groups, and involves the whole organisation at different stages. The spiral in the diagram illustrates that the progression through the four stages is sequential and repeats time and time again.

- Tacit to Tacit (Socialisation) - Knowledge is transferred through experiences, in meetings, face-to-face. The exchange occurs between individuals.

- Tacit to Explicit (Externalisation) - Knowledge is expressed as metaphors and models, articulating concepts in ways that can be grasped. The exchange occurs between individuals, forming into a group.

- Explicit to Explicit (Combination) - Knowledge is refined into encoded models and documents. It can be taught to others in the organisation. The exchange occurs between groups within the organisation.

- Explicit to Tacit (Internalisation) - Knowledge becomes embodied. Its codes and models have become a "second nature." The knowledge goes from the organisation and its groups to the individual.

**TACIT** →      **TACIT**

**TACIT**

**SOCIALIZATION**
- Shared Experience
- Learn by imitation
- Master / Apprentice
- Empathy

**EXTERNALIZATION**
- Ideation / Writing
- Creating Metaphors
- Sharing ideas & concepts
- Articulation

**EXPLICIT**

**TACIT**

**INTERNALIZATION**
- Access to codified knowledge
- Performance
- Self managed learning
- Embodying

**COMBINATION**
- Sorting, refining
- Creating models
- Teaching exercises
- Connecting

**EXPLICIT**

**EXPLICIT**      **EXPLICIT**

LEGEND
i = individual
g = group
o = organization

Figure 1: SECI Model of Knowledge Management

Another compelling aspect of this model is its focus on the transitional movement from one domain to the other. Tacit and explicit knowledge are not discrete, fixed categories. The movement of knowledge into liminal states --tacit/explicit and explicit/tacit-- appeals strongly

to readings of movement in affect theory[19] and directs analysis to the dynamic processes of actor training.

According to Nonaka, Western business practices, "[have] a view of the organization as a machine for "information processing." According to this view, the only useful knowledge is formal and systematic--hard (read: quantifiable) data, codified procedures, universal principles" (2008, page 2). He suggests that "[t]he centrepiece of the Japanese approach is the recognition that creating new knowledge is not simply a matter of "processing" objective information. Rather, it depends on tapping the tacit and often highly subjective insights, intuitions, and hunches of individual employees" (2008, pages 6-7). Nonaka's ideas are geared toward product innovation in a corporate business environment, but the general concept overlaps significantly with the ambitions of the *Embodied Acting System*. Actors are often trained in specific methods, many of which have a formalised, systematic view of the knowledge they transmit. There is a stratified culture surrounding the concept of insights—who may have and express them and who may not—embedded in the hierarchical structure of the actor's workplace. These factors construct the actor's professional identity which is dependent on the insights of other artists to give it substance, *i.e.* an actor is not an actor without a director and a writer.

Actor training in most schools consists of teaching students to internalise encoded methods. Correlating this to the SECI model, much of the curriculum relies on Combination and Internalisation. This is the phase where knowledge is encoded, abstract and teachable to a group. The other two phases, Socialisation and Externalisation, involve ideating and developing new practices, innovating new, combinant knowledge.

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[19] Massumi's research on Affect Theory and movement figure prominently in later sections of this paper.

This research was predicated on a gap identification concerned with creative agency and identity of actors. It views these domains as under-represented by the methods of actor training. How do actors create new methods, not only for their development, but to meet new professional contexts? What processes can actors use to share and expand knowledge? How can teachers frame, develop and model processes that are process-enabling--*i.e.* meta-processes? These provocations emerged in the early stages of research.[20]

*Cross-reference: SECI and the Metaphor of "Tools"*

The handbook refers to "actors' tools" to highlight the concept of the SECI cycle in actor training. From a very early stage of this research, I was taken with the notion that actor training (as with most vocational educational models) is firmly seated in the Combination and Internalisation stages. Socialisation and Externalisation are what the master teachers did to create our methods. A primary goal of the first parts of the handbook is to set the reader's mind on the idea that Socialisation and Externalisation are tacit, unconscious, non-linear and metaphor-reliant, They provide frameworks for the artist to give form to their intuitive knowledge.

## Notes on Presentation

The four phases of the SECI model are used as headings for the remainder of this thesis. They organise the research into four categories, but the reader is encouraged to see these as

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[20] These questions are explored more fully below.

overlapping and relational. They did not occur chronologically and hold different levels of importance at different times during the research.

Any written study in qualitative research is removed from the social reality that was studied and the data that were collected. Clifford Geertz reminds us that "Anthropological writings are themselves interpretations [...] they are thus fictions; fictions, in the sense that they are 'something made', something fashioned'-" (Geertz 1973, page 15). There is a temptation to present data in as raw a state as possible, believing it to be closer to the reality of the setting. Adrian Holliday suggests that it is the researcher's job to organise and develop data into an explanation of the ideas behind the research, demonstrating how it is constructed, showing the workings of the research.

The goal in this part of the thesis is to create a dialogue between the data and what the researcher has seen (Holliday 2007, loc. 2075-2100). This research is discourse-centred and makes its claims knowing that there is no innocent voice that one can adopt to represent participants. It uses an "interpretive perspective" to preserve subjectivity and report "specific events and actual personal encounters rather than creating a composite typification" (Foley 1998, page 112).

Field notes, data and "through the mirror"[21] writings are interspersed throughout the analytic discourse. Broken underlining is used in the main text to link commentary to relevant excerpts from extracted data.

    Data from field notes appear indented in the same manner as long quotes. In cases where attention is being directed to part of an excerpt, broken underlining is used.

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[21] See the notes on data generation and collection, above.

This format is used in the upcoming section titled "Socialisation.".

## Socialisation

*Recap:* Socialisation is the phase of the SECI model where individuals share their tacit skills in informal settings. Skill and knowledge is transferred through the "doing" of them. Personal experience is shared and observation/imitation are the main modes of learning. Master/apprentice relationships are good examples of knowledge transfer in this domain. Knowledge moves from the tacit domain of one person to the tacit domain of the other.

When teachers do research, they are part of the setting and have intimate knowledge of it. However, there is a risk that over-familiarity could cause details to be overlooked. This highlights the researcher's role as a phenomenologist, making the familiar strange. The origin of the "strangeness" may come intrinsically, from questions within the practice, or extrinsically, from conditions that affect it.

In the case of my own work, "strangeness" involved a significant reduction of both the Voice and Movement classes due to a restructuring of the program. The situation described in these compiled notes encapsulates the situation and the "crisis" of practice that initiated this research.

> Both subjects (Voice and Movement) were combined into one class to be taught in a tight 2 hours and 40 minutes per week. It worked out to roughly 1 hour and 20 minutes per week for each of the two practices. This introduced two forms of pressure. One was a significant reduction in the content, causing me to choose which exercises and assignments were the most important (but to which students??! A generalised idea of a student I

invented in my mind?) The second was my own ability to "snap" between being a movement teacher and being a voice teacher.

Following is a list of observations that came out of this:

- I valued "content" and had to pick favourites.

- I had assembled a sequence of methods and practices that I felt would address all the "main concerns" students might have because some methods were great for one type of problem while others were better for another.

- Both syllabi, voice and movement, were quite developed and I saw it as "snapping" between two fixed ways of working.

The first versions of my condensed syllabus were not successful.

It was a grocery list of ingredients. I wanted my students to know about as many different approaches as possible so they at least had enough exposure to them. I wanted them to know enough to seek more training after graduating and have an idea of what to look for.

In my attempt to make the methods the jewel, I was teaching "about" them. I was aware that I was offering exposure to practices, but without enough depth. I felt my course had become "method salad," but hoped it was enough to inspire continued study elsewhere.

However, I quickly learned that there is little incentive to seek further training when one's first encounter with a method is not a "significant learning" experience.[22] The minimised time allotment did not allow me to develop effective significant learning strategies, leaving me only enough time to cover foundational knowledge and application. Doing only these few facets reduced the class activities to technical, procedural exercises.

Alternatively, I could attempt a more well-rounded experience if I "borrowed" from the other parts of the curriculum, teaching to meet the students' own questions of practice, as they were developing in their other classes. With the support of the students, we started to angle our training to these individual questions.

## Experiments in Team-Teaching

In the midst of this change, I had the opportunity to team-teach with an instructor of the Alexander Technique. This added another dimension, inviting a deeper "strangeness" to my work.[23] The experimental approach led to adapting my studio class and became an incipience of the *Embodied Acting System.*

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[22] Significant learning, according to Dee Fink (2003), is oriented to constructivism and designed to engage the student in multiple domains of interaction. These include Foundational Knowledge (identifying and remembering), Learning to Learn (inquiring about the subject and self-directed study) Application (skills, critical thinking and managing projects), Integration (connecting people, ideas and realms of life), Caring (developing new feelings interests and values) and The Human Dimension (learning about oneself and others).

[23] I am using the term "strangeness" in a positive way, not as a value judgement. Teaching with another instructor invites out-of-the-ordinary experiences to one's own practice and set way of doing things. Secondly, strangeness was invited to the work once I unburdened myself and the students of a singular, predetermined goal for the lesson.

Team-teaching projects happened over a span of 3 years from 2012 to 2015. My main teaching partner was Gabriella (Gaby) Minnes Brandes PhD, owner and principal teacher of the Alexander Technique Centre of Vancouver, B.C., Canada. I also taught less regularly with Raïna von Waldenburg, a former faculty member at New York University where she taught acting based on the work of Jerzy Grotowski at the Experimental Theatre Wing. The following is a reconstructed narrative of my work with Gaby.

We conducted each class from our fields of specialised knowledge with the intention that one teacher's approach would serve as an interpretive lens for the other's. Our class was Voice and Movement, taught to the Second-year students of Capilano University. We taught voicework based on Kristin Linklater's approach, blended with the practice of the Alexander Technique. Even though these areas of study seem almost ideally aligned, and Kristin Linklater herself has had significant experience with the Alexander Technique, Gaby and I discovered differences that enabled us to reframe and rework our knowledge.

In the first weeks of trying this out, I would have minor "panics" when we discovered something to contend. This might be something like an inconsistency between my part of the lesson and Gaby's. One example is lying on the floor in a semi-supine position. In Gaby's practice, she requires that a book is placed under the head. This is not done in the Linklater practice as I learned it. When Gaby explained how the book preserves the natural curve of the neck vertebrae and connects the neck to the whole back, I could see how laying directly on the floor distorts alignment. I felt, for a brief moment, as though I had been teaching it

"wrong." I soon realised that showing the discrepancy between practices was beneficial for the students and could enhance their learning experience by revealing the contingent qualities of all methods and techniques.

Our conversations and "class plans" evolved in front of the students, not in a behind-the-scenes manner. As we each explained our perspectives and ideations of what to do with our studio time, we were attempting to model reflective practice for the students. These first weeks enabled me to reframe my sense of responsibility, both to the knowledge and to the students. Was my responsibility to convey and "defend" the knowledge? Was it to follow the questions implicitly guided by the technique? Or was my responsibility to the living questions posed by the students and the other teacher's method?

As time passed, we shifted our focus from teaching methods in a procedural way to a more applied approach and in increasingly co-constructed and contingent ways. The Alexander Technique provided a means for students to notice and reflect upon change, no matter which discipline they were training in.[24]

My feelings of being beholden to a paradigm of training were products of my previous training. When our communication was changed from "transmission" to "discussion," the possibilities of integration, synthesis, challenge and support became possible. The logic of

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[24] This reflection on team teaching was co-written with Gabriella Minnes Brandes, PhD over several emails in June, 2019.

one approach, when used with another, produced a third, unpredicted explanation. The primary learning activity changed from acquiring skills and competence in a method of noticing, comparing, evaluating, and personalising. We wanted to avoid punctuating this experience. The class was not "over" but it continued into the rest of their training for the week because we formed specific questions to carry forward beyond the limited studio time.

Basil Bernstein's model of power and control is an example of the pedagogical stance we had developed. Bernstein explains that "power" and "control" are analytically distinct, operating on different levels. Power relations, he says, "create boundaries, legitimise boundaries, reproduce boundaries, between different categories of groups, gender, class, race, different categories of discourse, different categories of agents" (Bernstein 2000, page 4). They punctuate social space. On the other hand, control "establishes legitimate forms of communication appropriate to the different categories. Control carries the boundary relations of power and socialises individuals into these relationships" (Bernstein 2000, page 5).

Both words, power and control, are charged with negative connotations in a progressive educational setting. Much in the way of democratising education has happened since Bernstein wrote in 1996. However, these terms are deployed in a specific way, aimed at outlining the fundamental concern that differentiates Bernstein's views from others in the field. A substantial amount of pedagogical scholarship focuses on philosophies that orient teaching to learning processes. Bernstein suggests that these theories fail to make a distinction between that which is relayed, the content of a curriculum, and the relay, that is, the structures through which the curriculum is realised.

By widening the frame of reference, beyond the singular "scene" of the class, the story of the students' discoveries trailed off into other work in other rooms of the theatre program. We had developed a way to briefly escape the limitations of how our work "should" be communicated.

Bernstein views education as a specialised form of communication. His work outlines how the constituents of power and control form a pedagogical code. In brief, forms of knowledge create different pedagogies through the way they are communicated. He applies two identifiers to communication. These include the "framing" of communication between teachers and learners and the "classification" (Bernstein 2000, pages 5-13) of teacher and learner roles. Framing and classification can be weak or strong, yielding four categories of communication or "pedagogic codes."
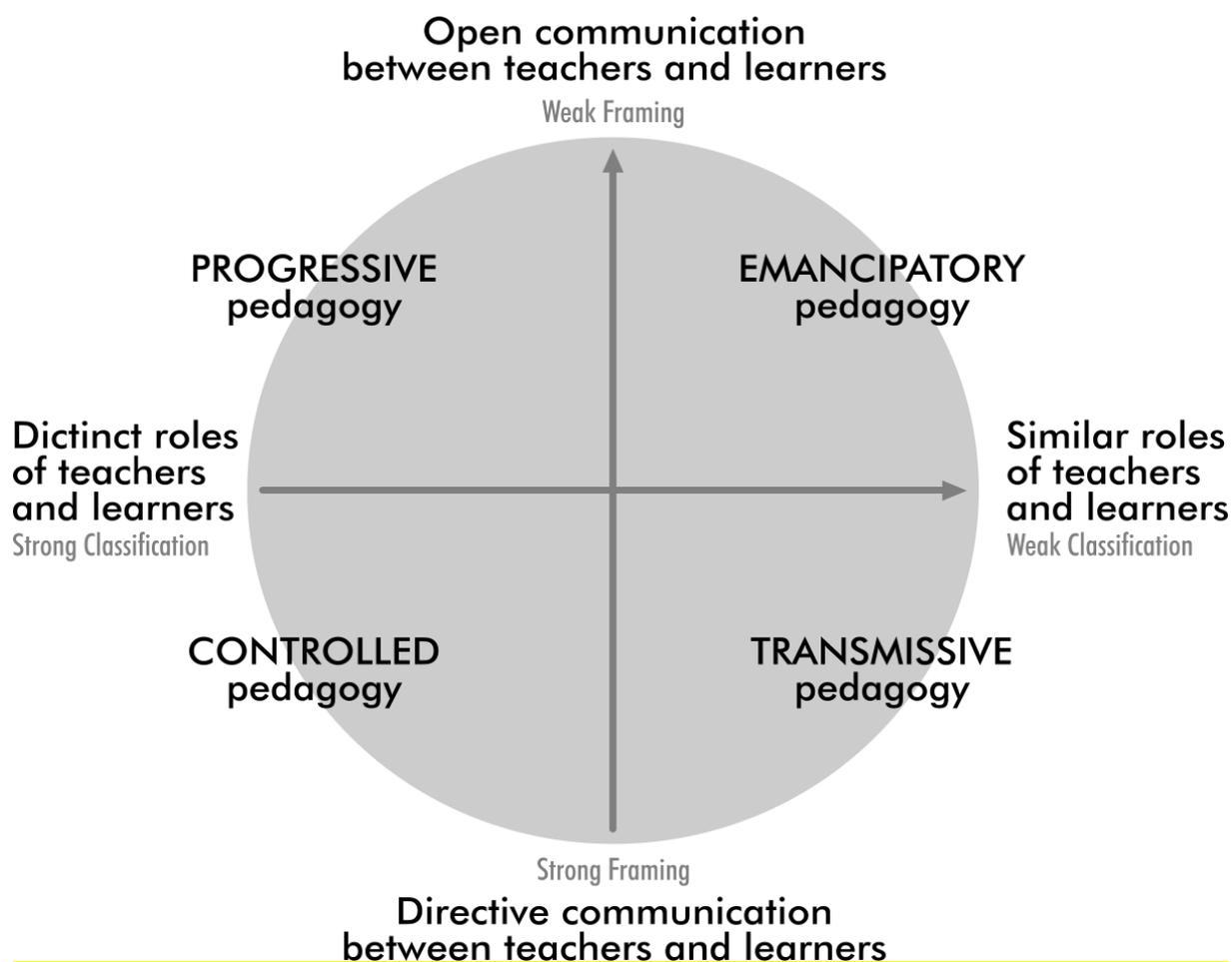
Figure 2: the pedagogical codes of Basil Bernstein,

This diagram depicts the pedagogical codes as they are constructed on two axes. The relationship between teacher and learner roles is on the horizontal axis. The manner of communication about the subject of study is shown on the vertical axis.[25] These have been related to genres of teaching and learning.

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[25] This figure was duplicated from Marsh, J., Kumpulainen, K., Nisha, B., Velicu, A., Blum-Ross, A., Hyatt, D., Jónsdóttir, S.R., Levy, R., Little, S., Marusteru, G., Ólafsdóttir, M.E., Sandvik, K., Scott, F., Thestrup, K., Arnseth, H.C., Dýrfjörð, K., Jornet, A., Kjartansdóttir, S.H., Pahl, K., Pétursdóttir, S. and Thorsteinsson, G. (2017) Makerspaces in the Early Years: A Literature Review. University of Sheffield: MakEY Project. July 2017.

Briefly, the definitions of the codes are:

- Controlled Pedagogy features strongly demarcated roles of teacher and learner, the subject divisions are strong. One is trained to think a certain way in a science class and another way in English class.

- Progressive Pedagogy features strongly demarcated roles of teacher and learner, the subject divisions are weak. Learning activities may be unified by ideas about how people learn.

- Transmissive Pedagogy features a weak separation between teacher and learner roles, the subject divisions are strong. The teacher assumes the role of a fellow learner in a specialised area of knowledge.

- Emancipatory Pedagogy features a weak separation between teacher and learner roles, the subject divisions are also weak. Teachers and learners work together to create learning across all subject areas.

(Jónsdóttir 2014)

While I identified strongly with the goals of Emancipatory Pedagogy on an idealistic level, it would be inaccurate for me to claim that I had fully assumed it in my practice. I was actually "all over the map." The class shifted from one code to another as the situation required. We had made framing and classification weak at times but fortified both when we felt it was necessary to convey the logic of the practice or offer insight from our area of speciality. We found this necessary whenever students expressed the need for more structure or clear instruction to proceed with their work.

Teaching in this way allowed us to distance ourselves from the implicit intentions of each exercise as a skill-learning activity and reconstruct it as a site of inquiry. We found that

students were beginning to take responsibility for their own learning and started to develop ways to generate significant learning experiences. We saw exercises as a method of self-enquiry and reflection that could produce alternate outcomes and became more audacious about how we blended learning activities. We might do an exercise focussing breath in the back ribs, combined with Suzuki Actor Training and Meisner's repetition. We would see greater leaps in the student's progress and integration of the knowledge than if we had kept the work separated by the frames of subject, time, and location.

Bernstein suggests that identifying pedagogic codes of classification and framing leads us to understand how they are put together. This forms something he calls the pedagogic device" (2000, pages 25-41). The pedagogic device is explained later in the thesis because it began to outline how Gaby and I communicated our class in relation to the "norm" which was far more strongly framed and classified. It led to identifying some of the tensions of practice.

## Tensions of Practice

While working on this project, it bears mentioning that the *Embodied Acting System* was inspired by tensions and obstacles that arise from training actors in a university setting. Subject division, what Bernstein calls "frames," is a prominent one. Another one is student assessment. Institutional policy, in some areas of practice, can rub against the goals of actor training depending on how assessment is framed. Both tensions arise from paradigms. Paradigms tend to determine what is thinkable and by extension, what can be assessed.

## The Silo Effect

"The Silo Effect" is a term used in teaching and learning scholarship to describe how knowledge and information are divided between the disciplines. On the level of an

organisation, it refers to the lack of flow between groups or parts of the organisation. The metaphor is one of the silos on a farm, preventing different grains from mixing.

According to the way actor training is organised on an institutional level, "acting classes" tend to be centralised while a second-class status is placed upon other facets of the discipline such as voice and movement training. They are often seen as tangential or in a supporting role, used as tools to "fix" bad habits, "neutralise" posture or "free up" physical inhibitions. Curriculum design in these subjects is given to take a deficit view of the untrained body, aims for culturally defined, idealised standards and often uses purely physical metaphors to explain and address psychophysical phenomena. There are many exponents of this curriculum, but one that epitomises it can be found in the opening chapters of *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*.

> "[T]o be in optimum condition to do a play, the actor must have a strong, clear, resonant voice. But developing this type of voice takes most people many years of training, of applying the will to working daily on effective vocal exercises. The actor knows he must develop a body that will do whatever is asked of it, but this again requires the discipline to exercise as well in the study of movement so that the body will become as strong, supple, and graceful as the physical constraints within which he was born (about which he can do nothing) will allow. The actor must look at himself honestly, which requires a great deal of bravery, and use his common sense to determine what his own shortcomings are."
>
> (Bruder 1986, page 4)

The impression left by this quote is that the body and voice are "tools" to assist an actor's expression. The voice and body are separate from the actor themselves and are meant to obey

or support the actor's performance when called upon. A counterpoint to this might see movement and voice as being central to the expression, not a peripheral operation, They, simply speaking, *are* expression. Admittedly, there are very real standards of performance that require dedicated psychomotor training. However, taking a purely utilitarian view of one's body and self tends to split the actor into parts. The actor is a puppeteer of body and voice,[26] potentially reducing what can be thought about acting to mechanical understandings.

Going back to Bernstein's model of pedagogic framing and classification, this perspective places acting in a vertical, hierarchical relationship with these other subjects. The framing is quite strong, with specialised communication, compartmentalising the actor's training experiences.

During the experimental team teaching, Gaby and I invited questions from the students. Their initial hesitation came from the attitudes adopted from the unquestioned frames which they had assumed. Our work proposed an alternative; that their voice and body were not tools of performance but were "they in performance."[27] We sought to challenge the tendency that reduces training to a set menu of mechanised routines and fixes.

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[26] The division between body and voice also bears scrutiny. Are they separate? Does voice not involve physical movement? Is physical expression silent?

[27] Gaby and I avoided referring to voice and movement as two separate things. It was a difficult habit to break as we would sometimes catch ourselves unconsciously breaking our own rules. Another thing we insisted on was to observe the tendency to say "my arm did…" or "my spine was…." These separations stopped participants from fully "owning" themselves. Our retort was, "Your arm and spine are *you*."

Pierre Bourdieu suggests that "It is not easy to speak of practice other than negatively--especially those aspects of practice that are seemingly most mechanical, most opposed to the logic of thought and discourse. All the automatic reflexes of 'thinking in couples' *[sic]* tends to exclude the idea that the pursuit of conscious goals, in whatever area, can presuppose a permanent dialectic between an organizing consciousness and automatic behaviours" (Bourdieu 1990, page 80).

Bourdieu's idea of a "theorising effect" addresses the heart of this issue. He suggests that the logic of practice is not that of the logician and to expect such is to "wring incoherence out of it or thrust a forced coherence upon it." When used non-reflexively, this assumed coherence creates a "poor" economic logic because the same schemes are applied to different logical universes. This may pass unnoticed if no one takes the trouble to record and compare the products of the application of the generative schemes (**Bourdieu 1990, page 87**).

As actors train, they adopt theories, they identify with them because they are more than a theory of doing, they often are theories of being, influencing the actor's phenomenological and ontological domains of thought and identity. Robert Gordon sees the actor's "performing identity has already been formed by the aesthetics they have "unself-consciously" [and uncritically] absorbed in training. Many books on acting aim to persuade the actor that there is one correct approach.[28] Gordon poses that "[a]sking a Strasberg-trained actor to perform in a Brechtian style is a bit like asking an American football player to adapt his particular physical skills to the demands of a game of tennis" (Gordon 2006, pages 2-3).

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[28] My addition of "and uncritically" in this quote is fully attributed to Gordon. He provides this elaboration in subsequent paragraphs. I have conflated the statements for brevity.

Our experimental team-teaching gave us an opportunity to activate several theories at once. Like a three-sided mirror, the multiple ways of seeing—and being—enabled us to address training from different theoretical perspectives at once. This would have been a vastly different experience with only one teacher and the informed use of a single theory, which is often the case in a standard university syllabus. This is largely due to the limitations that institutional policy places on the language of the course description, evaluation profiles and assessment activities.[29]

It goes without saying that students experience education differently than teachers and administrators do. There are many facets of the curriculum (read: forms of communication) that are not encapsulated in a syllabus, outline, or in the instructional hours of a class. These include such things as behaviours and implicit values modelled by the instructor, allocation of resources, time and space and the student's relationships with other students. For example, deciding to schedule a class on a Monday morning or a Friday afternoon affects the communication of that subject. While there are methods of "seeing" this through collecting, analysing and responding to data, they may be rarely used beyond the level of course content evaluation and instructor performance reports. Yet, they are just as significant to the experience of learning as the content is.

This became the subject of a parody film produced by my students about their lives as university theatre students. If given enough analytical attention, this film could easily be the topic of an entirely separate doctoral thesis, one based on a sociological analysis of theatre

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[29] Course design often enforces policies where no content may be repeated from one class to another, dividing and anatomising it in a way that dissevers it from its place in a whole practice. The different subjects interrelate, but the student often must work out how.

pedagogy in a specific site.[30] It is included as an example of framing and classification from a student perspective. The characters in the "mockumentary" are obviously exaggerated parodies, but they are also stereotypes[31] of instruction in a strongly framed curriculum. What can be taken from this is that, to the student, it seems as though different areas of the curriculum have different personalities.

Relating this idea to Bernstein's pedagogic device, he extends the concepts of framing and classification[32] into a description of the "pedagogising" of knowledge. It as a process with two tiers; acting on "macro" and "micro" levels. The macro level of pedagogy encompasses the policies and objectives of the institution. As with all areas of study in universities, acting is subject to institutional academic plans and what they have chosen to valorise.  This affects how knowledge is anatomised and assessed. The micro-level of pedagogy refers to the localised expression of the languages and identities projected from the macro level.

Bernstein created the pedagogic device to depict the interaction between official and local pedagogic identities. It enables the analysis of these interactions for change. The model can be applied to the micro, macro and macro-institutional levels of interaction, confining analysis to one level or including all of them (2000, page xii). The pedagogic device deconstructs

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[30] The "mockumentary" is titled *Caplandia* (https://youtu.be/gu7Ilo_trHM) and is a parody. While it is obviously distorted for entertainment value, it is also a product of reflection. It may be that fiction and comedy allow students to articulate views more clearly--if not satirically--than by more conventional data collection methods.

[31] I wish to use the word "stereotype" in the same way evoked by Anne Bogart's essay of the same name from *A Director Prepares* (2001). In the original French, a stereotype is a form of printing using a press. Copies were made from metal plates called stereotypes (2001, page 94). This is intended to draw attention away from the caricaturish portrayal of the teachers and focus on their role as embodiments of copied ideals.

[32] See "Experiments in Team-Teaching" above.

teaching practices to show that there is a difference between "what" is communicated and the structures that project "how" it is transformed and reproduced as it is communicated. Bernstein sees this as a hierarchy of three interrelated rules. These are:

- The Distributive Rule: This regulates who can distribute knowledge, what can be distributed to whom and the conditions under which this is done (2000, pages 28-31).

- The Recontextualising Rule: This regulates the "delocation," relocation and refocusing of knowledge as it moves from its original site of effectiveness. When it moves, it is ideologically transformed[33] (2000, pages 31-34).

- The Evaluative Rule: This regulates specific pedagogical practices such as accepted content, social (read: instructor-student) interactions and how they are organised in time and space (2000, pages 34-37).

These rules are hierarchical because evaluative rules are derived from recontextualisation, which is governed by the distributive rule.

Taking these concepts into consideration, the activities that Gaby and I introduced to our curriculum blurred the established device in two or more areas. First, the recontextualising of the knowledge was "softened" which permitted the students to apply their own context to a training method. Rather than claiming that certain content was acceptable or not acceptable in the class as per the distribution rule, students were invited to redistribute knowledge in new ways. For example, using Suzuki Actor Training to experience the connection to their back

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[33] Bernstein claims that no knowledge is transferred without creating a space for ideology to play. He states that, from this point of view, pedagogic discourses create imaginary subjects. He uses the term "imaginary" to distinguish between an activity unmediated by anything other than itself in its practice, compared to an activity where mediation is intrinsic to practice. In the case of the former, the original discourse is abstracted from its social base, position and power relations (Bernstein 2000, page 38).

ribs in an exercise that would have been normally framed as Linklater Voice training. Secondly, the interactions and use of time and space were less structured. Time and space were allotted to the investigation of problems rather than learning preconceived solutions to generalized problems.

> I cannot claim a generalisable result, but realise that a "braided" approach, blending both strong and weak frames and classification, would give the students time to refuel their reflective mindset on those days when they were low. In subsequent semesters, due to workload policies, I have taught alone. I now enter a class with two or more contingent plans. If the energy needed to inquire and reflect is low, I took up the slack with more structured activity. On other days, I followed the students.

Another significant underpinning theory emerging from the team-teaching experiment was constructivism. The constructivist theory is attributed to Jean Piaget (1926). The mind, according to a constructivist perspective, creates its contents through experience and shared experiences with others. This has played a significant role in educational reform, including L. Dee Fink's notion of significant learning experiences. Fink posits that interaction with other minds and creating the conditions for lived experience makes the creation and learning of knowledge possible. Our pedagogical discourse, in this context, focuses on creating experiences.

By contrast, another metaphor in education views education as "placing" knowledge objects into the mind or manipulating the knowledge that is already there. This viewpoint was dominant in the early to mid-20th-century pedagogy and sees the mind as a container of

knowledge objects. It is often viewed as being grounded in Taylorism, reflecting the educational goals of an industrial age.[34] The pedagogical discourse in this context is focused on the "delivery" of information. This perspective might well describe my own position prior to team-teaching with Gaby.

Carl Bereiter concedes that the two theories of mind can be agonising and frustrating to reconcile in practice. For example, the wisdom of keeping a teaching journal proposes "meaning-making, 'sciencing' and constructivism" while the wisdom of the teacher's staff lounge reinforces the idea that some things simply "must be taught." He suggests that even with the uptake of constructivist reform in education, it is difficult to model when teaching basic skills such as the multiplication table to children (Bereiter 2002, page 22). The notion of suprapersonal knowledge such as a "learning society" and "team-expertise" can seem unreal and difficult to measure objectively. Unless evaluation tools are built to incorporate the subjectivity of the evidence, it is easily degraded to something more easily managed. For example, a collaborative knowledge-building activity may degrade to a co-operative learning activity (Bereiter 2002, page 20).

Bereiter proposes a hybrid approach, negotiating effectively between individual learning on the one hand and seeing knowledge production as cultural goods on the other. He suggests that educational discourse may be structured to resemble the workings of research groups, investigating real questions to which the students contribute their group's progress. In the team-teaching experiments outlined previously, I came to a similar conclusion and moved my practice in ways that align with Bereiter's recommendations. This hybrid approach effectively

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[34] For a creative elaboration of this notion, see Robert Lake's *A Curriculum of Imagination in an Era of Standardization: An Imaginative Dialogue with Maxine Greene and Paulo Freire* (2013).

describes the target that Gaby and I ended with by the final days of our experimental teaching practice. Even though our students were writing individual reflective papers, the experiences they were writing about arose from their contributions to the group.

The lingering impression that I took away from the team-teaching experience was that being more flexible with framing and classification benefitted the learning experience. Combining training methods in "unorthodox"[35] ways allowed the different methods to have a co-causality that would not be conceivable if the activities are separated by hours or days in a class schedule.[36] However, critics of this method justifiably argue that the students may not acquire enough physical skill, i.e. strength of voice, "neutrality" of posture, precise articulation, *etc.* without discrete, vertical concentration on the subject of study. This is a tension that comes from a knowledge-centred, standards-oriented paradigm in training, one which can be overwhelmingly central to the university actor training experience.

## Paradigm

The "silo effect" mentioned earlier is one way of looking at how acting practice is compartmentalised in pedagogic discourse. Applying Bernstein's model enables us to see how various "sub-disciplines" of acting are framed as they are communicated. In this section,

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[35] The word "unorthodox" is used herein a specific way. Later in this thesis, Pierre Bourdieu's field theory is consulted to illustrate how "rules" affect professional knowledge. "Doxa" is Bourdieu's term for the "rules of play" and is related to terms such as "orthodoxy." This feature of field theory is discussed more substantially in an upcoming section.

[36] My inspiration for combining methods in this way came from training with SITI company. Their approach to Suzuki Actor Training and their version of The Viewpoints is motivated by the philosophy that the two methods have co-causal effects. Suzuki training strengthens Viewpoints and *vice versa*.

I would like to venture into how these create a prevalent pattern of thought and a standard of practice that has become the paradigm.

Paradigm is often defined as a grouping of concepts or a set of postulates that constitute legitimacy. We often discuss paradigms when we differentiate and compare categories of performance such as;

- traditional theatre *vs.* performance
- representational *vs.* presentational
- the legitimate *vs.* the avant-garde
- dramatic *vs.* postdramatic

Of these binaries, the one that has impacted the research the most is "dramatic *vs.* postdramatic." In fact, the initial research for the Embodied Acting System was titled *Postdramatic Actor training*.

The term "postdramatic theatre" was coined and deployed by Hans-Thies Lehmann, and has been used as an alternative to the ubiquitous term "postmodern theatre" which was generally applied to the performance that sought to rupture one or more traditionally dramatic unities (Lehmann 2006; Jürs-Munby et al. 2013; Carlson 2015). The postdramatic "seeks to secure for itself something 'primal' or 'direct' in the generation of meaning" (Jürs-Munby et al. 2013, section 127). Lehmann locates this new theatre within a simultaneous and multi-perspectival form of perceiving.

In the early stages of this research, one of my primary motivations was to reconcile the actor training I was reproducing in the classroom with new, provocative innovations in the field of

performance. Following is a "high-altitude" view of dualities that have been drawn in recent years:

Table 1: A high-altitude comparison of Traditional Theatre and the Postdramatic.

| TRADITIONAL THEATRE | THE POSTDRAMATIC |
| --- | --- |
| Unity (cause and effect) | Fragmentation (rupture) |
| Repeatability | Uniqueness |
| Globalisation | Localisation and the "Glocal" |
| Dialogue between characters | Dialogue with audience |
| Additive language in chorus-like monologue | Excitation/provocation of all senses |
| Voyeuristic separation | Active engagement |
| Text-centric | Text is subordinate to audience experience |
| Concentrates on plot | Concentrates on interaction |
| Actors in character (representational) | Performers performing (presentational) |
| One reading | Multiple readings |
| Homogeneity of style, unity, singularity | Heterogeneity of styles, disunity, plurality |
| Self-contained cosmos | Intertextual and hypertextual |
| Time is effaced by the text | Time is noticed/shared with the audience |
| Author-written and director-led | Collaboratively realized and devised |
| Single medium | Multimedia, intermedial |

This table is assembled from various sources (Auslander 2005; Auslander 2008; Turner 1974; Etchells; Hamilton 2008; Jürs-Munby et al. 2013; Lehmann 2006; Phelan 1999; Schechner 2004; Schechner 2013 and Wilkie 2002).

Once performed, the dualities between tradition and the postdramatic invite slippage. For example, the construction of representation is born equally by its audience. There are performance genres that readily defy or "rattle" what Jacques Rancière calls the spectator's

feigning of ignorance[37] (2011, page 2) if even for a moment in an otherwise realistic piece. Some performance operates in a domain of sensation and physicality intended to disrupt linguistic sensibilities. This is foregrounded in Antonin Artaud's concept of "theatre of cruelty" (1994; 2001). Lehmann's postdramatic also incorporates Jean-François Lyotard's concept of an energetic theatre of "forces, intensities and present affects" (Lehmann 2006, pages 37-38) which operate in a state of indeterminate meaning beyond representation.

This comparison envisions a theatre that challenges the paradigms of actor training. It does not rely so much on an audience's capacity to follow dialogue consciously but to allow the elements of performance to influence them subconsciously, in a manner similar to film's.[38] Similar types of affect may also be found in musical theatre, popular entertainment and circus. The theatre games of Viola Spolin (1963) advocate the spontaneity of play as a way of circumventing the dominance of plot, and the theatre of Augusto Boal (1985) engages audiences in ways that de-centre single-perspective text to create layered, counter-hegemonic discourses.[39] These are ways of upturning the logo-centricity of performance.

The reason why I became so enamoured with the relationship between dramatic theatre and its "shadow," the postdramatic theatre is that it troubled the centrality of the dramatic paradigm

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[37] Ranciere extends the notion of Denis Diderot's "paradox of the actor" (1883) to discuss the "paradox of the spectator." He proposes that viewing is opposed to knowing because the spectator is obliged to hold an ignorance of the process of production. Secondly, the spectator is held in a state of passive inactivity. Thus spectating is the opposite of knowing and acting (Ranciere 2011, pages 2-3).

[38] Lyotard's writings on performance and, in particular, films are not as extensive as those of Gilles Deleuze. However, *Acinema* (Lyotard 2017) and The Unconscious As *Mise-en-scène* (*bid.*) are considered to be significant contributions to the philosophy of film (Viegas and Williams 2017).

[39] These examples are admittedly lacking in detail. They are intended as broad reference points for the reader.

under which almost all actor training is based. The residence of the postdramatic in so many "other" types of performance, training and rehearsal methods caused me to think of the postdramatic as the more common performance and the dramatic as the specialisation.

When one takes into account how actors and directors explore a dramatic text in rehearsal, the narrative may be ruptured in the actor's emotional exploration, the "physicality" of a performance may be developed in ways that are not psychologically based or realistic, even though the end product is unmistakably couched in realism. Themes, motifs, location and time period may be localised to the milieu of the audience rather than that of the narrative. It is more accurate to say that the dramatic is carved out of the postdramatic as one might carve a statue out of raw material such as rock or wood. The delineation between dramatic and postdramatic may be unnecessarily polemic, focusing on the artefacts of performance without including the processes involved to create it.

The postdramatic is, possibly at all times, embedded within an actor's practice, but it is made invisible by aesthetic rules or *Doxa* that efface these processes. The dramatic/postdramatic paradigm divide has more to do with the visibility or invisibility of certain process-related elements. It can be seen as a choice to show or not to show the "underpainting,"[40] *i.e.* the process and construct of the performance artefact and the materials from which it is derived.

In the representational mode, with realism as the dominant aesthetic, the construct and materials are effaced in part by the style of production and in part by the spectator's feigned

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[40] Underpainting is a term used in visual art. It is a layer of paint over which other layers or a finishing layer is applied.

ignorance of them. It may be said that there has always been an awareness of construction and materials, but they recede due to aesthetic rules that dictate their reception.

*Cross-reference: Pedagogic Device and Framing*

One of the most stimulating and validating points of the research was Bernstein's and Bereiter's views on power, pedagogy and knowledge production. They provided lenses on the training of an actor and can be easily overlooked in the studio if one's eyes are fixed on evidence and criteria of product over production. These ideas influenced how I wrote about Image Studies and the Source Room. Both practices have strategies to weaken frames. In the Image Studies, the frames that separate the Actor and the Character are temporarily ruptured.

The Image Studies are not dedicated to any particular text. They treat performance moments as a painter might treat pigment. They are meant to be contemplated and freely associated with the construction of experiences. The Source Room is also weakly framed. There are fixed descriptions for each station, but they overlap and blend as the actor moves from place to place in the room. They aren't separate subjects of study, they are *orientations*.

This, to my thinking, correlates to the notion of the postmodern and postdramatic. This idea is threaded throughout the handbook. It is meant to encourage readers to imagine the Image Studies and Source Room as practices that may relate to other disciplines and modes of expression, but the book remains firmly seated in acting.

## Summary of Socialisation

In this section, the initial stages of the research have been described as a period of sharing tacit knowledge between individual practitioners. Through team teaching, the framing--*i.e.* Bernstein--of the classes was weakened. What may seem to be separate "subjects" in a curriculum were allowed to influence each other and have an interpenetrating discourse. Through experimentation and teaching co-constructed classes, a new pedagogic device started to emerge which formed a basis for the *Embodied Acting System*. Examining and reflecting on how knowledge is framed enabled me to examine dualities ascribed to different areas of practice, how they related to each other and their position as "central" or "peripheral" to what is considered to be a curriculum of professional actor training.

# Externalisation

*Recap:* The Externalisation phase involves individuals forming groups to share knowledge to many at once. In this phase the group ideates the knowledge by putting it into words, diagrams and creating metaphors. Knowledge is being shared amongst experts in terms of "lessons learned." The nature of knowledge is transitional--from the tacit domain to the explicit.

This phase of research is characterised by regular conversations with Mary Overlie and drawing diagrams and geometric "doodles" to organise the emerging concepts. This usually resulted in piles of small note papers with overlapping circles, squares and other shapes that illustrated a thought rather than having it written out.

> I needed to "step back" from words to let the images settle. I was settling
> on a way to depict these fields in a way that expressed their coexistence
> and relationality--like an ecosystem or the biosystems of an organism. At
> times, my diagrams seemed overly rational and technical-looking. Taken
> by themselves they might seem so, but I liken them to a codified language,
> like musical notation, functioning as a shorthand for practice. (Notes from
> research activity 01-Dec-2017 to 15-Feb-2018)

## System, Method, Technique: A Way of Seeing Knowledge

One of the first diagrams I set to paper was an attempt to reconcile three terms that were floating around in my mind: system, method and technique. They are often used interchangeably and dictionaries tend to define each of them by using the other two. There was potential to let these words describing how strongly or weakly knowledge is framed and

described. Applying distinct definitions to them would enable me to arrange them relationally.

Figure 3 depicts how Systems, Methods and Techniques can be seen in a hierarchical order. Techniques are on the highest level, while the system is on the bottom or base level. This arrangement borrows from how computing languages are categorized. A "high level" language contains a great number of pre-coded blocks and "objects." It is more easily read by a human reader. Whereas "low level" languages are closer to machine code. In its basest form it could be the binary "0/1" language readable only by machines.
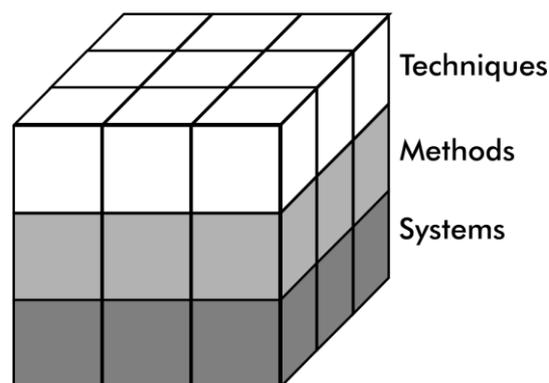


Figure 3: Techniques, Methods, and Systems

## System

The term "system" refers to an interconnected network of ideas. It is an arrangement of things working together to comprise a mechanism, a complex or an organism. The sciences create systems to identify the part of the universe being studied. For example, the thermodynamic system, the solar system and the interrelated systems of environmental sciences. This term also describes a domain of symbols and metaphors to communicate what the system

organises. Examples include the alphanumeric system, the Dewey Decimal system and the periodic system of chemical elements.

## Method

"Method" refers to actions. These can be physical actions or actions of thought. A method is the organised procedure for doing something within a system. Methods express a system via its symbols and metaphors. For example, the scientific method is an extension of a system of rationalism and involves the following actions:

- making conjectures and predictions

- performing experiments

- observing and drawing conclusions

## Technique

"Technique" refers to a particular way of expressing a method or a methodological notion that is distinguishable from others. The term implies that it is a refinement of action, possibly meant for a specific purpose whereas the broader method may be applied more generally. A technique can be an "after-text," which elaborates upon a method, or a "counter-text," which refutes part of a method and offers an alternate approach within a Method. Examples of this include:

- the Alexander Technique and the Feldenkrais Technique

- the counter-texts of Sanford Meisner's, Stella Adler's and Lee Strasberg's approaches — all of which use Stanislavski's System as a base.

These examples are refined techniques which relate to larger methodological ideas.

## Technique and Method "Seeing" the System

Once this hierarchy of System, Method and Technique took shape, it became apparent how framing, *Re:* Bernstein, acts on the information.
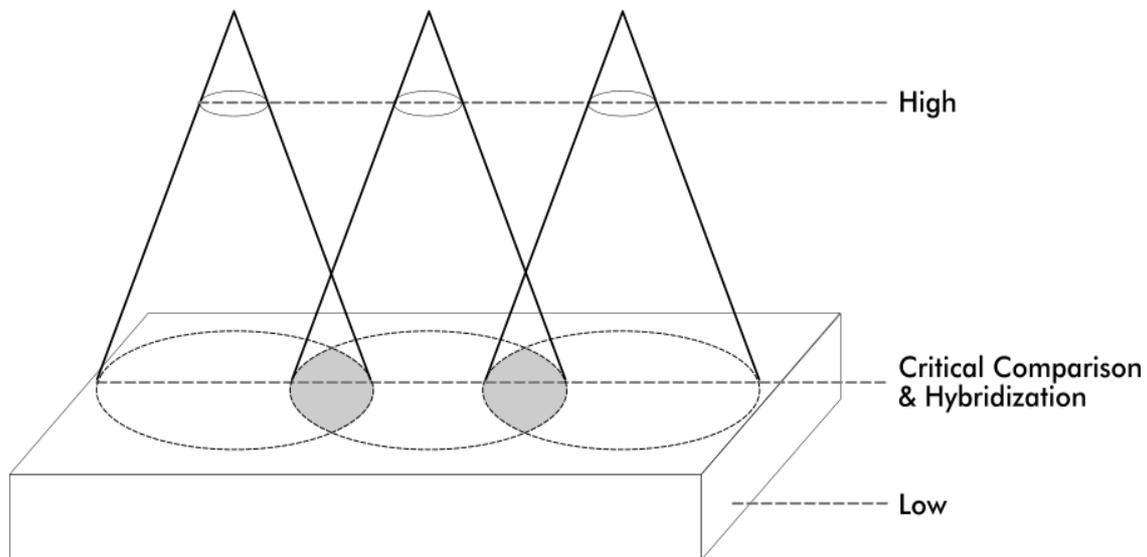


Figure 4: Technique and Methods "Seeing" System

There are the highest-level languages, *i.e.* techniques that are so well crafted that the "problem" and "solution" collapse into a single image of purposefulness. The knowledge in these languages is strongly framed. Using one of these techniques for something other than its intended purpose seems wrong--as if one is betraying the intent of its originator. A metaphoric example of this is a Phillips screwdriver. It is crafted to address a problem. It cannot be used on a slotted screw and turning it around, using the handle to pound in a nail, is the wrong use.

Conversely, the lowest level languages seem to have no rules at all, they simply describe forces, energies and categories of being. Their "problem-solving" capabilities are far outweighed by their capacity to enable exploration and open-ended enquiry.

Figure 4  illustrates this point. Highly framed techniques are susceptible to having the least overlap with other techniques. This is due to their specificity and often self-claimed differentiation from other techniques at the same level.[41] At the lowest level, there is no framing at all. It is portrayed as a solid mass of information with no rules to give it shape. It is simply a domain of knowledge that can be observed but not manipulated.

> In a moment of fantasy, I imagined that performance is a vast surface, like a stage floor. All our methods and highly refined techniques were like lamps, shining a beam of light onto the surface, overlapping in places. And it is through performing, by getting down to the surface level, that the actor is able to move into and through the areas of overlap. When we teach from framed methods, we are using the technique or method to illuminate the system. We draw it out from "concept space" and give it action. Some methods are framed in ways that synergise with others. And others leave gaps, areas of shadow that the performer passes through while negotiating the act of performing. To illustrate this, I drew overlapping circles. (Notes from research activity 01-Dec-2017 to 15-Feb-2018)
>
> My imagination compensated for the limitations of a flat image. In the illustration above, the lattice of overlapping circles is made up of the bases of the "cones" illustrated earlier with areas of overlap. Below the surface on which these circles are drawn is the rectangle of the unrefined system which consists only of the conceptual and lacks concrete action. Applying methods, *i.e.* actions, to a system "draws it out" into forms. It was a realisation that helped unify two concepts I had been chewing on for a long

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[41] Please recall the quote from Gordon's *The Purpose of Playing* in an earlier section. The differences are similar to different sports. Players from one sport may find it difficult to adapt to the others.

time. They had to do with The Viewpoints and Stanislavski's System.

(Notes from research activity 01-Dec-2017 to 15-Feb-2018).
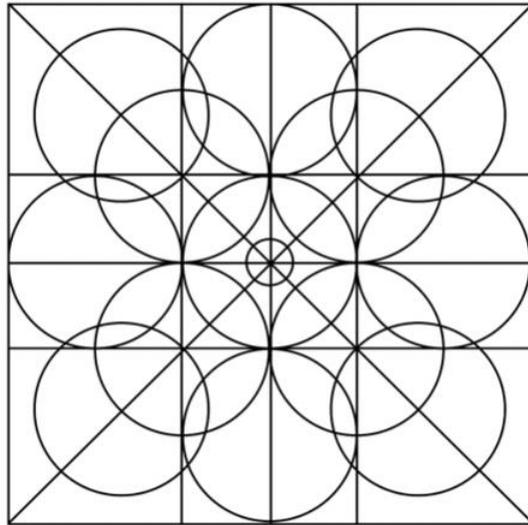


Figure 5:  A simple mandala image depicting overlapping methods.

## The Viewpoints: Case 1 of How Methods Relate to a System

Mary Overlie's Six Viewpoints, a.k.a the "S-STEMS" concerns the materials of performance.
The S-STEMS occupies a unique position in actor training and has been described as a clear
articulation of postmodern deconstruction in performance practice (Bartow 2009, loc. 548).
The term "postmodern" is not one that is easily uttered in the acting studio. Acting methods
tend to gravitate toward understanding how a character, *i.e.* a dramatic representation of a
person, is constructed. The notion of deconstruction comes from far afield of those that ground
most acting methods.

In the broad perspective, postmodernism deconstructs narrative and its constituents such as
voice, logic and emotion. Actors are trained to use and speak about these in unified ways from

their earliest years. This is compounded by the fact that the actor's tools and medium consist of their voice, logic and emotions. Stepping outside of these might seem like stepping into the void. Before the Viewpoints, there were very few languages or methods native to actor training to shape these concepts in the same way that other disciplines could. Metaphorically, it was as if one were painting on a canvas too far removed for most methods to reach. Many avant-garde performers looked to other disciplines. This is narrated by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau as they discovered Overlie's Viewpoints in postmodern American dance.

> Music, for example, would not dictate choices. An object could have the same importance as a human body. The spoken word could be on equal footing with another. One idea could hold the same importance as another on the same stage at the same time. These postmodern pioneers forged the territory upon which we now stand. They rejected the insistence by the modern dance world upon social messages and virtuosic technique, and replaced it with internal decisions, structures, rules or problems. (Bogart and Landau 2005, page 4)

Overlie's Viewpoints were being taught to actors at the NYU Experimental Theatre Wing when Bogart encountered her work. "To Anne (and later Tina), it was instantly clear that Mary's approach to generating movement for the stage was applicable to creating viscerally dynamic moments of theater with actors and other collaborators" (*Ibid.* 2005).

The components of performance that were formerly the purview of the director, dramaturg, designer, *etc.* were given language and material practices directed to actors,[42] where they could be put into motion as a training method.

My reflection, having used the Viewpoints with various companies and artists since 2006, is that there are two ways to apply the theory. In one sense, as Bogart and Landau say, it is a means to create dynamic moments on stage. My early days of using the system followed Bogart's and Landau's observation closely; that is, as a way to stimulate directorial collaboration with actors.

However, there is another side. Overlie's S-STEMS, or Six Viewpoints elaborate Story and Emotion in a way that Bogart's and Landau's does not. This opened a door for me. I realised the Viewpoints has language that discusses affect.[43] Overlie's "laterality" was not only to do with a choreographer's concerns, or a director's but had included all the primary elements of a performance. (Overlie 2016, pages 29-34, 43-64).

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[42] Formerly, this language "belonged" to directors. The strength of *The Viewpoints Book* is that it grounds this "director's language" more solidly in the actor's experiential practice in a functional, practical manner.

[43] The reason for Emotion and Story not being fully discussed in *The Viewpoints Book* is unclear. Both elements are discussed by practitioners using Viewpoints in many different contexts. Text is used rigorously in SITI Company Training. It may be conjectured that Bogart and Landau envisioned the Viewpoints for "generating movement for the stage" and creating "visceral dynamic moments" through means that were previously thought of as scenography and picturisation. Acting methods in the theatre have mapped the territory of Story and Emotion quite intricately. It may have been that these were thought to be quite well covered by available acting methods.

Overlie's Six Viewpoints explain a system. They identify primary materials comprising six conceptual objects; Space, Shape, Time, Emotion, Movement and Story. These are distilled and "pure ideals" in the same way that Platonic forms are ideals. The Viewpoints define the "Materials" of performance[44] as a complete and finite system. Bogart and Landau mention Overlie's "chagrin and delight" when students extrapolated and expanded them for their purposes (Bogart and Landau 2005, page 5). However, taking the S-STEMS as a system of raw materials, any expansion or extrapolation of them moves them into the domain of Methods. Overlie also discusses "bridges" and "practices," which can be taken to be Methods of her System. They express the system in multiple, evolving ways (Overlie 2016).

A second application of the Viewpoints, I found, is to act as "bedrock" upon which all manner of practices and methods can be invented through a combination of disciplines, different media, multiple cultural contexts, *etc.*. In my work, the S-STEMS became something like the elements of the periodic table.[45] They are foundational, irreducible[46] and can be combined to form "higher" level, material methods and techniques.[47]

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[44] "Materials" is capitalised here because Overlie's term may be confused with the word "material" which is used later to describe the transition from concept (system) to material practices (method and technique).

[45] This is about the periodic table of elements used in chemistry.

[46] They are irreducible and complete, not because of some empirical quality, but because they conceptually "need to be" for higher-order methods to function as they do. For example, adding a new number to the numeric system would not benefit arithmetic.

[47] This idea was confirmed with Mary Overlie in a face-to-face meeting (October 2018) after discussing the "System, Method and Technique" diagram. We correlated the S-STEMS to the system layer and the bridges and practices to the layers above.

Correlating both versions of the Viewpoints to the model of Systems, Methods and Techniques, it can be said that Overlie's Six Viewpoints are a System. Bogart's and Landau's Viewpoints are more of a method in that they concentrate primarily on the material uses of Overlie's concepts. Bogart and Landau have extrapolated, creating viewpoints of voice, gesture, architecture, *etc.* which are practical elaborations, like the bridges and practices, of Overlie's system.

## Stanislavski's System: Case 2 of Method Relating to System

Stanislavski's system was created dialectically and revised throughout his life (Gordon 2006, page 39), leading to multiple iterations of his work. Its transmission has been troubled by inconsistencies and barriers to translation. Sharon Marie Carnicke notes that there are competing traditions and truths which have fostered a myth of "anti-Stanislavskian" practices (Carnicke 2009, pages 7-15). American practitioners emphasised the psychological over physical aspects of his work. Soviet Russia claimed greater fidelity to the original, but illuminated some issues such as action, behaviourist psychology and Realism while obscuring this derived from Symbolism, Formalism and Yoga (*ibid*. pages 7-9). Stanislavski's system was defined by limited facets of a larger, multivariant and holistic system. In particular, the myth of the "anti-Stanislavskian" landed on experimental, somatic practices. Yet Stanislavski considered physicality in performance deeply.

> Scenic action is the movement from the soul to the body, from the center
> to the periphery, from the internal to the external, from the thing an actor
> feels to its physical form. External action on the stage when not inspired,
> not justified, not called forth by inner activity, is entertaining only for the
> eyes and ears; it does not penetrate the heart, it has no significance in the
> life of a human spirit in a role."
> (Stanislavski 1995)

Jerzy Grotowski's experimental approach is often framed in the light of the anti-Stanislavskian myth, a stigma Grotowski opposed by stating his work is an extension of Stanislavski's, simply resulting in an opposite conclusion (Grotowski 1997, loc. 1029).

Grotowski expressed impatience with the notion of experimentation as "toying with" technique which would eventually contribute from the periphery to ideas on modern staging. (Grotowski 1997, loc. 1023) He views experimentation much in the same way as Stanislavski--as the central action of a performer's inquiry. Grotowski's *Reply to Stanislavski* was first published in English in 2008, where he explains;

> Many people have difficulties distinguishing technique from aesthetics. So then: I consider Stanislavski's method one of the greatest stimuli for the European theatre, especially in actor education; at the same time I feel distant from his aesthetics. Stanislavski's aesthetics were a product of his times, his country, and his person. We are all a product of the meeting of our tradition with our needs. These are things that one cannot transplant from one place to another without falling into clichés, into stereotypes, into something that is already dead the moment we call it into existence. It is the same for Stanislavski as for us, and for anybody else.
> (Grotowski and Salata 2008, page 31)

In this quote, Grotowski makes a distinction between technique and aesthetics, calling Stanislavski's method a "stimulus." It may be conjectured that this has parity with the System, Method and Technique model. Grotowski mentions that Stanislavski provided a stimulus. This could be taken as a system-level stimulus for his work, if even to reach

opposite conclusions on the level of method. What Grotowski identifies as "aesthetics" maps to the technique level. Aesthetics are specific to individuals, cultural groups and periods of history and they have a way of refining and specialising method, turning it into a specific technique or a regional interpretation of a method. For example, watching actors do a session of The Viewpoints is quite a different experience than watching a troupe of trained ballet dancers working with the same method. Even if no specialised choreography is performed, the ballet dancers will walk, run and sit in a different way than the actors. If these differences were to be fully inscribed--*i.e.* included in the method--there would be two techniques for doing the Viewpoints.
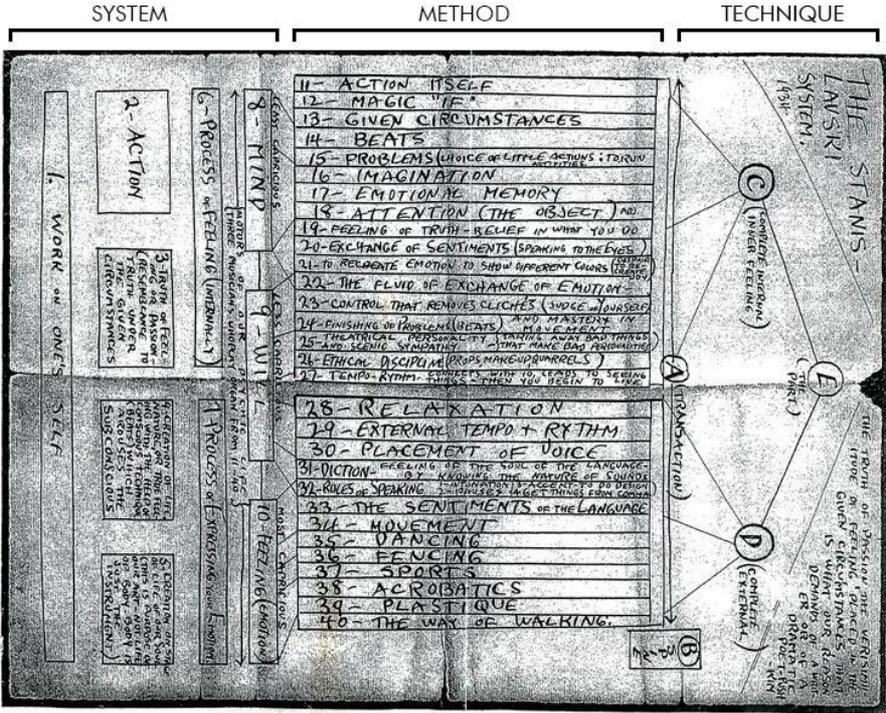


Figure 6: Chart of the Stanislavski System.

Figure 6 is a copy of a chart of the Stanislavski System as presented by Stella Adler after her time with Stanislavski in Paris in 1934. The chart was copied down by Bobby Lewis and later provided by Ronald Rand (Lewis 2012).

What many actors and teachers know, and tend to teach, are Stanislavski's methods. They are the parts of his work that is the most easily transferred. The system layer is more troublesome to communicate across cultural, political and linguistic borders and may have led to a reduction of the whole process in order to transmit it through exercises.

Stanislavski cautions his readers against this kind of reduction. He warns that simplification "put[s] a stop where the 'system' genuinely starts to reveal what it really is, *i.e.*, at the point where the crucial part of the creative act emerges--the work and nature of the subconscious." He continues with, "My students [...] have revealed many 'truths' which they mistakenly give out as the 'system' but they say nothing of its real truths which are so dear to me. [...] They often underrate the complex, difficult part and overrate the easier, more available part, the first, preparatory part" (Benedetti 2008, page xxvii).

When Stanislavski discusses the "complex, difficult part," it can be conjectured that he is referring to an organisation of deeper principles that his methods and lessons merely point to. He calls this deeper level our "creative nature." (Benedetti 2008, page xxviii) It is a "natural creative state" (Gordon 2006, page 41) and should be entered without forcing it. Stanislavski has written his system, he says, "in defence of the laws of nature." But he also reassures his reader that this is not fixed. "The content, tasks and forms of the things we make may change." He instructs his reader to "absorb and filter any system through yourself, make it your own, retain its essentials and develop it in your own way (Benedetti 2008, page xxiv).

Regarding Grotowski, Jenna Kumiega states decisively that there is no room in Grotowski's theatre for the Stanislavskian dual actor/observer. In Stanislavski's work, there is no middle ground between uncontrolled spontaneity and the manipulative perspective of the actor. (Kumiega 1997) Grotowski's is a theatre of trance and "of the integration of all the actor's psychic and bodily powers which emerge from the most intimate layers of his being and his instinct, springing forth in a sort of "translumination." (Grotowski 1997, loc. 1043)

However, there are similarities between Stanislavski and Grotowski which become more apparent upon referring back to Stanislavski's description of movement: That scenic movement emanates from "the soul to the body, from the centre to the periphery…." In the diagram of Stanislavski's system, there are three "motivators of psychic life," (Whyman 2008, page 41) titled Mind, Will and Feeling. The term Feeling was first associated with emotion and emotional memory, but from 1934 onward Stanislavski changed his focus to feeling through physical activity in his search for truthful emotional expression. The shortcomings of the English language have also contributed to confusion, with the word "feeling" associated with both emotional and proprioceptive phenomena.

According to the diagram of Stanislavski's system, "Will" is noticeably lacking a column of methods associated with it. Will is diverted to the practices associated with Mind and Feeling despite its equal relationship to the others in the System. It may be conjectured that, as Rose Whyman suggests, this was done to comply with the rejection of individual emotional experience as opposed to collective action after the revolution (Whyman 2008, page 44). The supposition that Stanislavski spent the final four years of his life, from 1934 to 1938, under a

form of house arrest adds weight to the idea that his work may have been contorted by political doctrine.

Grotowski's work can be characterised by two relevant statements.[48] 1) He realises that identification with myth is "impossible in an era no longer united by a "common sky" of belief and he invites the individual to explore his or her own sense of truth in light of the values encoded in the myth. (Grotowski and Barba 2002, loc. 250; Wolford 1997, loc. 555) and 2) The basic impulse of the work is autotelic,[49] concerned with performative elements as a tool by means of which the human being can undertake work on her/ himself. (Wolford 1997, loc. 746) In light of this, it may be said that Grotowski's work was a great contribution to the "missing" third column of Stanislavski's model--work that Stanislavski could not accomplish under the aesthetics and dogma of Socialist Realism.

Sharon Carnicke has contributed greatly to our understanding of Stanislavski's experimentation from the years prior to his death in 1938. "Active Analysis"[50] was a new direction that prioritised improvisation, physical exploration and working outside the constraints of the text. Physicality, action, the meter, tempo and rhythm of language were played with as actors devised scenes using nonsense words such as "tra-la-la" in place of the scripted dialogue. (Gordon 2006, page 56) The result was that the action of the performance

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[48] This, by no means, implies that Grotowski's work is reducible to these two points, but they are the most salient to the topic at hand.

[49] As in; having an end or a purpose in and of itself.

[50] Active Analysis also owed to the influence of Michael Chekhov, Evgeni Vahktangov and Vsevolod Meyherhold on Stanislavski's work. (Gordon 2006, page 58)

had already been "full-bloodedly" experienced by the time the text was applied to it.[51] After Stanislavski's death, Active Analysis was continued by Maria Knebel in spite of a Stalinist ban against the Active Analysis method through the 1940s and 1950s. Alison Hodge quotes Knebel as saying, "Active Analysis strengthens the improvisatory nature of the actor, helps uncover the actor's individuality, and cleans the dust of time off literary works with wonderful images and characters in them" (Knebel in Hodge 2010, page 99).

Carnicke uses these methods as evidence of the enduring legacy of Stanislavski's system. Her institute, based in Los Angeles, proposes that the dynamic principles of Active Analysis and its improvisatory approach foster in actors the independence, spontaneity, and flexibility they need to work across media and aesthetic styles from realism to postdramatic and beyond (Carnicke 2017, web page). Conversely, Gordon takes the view that Stanislavski's approach has an *underlying* naturalistic aesthetic. (2006, page 55) This allusion runs counter to the thesis proposed in this section so far, that aesthetics are "upper level" practical applications. There is no doubt those aesthetics not only influence but dictate the nature of performance in both its execution and reception. However, pushing the conceit of the System, Method, Technique model further, I would like to propose that aesthetics are applied to systems, in the same way that we apply lenses to our view of the world or paint to a surface.

Stanislavski quotes Aleksandr Pushkin's aphorism, "the truth of passion, the verisimilitude of feeling," which may lead one to conclude that Stanislavski saw the aim of acting as the accurate representation of a character's psychology as if they are real people (Whyman 2008,

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[51] A similar movement, de-emphasising the domination of the actor by the text, can be seen in the American schools of thought. For example, Meisner's "canoe and river" metaphor pictures the text as the "canoe floating on the river" of emotion. (Meisner and Longwell 1987, page 115)

page 41). However, the verisimilitude that Stanislavski sought can be interpreted in different ways. The mechanisms of feeling and experience in relation to action are complex. The Russian words for these terms are as much syntactic ambiguity as their English counterparts. What they suggest is that the goal is the truthfulness of the actor's experience; the sensations that an actor lives rather than those conjured intellectually or in mimic presentation (Whyman 2008, pages 44-46).

Stanislavski's abandoned faith in emotional memory is charted in his work between 1920 and 1933. The change in outlook outlines his conviction that intellect inhibits the actor while emotional memory can be fickle and negatively impact a performer's work by introducing tension, exhaustion and, at times, a kind of hysteria (Benedetti 2011, pages 59-66). He developed the Method of Physical Actions as a means of stimulating affect through action (*i.e.* after having experienced something actively, the actor is then equipped to experience it again) and his Method of Active Analysis (Gordon 2006, pages 49-55). This has resulted in two understandings of Stanislavski's work. Evidence of these two threads can be traced in the various derivations of Stanislavski-based methods. The schism between Lee Strasberg's method and the techniques later developed by Stella Adler and Sanford Meisner, prioritising imagination, is an example of this. Gordon sees the spread of Stanislavski's method in America coinciding with the assimilation of Freudian psychoanalytic concepts by Western culture at large. He also cites the prevalence of an organicist view of art[52] which privileged the emotional identification of the actor (Gordon 2006, page 56).

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[52] This is a Romantic, naturalist concept, viewing art as if it is a biological organism and creativity as a biological process of discovering the form in nature, then revealing it as art (Gordon 2006, page 48).

Looking back to the System, Method, Technique model diagrammed earlier in this thesis, it may be proposed that what Grotowski identifies as a "sky of belief"[53] parallels Gordon's observation. Aesthetics, in these examples, do not underlie our systems but lay over them. They are hermeneutics that direct how we move a System from the conceptual layer "upwards" to the layer of Method.

## A General Observation About Systems

A System, a well-engineered one, develops a teleological existence. It becomes similar to an organism in that it "asks" to be expressed by its agents in specific ways that justify its organisation. The capitalist system is a good example. To extend this metaphor, possibly in a fanciful way, the System is like a skeleton with no muscles. Methods we create give it muscle.  In Stanislavski's system, there are three "motivators of psychic life;" Mind, Will and Feeling (or Action). Two appear to be well-developed while "Will" seems to be like an atrophied limb. I propose that it was left this way due to a number of factors; Stanislavski's own limitations, Stalin's political doctrine, censorship, language barriers, time, *etc.*.

I posit that Grotowski continued the work on Physical Actions and developed Methods that made the "Will" segment of the system more visibly functional. One of the main tenets of Grotowski's work mentioned earlier is that it invites the individual to explore his or her own

[53] Grotowski's metaphor of a "common sky of belief" under which we no longer live does not refute the presence of several interacting "skies."

sense of truth in light of the values encoded in myth. This is, according to my reading, unmistakably about Will.[54]

Though he probably did not view himself as an exponent of Stanislavski's System, Grotowski refers to it as his "stimulus." From the perspective of the System,[55] Grotowski is extending its form and interpretation, making it more "muscled." As more methods and techniques are developed over the decades, the System evolves in the hands of more and more artists. As these different branches of the work are practised, disagreement and contradiction evolve from their divergent culturally informed contexts. They become separate, overlapping fields. Bourdieu's Field Theory offers insight into what Gordon has called the actor's "performing identity;" the unconsciously absorbed rules and behaviours that are freighted by training methods. Bourdieu calls these *Doxa* and *habitus*.

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[54] Generally speaking, and in a literary sense, it evokes a long history of heroes caught in the struggle of fate *vs.* free will. Will is what we employ to slip the noose of myth, religion, dogma, *etc.*. It can be conjectured that this is why it may have been censored under the government of Stalin.

[55] This points to the notion of "memetics," a popular extension of structuralism which proposes that one can metaphorically view information as being autonomous of its "hosts," the people who are agents of its replication. One can attribute information as having a "point of view" and a "desire" to be replicated. This concept was introduced by the geneticist Richard Dawkins (1978) to illustrate the similarities between the replication of information and the replication of genetic material.

## Field, *Doxa* and *Habitus*

To develop a clearer picture of the overlapping, and at times conflicting, fields of actor training methods, Bourdieu's Field Theory offers a robust metaphor.[56] According to Bourdieu, all cultural activity occurs within fields. A cultural field can be defined as "[...] a series of institutions, rules, rituals, conventions, categories, designations, appointments and titles which constitute an objective hierarchy, [...]" (Webb et al. 2002, page 21)

The behaviours, discourses and activities authorized within a field are what Bourdieu calls *Doxa,* meaning the rules of play. This Greek term is related to others like orthodoxy, heterodoxy and unorthodox. A field is also constituted by, and out of "[...] the conflict which is involved when groups or individuals attempt to determine what constitutes capital within that field, and how that capital is to be distributed" (*Ibid.* 2002).

People, being the agents of culture, are capable of occupying multiple cultural fields simultaneously and will internalise *Doxa* as a form of embodied knowledge called *habitus*. Agents of a field also enact the reproduction and exchange of symbolic power through *habitus*. One aspect of this is the universalisation of a field's values. The field's values become synonymous with the field as a whole. Another aspect of symbolic power is the field's misrecognition of its own power plays. A group of people within a field may be treated unfairly or ignored, but the victims of this symbolic violence mis-recognise it as "natural" because they have adopted the field's *habitus*.

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[56] The following outline of field theory is dramatically reduced for brevity. For example, Bourdieu's theory encompasses how cultural capital is acquired and displayed, and how power is recognized and transferred. Likewise, this research is not rigorously Bourdieusian, his terminology is used here as a framework for thought.

These terms correlate to several observable phenomena in actor training. *Habitus* maps especially well to what Gordon has called the "performing identity." A performing identity will have a universalised field value, such as "Truth in acting." A performance tradition will perform misrecognised acts of symbolic violence within its field, such as performing Shakespeare in a colonised culture while claiming its universal and timeless value, or producing few (or no) roles for certain groups of people.

*Habitus,* our internalisation of *Doxa*, is Bourdieu's solution to the divide between the objective and subjective in sociology. He viewed this split as both fundamental and ruinous. (Bourdieu 1990, page 25) Subjectivism, in sociology, views individuals as free agents, capable of making their own decisions whether to follow or rebel against the structures of society. It views society as immediately understandable.[57] Objectivism is much more deterministic, it views society as having control in shaping a person's thoughts, ambitions and identity. Lévi-Strauss saw that "myths think in men, unbeknown to them." (Webb et al. 2002, page 41) Bourdieu reads across the two approaches saying that practice is always informed by a sense of understanding and control over one's actions, but that the possibilities of that agency must be seen in relation to the structures of culture, *i.e.* cultural fields. *Habitus* does not completely control one's thoughts, but it is impossible to explain one's own actions without referencing the cultural context and language of internalised *habitus*. (Webb et al. 2002, page 36)

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[57] Schirato and Danaher use the metaphor of a Hollywood movie, where the hero is capable and in control of their own ideas. The hero can overthrow society's structures which are often portrayed as bureaucratic, dehumanised and incapable.

This concept may be applied to performance to great benefit. Performance is a "microfield," *i.e.* a fictionalised, miniature field where a *habitus* may be experimented with for the benefit of an audience.  The microfield is surrounded by the actual field that surrounds it. It can be formed from a physical location, a thought-space (as in storytelling) or transmitted to a screen. The *habitus* of this microfield is fictional and may adhere to the same rules as its containing field, or it may transgress them broadly. The performance may be experienced from the outside looking in or it may be participated with from inside (as in an immersive performance or video games). It may reference the real world or the greater cosmos of transcendent concepts (as in a ritual or religious service). It may also be a reduction of the larger world to a selection of symbolic contents of immediate life, such as a holiday dinner or a game of darts with mates. The various disciplines and arts that are used to construct the microfield have fields of their own, constructed and occupied by the artists, programmers, performers, writers, dancers, athletes, musicians, *etc.*. The fields of these "makers" overlap and interact in different ways with the making of each microfield.

I have used Bourdieu's concept of field, *Doxa* and *habitus* to direct attention to the extended field of performance. With the help of these metaphors, the location of traditional, dramatic actor training can be explained as one *Doxa* among many that overlap and interact with each other. This thought guided the development of the Embodied Acting System and contributed to the second name, "Crosspoints." With this metaphoric name, overlapping *Doxa* become a site of play and artistic enquiry that could lead to new arrangements and adaptations of form, producing original microfields.

*Matrices*

Overlie's Matrix

In *Standing in Space*, Mary Overlie relates the moment the concept of the Matrix occurred to her. She was on her bicycle, navigating the grid of New York City traffic on her way to teach a class (Overlie 2016, page 111). The Matrix is one of the 9 Laboratories that express the Materials (S-STEMS) of the Viewpoints. She defines the term as a situation or surrounding substance within which something else originates, develops or is contained. (*Ibid,* 2016, page 113)

In this practice she instructs the artists to be an observer/participant[58] standing at the intersection of all the Materials, allowing them to have a lateral, non-hierarchical relationship to each other. She continues by describing a metaphorical pair of glasses, fitted with 6 interchangeable lenses, one for each material. When looking through the "shape lens," the other 5 viewpoints are filtered out. The "time lens" does the same, *etc.*. The performer can "flip" lenses as they develop a more deeply informed, embodied relationship with the Materials.

Overlie acknowledges the similarities between her Matrix and the one in the 1999 movie titled *The Matrix*. In this film, the character Morpheus instructs newly "unplugged" Neo on the nature of the world;

> The Matrix is everywhere. It is all around us. Even now, in this very room.
>
> You can see it when you look out your window or when you turn on your

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[58] Rather than the creator/originator which is a role the artist takes as performance is approaching (Overlie 2016, page 111).

television. You can feel it when you go to work… when you go to

church… when you pay your taxes. (Wachowski and Wachowski 1999)

In the film, the Matrix is a fictional construct programmed into the minds of humankind in a machine-like, dystopian future society.

Overlie's version is ideal (*i.e.* virtual). It is a Platonic Form or Idea. Platonic Ideas relate the non-physical essence of things, creating *a priori* "lenses" through which to view the material world. In the following section, I intend to play Aristotle to Overlie as Plato by discussing another kind of matrix, the one that is culturally constructed and more like the one in the film.

At the time of writing this paragraph, I am a Canadian born, 188cm-tall man currently living in Japan, as I have done for the past two months. I also live in Australia, the United Kingdom and for brief periods in the United States. In each of these places, I experience Time and Space differently.

On this, my second move to Japan, it took me a few days to re-assimilate the rhythms of Japanese life; how to manage my height in a room or sitting at a table, the length of my stride while walking down a corridor at work, the energy and shape of my hand gestures, how to wait for someone, *etc.*. Also, at this two-month stage, my body still remembers a different way. I am experiencing the S-STEMS differently now than I did 9 weeks ago.

Overlie's Matrix and its neutrality toward cultural relativity is what makes the differences in culture visible. They help describe one's changing relationship to it.

Overlie, in conversation, has equated the Viewpoints Matrix to Stanislavky's Method of sense memory because both bring complexity and depth to the performance. Stanislavski's work drew out the invisible world of the subconscious. Overlie's work does the same with space, shape, time, emotion, movement and story. Both increase the performer's sources through a developed language. The Matrix, like Stanislavski's method, is the means of this emergence. It is the insipience, not the end.

The Matrix, and the Viewpoints in general, contributed substantially to how the Crosspoints evolved through practice. The "mandala" diagrams that constitute the visual metaphor of the Crosspoints is a reference to the several *a priori* lenses through which a performer can shift their vision and interpretation of a performance as they develop it. This refers back to my initial experiments in team-teaching, where the softening and blending of pedagogical frames allowed us to see our learning activities as resonances in several fields, not the singular one delineated by the *Doxa* of an exercise or the knowledge outlined by a single field.

## Sliding Doors and Moving Walls: A Thought Exercise

Bernstein, discussed previously, addresses communication within and between fields of knowledge. It may be profitably conjoined with the Bourdieusian model as a thought experiment. Remembering that a field of knowledge is a Bourdieusian cultural field as well, imagine each field located in separate rooms of a schoolhouse. The way for students to travel from one *habitus* to another is by the hallway linking them. The hallway is neutral space because there is no learning to be done, its only function is to be a viaduct for foot traffic.

Imagine that the hall is done away with. The rooms are linked by doors only. The student's experience would be different because there is no neutral ground. The framing of the knowledge has weakened to a point where it might be harder to "clear out" one *habitus before* entering another. It would be even more difficult if the classes in all the rooms were taught with the doors open. The most unframed version of this schoolhouse would have no walls at all. Every field would be taught in a single large room, and their *habituses* would mingle, like the Source Room explained in the *Crosspoints* handbook; a practice originated by Stella and Putnam. In the Source Room, several modes of character exploration and creative movement are permitted to be actively explored in any sequence, almost simultaneously, in an approach similar to an athlete's circuit training or cross-training session. [59]

It may be that some framing--or reframing--is necessary. Temporary walls may need to be placed between some fields while others have more direct communication with each other. These temporary walls and doorways are, of course, not as strongly constructed and the occupants of the temporary room are aware that they will be changed at some point. This image shows how the *visible* filtering of fields may lessen one's strong personal identity with *Doxa*. The student develops a more transmutable *habitus*.

## Grid

In working through this thought experiment, combining Bourdieusian terms with Bernstein's concept of weak framing, an additional conceptual layer could be added to the System, Method and Technique model. It is a paper-thin layer in the model, a culturally constructed "filter" that controls how the system moves upward and becomes a method or technique.

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[59] A full explanation of the Source Room and all of the mandalas can be found in the handbook.

Gordon refers to this as aesthetics. It is figured here as sitting atop Systems and under Methods. To avoid confusion, it is called the "Grid."
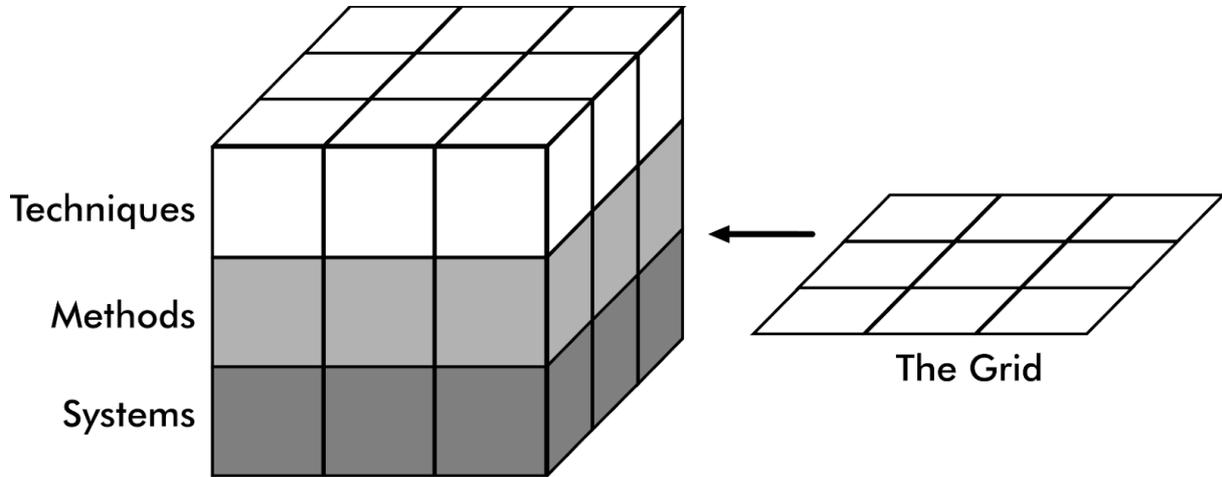


Figure 7: The Grid in relation to System, Method and Technique.

The Grid contains culturally shared and individual values, such as:

- Exemplars and determinants about "good" and "bad" art, the "entertaining" and the "offensive."

- Dichotomies and tensions such as the difference between representational theatre and postdramatic theatre or scholarship *vs.* practice.

- The network of social attitudes, beliefs and laws such as the difference between Moscow under Joseph Stalin's rulership and New York City under Herbert Hoover.

- "Taste," aesthetic values and economic divides between one form of cultural capital *vs.* another.

Grids are not fixed. Like Bourdieu's *habituses*, they are the middle ground between deterministic objectivism and self-determining subjectivism. For example, on the way home from buying groceries in Kushiro, Japan, I see three *Yezo sika* deer in the grassy lot behind an

empty building near me. I stop. A couple of other people from the neighbourhood have done the same on the other side of the lot. Time and space change as we watch them graze. Our movements slow down. We breathe differently. I fantasize about living closer to nature for a few minutes. Then my *habitus,* my Grid, pulls me back out of the moment and I walk back home. This is the function of many acts of performance; to draw us out to the margins of our Grids, to rearrange them momentarily, or permanently, then recede.

The reader will note that a great deal of this thought is condensed and re-told as prompts to the practitioners reading the handbook. It is important to me that the reader does not see the Crosspoints as another *doxic* "school of thought." My encounters with The Viewpoints (training with SITI Company and discussing the theory often with Mary Overlie) made me see them as Platonic Ideals which, in classical thought, imagines that there are some ideas that exist prior to their materiality in the world. This is deeply philosophical and a full exploration of the topic is beyond the scope of this work, but it outlines my "a-ha moment" when I found I was able to work outside the dramatic paradigm by incorporating The Viewpoints in my work as an actor, writer, director and teacher.

Creating the mandalas (called "compasses" in the handbook) was my first attempt at drawing some order out of the chaos created by seeing several overlapping *Doxa* at once. Envisioning the various components and facets of a performer's work as orientations (rather than directives) places the actor's self at the centre. In this visual metaphor, training is not the acquisition of skills "up" a ladder of progress but meandering around and through *Doxa* toward the centre. It is not intended to make it any less rigorous or intense, but to centre the work on the agency of the performer, not the concealed expectations of the method.

## Mandalas: Diagrams of Performance Elements Yet-To-Be "Gridded"

The word "mandala" is Sanskrit for "circle." The word is used in this mundane sense, but it has a more specialised meaning when used in the context of religious and spiritual practices. Carl G. Jung's research concentrates on this second meaning. He sees mandalas as circular images which are "drawn, painted, modelled or danced," in religious contexts as well as in

states of conflict." (Jung 1972, page 3) He notes that they frequently contain a "quaternity," which is a multiple of four in the form of a cross, square, star or octagon. He also cites the spontaneous occurrence of mandala-making in situations of disorientation. It is a behaviour that applies a severe pattern of order over circumstances that are disorderly and disorienting. Its primary function is to enable comprehension primarily through constructing a central point to which all other elements are related in a unifying schema. (Jung 1972, page 4)

Jung used mandalas as a means of self-healing, enabling an individual to reconcile opposites and bridge gaps in their process of individuation. The mandala is seen, in this therapeutic context, as an archetypal ideogram of personal wholeness. In the case of this research, mandalas were used to structure the many overlapping and conflicting fields of actor training and to relay their basal contents, as Overlie has done with the S-STEMS.

> I prayed that I could find a way to impart my developing philosophy. I
> thought of drawing it and tried, but came up with an almost solid black
> cube from all the lines I drew depicting the S-STEMS interacting with
> each other. (Overlie 2016, page 113)

As with Overlie's dilemma, the growing system of connections needed to be documented, but linear text, or even diagramming it as "lines" would not suffice. Linear communication failed. For me, images became a "language" of choice. The first of these images came from my early training. It was an elaboration of the ground plan for Linda Putnam's and Penelope Stella's Source Room work. Originally, it was a hand-drawn circle with eight points evenly spaced around it; 1) Light/Absence of Light, 2)Energy, 3) Creature, 4) Persona, 5) Mask, 6)

Caricature, 7) Character and 8) Text. The space outside the circle is labelled "No Play - Talk." The space in the centre of the circle is labelled "Performance."
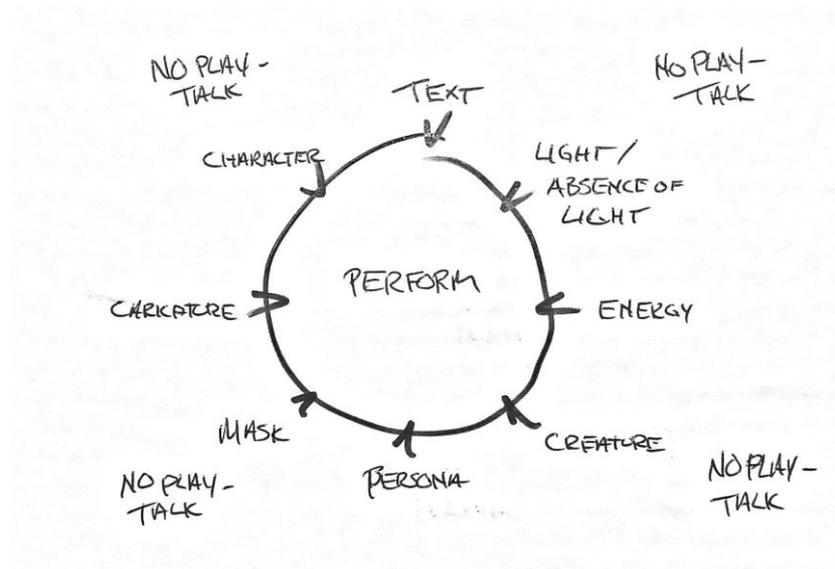


Figure 8: Penelope Stella's original hand-drawn diagram of the Source Room.

This drawing maps the space in the studio with 13 "stations" posted at corresponding points around the room. "Performance" is in the centre of the space and "No Play/Talk" is on the periphery (usually in the corners of the room). The 8 remaining stations are evenly spaced around the circle. While doing the Source Room, the actor moves from station to station working with the metaphor attributed to each one. For example, while in "Energy" the actor is working with qualities of energy and movement. In "Creature" the actor is using animal movement and behaviour as the basis of their exploration, and so on… The map is both a conceptual diagram and a set of spatial coordinates, enabling the practitioner to literally move into and be moved by concepts and material practices. Extending the motif of the Source Room map, six mandalas were created:
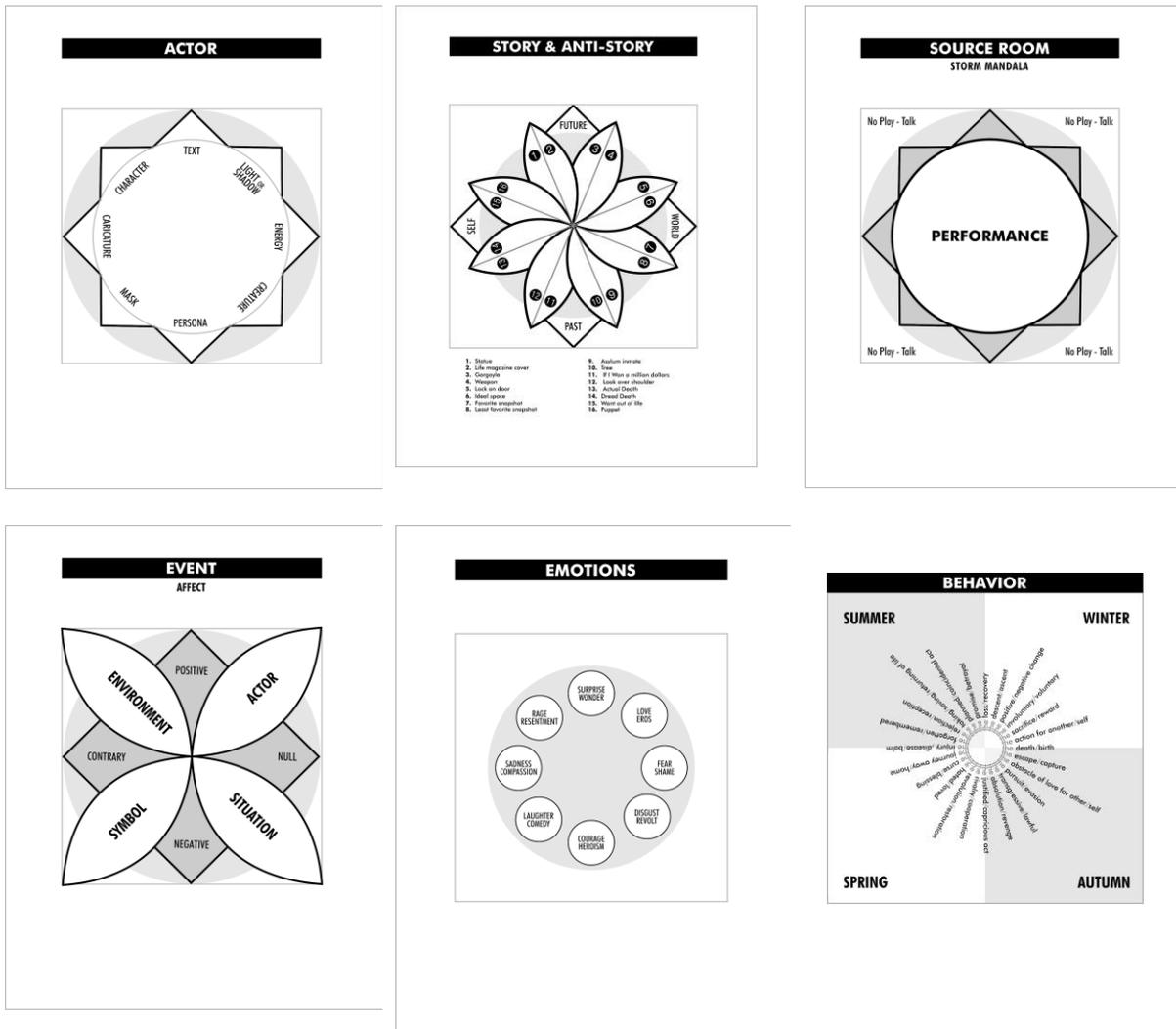
Figure 9: First drafts of the «mandalas» for the handbook.

**Actor** represents the physical attributes and presence of the figure in the performance. The actor might be a human being playing a character or may be an inanimate object, pixels on a screen or the audience members themselves, as in an immersive or gamified performance experience.

**Source Room** is a "map" for setting up physical exploration of the work. It is intended to plot physical space. When doing Source Room, we label all the points of the cycle according to

the points on the Actor mandala. In a Storm mandala, anything goes. Every participant can name these points with whatever labels they want, including those they have invented.

**Story/Anti-story** are emblematic points of the narrative. They are independent of the text but some may be framed by the events portrayed by the text. They are influenced by four "directions" including Self, World, Future and Past.

**Event** represents the object or action that stimulates empathy and affects the audience. In the domain of objects there are;

- the actor (who may be performing affective behaviour)

- a symbol (as in a ritual)

- the situation (as in the war in Brecht's *Mother Courage*

- the environment (such as an immersive event that holds atmosphere or narrative that the audience experiences).

In the domain of values, affect can be created by aligning behaviours (see the Behaviour mandala, below) with a point on the "moral compass." These points include;

- the positive value

- the negative value

- the contrary value

- the null value[60]

In the centre of this arrangement is the performer, the human agent making the performance. It is a moveable node and can be shifted toward any of the elements in the Event mandala by degrees. In representational theatre, the performer slips entirely under the "actor" (the

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[60] These are inspired by Robert McKee's "story values." (McKee 1997)

character) and never "peeks out." However, there are performances that slip out of the disguise by degrees.[61]

 The same holds true for values. The performer can slip out of value and comment on it. For example, Hamlet's lament to the audience, "O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!" and Bugs Bunny's "Ain't I a stinker?" are slipping out of the value to "point it out" as an Event.

**Emotions** include the 8 rasas from the *Natyasastra.*[62] These are emotional "flavours." These may "infuse" other elements such as Emblems, Behaviours and Events to intensify them.

**Behaviour** is the activity that reveals the story--it is synonymous with "plot." There are 24 behaviours representing a list of dramatic "situations." Behaviour is influenced by myths, represented by the four seasons;

- Autumn is a myth of life in decay or a fall from grace. It corresponds to tragedy.

- Winter is a myth of death or deep sleep. It corresponds to horror and irony.

- Spring is a myth of new life and rebirth. It corresponds to comedy.

- Summer is a myth of the zenith of life and plentitude. It corresponds to romance.

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[61] In a Shakespearean soliloquy, the performer drops the disguise half-way by addressing the audience. In a Brechtian piece, the performer moves toward the centre and points to the Situation to enhance critical awareness of it. Vaktahngov's use of the performer's attitude toward his character is another example.

[62] The Natyasastra is a Sanskrit text written between 200 B.C.E. and 100 C.E.. Some sources indicate that there is a 9th rasas "Bliss," which is associated with spiritual enlightenment. If it were included, it would probably occupy the centre position, which changes the aim of the mandala.

The mandalas contain elements known in literary theory, the morphology of myths and cultural texts such as the *Natyasastra*. Arranged in this manner they connote new relationships and meanings. Thinking of "Behaviours" rather than "Plots" slips them out of their fixed literary context.
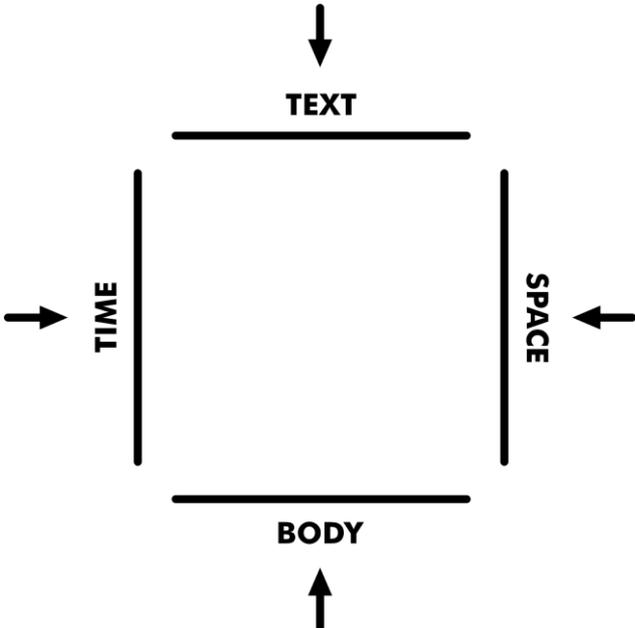


Figure 10: The four "base elements" enclosing the mandalas.

The Frame is the irreducible "edge" that holds the contents of performance. Jung identifies the "squaring of the circle" as an archetypal motif representing wholeness--a quaternity of "one."[63] (Jung 1972, page 4) This square is the "meta-level" framework of all the previous mandalas combined.

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[63] The squaring of the circle has biblical, spiritual and alchemical significance, but none of these were contemplated at the time of making these designs.
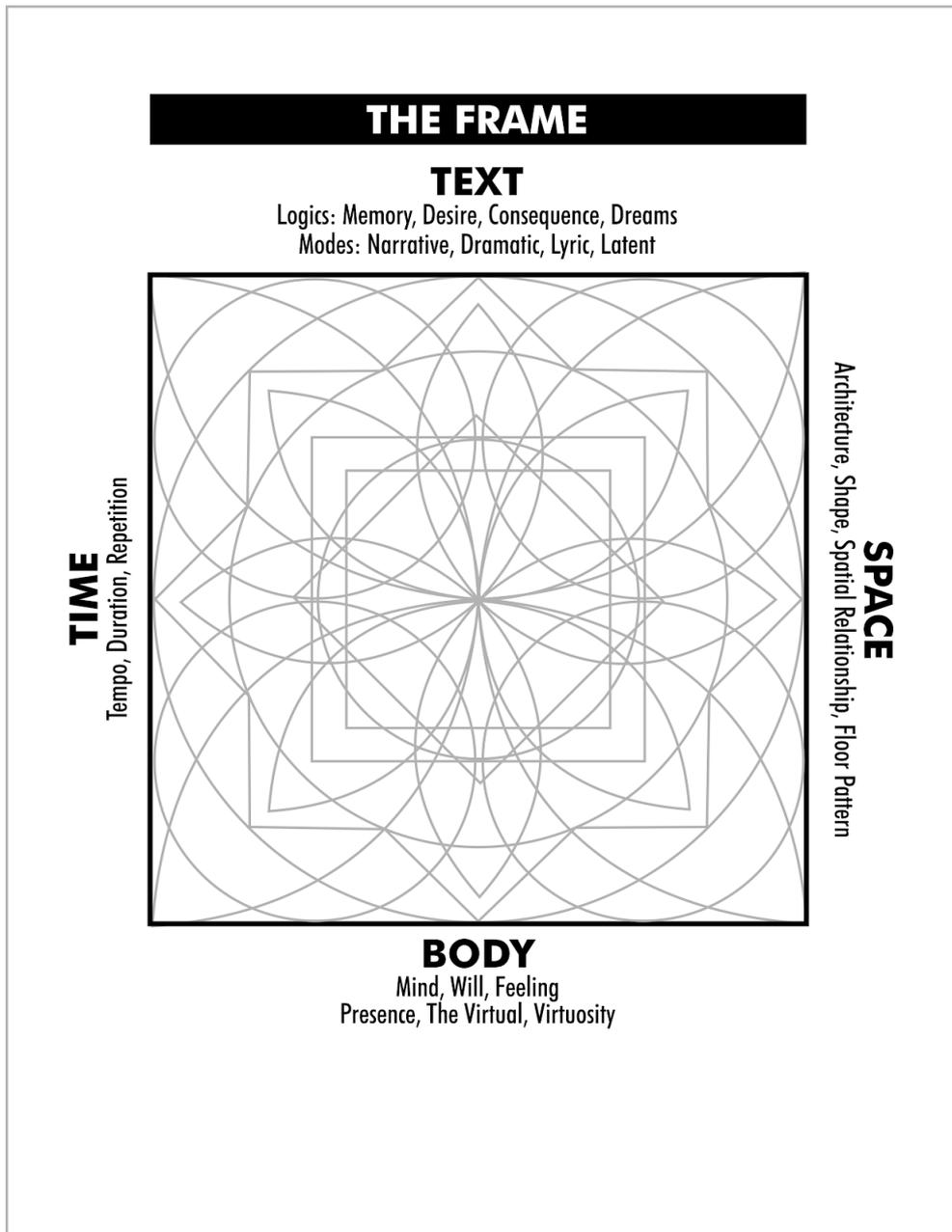
Figure 11: The first draft of the overlapping manadalas.

These diagrams are indicators. Like the cardinal points of a compass, they are not the only

directions available. They are simply points of orientation. These points are not absolutes

because there may be more unnamed nodes in the system, for other practitioners to discover.

For example, the "seasons" in the behaviour mandala are based on one's experience of a

temperate climate in the northern hemisphere. It does not adequately describe a culture like

Australia's, which deploys the symbols of Christmas--*i.e.* light coming into the world on the

darkest night--in the height of summer. Likewise, seasons in another part of the world might be categorised by flood and drought, or typhoon season and dry season. These phenomena will have their own mythos. Some readers will discover that the mandalas have "degrees" or "minutes and seconds" in between each explicitly labelled point. They are not fixed categories, but nodes on a network.

*Cross-reference: The Evolution of the Mandalas*

The reader will notice that the Mandalas are different in the handbook. Some only have different labels and others were omitted completely but remained as elements of a practice. For example, The Source Room and Emblems are nearly identical in the final draft of the handbook. The Event and Behaviour Mandalas have become part of the activities in the Image Studies and Source Room. The decision to pare them down helped with clarity. The older drafts are left intact here to preserve transparency. Another thing to note when reading the handbook is that the circular diagrams portray activity as "nodes" of a continuous cycle.

## Nodes vs. Categories

Resorting to the mandala structure was an organisational strategy because performance does not always readily map itself to semiotics and language-based description. Mark Fortier muses on the complimentary definitions of theatre and drama. Theatre is a term derived from the ancient Greek word "to see" whereas drama is rooted in the word "to do" (Fortier 2002, loc. 147). The term performance encapsulates both and has been applied to a wide range of activities. Michael Kirby places these in a continuum of expressive acts where performance "passes through" five nodal points:

- non-matrixed performance--doing something in a performance other than playing a character (*i.e.* a *koken* in a kabuki performance)

- symbolised matrix--doing something onstage that is seen as belonging to a character even though performers are perceived as being nothing other than themselves (*i.e.* a dancer performing a choreographed piece)

- received acting--is doing something such as wearing a costume or speaking in such a way as they are read as part of the situation portrayed (*i.e.* an extra standing in a crowd)

- simple acting--is doing impersonation and simulation (*i.e.* a medieval village reenactment or the 'demonstration' of a character as a position or role in society such as "Doctor" in Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck*)

- complex acting--is doing a fully realised character and calling upon the actor's physical, mental and emotional faculties in a cohesive manner[64]

Marvin Carlson extends this concept further by saying that all human activity is potentially within a sphere of constant performance because our lives are structured around repeated, socially sanctioned modes of behaviour. He also acknowledges the "futility of seeking some overarching semantic field to cover such seemingly disparate usages as the performance of an actor, of a schoolchild, of an automobile" (Carlson 1996, pages 4-6).

Rather than describing Kirby's matrix as 5 *categories* of performance, Schechner's description is careful to preserve the idea of a continuum with 5 identified nodes. The nodes are culturally constructed points of orientation. There may be other nodes not defined by

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[64] Michael Kirby's continuum is discussed in Richard Schechner's *Introduction to Performance Studies* (Schechner 2013, loc. 5594). Schechner condenses the description of the five nodes from Kirby's *A Formalist Theatre* (1997, pages 3. 6-7, 10, 20).

Kirby's experience because those recognised in his model are relative to his culture and period of history. For example, virtual performance through an avatar, role-playing in a game, puppetry, being a participant-audience-performer in an immersive, interactive performance are not depicted by Kirby, yet can be found in performance literature and in practices worldwide. By using language that preserves the interstices, calling them nodes as if they are in a network, there is room for the reader to insert identifiers and new nodes from their own cultural experience.

## Meandering Toward the Centre

A practitioner's experience in any field of knowledge is rarely unified as an organic whole. There are stumbles, antithetical actions, retrograde "progress" and dead-ends that only appear as such if there is an assumption of unity or of progressive, linear evolution. Myths of discovery tend to efface these embarrassments[65] and dress them with the trope of the hero's journey. It is often the case where innovators in a field are mythologised as having a single "eureka" moment, or a single problem to overcome (a dragon to slay) with a revolutionary idea or a clear path that opens to them.

Contrary to this myth, it may also be said that a discoverer is a person who paused between the waypoints, took notice, and found it more captivating than the planned destination. They "got lost." Schön refers to a "new sense of the situations of uncertainty or uniqueness which

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[65] I use the term "embarrassment" here because I am fond of its etymology. There are two strains of thought on the origins of the word. One suggests that the French and Spanish languages imported the word from the Italian *imbarrazare* which means "confined with bars." Embarrassment is also linked with the words barrier and barricade. In another interpretation, it is a verbal derivative of the Portuguese words baraço, and barraca, a cord or noose, which implies that to be embarrassed is to be entangled or caught.

[the practitioner] may allow himself to experience" (Schön 1983, page 61). The mandala image, because it is based on a circle, encloses space. When one views it, there is a sense of positive and negative space within, maintaining the sense that there is "what is described," as well as "what is not described" in the empty interstices.[66]

Jung describes the journey to individuation in a way that may well be about any rehearsal process for performance. He says it is meandering around the "self" toward the centre. (Jung 1989, page 196) The practices devised for the mandalas of the Crosspoints share the same meandering quality. They encourage individual interpretations of phenomena, which is characteristic of the therapeutic uses Jung put his mandalas to. The labels given to the nodes of each mandala are archetypal. Their names are intentionally open-ended, metaphoric and prone to slippage when related to other nodes.

Like an archetype, the nodes are modelled after Platonic Ideas--that is, an "original" Idea from which all subsequent matter and ideas are derived." (Samuels 1985, page 23) They are considered to have been held in the minds of the Gods before the world was created and therefore precede experience. As an *a priori* form, an Idea organises perception of experience. It is active in the process of making meaning from perception. Jung's archetypes function in the same way but are applied to bodily perceptions and everyday experiences rather than transcendental ones.[67] (*Ibid.*)

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[66] Ancient maps used the phrase "here be monsters" to denote areas that have not yet been mapped.

[67] Later in his work, Jung applied mandalas to more transcendent and spiritual objects of contemplation.

The mandalas, coupled with the practices in the handbook, aim to revivify associations and meanings so that a practitioner creates new patterns outside of memory, causality, conscious experience and culturally prescribed norms.

## Summary of Externalisation

In this section of the paper, I have outlined the various ways that the socialised principles of the practice "came out" in the form of diagrams, models and terms derived from Bernstein and Bourdieu. I readily admit there is an overabundance of diagrams and charts. The process of ideation and "putting things out there" has provided the opportunity to mentally doodle and improvise spatial arrangements of concepts while continuously asking which expression clearly states what is meant. Articulation, in this part of the work, is not about nailing down a strict definition. It has been about finding words and images that convey the ambiguity and contingencies of exploration in practice.

# Combination

*Re-cap:* In this phase, knowledge is being shared from one group to other groups. It has taken a more structured form as lessons, instructions and exercises with specifications and criteria for success. Knowledge is in a completely explicit form.

This section of the paper documents the workshops conducted between February 2108 and March 2019. They are presented in chronological order. As the reader will soon see, many of the classes did not have a pre-set structure other than to try the system out in a way that seemed appropriate for the group. Notes and feedback informed what would be done in future iterations. Each of the workshops had different priorities regarding my experimentation with the Crosspoints. In some, the goal was to try something radically new. In another, to simply "get better" at what had been previously tried.

I usually punctuate studio work with reflective discussion. Our "discussion circles" usually happen three or four times in a class. These provide opportunities for data collection in a natural, candid manner that is in tune with the practice. They usually occur:[68]

- In the first part of a class, after an initial group warm-up activity.
    - o I use this to frame the initial questions that will be addressed in the work. Students are free to contribute relevant questions and observations.
- After a long period of explorational group work.

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[68] This rough outline is intended to give the reader an idea of how most classes flowed. I do not include this breakdown in the workshop descriptions below, but they were all formed around this basic outline to provide an opportunity to collect data in the most immediate way possible.

- o Students often share the connections they made. I use this time to "regroup" and collect my thoughts on how to proceed to the next activity--or determine if the next planned activity is appropriate.
- At the end of class.
  - o This is a review of what we did and how we progressed through the points we constructed. Students share their observations. I encourage them to view each other as sources of knowledge in their training. I collect mental notes on the consequences of the class. With this information, I am able to take notes-- mentally or on my smartphone afterwards for the next iteration.

The field notes were a richer and more reliable source of data than other possible sources, such as reflective essays and student surveys. Surveys were used only twice throughout the entire study. I use surveys sparingly because there is a "conspiracy of politeness" when people are removed from the setting of the work. Another concern is the participants' perception of their own work which is, at times, difficult to put into words even without the pressure of articulating them in print. Group discussions had become a part of our studio culture and participants had less fear of being inarticulate as they shared their experiences.  In all cases, we avoided giving them words to "help" them. This quote from Stephen Wangh outlines the issue succinctly;

> ...by even hinting to her that I had perceived something there, something behind the "weirdness" she was experiencing in her work, I was putting her in a terrible position. "Weird" was her word, and I was forcing her to choose between her own sense of honesty and capitulating to a received truth. (Wangh 2013, loc. 1199)

## VANCOUVER, Feb 18, 2018

The Image Studies and Emblems had been taught occasionally to the first- and second-year acting students at Capilano University. The work was applied to movement classes since early 2017. In mid-February, Daniel Will-Harris was visiting, and it was decided to hold an experimental writing workshop. Will-Harris's writing method is one in which participants speak, non-stop, from the first-person perspective, using a stimulus word, sound or image. The resulting story could be transcribed from recordings later. His method is essentially performance-based and provides an ideal context to use Emblems as a writing stimulus. The workshop was limited to 4 hours with a 1-hour meal break. The Emblem work was constrained to an exploration of the "4 Sides," consisting of "Elder, Child, Self and World."[69]

In addition to preparing Emblem work, I had drafted a brief exercise for "non-linear plotting." It consisted of a large pattern of concentric circles printed on a large sheet of paper. It was meant for "post-it" notes. After accumulating a few stories, we dedicated the last portion of the workshop to put them together in unusual ways. This was intended to circumvent linear plot development or cause and effect expectations when developing a narrative. The operative metaphor for this kind of plot was a network or web of events rather than a line with rising and falling action. The workshop was an opportunity to test the valency of Crosspoints with other methods.

Daniel Will-Harris taught his method, *Write in the Now*, throughout. After working with the stimuli normally used, each participant had accumulated a substantial "store" of material. The

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[69] These are explained in the handbook.

Emblems were used for four additional stories. Then a diagram of concentric circles was introduced as a possible structure on which to create character relationships, events, and related stories to build on the world that the exercises explored. The circle diagram is a stimulus, not a set rule. Participants could interpret the centre and the periphery in any way (*i.e.* the centre could represent a beginning or an end or a character's point of view regarding the other characters and events. "Sticky notes" and flags were used for keywords, emotions, names of events, *etc.*. Stories were then told from these new associations.
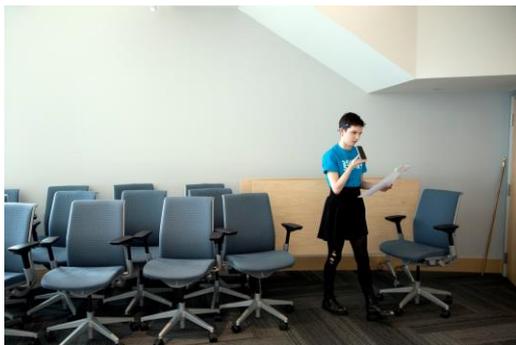
Figure 12: Photographs of the Write in the Now Workshop. Photo credit:Tae Hoon Kim

**Daniel Will-Harris on:** *Write in the Now* **with Crosspoints**

Most people think writing takes place in the brain. I used to think that. But my writing changed when I realized it takes place in the body, which leads to our emotions, and then finally, thoughts.

I developed my *Write in the Now* practice from decades of experience as a writer, actor, improviser, and designer. My approaches to those fields combined and helped me distil my writing approach to its essence, or what I call three ridiculously simple rules:

1. Speak in the first person (this puts you inside the character)
2. Use your emotions and senses (rather than "thinking)
3. Keep talking (to bypass your inner critic)

Because of the simplicity of the process, students can pick it up quickly, and in one session find themselves telling emotionally rich, detailed stories after only a few hours.

Write in the Now emphasizes senses and emotions over thought. We experience the world through our senses and process it first through emotions. Focusing on this leads writers to experience their characters' stories directly.

My practice also used a physical component with warm-ups and poses to help the writer position their bodies in ways that are not their normal way of standing and walking. But when I encountered Stephen Atkins' "embodied acting," then his "Crosspoints" system, the effect the physical had on the psychological became even more evident.

Atkins's approach and exercises showed me how the body can stimulate and create sensations, emotions, images and stories. And, in using some of his techniques with my students, I see how effective this is for them. In the joint workshop, we gave, called 24-Hour story, the Crosspoints "Emblems" exercises were used to help students expand and deepen their understanding of a character, and then develop story.

With characters from stories students had previously written in the workshop, Emblems guided them in creating new scenes. These acted as guideposts for larger scenarios. Each Emblem was distilled down to an action or emotion and written onto a post-it note flag. The flags were then arranged on a series of story maps in different configurations, such as concentric circles or square quadrants. Then a new longer story could be told using the Emblems as scenario signposts.

The workshop produced some generalisable concepts. 1) The Emblem work could be a foundation or stimulus for storytelling. 2) The uses of Story and Antistory (Emblems) became a more solidified practice because of how participants were plotting their work on their story

maps. 3) The new configurations discovered on the story maps gave participants several unplanned relationships between characters and dramatic events.

While "speaking out" these new relationships in the final stories, the students innately produced a dramatic question and discovered themes. These did not have to be a guiding principle in their work, instead, it emerged. For example, if two events or characters are placed in relationship with each other, it was not assumed that the next story would be about how they connect or come to be related. This way of thinking is linear, causal and reductive. The next one might be about how they did not connect or did not perform an obvious action, which is Antistory in the Emblems work. The reflections from this workshop produced a need, which was eventually solved by the "Behaviours" mandala. I recognised a need for a way to describe dramatic situations in a short, concise way and retain the archetypal nature of the Crosspoint work.

## VANCOUVER, March 18, 2018

A second writing workshop of a similar nature was requested by the Actorium, a Meisner-oriented acting studio in Vancouver. This class was also team-taught and featured Will-Harris's writing method with more extensive use of Emblems.

The last workshop used only the 4 Sides and two Emblems (Favourite Snapshot and Look Over Shoulder). This one experimented with the Emblem pairs, such as Favourite Snapshot and Least-favourite Snapshot, Gargoyle and Weapon, If I Won A Million and Look Over Shoulder. These are contrasting story elements, but their opposition is not consistently dialectic. For example, If I Won A Million--an Emblem that inspires joy, a feeling of ease and gratitude--is not opposed by "losing a million." Instead, it is contrasted with Look Over Shoulder--an Emblem about suspicion, dread and feeling pursued. These emblems and their 14 counterparts are described in greater detail in the *Crosspoints* handbook.

The relation of Emblem work to Story/Antistory was strengthened in this session. Notes from this period of work significantly informed the Emblem chapter in the handbook and inspired the pairing of emblems in the mandala.[70]

## VANCOUVER, March 15, 22, 29 & April 5, 2018

Two alumni, graduates from 5 years ago, started a theatre company called Third Wheel Productions. They had embarked on an ambitious project called *Deep Into Darkness*,[71] an immersive experience that drew on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* combined with the collected works of Edgar Allan Poe. The former students requested mentorship for their project.

These workshops focused on the Image Study, Emblem and Source Room work. The company met in a small studio. The work flowed in much the same way as it had in previous workshops. One of the founding members sat to the side and wrote 5 single-space pages of notes outlining and describing the activities. These notes were consulted while writing the handbook.

To provide some context on how the Source Room is executed, a brief description follows. This may help the reader comprehend some of the feedback data presented in this report.

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[70] Joseph Chaikin uses the term "emblem" in *The Presence of the Actor* (1972, page 93-94, 120). The "jamming" practices he describes in the same publication are similar to how the emblems are developed in this work. It is apparent that Chaikin's ideas may have been transmitted orally to Stella and Putnam during the early days of this training in the 1980s.

[71]  See https://www.deepintodarkness.com/.

The stations are set out using paper signs according to the map. Progressing from stage to stage is not a direct, linear process. It has no hierarchy other than the central position of "performance" with all other stations feeding into it. A participant may work in the transitional space between stations, move clockwise and anti-clockwise, or cross the circle to any other station if something is performed when they move through the centre. The practice is done for a set period of time, which the actor must fill with exploration or, if a "stop" in the flow of work has happened, they go into "no play" to self-talk, bringing them back to the circle. Once the elapsed time is passed, the actor exits the exploration. The three most significant features of this work are;

1. The actor is in a constant state of activity, transitioning from one station to another. The rules of each particular station become more fluid and integrative of the others by moving through them more rapidly as time passes.

2. All the stages of the process can be seen simultaneously, from any point in the circle and "invite" the actor to them as they work from station to station or through the central "performance" node.

3. It enables any conflicts that may exist between different methods to find equilibrium in the actor's body, as "embodied knowledge."

**S. Doberstein, founding member of Third Wheel Productions. (Notes from 05-04-2018):**

The work helped generate ideas which would not have come to me otherwise. Experiential elements and forms occur simultaneously and flow from one to the other seamlessly without having to try or think about it.

> The system helped me to reconnect with my body and to things I had
> studied at theatre school / other acting classes that I had forgotten / not
> thought about for a while / didn't realise could help me with character
> development and text analysis.
>
> Sometimes I was unsure of the purpose of an exercise for a while, or the
> ideas that came from it weren't directly applicable to my immediate goals.
> But overall, the system was valuable for me as an actor / artist.

## VANCOUVER, April 6, 2018

This workshop was a single scheduled class in the first-year curriculum for Movement. It was a culmination of several short sessions where I introduced Image Study and Emblem work when an opportunity arose.[72] The opportunity for an "extra" class came about due to how holidays influenced the schedule. I used the Source Room work, which they had not yet done. Dr. Nicholas Harrison, another acting and movement instructor, attended the class and took notes.

After doing some preliminary exercises, I explained the outline of the Source Room. There was time for a 30-minute immersion into the Source Room. Improvisational movement was used to recall the Image Study work. Components of it were narrated, offering suggestions sparingly. One of the survey questions asks if the side-coaching is helpful or distracting. The choice was intended to find an appropriate level of "interference" from side-coaching.

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[72] There were approximately three 80-minute sessions where we explored Image Studies and Emblems.

The survey had a high response rate--21 out of 26. The answers to the questions are positive and provide a large amount of detail and insight. Like the notes taken from outsiders, the responses informed the writing of the handbook. The most important statistic generated from this session was that 70% of the students felt the system worked well for them. I had backed away from giving a large amount of side coaching so I expected that some might find it a bit challenging. However, the remaining 30% reported that they were able to replace parts of the system with other work they were familiar with. I took this to be a positive indication of adaptability.

My side coaching was helpful to many students, but two found it to be a distraction at the time. One student felt that the large number of participants was also a detriment to focused work. It is also possible that doing a class with other students who are not part of their regular cohort may have contributed to the participants' unease.

> **Dr. Nicholas Harrison (Notes from 06-04-2018):**
>
> (Work on "Presence" with Leanne in front of the group)
>
> It is important to note this was not rushed - nor should it be. The relationship between signifier and signified became more energized as she and the group focused on the instructions. Stephen then asked Leanne to "show us your heart and mind" --- very much akin to The Viewpoints.
>
> [Dr. Harrison gives a detailed account of each exercise which contributed to the handbook. He also transcribed many of the participant discussion points.]

> "B": That opened a lot of doors
>
> "D": This makes so much sense now
>
> "X": I enjoyed the centre of the circle for the monologues [...] having the stations were so helpful – fully committing was a little hard in the beginning (light and shadow) and discovering so many thoughts to the person.
>
> "G": Evolving into the performance is so beneficial. By the time you get there you have all these layers beneath. It just comes up.

The response to the work was positive with many students remarking that it provided layers to their performance that they would not have discovered on their own. When "D" stated, "This makes so much sense now" her intonation and gesture suggested that she was referring to the whole curriculum of acting school, not just the events of the single class. I had intentionally set the workshop up in a way that invited the students to "replace" any part of the Source Room with a practice more familiar to them. The survey revealed that students were able to self-teach their way through the process.

## LOS ANGELES, April 21, 2018

This workshop was offered to members of We Make Movies Los Angeles.[73] Because parking is notoriously difficult on Fairfax, only three participants showed up for a three-hour session. All were film actors. Participant A had previous training. Participant B was now a film actor whose primary training was as a dancer--she described herself as having "no system or

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[73] See https://www.wemakemovies.org/.

technique to draw on." The third participant was Will-Harris (DwH), my teaching colleague, a writer and a part-time actor.

We had the studio for three hours. With such a small group, we had plenty of time to work through Impulse, Image Study, four Emblems and finally the Source Room. The purpose of this session was to see if giving the Source Room more structure would produce better results. In previous iterations, the performer could start from anywhere in the circle. This time around, we all started in the first station and developed each one stage by stage.

With more structure, the participants were more confident. This was evident once we opened the practice to free exploration. A second discovery came from working with the Emblems. After scoring these, we used them in sequences, which started to accumulate a specific emotional quality embedded in each Emblem.

While this is a good outcome, I wanted to see if the emblems could be emotionally neutral and if we could infuse them with unpredicted emotional states. For example, Gargoyle may suggest a paranoid or defensive emotion. Anger and bitterness are the most obvious. But we tried doing Gargoyle with happiness and joy.

The result was engaging and warranted inclusion in future work. "Gargoyle" combined with "Joy" seemed like a person who defends herself with wicked humour or obviates bad experiences with "puffed up" joy.

Because this was a small group, I alone made these observations. When I shared them, the performer was surprised by what was read. She was preoccupied with synthesizing the two

images in her body, but what was being signalled was deeply arresting. It reinforced the idea that we are not always conscious of all that happens in our own performances. In larger groups, half the participants should observe and make notes for the others.

Following are notes from the reflective feedback at the end of the session:

Participant A remarked that she found the work to be quite "immediate," giving her a direct method of accessing emotion, impulse and intention without text analysis as the first point of entry. (She had no text to work with and did not find this to be a drawback.)

Participant B said that her extensive training in dance and somatic practices often made it difficult for her to "get into" thinking the way an actor does. She admitted to having "no method in particular" when it comes to acting and that this work aligned with her "dancer's mind."

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**Daniel Will-Harris's Notes: 21-04-2018**

The movements themselves are extremely stimulating, both in terms of emotion and story. Atkins had us alter the scale of these movements, making them as big as we could, big enough to fill the entire room, or as tiny as we could as if they fit in the palm of our hands.

The results of playing with the scale this way were quite surprising. I was working on a story about a Japanese potter who challenged *Wabi-Sabi* and sought to create perfection. When the scale was small, he accomplished

> this. But when the scale was enlarged to beyond the size of the room, now
>
> it was he who was challenged for his own imperfections as a man.

The Fairfax Studio session ended with a number of positive directions to develop further. Notable points include 1) Having participants observe and tell performers what they are able to read from others' work. 2) Giving more specific guidelines in each stage of the Source Room while allowing the exploration to follow to be as open and unconstrained as possible. 3) Highlighting scale and its potential to change the entire story, not just levels of repression and expression of a single idea or emotional state. 4) Using a variety of emotional qualities, or "rasas"[74] in the Emblem work.

## Labyrinth

While observing the workshops, a persistent metaphor emerged. The circuitous movement of the participants, while deeply involved in thought-in-motion, conjured the image of a labyrinth. A labyrinth is unicursal, having only one path rather than a branching one with choices and dead ends. The latter is commonly called a maze. Labyrinths appear in many cultural traditions.[75] They have also been used to represent the archetypal "hero's journey."[76] Jung evokes this imagery when discussing his "path" in life. He saw his own life as a series of meandering paths that bent back on each other and yet always led to the centre, to individuation (Jung 1989, page 196).

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[74] Rasa is a term I encountered independently of Richard Schechner's "Rasaboxes," though I have been aware of the rasaboxes practice for some time and have included a workshop in rasaboxes as part of this research. This session inspired the Affect Mandala.

[75] See Herman Kerne's *Labyrinthe*, 1982.

[76] For example, see Joseph Campbell's *Hero of a Thousand Faces*, 1942.

Though labyrinths are in many cultures, those most familiar to me are found in churches as a mosaic on a chapel floor or a path in a garden or park. I've walked one myself at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Vancouver. When one takes the path meditatively, there is a moment of stillness once the centre is reached. The most adequate word to convey this is "potential." Then one walks back out, taking the same path.

Labyrinths from various cultures and periods of history.[77]



Figure 13: Labyrinths.

Eugenio Barba calls the 20th century an age of exercises. According to Barba, they bring to light the invisible structures of performance and the actor's subscore, "the invisible "something" that breathes life into what the spectator sees" (Barba 2002, page 98). He views

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[77] 1. A Hindu or Indian form of labyrinth with a spiral in its center, sometimes associated with the epic Sanskrit terms "Chakravyuha" or "Padmavyuha". (Unknown 2009)  2. Hemet Maze Stone, a prehistoric petroglyph near Hemet, California. (Takwish 2003) 3. The ground plan of the labyrinth at University of Kent. (Saward 2008). Note: The use of these images, especially when placed side by side, is admittedly fanciful. I do not intend to say that there is a "universal code" shared across different cultures. Their specific contexts and contoured meanings are generalised to illustrate a behaviour I observed while doing the Source Room.
(https://www.kent.ac.uk/creativecampus/projects/learning/labyrinth/about.html)

exercises as pedagogic fictions[78] that do not actually teach the actor to act, but to think with their "body-minds" and to make real, but not necessarily realistic,[79] action in performance. Exercises are ideograms, which are elaborately scored with codified details, which then become an end in themselves (Barba 2002, page 101). Barba summarises this thought by saying an exercise is an "amulet made of memory." They are small "labyrinths" that actors trace and retrace in their body-mind, incorporating paradoxical ways of thinking and entering the extra-daily behaviour of performance. They draw "from them certain qualities of energy out of which a second nervous system slowly develops."

The term "a second nervous system" points to the broad horizon neuroplasticity and adaptation phenomena. It is not within this study's scope or researcher's expertise to explore this topic with depth. However, it is conceptualised in many acting methods and is definitely present in the Crosspoints exercises.

I have often called it a "second self" which I explain from a constructivist perspective, taking the view that one's self is selectively put together from narratives of experience, culture and memory. Some, we expose, others we conceal. It is the essential idea behind the "Light/Shadow" segment of the "actor" mandala. I believe that selves are "fictive" (*i.e.* made of narrative) and that one's person can be an expression of several potential selves.[80] Emblem

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[78] Though he does not reference Bernstein specifically, the "pedagogic fiction" is analogous to the pedagogic device.

[79] One may interpret the qualitative difference between "real" and "realistic" as tangled language pointing to the term "verisimilitude." What is real is not always a replication of a thing's empirical qualities.

[80] In the handbook, special attention is paid to Ferdinand de Saussure's concept of the "utterance" (or *parole*) which commingles with this concept.

and Source Room work became analogous to images of labyrinthine meanderings on a path toward a centre.

**Here There Be Monsters: Encountering "You" and "Not You"**

The ancient Greek legend of Theseus and the minotaur conveys several archetypal polarities. There is the obvious one of the minotaur, which is half man and half-savage beast. The labyrinth, which is a functional prison of the minotaur is said to be inspired by the complex architecture of the Cretan palace and symbolic of civilisation versus nature. Theseus, the hero, is clever. He uses a thread tied to the labyrinth's entrance to guide him back out after he has confronted and slain the minotaur. This may be said to represent intelligence versus animal instinct.[81] The unicursal labyrinth in the examples above utilises the mind's ability to recognize patterns and create, or impose, order. The labyrinth shows a path that is both complex and simple. It is an archetypal act, drawing of order from chaos.

The implication is that movement, through the labyrinth, confounds our innate predilection for pattern recognition. Patterns are analogous to the Grid mentioned in the previous section. Brian Massumi asks, "How does a body perform its way out of a definitional framework that is not only responsible for its very construction but seems to prescript *[sic]* every possible signifying and countersignifying move as a selection from a repertoire of possible permutations on a limited set of predetermined terms?" (Massumi 2002, page 3).

The grid in Massumi's writings is correlative to the "Grid" in this work. Grids form out of our capacity and need to create "positions." In doing so, we impose measurability on the

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[81] The legend has several accounts and various interpretations. These are the most general points culled from encyclopaedias, web sites and children's books.

physical world and on our own experiences. Positionality is a series of static points on a grid. They form an identity, which is a network of binaries or positions on a scale; of race, age, gender, economic class, *etc.*, Massumi proposes that positionality, *i.e.* concreteness and that the opposing value of any position is not the network of its opposite values. That is simply another point of stasis on the grid. The opposite of positional stasis is motion. Massumi asks rhetorically, how do we "make sense" of the world? We have a mind, which is composed of, and composed by, our bodies. And a body moves. It is through movement that we can slip out of the Grid to make new sense.

Massumi relates a particular attitude toward motion. It is not the kind of movement that "conveys" a body from point A to point B.

> A path is not composed of positions. It is nondecomposable *[sic]*: a
> dynamic unity. That continuity of movement is of an order of reality other
> than the measurable, divisible space it can be confirmed as having crossed.
> (Massumi 2002, page 6)

Movement slips a body from occupying a position to being in a continuum. The in-between positions are *possible* endpoints. An arrow in flight cannot be stopped at any position along its path because it was never in any one point. It was in passage across them all. A thing only "is" when it is not "doing"(Massumi 2002, page 6).

The labyrinth is a long walk, constructed to impose an acknowledgement of how movement may "fluidify" the concrete. It is a completely "unnecessary" act[82] when one can see the

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[82] Mary Overlie's laboratory of "Doing the Unnecessary" relates to this. "Whether trained in the Viewpoints or any other technique, actors normally "rest" in the necessary, They produce efficient, coordinated, meaningful

destination only a few metres away from any point along the way. It relates strongly to the Source Room work because participants are in a constant state of flux and transition as they move from station to station. Massumi asserts, with Leibniz, that" all the predicates that can be stated of a thing— all the "accidents" that might befall it (even those remaining in potential)— are of its nature" (Massumi 2002, page 7).

The Image Study, Emblem and Source Room work emphasise process before signification or coding. According to Massumi, the latter are not "false or unreal." They are merely stopping points.

## Cross-reference: Slipping the Grid

Combination, according to the SECI model, is about creating and sharing repeatable exercises and metaphoric behaviours within the group. These workshops eventually became the exercises found in the handbook. The layered participant voices gave me feedback on how to talk about the work. While writing, there were times when I imagined passages spoken in one of my participant's voices. To avoid an over-reliance on prose and linear description, I created diagrams as often as possible. These notions of the labyrinth and the grid became important metaphors in the handbook. However, the full-page diagrams posed a challenge when doing the print layout of the final draft. I wanted to ensure that there were no blank pages interrupting the flow of thought. I had to edit my prose to conform to the page size while incorporating the full-page illustrations. It was challenging but gave me a reason to edit heartlessly.

actions either in a hierarchical structure or a non-hierarchical structure." (Overlie 2016, page 120) Doing the unnecessary introduces the incidental and accidental to their work.

Using icons as the primary graphic component in the handbook served two purposes. Firstly, it shortened the production timeline considerably. It also allowed me to play to my strengths as an amateur graphic artist (illustration by hand is not one of them). Secondly, the concept of an icon, especially of a human-like one, creates an "avatar" for the reader. The readers can place themselves in diagrams that seem like they're about "doing something." My influences included things like old fashioned dance charts and IKEA assembly instruction booklets.

## Workshops: Part 2

### HIATUS, May to August 2018

In this period I took two masterclass intensives. Michele Minnick and Janice Orlandi taught a week-long course combining Rasaboxes with Michael Chekhov Technique. A second week consisted of a Michael Chekhov Technique intensive, taught by Janice Orlandi and Lisa Dalton. Notes from this period are found in the next section, titled Internalisation.

### SIDCUP, September 10, 17 & 24, 2018

The opportunity was generously given to teach weekly classes for a month at Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance. There were two classes each week consisting of first- and third-year students. With the first-years, I taught Viewpoints for three sessions followed by a full class on compositions using Crosspoints. The third years received Emblem and Source Room work, a full class of Will-Harris's *Write in the Now* and a final class that combined the two.

I had internalised enough of this work that I could be loose and responsive with the students. I held discussion circles with faith that the students

would readily supply input to inform the next part of the class. The first years were energetic and lively in their first weeks of theatre training outside of secondary schooling. We used the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice as source material for Redux compositions. No dialogue, but sounds were allowed.

**Daniel Will-Harris's Notes (excerpt from 24-09-2018):**

In a half-hour, the groups devised original, physical, highly theatrical, and emotionally moving performances. One group used smartphone flashlights as the sole source of illumination and combined it with surprising physicality of actors appearing, disappearing, and carrying each other. Another was performed in almost complete darkness, with the actors amid the audience, stimulating our non-visual senses.

Over 85 pages of notes were taken by Will-Harris during these sessions. They transcribe salient features of what was said as well as his interpretations of what was done and seen in exercises and performances. His notes on reflective discussions are a valued resource for writing the handbook.

The third-year class participated in more concentrated Emblem and Source Room work. Our sessions ended with a final class integrating *Write in the Now* with Source Room. The students remarked how much they enjoyed having this "integration day" rather than two separate workshops.

At one point in the final class, we did the Emblem "Asylum Inmate."  The Asylum Inmate emblem is based on a facet of the character's behaviour which is extended to an extreme level, to the point that it is a form of "madness." This work had a negative reaction with one student who, unable to address it with me after our final day, contacted me by email to explain why.

The student found the work to be confronting and she became fearful of stigmatising mental illness. She felt that it was perpetuating a damaging stereotype. I realised I had done a poor job of narrating this emblem prior to letting the group explore it. After my mortification over my insensitivity, I realised that I had a completely different understanding of it than what was heard when I was offering instruction. I have since altered my narrative of this part of the work.

Now, I'm careful to inspire participants to see Asylum Inmate not as "mental illness," but what is considered to be "madness" and therefore confined. The madness is fictive and relative to every culture, every age of history and individual. The example I provide is from the film *A Christmas Carol* starring Alastair Sim as Ebenezer Scrooge. At the end of the film, Scrooge is jumping on his bed, laughing, "throwing money away" on the largest Christmas goose and giddily making merry with his family. This is Scrooge's Asylum Inmate. It is the part of himself he thought was irrational and locked it up.

The second Los Angeles Workshop was offered at the Skirball Centre. Participants were brought in from the We Make Movies mailing list as well as the mailing list of an acting studio. There were 5 Participants. Participant A was a veteran, senior actor who had trained in New York with Lee Strasberg. Participant B was a young actor who had recently moved to Los Angeles and was looking for affordable training. Participants C and D arrived together. They were a young couple who had never had any acting training at all, they wanted to try it out for fun. Will-Harris was also in attendance as a full participant.

The evening had the same overall shape as previous sessions, working with movement, evolving into Image Studies and Emblems.[83] The small size of the room was not conducive to a Source Room session, but it was remarkably cosy, which contributed greatly to the relaxation of the participants.[84] With two and a half hours we explored 5 emblems and then tested a new exercise I had developed especially for screen actors.

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[83] It was in this workshop that I confirmed the best way to start explaining the work is by starting with image Stuidies. Previously I was confident that a reader of the handbook could start anywhere they wanted to.

[84] The Skirball Center has no dance studio. At first, I saw this as a detriment. To my surprise, it was one of the best sessions. The carpeted meeting rooms were small with no furniture except for the few chairs we requested. The large windows had blinds that we could close. A planted courtyard was just outside. I've made note that a "dance studio" might be an overwhelming situation for many actors. A low-key environment like this one might be more ideal for some parts of the work.

My modification to the Emblem work made it more suited to camera acting. We

generated a "one camera" scene as a group by taking it out quickly. I posed a

question and participants responded as quickly as they could.

> SA (me): You're waiting, seated in a chair. What
>
> for?
>
> Participant: Someone to come.
>
> SA: Why is the person coming?
>
> Another Participant: To interview, no, question! To
>
> question me.
>
> SA: Do you mean an interrogation of some kind? Or
>
> a job interview, or…?
>
> Participant: Interrogation.
>
> SA: Ok. Are you willing to give information or not?
>
> Another Participant: Not willing.

SA: Why are you unwilling? Is it to do with you or

someone else?

Another Participant: Another person.

SA: Because… how do you feel about the other

person?

Another Participant: Protective. Protecting the other

person.

The specific narrative circumstances of the scene were left up to individual

participants. From this, we constructed a film scene. Those who wanted to

might ask a friend to film it on their smartphone camera.


INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Seated in a chair CHARACTER waits to be questioned. A tense minute
passes until the inevitable sound of the door OPENING and CLOSING.

INTERROGATOR (O.C.)
Hello.

When auditioning for minor roles, the actor has very little story context.  If the

script is from a major studio production, it is often redacted to avoid "leaks."


The participants each took a chair and went to separate areas of the room to work

using the emblems from earlier. Participant C asked if they had to use all of them.

I suggested "cycling" through all the available material to avoid making a literal

or obvious choice. To all of the participants, I added the request to remember the

gradual transition work we had done earlier

Midway through their 7-minute preparation period I noticed that the scenes were becoming fixed in a way that looked too "polished." They had lost some of the vitality of their first runs.

> **Daniel Will-Harris's Notes (excerpt 2 from 10-10-2018):**
>
> Atkins had us practise these for a few minutes, then suggested we try mixing up the emblem order. In doing so, I learned the order really didn't matter here, and the new arrangement lead to new discoveries—like how simply crossing my legs made me feel a different reaction to the situation. Seemingly small motions created a strong inner life.

We performed the scenes one after the other with no input or feedback in between. I read the off-camera line in a neutral voice, imitating the flat mode of delivery often used by readers in a film audition.

The group gave comments on all the scenes. The remarks outlined individuality evident in each performance. Will-Harris mentioned that switching the order of the emblems revealed subtext in a new way.

> **Daniel Will-Harris's Notes (excerpt 3 from 10-10-2018):**
>
> Everyone did their performances, without fear. What was most interesting--and gratifying, was that in every case, there were so many things happening in our bodies, faces, and feelings.

> One student talked earlier about how he felt all these things inside, like lava, but that his exterior felt like a hardened, petrified crust of stone through which you couldn't see what was happening inside. At the end of class, he was very excited and said these exercises had broken through the crust, that they made his feelings come out naturally--that it also made him excited to perform.

## HIATUS, Mid-October to November 2018

This period of time was dedicated to designing the website for www.otheractingschool.co.uk. The branding and design process gave form to some of the metaphors and concepts visually, but an equal amount of time was dedicated to Combination--creating outlines for each class, setting a price point, which determines who can afford the training, and envisioning the class structure in the context of the other offerings at The Albany Arts Centre in Deptford.

The development of the Crosspoints was reaching a point where it could be parsed into groupings of exercises and blocks of learning activities. Two workshops were designed to concentrate on Image Studies and Emblems (titled Crosspoints 1) and Source Room (titled Crosspoints 2). Writing the class outlines, course descriptions and marketing materials clarified ideas for later development as chapters for the handbook.

## VANCOUVER, December 23, 2018

The company, Third Wheel Productions, requested another workshop specifically centred on compositions for their upcoming production of *Deep Into Darkness*. This version used the Event, Situation and Behaviour mandalas. These are stimuli for what Bogart and Landau might call ingredients (Bogart and Landau 2005, pages 189-197).

We broke into small groups and made two sets of compositions using the available space. It was a small studio outfitted for a screen acting workshop but featured a tiny reception room, along a private hallway to the toilet and a larger main room. Because the company was interested in devising ways to draw audience members into intimate "theatre for one" situations, these smaller spaces proved to be the most inspiring.

 The gothic themes of the piece implied atmosphere with the tension, suspense and mild horror. One composition used the security monitors behind the reception desk. The actor silently drew the audience closer to her, directing attention to an event that was happening on the security screens. This was a compelling negotiation involving subtle work and the breaking of the traditional actor/spectator divide.

Notes from the company members include the following observations at the bottom of their session notes:

- The use of the Source Room will aid us in creating full characters for the show.
- Build relationships, with an Image Study
- Need to have strong "idling" for each character in the show.
- Mask can help create interesting idles. Gestures for the actors to find the character.
- Creature work/ energy/light and shadow feel like they may hit strong in our work.

The actors are making choices to accentuate a part of the Source Room work over others, which will give them stylistic options. The term "idling" refers to a practical question that the company anticipates in their immersive, multi-room show. What to do when a performer is in a room alone? They could be discovered by an audience member at any time or maybe observed without knowing. These notes indicate that the performers are tailoring and adapting the elements of the system to meet the needs of their project.

## Workshops: Part 3

### VANCOUVER, January 14, 2019

On the way back to the U.K., passing through Vancouver, there was an opportunity to have a one-off rehearsal workshop for Dr. Nicholas Harrison's upcoming production at Capilano University. The third years were doing *Learned Ladies* by Molière. These students previously had a brief encounter with the basics of the system in their Spring semester,[85] and Dr. Harrison allocated half an evening's time to "play."

I was sensitive to staying within the confines of the allotted time. Rehearsal is precious in the early stages of a production schedule, especially in the first weeks back from holidays. I was also cognisant of treading on any dramaturgy and analysis that would have already been done. I had not had an opportunity to "conspire" with Dr. Harrison prior to arriving. Dr. Harrison observed the entire session. I used the Source Room with some modifications, as outlined below.

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[85] These were the second years who were mentioned in the April 6 workshop above.

We started with a "general creature" that I asked the entire cast to embody as a base starting point. It was a bird with a display of plumage.[86] I chose it as my personal bias when working in the style of Moliere and English Restoration Comedy. I intended it to be a warm-up and a common baseline from which to build the rehearsal. I did not mind if the actors discarded it in favour of a new discovery. This metaphor is often used in movement exercises for period pieces of this genre. We altered the "bird" image with side coaching to get the embodiment of privileged, elite social creatures (the social class Molière often mocks) and the sense of being a self-made object of art. After warming up in this way we went through the standard cycle of stations found in the Source Room. Once we did all of them, we played for around 20 minutes.

After a brief feedback session, I introduced a new idea. It was a risk because I had not fully thought it through, but it was stimulated by the bird imagery we had just done. I had a recollection of a dead bird found on a walk-in Australia, where I live part-time. I shared an anecdote that had been with me for some time, ever since we started calling the diagrams "mandalas" which had surfaced due to our bird improvisations. It also connects me to this work in the manner of a "micro-ethnography," showing how these performance practices have their basis in personal and folk ritual.

I spoke about my cousin who lives in a remote bush region of northern New South Wales, Australia. When she has visitors, we often walk the trails where we retrieve small items and arrange them as a centrepiece on the dining table. Afterwards, the arrangement is swept back outside. One spring, a young

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[86] In the Source Room practice, found in the handbook, there are three "displays" attached to the base instincts of "threat, mating and territory." This was a special one tailored to the rehearsal of this production.

kookaburra frequented the area and we had grown attached to seeing it. But NSW has epic thunderstorms in spring. Unfortunately, on a post-storm walk the next day, was the dead "kooka" among the debris. P. Stuart and H. Tate retrieved some feathers and made a "storm mandala".

Figure 13: The storm mandala. Photo credit: Penny Stuart

Richard Schechner writes extensively about the parallels between theatre and rituals. Because of the personal attachment and the upheaval of the storm, the mandala became a "necessary, obligatory" act.

> [Rituals] are devised around disruptive, turbulent, and ambivalent interactions where faulty communication can lead to violent or even fatal encounters. Rituals, and the behaviour arts associated with them, are overdetermined, full of redundancy, repetition, and exaggeration. [...] [W]hat a ritual communicates is very important yet problematic. (Schechner 1993, loc. 4070)

So many little gum nuts and blossoms, that you would never normally see,

came raining down in the big winds, and the poor young kooka. (Email

from P. Stuart)


The mandala was a homage to life death, impermanence, and nature. We

also scattered the mandala in the garden at the end of our stay........also we

each have one of the feathers.

 (Email from H. Tate)


A ritual communicates an event that is too intense to communicate directly. Instead it "points

to" the experience. "[R]ituals are also bridges—reliable doings carrying people across

dangerous waters. It is no accident that many rituals are "rites of passage" (Schechner 1993,

loc. 4075).


Massumi notes that the strength and duration of an image, such as the mandala made of storm

debris, is not logically connected to the contents of the image. There is a gap between the

contents and the effect of an image, meaning that images are received on at least two levels.

The gap is filled by a different sort of logic or an index of meaning other than the one

qualified by an image's conventional qualities. If the "literal" meaning of it is fixed by its

sociolinguistic index, the second index is intersubjective. Massumi poses the phenomenon in

this way; he sees a "bifurcation," a split, that happens as a reaction to two or more systems of

reception. They "cross wires," semantically. In this situation, sadness is pleasant. The image

has accumulated what Massumi calls "intensity" (Massumi 2002, page 24).

The next request placed before the students were to consider the exercise as a "storm mandala," made up of whatever has been shaken out of their work--curiosities, debris, things that are special, mundane, emotional, gruesome, old or new--small ideas wanting development and confusing ones wanting to be put "somewhere." The signs for the traditional Source Room stations were taken down and the participants were asked to make their own mandala from whatever they wanted. They each placed individual signs around the 8 stations. Each one had a small pile of paper labels, some with single words, others with questions like "Am I Learned?" and "What do I think of [character name]?" or "Knowledge/Ignorance".

The next 20 minutes were highly energised and very chaotic. The actors met more frequently in the central performance area and "jammed"[87] bits of dialogue and silent exchanges between the characters. The peripheral stations had consistent activity as well. It was extremely hard to keep track of it all.

In the feedback after this session, they made several observations about the complex relationships between the characters. In overlapping dialogue, they related to each other their plots, secrets, interpersonal intrigues, *etc.*.

The performers used the mandala to organise the complex of relationships in the play at this early stage of rehearsal. This owed considerably to the complexity of the source text, but the "storm mandala" provided a way to generalise the Source Room work to suit a production already in progress. It was also a vehicle for ensemble work on a shared, unifying text that enabled the cast to express ideas without feeling they need to be intelligent or fearful of the

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[87] Jamming is a term used by Joseph Chaikin referring to improvisation around a moment of text. He evokes the jamming of a jazz musician in his description. (Chaikin 1972, page 76)

director's disapproval. This open arrangement was generated from the individual practitioners' self-prescribed, immediate goals. It was chaos (a storm) which they rescued from disorder and formed a new order of their own making.

I asked Dr. Harrison for feedback, specifically about the chaos in the final mandala and if he thought it was helpful or a drawback.

**Dr. Nicholas Harrison's response:**

Yes, it was a lot for them to take in but it really helped with the end result. It brought them out of their heads and more in their bodies, which is where it really needed to thrive. Chaos in art is essential. It was well-structured chaos for sure. They definitely upped their game after the workshop. I only wish it could have been longer even.

Sent in email May 26 2019

[When practitioners] have allowed themselves to become confused about subjects they are supposed to "know"; and as they have tried to work their way out of their confusions, they have also begun to think differently (Schön 1983, pages 66-67).

Grotowski developed an interest in ritual by moving away from theatrical mimesis into paratheatrical experiments, which "attempted to create concrete and authentic instances of communion among co-actants engaged in spontaneous activity" (Wolford 1997, loc. 721),

Following this was the Theatre of Sources[88] where he encountered the living ritual traditions of various cultures. With Objective Drama and Art as Vehicle, he progressively withdrew from the notion that the value of performance was dependent on its reception by outside observers. (Wolford 1997, loc. 749-760)

The performers in *Learned Ladies* appear to have relished this personal act. The story of the storm mandala was about making one's own sense--creating an individual order of conventions separate from the general one. When creating these individual rituals, the actor's work was untethered from the ever-present, implied needs of a spectator. I think this is what Grotowski sought to replace with the concept of the "Partner." It was a rupture of the conventional formulation. It was invented spontaneously and fed into the "second index of meaning" as Massumi has put it. The intersubjective--the personal meanings--are made stronger without resorting solely to lived experience, or imagining oneself in "given circumstances." It was another order of meaning-making.

Dr. Harrison noted a difference in the work of the participants after the mandala. This may have been a direct consequence or a coincidence, but the 'unusualness' of the event contributed to its energy and possibly to its significance for the actors. Rituals should feel extraordinary--a break from the status quo. Perhaps there was something of a rite of passage in it.

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[88] It has been hard to trace accurately, but it is believed this is when Linda Putnam, creator of the original Source Room (see the section titled Externalisation) studied with Jerzy Grotowski.

These workshops had different attendees at each one. They consisted of The Viewpoints, *Write in the Now* 1 & 2, and *Crosspoints* 1 & 2. At some of them, a few of the Rose Bruford College students came for a second and third class. One or two students from other acting schools showed up as well. Those who gave feedback consisted of; Participant A - a Canadian-born film/TV actor who works frequently in the U.S.A. and the U.K. Participant B - a film/stage actor who has worked extensively with Simon McBurney and Theatre Complicité. Participants C and D were students from university acting programs-- C was from Rose Bruford and D was from the University of Kent, Canterbury. Participant E was a young resident of Deptford who had only taken one or two acting classes at a community centre. Participant F is a film director/producer who was also a child television actor.

By this time, the structure of the workshops was quite solid. Improvising exercises, when appropriate, came more easily and the narrative of instruction was economical. Following are highlights of participant feedback that shape the handbook.

Participants A and B--the professional film actors--saw the potential for addressing one of their growing concerns-- the "self-tape." With greater frequency, actors are asked to film themselves and "submit" online. Participant A was especially vexed about filming up to three submissions in an afternoon, in his home. Trying to "keep things fresh" and intuitive while working alone is a relatively new obstacle for working actors. The

Emblems hold promise for being a stimulant in this process, creating a wider range of performance elements.[89]

Participant C said, "I'm coming at this from the "student perspective," but it was great to see how all of the different things we learn fit together-- Laban, Lecoq, Copeau, Mask, and so on." Participant D, from another university, made an almost identical statement, though she attended a different workshop than D did.

Participant E arrived with no idea about having a character to work from, she had not seen or read any plays. Instead, she used the story of Little Red Riding Hood and asked if that was alright. With very little "text"--but a story with strong archetypal elements, she was able to work with the system.

Participant F wrote a letter of reference several weeks after the class. "I am a freelance TV writer, director and producer (since 1998) from a base in London, but providing broadcast television for a number of international channels and producers including BBC, ITV, SPACE, SyFy, Discovery, Five, ZDF, SVT, CNN *etc.*. [...Stephen Atkins...] has developed an

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[89] I equate this with their archetypal nature. The work is ideally done with other actors, but if one must work alone, the archetype provides a "partner" of sorts. Grotowski spoke of the "the "secure partner," this special being in front of whom [the actor] does everything [...] to whom he reveals his most personal problems and experiences" (Schechner and Hoffman 1997, loc. 1252). Grotowski suggests that it cannot be defined but discovered.

approach to empowering actors with a profound grasp of the integral

relationships between text, platform and performer.

The breadth of experience that these participants brought to the work was a change from the more homogenised training environment in a university classroom. What the feedback reveals is that many different performers, even when working with gaps in age and experience, can make the work function for themselves while maintaining an ensemble-based, collaborative learning environment. Integration is a key theme in feedback and became a significant message in the handbook.

## Workshop Summary

With the exception of a 3-month hiatus for research and studio work and a 1-month period for website design, the workshops were conducted nearly every month between February of 2018 and March of 2019. As they progressed, the sequencing of instruction took on a more consistent shape and became more repeatable while the narrative remained quite "loose" and responsive.

I noticed while going over the notes provided by Dr. Harrison, Will-Harris and two additional external observers,[90] that I continued to modify how I gave instructions, even though the content of the sessions, from my perspective, had remained quite fixed. I borrowed concepts from Massumi and used different anecdotes and metaphors, such as the Storm Mandala. But I grounded the classroom activities in what I observed in the students. I tried as often as possible to highlight the parts of the system that were suited to addressing immediate goals while keeping it all ideally "lateral."

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[90] These were emailed notes from the members of Third Wheel Productions.

A central goal of the research was to encourage adaptability. The variety of research contexts provided opportunities for this. Teaching, rehearsing a play, devising a new piece and working with teachers in different disciplines embedded a flexible "framing"[91] of the system in its early stages. With its origin in team teaching, it was considerably easier to maintain throughout as it developed greater complexity.

The Crosspoints were taught in the relatively homogenous environment of universities as well as in more heterogeneous contexts where one can have a beginner and a professional in the same session. Where possible, situations in which the developing system could adaptively respond[92] were sought out. For, example;

- tailoring the work for a devised theatre project,

- importing the work to a rehearsal schedule that is in-progress,

- and collaborating with Will-Harris on the writing workshops.

Many "truths" about the system did not emerge until they were seen afresh later down the track. The downtime between workshops averaged to be a little over a month. This allowed for reflection and grounding research to have their effects. The *a posteriori* narrative of the Crosspoints in this report has drawn meaning from the string of events. Emergent phenomena have developed logic in hindsight and have accumulated significance through "speaking them into being" and repeating them reiteratively throughout the year of work.

> My goal was to integrate knowledge as questions emerged and then carry
>
> this process forward to the handbook. For example, working with film

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[91] As in Bernstein's pedagogic discourse.

[92] The situations that prompted adaptation contributed greatly to the idea of the "matrix" found in the previous section titled "Externalisation."

actors presented practical concerns about adapting the work for the camera. The email from the student regarding "Asylum Inmate," outlined a narrative I was unaware of. The persistent metaphor of the labyrinth will undoubtedly influence the handbook. (From notes on practice 30-03-2019)

The Crosspoints practices, some of which are from previous training and others invented in the course of this research, were enhanced by keywords and themes in Massumi's writings-- below. These became points of reference while teaching. The framework of this work is phenomenological and the ideal action within the framework is to continuously (re)create modes of experimentation.

| Wayfinding | | prescribed destinations. |
|---|---|---|
| Improvisation | | technical constraints. |
| Revivification | ***...should not be conditioned by...*** | replication. |
| The unthought | | the known.[93] |

*Cross-reference: Exercises and Order of Points*

If the reader has felt that this voice linking the exegesis (this paper) to the handbook has fallen silent, it is because the section on workshop teaching is already a multi-layered, multivocal part of the document. Adding yet another voice might be overkill.

The experience of teaching was immensely important once it came to writing the handbook. Some of the exercise descriptions went through several drafts and rewrites to balance

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[93] These phrases were inspired by Massumi's *Concrete is as Concrete Doesn't*. (2002, page 1)

explanation and guidance with engaging questions for the reader. Other practices remained unchanged throughout the teaching period and could be transcribed "as-is.".

The Image Study and Source Room were foundations in my early training in the 80s and I have used them for many years. The Storm Mandala (called a Source Storm in the handbook) came to me in a flash while teaching for Dr. Harrison's rehearsal. It seemed to be the best way to modify and adapt the work to a rehearsal process that was already underway with a director I did not know very well.

Likewise, the short "interrogation" scenes led me to write the Inner Montage section of the handbook. This was a completely new practice, discovered in the Skirball sessions in Los Angeles and then carried from site to site afterwards. They have become a staple practice since then.

## Summary of Combination

This section of the research document has focused on how the symbols, objects and ideas of the Externalisation phase have been turned into repeatable exercises and documents that allow groups of people to transmit the knowledge or teach it to themselves. While this section doesn't contain the actual documents (see the handbook for that), it records the events leading up to the document.

# Internalisation

*Recap:* Internalisation is the phase where an organisation's knowledge can be shared through instructions and other documents. A learner can take the information from the explicit domain and carry it forward as tacit knowledge.

Up to this point, the themes in this part of the research document have followed the SECI action research model faithfully. Internalisation is the fourth and last theme. Taken literally, the handbook accompanying this thesis is the internalised practice. Another way to interpret the term "internalisation" is to view the knowledge as embodied, *i.e.* embodied by the researcher writing the handbook. This part of the thesis uses the latter interpretation to discuss how knowledge from the previous phases of SECI was carried into different contexts. It served as one final layer of meaning-making prior to writing the handbook.

I had the opportunity to take three intensive workshops in 2018 and 2019. These included:

- A week-long Rasaboxes intensive.
  - Instructors: Michele Minnick[94] and Janice Orlandi[95]
- A week-long Michael Chekhov intensive.
  - Instructors: Janice Orlandi and Lisa Dalton[96]
- A two-week series of classes with Screen Actors London.
  - Instructors: Tom Sawyer and Philip Wolff.[97]

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[94] Michele Minnick CMA, PhD. is a primary developer of the Rasaboxes exercises.

[95] Janice Orlandi is Artistic Director of the Actors Movement Studio (AMS) Conservatory NYC.

[96] Lisa Dalton is president of the National Michael Chekhov Association in Dallas Fort Worth, TX, U.S.A.

[97] Tom Sawyer and Philip Wolff are co-founders of Screen Actors London Acting School, London, U.K.

These workshops did not involve the Crosspoints in any way but provided contour and perspective on the development of the research--*i.e.* how the Crosspoints relate to more established methods and how they function in the technical, multidisciplinary context of acting for the camera. These situations were used to align the theory-to-practice lens.

Following are brief summaries of the methods taught in the workshops. It is not the aim to give an exhaustive description of the practice but to convey their essential qualities. In most cases, the workshop was the researcher's first contact with the teachings. However minimal these summaries are, and cursory the experiences might seem, the workshops provided rich, field-related data and contextualised my thoughts on the Crosspoints as work on the handbook began.

## Rasaboxes

Richard Schechner's Rasaboxes was developed to bring a counter-perspective to Western actor training. Schechner writes that Western theatre, based on Aristotelian Poetics, places the site of theatricality in the eyes and ears (Schechner 2012, page 10). The *Natyasastra* (translates: *natya-*"Dramatic Art" *sastra-*"Holy Text") is the sanskrit equivalent of Aristotle's Poetics. It discusses the use of *rasa* by a performer to create dramatic art. *Rasa* is synonymous with the English words "taste" or "flavour" and is meant to evoke the idea that emotion is received through the senses of the body.

*Rasa* is the cumulative result of the stimulus, involuntary reaction and voluntary reaction--it is sensuous, proximate and experiential (Schechner 2012, page 12). Rather than relying solely on the eyes and ears as the primary organs of reception, Schechner suggests that rasas

incorporate the whole body as a signifying and receiving organ by engaging the enteric nervous system (Schechner 2012, page 18).

The *rasas* correlate to 9 strong (archetypal) emotional states--desire, humour, grief, anger, vigour, fear, disgust, surprise and peaceful balance. The Affect Mandala borrows, as Schechner has, from this taxonomy. At the core of *rasa* is the distinction between "feelings," which are experienced, and "emotions," which are communicated. An emotion is transmitted by a performer in the same way that a chef prepares a banquet. Acting is the art of presenting the *sthayi bhavas* (the indwelling emotions) so that both the performer and the partaker can taste the emotional *rasa* (Schechner 2012, page 15). It can also be the tonality, or rhythm of the performance, that may be modulated in the same way as the pitch, key, tempo and rhythm of music can be (Minnick and Cole 2002, loc. 6396).

The rasaboxes exercise, as Michele Minnick and Paula Murray Cole say, is a form of movement training that engages the entire complex of emotion-body-voice-imagination-character. It is intended to overcome an actor's limited access to the experience of the expression of certain emotions due to culture, theatrical training or individual history (Minnick and Cole 2002, loc. 6381-6409).

Rasaboxes Workshop, July 2 - 6, 2018

The rasaboxes use gestures and physical imagery to extend the actor's experience beyond the limits of life history. They create a "nodal," mapped environment and ascribe specific meanings to the taped and/or chalk-drawn boxes. The performance space has a clearly defined "inside" and "outside," imposing a choice on the actor--Play, or do not play. There is no "thinking about it." The similarities to Source Room are numerous, but one of the most

prevalent is the idea of orienting certain facets of the performance activity to locations in the room. This recruits spatial intelligence as an acting resource.

The exercises hold a radically "external" perspective that, in the Western acting tradition, may be seen as taboo territory. Fear of melodrama and cliché may stigmatise such work. Rather than subscribing to the "interior/exterior" binary, rasaboxes propose an "emulsification" of the outer and inner life to enliven and liberate the actor in a performance. As Schechner points out, the value of the performance lies in its reception. Whether the internal feelings are there for the actor or not, they actually happen in the audience's minds and bodies.

Takeaways: The workshop was a transformative, rich experience, Summarising it in this way is painfully reductive, but I wish to highlight two experiences from exercises in the latter half of the week. Transitioning, or phasing, between the rasa boxes was revelatory. Occupying the "phase space"[98] of two extremes harkened back to Massumi's emergence and the interstices of the Source Room stations.[99]

A second enduring experience was the energised tension of having only two actors play in the space while all others watched. The Source Room work is usually done with an entire class in the work at once. Clearing the Rasaboxes of all other actors focused the actor's attention and

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[98] "Phase space" is a term used by Massumi describing the organization of multiple levels that have different logics and organizations, but are loc..ked in resonance with each other (Massumi 2002, page 33).

[99] The side-coaching narratives started to include transitions between stations in the Source Room--letting them have as much significance and attention as the stations themselves. I began to include transitional "phasing" in between "Energy" and "Creature" and between "Creature" and "Persona."

was different than an "emotional scene" performed while inwardly focused on psychological phenomena. Both the actor and the audience became mutually engaged, with heightened receptivity due to the emotional nature of the communication.

Schechner writes about traditional Indian genres from a first-hand, audience perspective.

> [T]he performer [is] looking at her own hands as they form different *hastas* or *mudras*--precise gestures with very specific meanings. This self-regarding is not narcissism in the Western sense. *Abhinaya* literally means to lead the performance to the spectators--and the first spectator is the performer herself" (Schechner 2012, page 24).

The merits of rasaboxes over other methods like emotional memory recall is that the performer retains a form of detached-but-engaged self-awareness that has the potential to take the performer to the heightened state of emotion they might not normally take if left to mine their own life experience or psychological make-up. This "self-regarding" as Schechner puts it, is similar to Image Studies. My experience in rasaboxes has informed how I narrate and teach an image study. I try to mix the internal and external. The emotions are like a "binding agent" that unites the two.

## Michael Chekhov Technique

Michael Chekhov's actor training originated in the milieu of performers and directors at the First Studio in Moscow. Chekhov performed in productions by Stanislavski, Richard Boleslavsky, and Yevgeny Vakhtangov. One of his performer contemporaries was Vsevolod Meyerhold. Both Meyerhold and Vakhtangov extended the work of Stanislavski, particularly by departing from his method of emotional memory; as Andrei Drozin writes, in holistic, "full-blooded" processes. In some cases, they created their own theatrical languages starting

from dance, still poses and choral movement while prioritising the unbreakable connection between the "life of the body" and the "life of the spirit" (Droznin 2017, page 137).

In 1923, Chekov was appointed director of the Second Moscow Art Theatre where he diverged from Stanislavski's praxis, incorporating "mystical" ideas from *eurythmy* and the anthroposophist concepts of Rudolf Steiner. Underlying his new direction was a desire to foster a more creatively stimulating environment for actors through suggestive instruction rather than the correction of faults (Gordon 2006, page 61).[100]

Chekhov created improvisations and games that were an incipience of, or metaphorically played with, the concept of production. One of the primary differences between Chekhov's and Stanislavski's approaches is their view on the actor's source. Stanislavski saw it as being the actor's experience of their own senses. Chekhov's work started from observing images already formed by art or the archetypal ones that have formed in the actor's mind. Despite the difference in their concept of the actor's *a priori*, Stanislavski's system underpinned all of Chekhov's innovations (Gordon 2006, pages 61-62).

The gap between Stanislavski and Chekhov is not wide or irreconcilable. In Chekhov's correspondences with Stanislavski, during his exile to Berlin in 1929, Chekhov argued Stanislavski away from the emotional memory technique. While he was not immediately swayed, by the 1930s Stanislavski began his exploration of Physical Action and eventually moved into Active Analysis. Droznin writes that this shift emphasises the actor's physical

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[100] In today's pedagogy, his approach would be classified as "learner centred" as opposed to how Stanislavski's method has been couched in "knowledge-centred" approaches to instruction.

existence and action as the medium for bringing the conceptual (read: virtual) into the physical world. The body is the material medium of acting (Droznin 2017, pages 42-43).

## Michael Chekhov Workshop, July 9 - 13, 2018

Chekhov's technique is grounded in the physical presence of the actor. The entirety of his approach is diagrammed, circumscribed by a mandala-like circle with "Inspired Acting" at its centre.[101] The actor may navigate to this centre through any one of 19 practices including Psychophysical Exercises (Expansion/Contraction, Qualities of Movement & Archetypal Gestures), Qualities and Sensations, Characterisation, Atmosphere, Composition, Radiating/Receiving, Improvisation, Psychological Gesture, Tempo and Rhythm, *etc.*.

The classes were fast-paced as both of the instructors led us through their entire curriculum within the five-day intensive. They were accomplished Chekhov practitioners and always explained the underlying philosophy of the training while applying it. Our final project, selected by the instructors, was monologue work from Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*.[102] Throughout the intensive, I was often "floored" by the similarities and

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[101] See the *Chart of Inspired Action*, as used by National Michael Chekhov Association Intensive Training Workshops located at http://www.critical-stages.org/15/the-art-of-michael-chekhovs-chart-a-training-sequence-for-contemporary-practice-in-professional-studios-and-academia/

[102] By naming the performance text used in this intensive, I have inevitably drawn attention to its cultural/historical significance and raised questions regarding its significance to my investigation. Why wouldn't I have performed in a Sarah Kane play, a piece of new performance art or a play by William Shakespeare? I have, in the past, deployed prototypes of this system in performance art and Butoh dance performances. In this case, this workshop "arrived" and provided an opportunity to apply myself as a performer to an established acting system that had thought and processes adjacent to those I had been exploring in my own work. One of the tenets of my work is that imaginary experiential "memory" can be built through physical improvisation. For this

parallel thought between this class and the methods I had been working with since my late teens. Yet I knew that none of my teachers had ever knowingly encountered Chekhov's work.

The parallels are too numerous to discuss with the detail they deserve. And my contact with the technique, being only 5 days, would make a protracted elucidation disingenuous. Chekhov posited that an actor imagines with his body--*i.e.* The Imaginary Body. Chekhov believed that "there is an objective world in which our images have their own life," and that cultivating images was training for the imagination (Gordon 2006, page 63). [103]

The method of developing a Psychological Gesture by scaling the movement up and down, the use of Archetypal Images, Emotional Atmospheres and using metaphors such as the "ball, stick and veil" to categorize physical states of energy--these are the most prevalent overlapping activities.

The work gave me the opportunity to "knit" many of my long-known practices with their progenitors in Chekhov's philosophy and technique. Richard Kemp observes that "much knowledge about acting is held and communicated in a sort of oral tradition — the lore of the

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workshop, I chose a character with which I would have the least amount of life-experience to draw upon. I played the role of Lady Bracknell. I adhered to the Chekhov system throughout the workshop and reflected upon its similarities after the fact. Through this comparative analysis I came to the conclusion that, given my limited understanding of Chekhov's method, I understood it to model similar ideas and use metaphors compatible with those I had been building in my work. The Crosspoints system comes to similar conclusions by a different route.

[103] This concept is connected to Jung, but also to Bourdieu in that Images can become archetypal, influencing how we construct our experiences much in the same way that *Doxa* and *habitus* dictate and explain behaviours and values simultaneously.

studio" and that there is a tendency towards kinesthetic learning which prioritizes embodied experience over narrated information (Kemp 2014, page 14). This method had undoubtedly worked its way into many tributaries of contemporary actor training.

## The Skein of Practice

Michael Chekhov admitted to being greatly influenced by Vakhtangov's talks and rehearsals. According to Andrei Malaev-Babel, the influence was mutual. (Malaev-Babel 2011, loc. 302) Chekhov ranked Vakhtangov as the highest exemplar of the Russian theatre in a speech delivered in 1955 to Hollywood actors, saying:

> [...] he was a kind of vessel, as I say, where all the positive things of this period of the Russian theatre [...] coming from Stanislavski, Nemirovich, Tairov, Meyerhold, apparently can be combined. And Vakhtangov did combine them; he brought them together – these extreme and seemingly irreconcilable things [...]
>
> - Transcribed from a vinyl audio record; Bakhrushin State Central Theatre Museum; HB 4904/17 (Malaev-Babel 2011)

Vakhtangov's work can be seen as a point of conjunction, combining seemingly irreconcilable practices through synthesising images and sensations with the psychophysical body. According to Gordon, he believed Stanislavski's system was limited to naturalism. To overcome this, an actor need not be concerned with how an action is motivated as long as it produces the desired effect for the audience. He separated actor and character motivations by combining actions into illogical sequences--as in surrealist drama (Gordon 2006, page 59).[104]

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[104] I unknowingly replicated this very practice in the Los Angeles workshop by reordering the sequence of emblems that the actors were preparing for their silent scene.

He advocated the idea of the actor's "secret reason" for doing something, which he called "a justification," and used "naive belief" in performance instead of Stanislavski's "Magic If." In short, his methods unfettered the actor's imagination from relying only on the sensations of the actor's true-to-life experience of the mundane world. Vakhtangov incorporated fantasy by saying that the actor's task is to understand the analytical, psychological and physical aspects of motivation. This meant understanding the character's goal, feeling the character's desire and making physical adjustments to this--which may be realistic or the product of fantasy (Gordon 2006, page 60).

Chekhov's and Vakhtangov's work retained the base elements of Stanislavski's system, but they did not pedagogically frame their methods as strongly as Stanislavski did. In the Chekhov acting technique, an actor may use any single practice, a combination of them in any order, to find Inspired Acting. Vakhtangov advocated using fantasy, adjustments and justifications to produce the desired outcome. Both examples allude to the Bernsteinian concept of weakened frames.

More similarities are found in Robert Gordon's quote of Vakhtangov's emancipatory acting pedagogy, "A theatrical school must clear the way for the creative potentialities of the student--but he must move and proceed along this road himself, he cannot be taught. The school must remove all the conventional rubbish which prevents the spontaneous manifestation of the student's deeply hidden potentialities" (Vakhtangov in Gordon 2006, page 77).

My experience in the Michael Chekhov intensive stayed with me for some time afterwards. Many of the practices felt as though I had gone back in time to my training with Linda

Putnam and Penelope Stella. It occurred to me that both Putnam and Stella had assimilated an approach to the actor's imagination that was similar to Michael Chekhov's. *To the Actor: On the Technique of Acting*, written by Chekhov in 1953, contains this observation about imaginary images:

> You are amused by the fact that these new images possess their own independent lives; you are astonished that they appear without your invitation. Finally these newcomers force you to watch them with greater poignancy than the simple pictures of everyday memory; these fascinating guests who made their appearance from nowhere, who live their own lives full of emotions, awaken your responsive feelings. They force you to laugh and to cry with them. Like magicians, they call up in you an unconquerable desire to become one of them. (Chekhov 1953, page 36)

Images, Chekhov says, have their psychology, like the people surrounding us in everyday life. Unlike seeing people by their outer appearances alone, these images have inner lives that are completely open to behold. This is due to their constructed nature. It is like the common adage, every person you encounter in your dreams is a version of you.

> The oftener and more intently you look into your image, the sooner it awakens in you those feelings, emotions and will impulses so necessary to your performance of the character (Chekhov 1953, page 40).

Putnam's and Stella's Source Room, along with the Emblems, provides a framework for looking into images. The nature of the emblems is that they are metaphoric, not life-like by any means. They are different from fleshing out your character with something like a

character dossier, which fixes the actor's imagination on concrete moments of the narrative. Also, like Vakthangov's adjustments, the Emblems and Source room provide modal points of entry into the text, rather than limiting the actor's access to a character to textual interpretation only.[105]

Malaev-Babel writes that Vakhtangov "interpreted the problem of an actor's improvisational freedom versus formal discipline; paving the way for Jerzy Grotowski--who was trained by one of his disciples. He is credited with prefiguring Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty and "trance" with his cosmic ecstasies, earning praise from Max Reinhart and Edward Gordon Craig, and influencing artists such as Bertolt Brecht and Peter Brook (Malaev-Babel 2011, loc. 292).

Adjustments and images pre-existed Vakhtangov's and Chekhov's acting methods in many forms. Folk tales, myths, song, poetry and ritual objects all have image-like qualities and help us "adjust" our behaviour and perspective of the world. I believe that Vakhtangov's and Chekhov's innovations flowed into the field and became something akin to common sense. As I coached actors in film scenes, images became more relevant to me than ever. Chekhov writes:

> I anticipate your asking: "Why should I take such pains to develop my
> imagination and apply it to work upon modern, naturalistic plays when all
> the characters are so obvious and easy to comprehend; when the lines,
> situations and business provided by the author take care of
> everything?"(Chekhov 1953, page 41)

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[105] This is often the misinterpretation applied to Stanislavski's work due to the separation of "preparation for a role" from "an actor's work."

Chekhov responds to this rhetorical question by saying that what the author provides, in the form of a written play, is his creation, not the actors. In agreement with Chekhov, I would add that it cannot be anything more. Authors expect that "flesh and blood" be provided by the actor and they take great pains, especially in modern screenwriting, to edit and reduce with the goal of "showing, not telling." There is an implicit trust that the deeper story will be told (and written into the body) by the actor.

## Acting for the Camera

The last workshop was a practical class in acting for the camera. The purpose for taking it was to follow up on the questions raised during the test workshops in Deptford. How could Crosspoints be applied practically to the specific problems encountered by TV and film actors? The documentation in this section draws almost exclusively from my reflection as a participant.

**London Screen Actors Workshop, March 11 - 23, 2019**

One of the first concerns raised by the film actors in Deptford was how to "score" a scene for a camera in a way that is creatively engaging for the actor. The exercises provided opportunities to explore how to apply elements of Crosspoints to meet these situations.

The following exercises were taught by the Screen Actors London faculty. Unless specified otherwise, these scenes took place in a 2-camera set consisting of a table with two chairs facing each other. The actors performed from seated positions, each with a camera on them focused in a medium close shot.

<u>The Cold Reading:</u> In this exercise, the actors are given a script which is placed face down on the table. Once "action" is called the scripts are turned over and the actor's read "cold" with no line being spoken unless full eye contact is held with the scene partner. This leads to pauses in mid-sentence and long gaps between lines which can be edited out later.

Reading "cold" was meant to place full attention on my connection to my partner. This was more important than any information I could glean from the page for the brief moments I was able to look down to catch a few words. I found that I was predominantly communicating with Energy. Our shared connection relied least on words and mostly on this nonverbal spectrum of performance. Words were either "made to be true" or revealed our attitude and feelings toward one another. The text became an "ornament" of the true exchange that was happening between performers. In future versions of this exercise, I would include work with Light and Shadow. This work tends to anchor an exploration when doing the Source Room and would serve this exercise well.

<u>Walking, Then Speaking Directly to Camera:</u> The participants walk back and forth across space in a full shot. When they sit in a chair facing the camera, they look "down the barrel" and answer interview questions. The purpose of this exercise was to determine the actor's "type." The off-camera participants filled out a form asking what occupations, age range, archetypes, etc. the actor might be suitable for.

We started with walking. When it came to my turn, I intentionally shifted my movement centre with each pass in front of the camera. I did this in subtle ways, improvising secretly. For example, I shifted my internal focus to one of the four sides in the Emblem work.[106] I also

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[106] The Emblem work is found on the Story and Antistory mandala. The sides are Self, World, Future and Past.

changed my energy and tempo slightly with each turn. In the feedback on this segment of the film, the other participants listed a wide variety of types. I attribute this to the notion that my work allowed them to see what they wanted to see in my physicality.

When I interviewed directly "to the camera," the instruction whispered to me by the director was to answer every question as if I was enjoying a sexual fantasy about the person asking them. There was no human partner to work with, I was looking "down the barrel" of the camera. Because the situation was a complete fantasy, I used image and personally constructed archetypes.

This last half of the exercise emphasised the practicality of using images in camera acting. There are situations where the actor's surroundings and scene partner are entirely fantasised.[107]

Filmed Scene for a Demo Reel: This project comprised the entire second week of the class. The actors took turns "crewing" for each other. An average of two scenes was filmed per class. The participants could choose their scene from two that were selected by the faculty. The rehearsal period started with cold reading, as above. As the week progressed the group worked through a technical rehearsal up to on-location filming.

The scene I ended up working with was from the film *American Beauty*. I was a "redneck" father who is verbally abusing his son because he suspects him of being gay. Because I am gay, with no children, the situation was quite alien to my life experience. Creating "Magic If"

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[107] Working within the "volume" of a motion capture studio comes to mind.

circumstances for this scene would have worked fine, but for this work, it felt like playing another scene inside this one.

Recalling the work done by the participants in the test workshops, I tried using Emblems and Energy. They enabled me to consistently hit a highly emotional climax--throwing a beer at my scene partner while calling him a "faggot." We had to do 6 takes and I felt good about each one. I was able to offer different nuances for each take and build my work as we went along.

Emblems proved to be helpful in the "downtime" between takes. Attention tends to go to the equipment, *i.e.* lights, boom shadows and "sound on the wire" more often than the actor's performance. Emblems allowed me to "manage" myself while the crew worked and hold the energy of the scene alive during long periods of waiting.

The experience of working on camera highlighted the demands of the medium and the working conditions. There is often physical discomfort with cold, damp, heat, *etc.,* as well as awkward physical postures that one must accommodate to keep everything "in a frame." Having a rich, accessible image life keeps the actor's imagination alive even when under siege by discomfort and distraction.

Film is a sequential, visual medium. Like a graphic novel, the sequence of shots conveys a story. The comic book page below is constructed in the same way. In each of them, there are different demands of the actor which can be met with a physical image.  In each of these situations, the actor could choose to play the scene "realistically" using the components of a

Stanislavski based method. But they could also play it physically, contributing to the composition and physicality of the scene.

- In the first shot, both actors are scenic elements more than characters.

- In shots two and three, they are readable as people.

- In the fourth shot, the relationship is conveyed only through the hands.

- The final shot suggests variations in rhythm, timing. Who initiates the hug? Is it fast, or tentative? These are usually not determined at the time of filming but in editing.



Figure 14: An example of a storyboard montage,

Taylor, T. (2014). *Injustice: Gods Among Us* Year Three, issue #1 [Cartoon].

## Summary of Externalisation

My quiet supposition throughout all of this research was that Crosspoints would be a "portable" acting system that could be used by itself or folded into a variety of different work inside and outside the representational acting mode. The workshops let me internalise and carry the Crosspoints forward as a student would.

One of the central goals of Grounded Theory research is to ensure its fit between the findings and the world the research purports to represent. Moving into writing the handbook, these workshops provided me with recent background and context for the practice. They have also allowed me to "fit" my thoughts on Crosspoints into the world. The acting for camera class, with its practical application throughout the second week, was especially helpful because it presented problems emerging from the situation of practice. By this time, the theory and practice of Crosspoints were developed enough to provide solutions within the site of practice, not just to be an esoteric training method. Working with two similar methods such as Rasaboxes and Michael Chekhov's actor training grounded Crosspoints in well-established areas of thought, even if they exist in the margins of Stanislavski-based work.

# Part 3: Research Summary

Ludwig Wittgenstein's theory of "language games" in *Philosophical Investigations*, aphorism 18, liken a language to "an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses with additions from various periods and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs" (Wittgenstein 2009). Multiple languages such as the symbolism of chemistry, the notation of calculus or music are the suburbs of language. Each suburb has its coherence, forming a language game. According to Wittgenstein, language games are a primitive language meant to be a "shorthand" for communicating or directing the action. These become naturalised by consensus even though, over time, meaning and social truth change to form new subjectivities.

When I started this research project, I felt that common acting theories and methods may be limiting the actor's capacity to embrace the changes that are already ubiquitous to the field. The consensual suburb of the actor has distanced the practice from the signal calls from the postmodern and postdramatic movements of the last few decades.

In *On Certainty,* Wittgenstein posits, "I am told, for example, that someone climbed this mountain many years ago. Do I always enquire into the reliability of the teller of the story, and whether the mountain did exist years ago?... [A child] doesn't learn at all that that mountain has existed for a long time: that is, the question whether it is so doesn't arise at all. It swallows this consequence down, so to speak, together with what it learns." (1969, page 143)

If the language of an actor's practice is unelaborated upon by the questions of the present moment, it will always occupy Wittgenstein's "suburbs." Following the methods of master

artists, unquestioningly, or without reawakening them through interrogation and play, actors will derive, and prescribe, their process from a limited language; one "swallows its consequence down," as above.

The Crosspoints constitute a framework to examine what theatre practitioners do from a "meta" level. The practices associated with it are integrative, combining elements of Stanislavski's system and Overlie's Viewpoints to "square" the chaotic, multiple, overlapping elements of practice.

The process started with the simple notion of team-teaching and "weakening" the frames of pedagogic discourse. The problems and solutions encountered in this phase of the research led to Bourdieu. Field theory visualises the *Doxa* and *habitus* that control, to a great extent, what is "thinkable" within a field. Massumi's notion of "movement" as a means to enter the virtual and unthought has contributed greatly to slipping out of the grids that *habitus* makes from our experiences.

The "mandala" visualisations serve to create nodal and relational models of the practice rather than linear ones. This is a response to the broadened concept of performance and working in a field that is increasingly heterogeneous, not only in terms of its cultural texts but technologies and the new ways in which stories are told, untold, ruptured and reintegrated with the culture(s) of this moment.

What has resulted is a model and some practices that extend the underpinning ideas of this research in as friendly a manner as possible.

*Cross-reference: Final Notes on the Handbook*

The opportunities to study other methods while doing this research gave me a polyfocal researcher's perspective, avoiding a monoscopic, monolithic re-telling of the Crosspoints. By working in Rasaboxes, Michael Chekhov Technique and Screen Acting, I was able to import the work to test it in "tendrilous" and adaptive ways.

The most eye-opening experience was studying the Michael Chekhov Technique at an extremely late stage in the research. I was grateful for the circumstances because if I had encountered the work earlier, I might have lost faith in the uniqueness of the Emblem work and the Source Room, which form a substantial part of the Crosspoints practices. Instead of losing faith, I took encouragement from the validity of my ideas already expressed in others' works.

## Conclusions

This research has traced a narrative line to plot diverse experiences while capturing beliefs, practices, experiences and the contexts in which practitioners and participants act and respond to. Narrative analysis is often used in studies of educational experience (Connelly and Clandinin 1988, pages 2-14). In the course of the study, practice, data analysis and narrative inquiry have progressed in tandem, resulting in a thematically and relatively chronologically coherent, storied account.

As stated earlier, this approach has been recruited to present the data in a way that allows the reader to fill gaps between the events and the "smoothened narrative" of the handbook. Donald Polkinghorne differentiates between two methods of narrative research.

- **Analysis of Narratives** is a paradigmatic mode. It "produces cognitive networks of concepts that allow people to construct experiences as familiar by emphasizing the common elements that appear over and over" (Polkinghorne 1995, page 10).
  - It uncovers commonalities across multiple data sources and uncovers general knowledge from particulars. It tends to underplay the unique qualities of each situation (Kim 2016, page 197).
- **Narrative Analysis** uses narrative reasoning which notices the "differences and diversity of people's behaviour. It attends to the temporal context and complex interaction of the elements that make each situation remarkable" (Polkinghorne 1995, page 7).
  - It configures the data into a coherent whole while sustaining the metaphoric richness of a story. It is meant to help readers understand how and why things happened--why participants behaved as they did--and to convey the lived experience of phenomena (Kim 2016, page 197).

To my understanding, both forms of analysis were active at different times in this research. At times, they mutually informed each other. My claim at the beginning of the research, noted in the section about research methodology, was that this study used modified Grounded Theory in an Ethnographic sense, *i.e.* focusing on processes rather than specific contextual details.

Most of my conscious activity while teaching the Crosspoints workshops was aimed toward constructing and recognising common elements that repeated, to create a generalised story of the Crosspoints. My attitude toward teaching was to "stick to the evolving script" but I was equally committed to inviting change as it emerged.  This is much like what Jeong-Hee Kim calls "flirtation" with data; an unconscious form of scepticism. Flirtation happens when one is

involved in a shift of allegiance or transition. When one flirts with ideas, it allows one to keep them in play, or to allow new ideas to take shape without influencing them with our wishes. Flirtation "dwell[s] on what is uncertain, unconvincing or perplexing, rendering surprises, serendipities, and of course, disappointments as well." (Kim 2016, page 187)

I realise that my research involves an arbitrary subjectivity. Narratives are smoothened to add coherence and insight for the reader. The familiarity researchers have with their professional contexts may cause them to omit details which seem obvious but are not obvious to the reader. Kim proposes two perspectives from which to approach narrative analysis; called the interpretation of faith and the interpretation of suspicion. When we approach narrative data from the perspective of faith, we assume the participants are telling a story that can be believed and taken at face value. Narratives retold from this perspective are assumed to be a genuine personal encounter.

Interpreting faith is complemented by an interpretation of suspicion which involves decoding and demystifying implicit meanings or rhetoric that might go unnoticed. For example, I was concerned that some of the positive feedback from the April 6, 2018 workshop was influenced by the end of term auditions. As a result, I focused less on the most positive statistics and more on those that reported the work as "partially successful"--the participants could replace what was "unclear" with methods they already knew.

Obvious issues that arise from using narrative inquiry as a method include:

- Meaning is not tangible, nor is it static, and therefore is not easily grasped.

- Readers are at the mercy of the teller's recollection and introspection because we do not have direct access to the realm of meaning held by others.

- Information about the realm of meaning held by others may be gathered through narratives, but these are context-sensitive and should not be taken in isolation.

- The methods of analysing narratives are not quantitative nor absolute; they use interpretive reasoning which is imprecise.

- The realm of meaning appears in various modes of presentation including perception, memory and imagination. The connections between images and ideas are complex and are therefore hard to investigate (Polkinghorne 1995, page 7-8).

The ethnographic and phenomenological stance in self-study enables analysis to focus on why people believe what they do. It proposes an explanation of the structures of belief and reasons why the researcher and participants act upon those beliefs within their communities. The meaning-making process is extended in the narration of the study to "lay bare" the researcher's voice and its role in interpreting the findings. It is the primary scheme in which human existence [and actions] are rendered meaningful (Polkinghorne 1995, page 11).

The process of writing the handbook (and illustrating the overlapping mandalas) owes a considerable intellectual debt to Joseph Schwab. He revolutionised pedagogical philosophy in the 1970s by introducing the belief that any curricular situation may be understood in terms of "four commonplaces" (Schwab 1978, pages 366-368, 371-375). These include teacher, learner subject matter and milieu.

This contributed greatly to critical reflection on practice by adding dimensions that may previously have been pictured only as binaries; for example, subject matter and learner,

teacher and learner, *etc.*. Considering the four commonplaces encourages the critical (or creative) practitioner to incorporate multiple perspectives at once. For example, a commonplace that is frequently overlooked in critical reflection is the spatial milieu. The method of organising space is a component of the pedagogical device. Theatre practitioners are more sensitive to this because several aspects of learning activities are dictated by space. Space implies movement. and as Massumi posits, movement implies emergence. Spatially oriented compass points became the dominant metaphor of the Crosspoints.

Schwab's other significant contributions include his concept of The Practical. Schwab viewed curriculum development as a moribund field (Schwab 1978, page 287). That is, it had become too dependent on theories from other fields which are incomplete or ill-fitted to the problems of teaching and learning. Schwab pictured the divide between theory and practice in much the same way as it is often depicted in fields such as performance. Theory development is separated from practice because of their differences in method, source of problems, subject matter and outcome.

This perspective highlights how, for example, the Postdramatic Theatre can be outlined as a significant departure from traditional theatre when comparing theories of representation, whereas, in practice, the postdramatic is a functional, integral component of a common rehearsal process.

There are two concepts related to the Practical; the Quasi-practical and the Eclectic. The Quasi-practical is responsible for finding organic connections between diverse organs of the school, the community and the educational establishment. The Eclectic helps teachers and learners draw educational implications from rival theories or theories that may seem partially

or wholly disconnected from practice. It recognises the usefulness of the theory and that terms and distinctions of a theory--even from another discipline--can be brought to bear in practical applications.

Schwab also recognised that the concepts of the Practical required methods of application; bringing theory and practice together. He calls these the Arts. This term refers to the way principles and methods are used, especially in the Humanities. They are differentiated from the Sciences because, as Schwab writes, "Although they can be described and exemplified, they cannot be reduced to generally applicable rules" (1978, page 323). Schwab elaborates with two kinds of Arts-- the Practical Arts (1978, pages 324-326), which create decisions on what to do, and the Eclectic Arts which enable a theory to be used in practice.

The Practical Arts include Perception, Problemation, Prescription and Commitment to the new idea or solution. They are integral to most action research cycles. The Eclectic Arts are more uniquely "Schwabian." They are;

- mutual accommodation of theory and practice
- recognition of the incompleteness of theory about a single subject
- selection, adjustment, and a combination of incomplete views (1978, page 331).

In a rather long-winded and roundabout way, I hope I have impressed upon the reader how Schwab's concepts of the commonplaces, the eclectic and the practical are the substrate of the handbook accompanying this paper. To provide a more in-depth explanation would be another thesis. The Source Room, developed by Linda Putnam and Penelope Stella, not only accommodates contrary or incomplete theories conceptually, it allows them to inform each other *physically and mutually*. The "phase-space" between fixed points of thought or action

became the basis upon which all the other mandalas were constructed. Massumi defines phase space as a diagrammatic rendering of the virtual dimension as "[t]he organization of multiple levels that have different logics and temporal organizations, but are locked in resonance with each other and recapitulate the same event in divergent ways." He proposes that this is "a fractal ontology and nonlinear causality underlying theories of complexity" (Massumi 2002, pages 32-33). This epitomises the mandalas and the way they have been put together in the handbook. They are meant to be eclectic and resonant.

Some may argue that eclecticism lacks rigour,[108] spreading a practitioner's energy too thinly across multiple areas of knowledge. Eclecticism is not exclusive. It can be deployed alongside regular curriculum design to enhance learning and problem-solving. Secondly, an eclectic array of theories does not need to be embodied simultaneously by every participant. The mandala illustrations indicate how theories overlap and correlate. The Source Room is a cacophony of complementary practices. "Phase space" in every iteration throughout the handbook is the space of movement and the emergence of images.

## Answers to Research Questions

### Research Question 1

*Can the system provide actors with a means to synthesise their training and rehearsal methods from the various subject divisions in their education? If so, how? If not, why not?*

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[108] For example, Grotowski's primary motivation for his work was to uncover an "essential" theatre and positioned this inquiry in opposition to synthetic and eclectic performance forms. (Schechner 1997)

The data gathered through the course of teaching indicates the system's efficacy in synthesising different methods. Some participants voiced this without being prompted in any way.[109] The Source Room work, developed by Putnam and Stella has proven to be the most effective of all the practices at doing this. Another discovery included the participants "inflecting" their work to explore style; emphasising one facet of the Source Room cycle over others. This use of the work was also useful in film performance, to achieve a certain level of energy, emotion or characterisation more consistently from take to take.

## Research Question 2

*Can the system be of service in giving actors a point of access to the expanded field of performance? Does it enable valency between acting methods and new technologies or new contexts such as interdisciplinary and intercultural exchange?  If so, how? If not, why not?*

Limited time and resources prevented exploring this question in a broader sense; with, for example, an animation company or a motion capture company. The Redux practices with the Sidcup students presented opportunities to perform with devices and found space. Participants incorporated these aesthetically and uncovered their performative qualities. Further research might involve teaching the system across different cultural groups and with different technologies.

## Research Question 3

*Does the system incorporate and occupy "the present moment" that performance is in? That is, the post-structuralist, postmodern moment?  If so, how? If not, why not?*

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[109] In two cases, Sidcup and Canterbury, participants walked up to the instructor after the class had convened to say that they appreciated how it brought all of their other subjects together.

The system supports and legitimises post-structuralist and postmodernist perspectives in the following ways:

- Dissolving of the subject
    - The notion of a stable structure depends on a subject distinct from it.
- A critique of historicism
    - There is antipathy toward the concept of historic progress. The "primitive" and the "advanced" have a lateral relationship to each other.
- A critique of philosophy
    - It is argued that the human subject does not have a unified consciousness, but is structured through language. Metaphysical concepts of causality, identity, the subject and truth are destabilised.[110]
- A critique of meaning
    - The structural relationship between signifier and signified is considered to be arbitrary; a sign stands for something only through convention and common usage, not by necessity. See below.[111] (Sarup 1988, page 2-3)

Earlier in this section, Wittgenstein's metaphor of a city was used to illustrate his concept of language games. Languages, according to Wittgenstein, elaborate outward from a "city" centre, creating suburbs. The metaphor is apt because cities are an extension of mind; they are "grids," both metaphorically and materially. Performance, especially theatre, is historically

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[110] These claims, as well as the two before this, are more substantially supported in the handbook.

[111] I am indulging this point because, to my interpretation and at this time, the "creation, conveying and opening of meaning" appears to be the brightest star in the constellation of an actor's intentions.

linked to the concept of the polis. Theatre extends mind; it can be used to reinforce, colonise, protest or restructure our social links to our "cities/grids."

However, Wittgenstein's model is structuralist. It presupposes one city from which suburbs extend. There is another metaphorical city to be found in the science fiction novel *The City and the City* by China Mieville (2011). This "weird fiction" crime-noir detective story takes place in two separate cities with a heavily regulated border between them. Passport control is so elaborate that it is a major plot point. But as the reader progresses through the narrative, it becomes apparent that these two rival cultures are, in fact, the same city.

They are two grids occupying the same space and time. Their inhabitants have disciplined themselves to "unsee" the other city and yet remain ever-conscious of each other's presence. Unauthorised "seeing" of the other is a crime called "breach." And one is especially vulnerable to accidentally "breaching" when walking in the "crosshatch;" the urban spaces where distinctions are blurred.

Mieville's model of the city is post-structural. In post-structuralism, the signified--i.e. the city-- is demoted and the signifier--*i.e.* the citizen--is made dominant. The citizens carry their city in their minds; there is no one-to-one correspondence between propositions and reality. The relationship between the signifier and the signified is precarious and prone to slippage or transference.[112]

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[112] In February of 2017 I performed in an adaptation of *The City and The City* for the PuSh Festival in Vancouver, B.C. Looking back, it may be that the image of overlapping grids had a direct or strong unconscious influence on the drawing of the mandalas.

Mieville's story resonates with the present moment because we have come to comfortably inhabit the virtual; the phase space between concept and substance. Virtuality is now a context for social behaviour. And, to my understanding, this means that we have become a different kind of human being. The *Embodied Acting System* is an attempt to model the structures of performance in a non-essentialist way, turning hierarchies into nodal points of a network and acknowledging the fractal expansion of the network.

## Research Question 4

*Is the system modifiable? Does it enable the recasting of concepts into new constellations, forming new rehearsal methods, generative metaphors and individual questions of practice? If so, how? If not, why not?*

The system was modified to work in tandem with the *Write in the Now* method taught by Daniel Will-Harris. In this case, the covalency of the two methods enabled them to affect each other. When the participants created the story "signposts." it resulted in the addition of a mandala to the system[113] without negatively affecting the whole. Because of its "nodal" design and "layered, fractal" nature, participants may add to or subtract from the system as their needs change.

In creating their "Redux" performances, the participants in Deptford and Sidcup created their rehearsal methods from the need to prepare for presentations. This is an incipient actor training method. For example, if one of the Redux performances became popular enough that it would be repeated or transferred to another location with different performers, the

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[113] It was the Behaviour mandala to be precise.

performative content would have to be encoded and taught to the new cast of actors. In this process, exercises, metaphoric actions and directions would be set down to ensure the accuracy of this transposition--or invite permeability, depending on the artist's goals. This is the essence of an actor training methodology. The mandalas of the system--and the additions or subtractions the performers make to them--enable artists to map their method-making endeavours and give them a shared language of inquiry.

## Research Question 5

*Could actor training adopt the values and goals expressed by new models of the curriculum? Like many creative disciplines, actor training already enacts many of these in ways specific to the job of an actor. These learning activities may enhance the goals of other areas and disciplines. Is there a way to generalise these into learning objectives and assessment practices across the academy? If so, how? If not, why not?*

This last question was thought to be ambitious at the start of the research. It may well be the topic of another study. However, this project experimented with changing the "frame" of subject matter as well as with the Schwabian notion of the eclectic. These activities potentially direct the focus of this research to horizons defined by other disciplines.

The lateral, non-hierarchical structure of the mandalas, constrained by a set number of irreducible elements, may give other disciplines a model for blended teaching, interdisciplinary collaboration, and a method of creating new relationships between their incumbent praxes. This is not necessarily limited to application in academic institutions. Bernstein's model of the pedagogic device is sociological. It is a theory of communication which can be profitably transferred to different situations. For example, there is pedagogic

communication between a director and actors, between a film and an audience, between designed space and its occupants.

This partially answered question is compelling and may point to future research. Massumi draws parallels between his concept of "phase space" and systems that attempt to map complexity, such as chaos theory (2002, pages 8-16). In chaotic systems, the "attractor" is the element to which the entire system gravitates, like the "meandering to the centre" of the mandala. In this research, the centre is defined as performance, which is inherently multifaceted and complex. Other disciplines such as economics and environmental sciences have similarly complex attractors to which several disciplines and topics of study might orient themselves and speak into. It may be that this model is adaptable in ways I have not conceived of at the time of writing.

## Applications

### Acting

When I first encountered The Viewpoints and created performance compositions using their conceptual language, I found that it legitimized my desire to be a deviser of performance and to find ways of extending traditional acting into the postdramatic (or retracing representational theatre's emergence from an earlier postdramatic epoch). Extending the underlying philosophy of the "lateral" into the "materials" of performance allows actors to slip out of paradigm into an experimental mode of expression.

## Directing and Devising

The directors and devised theatre practitioners who used the Crosspoints gravitated to its potential for generating embodied performance ideas. When the Source Room and Storm Mandala (a.k.a Source Storm) were deployed, the centre of the room was used as a place to rupture the plotted space of the rehearsal room[114] and invite surprise and flirtation[115] with the work. It was a form of improvisational, physical dramaturgy that allowed actors to give form to ideas before speaking them. The world of the play or devised work expanded and with the addition of *Write in the Now* practices, the system became a text-generating schema.

The Crosspoints have the potential to be expanded or contracted to suit different contexts and intentions. They can be used to apply interpretive and interpolative dramaturgy to something like a ballet, opera, or a verbatim theatre piece. The Crosspoints also work well with mixed technology, non-linear story structure and immersive experiences or virtual performance. These potential uses are not yet tested but may be addressed in future research.

## Teaching and Training

Out of all the applications in this summary, this thesis gives the most insight into teaching and training. To provide a summary view, I will recruit Schwab's concept of "polyfocal conspectus" (1978, page 342-359). In his essay, *The Practical: Arts of Eclectic*, Schwab

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[114] When I refer to the rehearsal room as a "plotted" space, I am referencing the practice of "taping" the floorplan of the set. The rehearsal room floor is marked with the dimensions of the set using coloured adhesive tape. But there are other less tangible signifiers present in how space is organised. For example, the position of the director's table and the loc..ation of the actors' "stuff."

[115] By "flirtation" I mean the very same sense of the word used earlier while describing narrative analysis; flirtation with ideas as an expression of unconscious skepticism and activity that keeps possibilities in play.

posits that there is "mere conspectus" which asks of teachers and learners to master a group of theories without comparing them to each other in-depth. Then there is "polyfocal conspectus" which requires learners to see how one theory compliments another; to prevent over-reliance on single theories.

The Source Room, created by Putnam and Stella, and The Viewpoints, created by Overlie, are practical examples of polyfocal conspectus. They initiated this research. Their laterality led to a flirtation with the principles of each theory. Schwab describes a process similar to this as "cycles and phases" when teaching with polyfocal conspectus.

Schwab suggests that students learn to master theory, then learn to apply the theory to understand different situations. This comprises phase 1 and 2 of the first cycle. The next cycle is a repetition of the previous two phases--mastery followed by application--with a different theory. As these cycles accumulate, each repetition pinpoints the differences between theories (Schwab 1978, page 357) and enables the student to see theories as to potential explanations and viewpoints rather than as differing doctrines.

Schwab stresses that active enquiry is the most important part of developing plurality. The theories must be used actively to potentiate each other (Schwab 1978, pages 346-348). Using the mechanics of the Source Room and the mandalas to structure practical enquiry, in performance as well as other disciplines, may help different theories and practices actively potentiate each other.

## Interdisciplinarity

Continuing with Schwab, he writes that there is the "probability that men *[sic.]* of intelligence taking different cuts through a subject matter may well have done so with different intent"

(1978, page 350). The intent is often masked or subsumed by the logic of practice, to be later justified as practical sense. Bourdieu says;

> Practical sense is a quasi-bodily involvement in the world which
>
> presupposes no representation either of the body or of the world, still less
>
> of their relationship. [...] It orients 'choices' which, though not deliberate,
>
> are no less systematic, and which, without being ordered and organized in
>
> relation to an end, are nonetheless charged with a kind of retrospective
>
> finality (1990, page 66).

As Bourdieu has amply outlined, practical sense, once embodied and enacted, becomes *habitus*, which is a form of embodied *raison d'etre*, "a direction, an orientation, an impending outcome" (1990, page 66) which operates on the practitioner the same way that the rules of a field sport operate on an athlete. Bourdieu's metaphor is a physical one. It evokes how the athlete/performer orients themself to a constrained set of appropriate actions, their manner of behaviour with opponents and teammates, and what constitutes a goal.

The Source Room reorients performers in ways that allow them to actively enquire about contradiction and paradox, proposing a deeper relationship between areas of knowledge. This notion is central to interdisciplinary studies, which is defined in several ways.

> **Cross-disciplinary analysis** – examines an issue typically germane to one
>
> discipline through the lens of another discipline (i.e., how physicists
>
> explore music, sociological perspectives on the purpose of religion).
>
> **Multi-disciplinary analysis** – examines an issue from multiple
>
> perspectives, without making a concerted effort to systemically [sic]
>
> integrate disciplinary perspectives.

**Inter-disciplinary analysis** – examines an issue from multiple

perspectives, leading to a systematic effort to integrate the alternative

perspectives into a unified or coherent framework of analysis.

(Maier et al.)


To engage in any kind of interdisciplinarity *habitus* must be deconstructed. Two contrary

*habituses* must be acted out, in proximity to one another, to negotiate potential solutions. This

is what Schwab calls the "quasi-practical" (1978, pages 291-295).


On a personal note, I am strongly devoted to the principles of interdisciplinarity as an

eminence for solving the problems of the future. Human actions have solved many problems

in the course of history. However, a problem solved doesn't halt the emergence of new

events. Some may have been precipitated by the solution, like the two heads that sprout from

the severed head of the proverbial hydra. As Schwab observes;

> [E]nquiry affects problems themselves, as well as knowledge. The very
>
> fact that we possess knowledge couched in a given set of terms, treating an
>
> aspect of the world by recognizing it in certain parts and certain
>
> interrelations of these parts, means that problems which can be treated in
>
> terms of these partitionings and connections are not only successfully
>
> treatable, but successfully treated. From the moment the knowledge is
>
> acquired, the problems appropriate to it begin to be settled problems. And,
>
> as fast as they are settled, new kinds of problems arise, generated by the
>
> solutions of the old one, involving a different partitioning and other
>
> connections. For, when we have effectively solved a problem, we have
>
> diverted, in some respect, the flow of events (1978, page 136).

## Implications for Further Research

This study has focused primarily on the experience of an instructor and the conceptual underpinnings of a new framework for practice. This practice has yielded a set of theoretical principles that would be served if they could be tested in a broader array of cases. Further investigation might include the potential for a Crosspoints framework to solve (or discover) problems in different social and cultural contexts or explain phenomena from a post-structuralist perspective rather than a positivist/structuralist one.

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# APPENDIX 1: Research Timeline

| | DATES | ACTIVITIES |
|---|---|---|
| **PHASE ONE** | Sep to Dec, 2017 | Abstraction of the system into "maps" and diagrams. Creation of the "mandala" diagrams. |
| | Jan to Apr, 2018 | Workshop testing of the "story maps," Test classes for the "Source Room". and the Emblems in Vancouver, BC and Los Angeles, California: <br>• Capilano University (North Vancouver) <br>• Actorium Acting Studio (Vancouver) <br>• Independent Workshop (Los Angeles). |
| | May to Jun, 2018 | Reflective analysis and library research. |
| | Jul to Aug, 2018 | Comparative practice and analysis with Michael Chekhov Technique and Rasaboxes. |
| **PHASE TWO** | Sep to Oct, 2018 | Library research. Create test class outlines for the system, making a two-day workshop schedule. Website design. |
| | Nov to Dec, 2018 | Analysis and reading. Website design and writing syllabi for the short-term workshops. Considering how the system works into a larger curriculum. Test workshops in Los Angeles, California and Vancouver, Canada. |
| **PHASE THREE** | Jan to Apr, 2019 | Analysis of the secondary data. Writing up the thesis. Workshops in London and Canterbury. |
| | May to Dec, 2019 | Writing of the report. Illustrating and writing the handbook. |
| | Jan to Aug, 2020 | Redrafting and laying out the handbook for printing. Preparation of the thesis and hanbook for submission. |