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THE BODY IS TEXT

MOVEMENT TRAINING AS APPLIED TO THE DRAMATIC ACT

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts Degree at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Abstract

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By Jonathan K. Becker

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Virginia Commonwealth University, 2005

Major Director: Dr. Aaron D. Anderson
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The purpose of this document is to provide a foundation for a book dealing with a unified vocabulary and pedagogical approach for the teaching of movement in an American training system. The thesis discusses:

- The concept, the body is text
- Students and the teaching environment
- The learning environment
- Teaching methodology
- The essentials of movement training

- The importance of a unified vocabulary for the teaching of movement

An outline of the book to follow the thesis is provided as well as a proposed writing time line in the appendices.

INTRODUCTION

Theatricality is the result of the body in space. – Vsevolod Meyerhold

The purpose of this document is to establish the foundation for the creation of a book dealing with the development of a unified vocabulary and pedagogy for the teaching of movement in an American based college or university training program. The following will be addressed:

- What is meant by saying, the body is text?
- Who are the students in the training environment?
- What is the learning environment?
- What is at the foundation of good teaching methodology?
- What are the essentials of movement training?
- What is the importance of the vocabulary, the words and phrases that we use in the teaching environment?

This document is the product of the life, teaching, professional and educational experiences of its author Jonathan Becker. Mr. Becker holds a conservatory certificate from The International School of Theatre Jacques Lecoq in Paris, France, a movement based physical theatre training program, and a Master of Arts Degree from The University of Akron where he worked and trained with The New World Performance

Lab, a Grotowski based theatre ensemble. In the spring of 2005 he will receive a Master of Fine Arts in theatre pedagogy from Virginia Commonwealth University. His professional credits include: work as an actor touring throughout The United States, Europe and Asia; guest artist teaching positions at workshops, colleges and universities throughout the United States and Europe; work as a mask maker and owner of one of the leading mask production studios in The United States. In the past 17 years Mr. Becker has collaborated on 15 original productions.

Mr. Becker has collaborated with Dr. Aaron Anderson in the development and clarification of ideas and concepts pertaining to the overall book project. Following the completion of this document Mr. Becker and Dr. Anderson will expand the ideas contained here and work cooperatively toward the creation of a book dealing with the development of a unified approach to the teaching of acting, voice and movement. Dr. Aaron Anderson is currently an Assistant Professor at Virginia Commonwealth University. He holds an MFA in Acting and Asian Theatre from the University of Hawaii at Manoa and an Interdisciplinary PhD in Theatre and Drama from Northwestern University.

The book project also will contain information and inspiration gathered in an overview of the published materials released in the last 20 years concerning the teaching of movement. The reason for this project is twofold:

- How can we as educators help students make a more immediate transfer of the concepts and understandings from their movement training to their voice work and their work as actors?

- To introduce the concept of “the body is text” as being important in actor training.

The latter of these two reasons, the body as text/the body is text, is derived from the point of view that an audience can not understand what an actor is thinking and feeling unless thoughts and sentiments exist on a level of physical action or are expressed in stillness. It is necessary that the internal life manifest itself outwardly. For the audience to fully understand every aspect of an individual performance each portion must exist as a choice made by the performer. Any part of an actor’s physical life that does not clearly fit a given moment must be eliminated for the verbal text to be heard and for the supporting physical text to be seen.

The methodology that will be used in this document as the foundation or reference point, as the central concepts are developed, will be that of The International School of Theatre Jacques Lecoq. The vocabulary and the pedagogy of the school are ones that marry the inside-out approach of the acting process to the outside-in approach in such a way that the performer is lead to an understanding of the unity on the two approaches. Through this methodology the actor begins to deal with them as a single approach in which both are happening simultaneously. Lecoq’s pedagogy places secondary importance on the intellectual process of the actor and focuses on kinesthetic awareness and an intuitive response.

The teachings and approaches of Jerzy Grotowski, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Michael Chekhov, Tadashi Suzuki, F. M. Alexander, Rudolf Laban, Anne Bogart and Constantine Stanislavski will also be used in the discussion of pedagogy and use of vocabulary. The overall objective is to build a training process that allows the actor to make connections

between the movement, acting and voice training; to see them as a single entity and then begin to make the transfer of the training to the act of performance and the understanding of craft.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BODY IS TEXT

An actor is both artist and instrument. - Jean Louis Barrault

In a movement class the body is often referred to as the actor's instrument. The movement class is for the purpose of preparing this instrument for use. The actor is taught proper alignment, a connection of breath to movement and to follow physical impulses as well as being trained to be stronger and more flexible. To what end? Why? What is the relationship and the importance of the activities in the movement class to the performance of the actor? An understanding of the relevance and importance of movement training is found through considering the body as text or by saying that the body is text.

Through the training of the body, an instrument of communication is created. The physical presence of the actor communicates to an audience everything there is to know about the character being portrayed at a particular moment. To be effective, the actor's physical presence must exist within the play he is performing and communicate to the audience the ambience of the particular play. In a classical play the actor must have a different physical presence and sense of physicality than he has in a contemporary realistic drama. The moment the actor enters the space the audience begins to ask

questions of who, what and why. The actor's physicality and play of action can and should answer these questions long before actual text is spoken. In this way of thinking, then, the body becomes text. The manner in which the body is carried elicits the image of something or some state of being. The very physical presence of the actor begins a conversation with the audience.

Through training the actor is learning how to communicate the internal through external form, i.e., to express a connected internal response through a readable body. He is also coming to a refined understanding of what his body is both capable of and represents to an audience. This is important because an audience will read meaning into an actor's physicality. Culturally we expect certain behavior from certain body types. Because of this, one could suggest that through the mere presence of a body, a story is already being told. David Alberts in The Expressive Body notes that body research suggests there are three major body types:

- 1) round, soft and fat
- 2) muscular, bony, and athletic
- 3) thin and fragile

Alberts notes that there are also particular personality and behavioral characteristics associated with each type. The following traits are generalized perceptions of the personality connected to each type:

- 1) round soft and fat: Dependant, affable, generous, relaxed, tolerant, sociable, sluggish, affectionate, emotional, cooperative, sympathetic, forgiving

- 2) muscular, bony and athletic: Dominant, determined, adventurous, confident, outgoing, optimistic, energetic, courageous, aggressive, enthusiastic, argumentative, temperamental
- 3) thin and fragile: Tense, anxious, meticulous, self-conscious, thoughtful, considerate, shy, suspicious, awkward, tactful, cautious, introspective (Alberts 48)

Keeping with the understanding that the body is text, one finds here a list of generalized perceptions that to some degree match categories of characters and illustrate the way in which casting directors treat physicality in the hiring of actors for a play. These perceptions of type and personality also reflect an audience's initial perception of an actor as she enters the space. The list implies that the form of the body is suggestive of a character or of a person's personality and back story, and leads an audience to anticipate how such a body/character will react to a particular situation. The inclusion of the list is to help lay a foundation for an understanding of what is meant by the body as text. Through the training process the definition and application of understanding the body as text can then be expanded.

The training process is intended to create for the actor an instrument that can respond organically to impulses in an uncluttered way. It is the unspecific movements, or clutter, that muddies the story the body is telling. The more the actor is specific in his physical choices the clearer will be his intentions to the audience. The neutral mask is an excellent tool for training an actor to understanding the body as text. The neutral mask represents a being that exists without a past. The being exists only in the present, in a constant state of discovery. Because it has no past the being of the neutral mask can not

comment on the events of the present, cannot judge or react in a way that would suggest it already knows. The neutral mask progresses through its existence with a sense of curious resolve. Most importantly the actor with the neutral mask must internalize and then express outwardly what is being experienced and discovered.

For example, when neutral man or neutral woman sees the ocean he or she is the ocean. This means that the body reflects what it is seeing. The way in which the body experiences the space inwardly changes the outward physical expression and release of energy. The physicality of the neutral being looking at the ocean will appear different from the physicality of the neutral being looking at a mountain because of the change that occurs within the actor if he is truly making the discovery in the moment. Here the body becomes text that communicates a vast open space in constant movement or a fixed and expansive space rising upward. This is not to be confused with a physical interpretation of the movement of the ocean or the upward thrust of a mountain. Through the neutral mask, for the neutral being, the vast open space and movement of the ocean are internalized and in the stillness of the being they become an integral part of the physicality that now represents them; for the neutral being, the expansive upward-rising space of the mountain becomes an integral part of a different physicality that now communicates the grandeur of this landscape. Here the body's story is one of grandeur and expansion.

As the actor achieves a support of the neutral mask by finding the corresponding body the mask demands, he discovers suddenly that text in his body is no longer present. Only the presence of the performer as a body in space remains. It is in this neutral state

that a foundation for applying the body as text is laid. The actor's mannerisms and judgments of what he is experiencing are absent. Now the body is ready to become the text specific only to a particular story.

Other philosophies and approaches address the issue of body as text. Anne Bogart's viewpoints ensemble work is rooted in the body's relationship to other bodies in space, and the resulting text that appears is based on images created by the relationships taking place. Rhythm and time become visible physical directives concerning the quality of movement and the manner in which relationships are developed, held and dissolved. A viewpoints exercise seen from the outside could be described as moving poetry. This work allows for movement and physical relationships wherein a connected sense of space and rhythm appear. Story and metaphor evolve through an intricate play of rhythm, bodies and space. Every aspect of the actor's movement then communicates something important. Every change in rhythm and position changes what is seen from the outside. Note the differences in what the following scores of physical action communicate:

I.

A single chair rests center stage.

Enter a man.

Slowly he crosses to the chair.

He stops in front of the chair.

Slowly he looks out.

"I'll stay," he says.

Slowly he pulls his trousers up.

Slowly he exhales as he sits

At a medium pace he looks away.

II.

A single chair rests center stage.

Enter a man.

Slowly he crosses to the chair.

He stops in front of the chair.

Quickly he looks out.

"I'll stay," he says.

Quickly he pulls his trousers up.

Slowly he exhales as he sits

At a medium pace he looks away

In this very basic example one finds the rhythmic differences in the movement begin to tell a different story. Combine now different physicalities with the rhythmic changes and the differences become more and more dramatic. For the changes to communicate exactly the choices of the actor, however, any aspect of the physical work that is not intended must be eliminated through a heightened awareness on the part of the performer. In other words, the actor's body must speak only the intended text and nothing else.

An actor's body must also support the text that is being spoken. This would suggest that the body must reflect the style or, better stated, the space of the play and text. The body needed to support a classical text, one which reflects the play, is present in a different way than the body needed for contemporary American realism. Perhaps a better

way of understanding this idea is to look at the following exercise in which an actor is asked to enter the space, introduce herself and then leave. The objective of the exercise is to remain present in the space throughout the time from the moment before entering through to the moment after exiting. The first level of the exercise is to bring into the space a very personal presence. Essentially it is the level at which the actor comes into the space as herself. Here the body is that of the actress telling her story only.

Subsequence levels of the exercise introduce different styles of theatre. By asking the actor to enter bringing the presence, or the body, of the style into the space the exercise is repeated. Examples of style are Melodrama, The Tragedy or Clown. In each case the body enters in relationship to the spatial dimensions of the style. In The Melodrama the actor enters in relationship to the other characters and into the space of the story being told. In The Tragedy the actor enters into a vast space in which a story will take place. In Clown, the actor enters intent on developing a direct conversation with the audience.

In each case the actor's physical sense of self is very different and the physical needs of the environment being entered demand a manner of response that is connected to the style. The body carried by the actor is one that is intended to then support the text of the play, much in the same way a body supports a particular mask. In mask work the actor is searching for the physical center of the mask, its life rhythms, the masks relationship to the floor and its core state of being. In Biomechanics Meyerhold demanded that his actors be virtuosos in physical skill. This was to focus attention on the actor's body which he wanted to become "word equivalent." The body was intended to be the main transmitter, a poetic force (Leach, 56).

The importance of an awareness of the body as text is revealed when there is an unsuccessful production where the individual performers are all in different plays physically and some are simply not present at all. The latter is more common in amateur productions and in undergraduate training productions than on the professional level. Although even in a professional production one finds the occasional actor who somehow did not arrive in the show in which he is performing.

In order for the body to be text in the space the performer must be capable, as Anne Denis states in The Articulate Body, of making the invisible visible (Denis 8). For the invisible to be visible an actor must invest every aspect of his instrument in coordinated activity of translating internal feeling to physical activity. It is the activity in which emotional response and thought become action. Stephen Wang has an exercise in which he takes a scene from an extremely cheesy novel and asks the students to act it as big and as badly as possible. Then the students are asked to play it well. Inevitably the students pull back in the second enactment and act with so much restraint that there is no visible inner life. Those observing are asked to describe the difference between the two scenes. They often describe the big bad scene as being more interesting to watch. The body in the badly acted scene was more open. The work then is to find the same “bigness” played with truth. The performer must learn to push honestly what is inside. The inner life must become readable to the audience.

It is not uncommon to see an actor in performance pulling everything into himself, acting inwardly. The energy in performance is being pulled out of the space and being directed into the actor instead of flowing out. The performance takes on a very

private quality and the emotional life of the character remains hidden from the audience. The actor appears self indulgent. If the energy were taken in the opposite direction and the actor were to concentrate on expressing the moment honestly, truly and simply in an outward fashion, the performance would remain dynamic and moving for an audience rather than being private and elusive. The outward energy engages the audience's imagination.

Developing a sense of the outward flow of energy heightens an awareness of the body as text. Exercises that provide an understanding of how to direct the energy outward such as Lecoq's pushing and pulling exercises address this idea. In the exercises students are asked to create a space that pushes and a space that pulls. They are asked to use their physical bodies, five foot wooden sticks and large cardboard panels. This exercise is conducted in conjunction with learning mimetic movements which express physically pushing and pulling. The connections pedagogically result in greater understanding of the dynamics of space as well as the dynamics of physical gesture in relation to the sensation of pushing and pulling. The physical gesture and the emotional response become connected to the space.

If the body is not readable the dramatic sense of a moment does not exist. One must be aware of what the body represents and what it is doing at any given moment. The performer must then act with intent revealing his thoughts through action. Barba speaks of achieving this:

Training . . . is a process of self determination, a process of self discipline which manifests itself indissolubly through physical reactions. It is not the exercise in

itself that counts – for example, bending or somersaulting – but the individuals justification for his own work, a justification which although perhaps banal or difficult to explain through words is psychologically perceptible, evident to the observer. (Hodge 212)

Grotowski equates the same idea to the act of performance when he states, “physical action is not the bare fact of walking. Which in itself is only an activity, but in the actor’s awareness of why and for whom they are walking: the movement itself is only a pretext or a means” (Hodge 205).

The training also provides for the actor the ability to go beyond himself; it expands his range and enables him to transcend his physical type. If the performer can go beyond or in ways violate the expectations of what he is initially perceived as being capable of, he will be much less limited in what he can accomplish. The body as text in this case becomes much more dynamic. The audience possesses preconceived ideas of what is possible. If the physical presence of the actor is suggesting there is more, the audience will be kept on the edge asking what is going to happen next.

Through a consideration of the body as text one can begin to define for the student the transfer of the physical work to the performance of written text. As the student actor considers what story is being told by the body she is brought to a greater understanding of:

- what her personal physical presence represents
- what physical life is needed in relation to the play being acted

- the physical life of a character and how that is seen and interpreted from the outside
- the process of externalizing the internal life
- the actor's physical relationship to the space and the style
- the relationship of the actor to the audience

CHAPTER THREE

STUDENTS IN THE TEACHING ENVIRONMENT

In America many people live in their bodies like abandoned houses, haunted with memories of when they were occupied. - Joseph Chaikin

Before one can address a unified vocabulary and a pedagogical approach, however, one must first look at the culture of learning from which a student comes. Each of these aspects affects the learning process and requires awareness on the part of the instructor in order to overcome the cultural learning disabilities of the typical American student.

It is necessary to ask the following questions as a pedagogical approach is being developed:

- What are the challenges posed by the students?
- Where do the students come from?
- What do the students need to achieve through the learning process?

The answers to these questions will define the hurdles the students have to jump as they enter the training. The answers to these questions will help to provide pathways for the teacher to bring the students to the work.

What Are the Challenges Posed By The Students?

The initial challenges in the work and in the training are unique to the American cultural and educational environment from which the student comes. More and more students coming to the work are removed from a deep physical and emotional relationship to daily life. As American society becomes more urban, more consumer oriented and more automated the less the young artist is in touch with his physical instrument or the physical world. Acting students who have not participated in sports or other physical activities that have put them in touch with their bodies have become disadvantaged.

Many students have been immersed in a social background that has very little interaction with family; the hours of childhood that used to be left for unstructured play have been filled with team sports and adult supervised clubs from a very early age. Cell phones, computers and the internet dominate lives rather than real human interaction. Television and film so permeate society that time spent in the virtual world leaves little time left for real human interaction. Impressions of life become based on a fictional version of what human beings are like.

Grotowski spoke to the challenges posed to performers who are products of mostly urban life in talking about the differences between the city dweller and the country peasant. Urban man has a tendency to make gestures while the rural dweller fills action. Here Grotowski is speaking to how the urban environment gets in the way as we train actors. The young actor is absent from his own body. The idea of working with one's own body on a daily basis to solve the challenges of life is foreign. When the actor

must then recreate life of a human being on stage the result is a physical life of meaningless, indicative, empty gestures rather than truth filled action (Richards 75).

Trying to provide the students with a more profound approach to the work than what they perceive possible is a great challenge. They are being asked to recognize that they are part of humanity on a larger scale. They are being asked to see beyond the walls of the classroom and to know they are part of something greater, not just as theater artists but as human beings. This is difficult in American society because artistic pursuits are culturally undervalued.

Where Do The Students Come From?

Most of the students coming to training programs in the United States are from middle and upper class families. Most of them have never been hungry, few have faced addiction, homelessness is something that happens to other people, very few of their relatives have gone to prison. Most are not the first in their families to be educated, although they may be perhaps among the first. Typically students at the level of higher education in America are among the elite. Typically it takes a certain distance from poverty to be able to consider theatre as a profession in American society.

In addition to the challenges of the cultural landscape as it impacts the student of theatre, the educational environment does not prepare the student for the level of personal investment, dedication and drive that is needed to be successful to the greatest of their ability. For the most part the approach to education in America does not lend itself to deeper understandings or explorations. Schooling sets up a multitasking approach to

learning in which the student switches subjects every forty-five to fifty minutes. The individual is seldom focused on any one area long enough to go beyond identifying a rote answer to a closed question. Beyond primary and secondary education we often continue to break up the learning within the university program. Students go from class to class. Each class is separate from the previous and connections between them are often unclear. The task of keeping the student focused on what he is doing, the building of momentum in the process of allowing for absorption of concepts, and the application and transfer of understanding become very difficult.

Students are also coming from an educational system that teaches a rote approach to most subject matter. For every question there is one right answer and only one right answer. In many ways an education in the arts is the antithesis of the educational process as promoted by general public education. Students in the arts we are more often than not asked to search for the questions to ask rather than being given definitive answers. In the event a specific question is posed, there are multiple answers that could work in the moment. In a theatrical world one can justify two plus two equals five. Part of the training is inspiring the student to give himself permission to seek for questions and to find solutions rather than answers.

The students are also coming from:

- A culture wherein at 19 almost half of their lives on the statistical average has been lived in front of a television set or a computer screen rather than interacting with family or other human beings in real life situations. Their understanding of the human condition is based on someone else's fictional version.

- A culture in which very few people attend live theatre or see it as a legitimate form of artistic impression
- A place with almost no understanding of the craft of acting or the level of inner commitment and physical and emotional strength needed to be successful
- A T-ball mind-set. A mind set in which “it’s all good,” everybody gets a home run, everybody wins and there is no challenge in the game. It is a mind set that is threatened by critical feedback and the admonition to be a creative thinker and a dynamic self motivator

What Do The Students Need To Achieve The Learning Process?

Within the training students must be made aware of a life that is more spectacular than they have considered. They need to discover a life that goes beyond mundane activities. A connection to emotional states they have not experienced, the finding of a level of engagement they did not know existed and a renewed connection to the physical instrument are the first steps.

For the younger American student of theater it is often necessary to first teach him the necessary self discipline, concentration and proper work habits. The student must first learn how to approach the learning process. There is a need for intense rigorous physical training that strengthens the body provides core strength and flexibility as well as alignment. The students need to know the difference between work that is dynamic and fully engaged and work that is not. They need to know what each type of work looks like. In this they can begin to build an understanding of acting as a craft.

We practice and teach theatre in a country where live theatre does not exist in the daily lives of the vast majority of the population. Many of our students at the outset of their studies have had very limited exposure to theatre on a professional level and very few of them would be able to explain what makes for a successful performance. The student is distant from the work both physically and emotionally. The idea of acting as a craft or as a high art is foreign to most. Unlike students of music and dance who possess a degree of self discipline and an awareness of the level of technical proficiency they must achieve in order to be successful, many students of acting are completely unaware of the level of personal commitment necessary to learn and improve.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

I have always thought that the students don't need a professor to be of their time and that we, the professors, should bring to them something of permanence . . . and demonstrate the laws of movement that direct the organization of life and of the arts. . . . - Jacques Lecoq

This chapter will discuss the various aspects of the learning environment and the place movement training has in an acting program. Issues facing the teacher as well as how pedagogy is and can be integrated will be addressed.

It has been the experience of the author in teaching as a guest artist in various Universities throughout the country that instructors are often working separately from each other solely with their own understandings of the work. Training programs are often not addressing the integrated nature of what we do as theatre artists nor are they addressing the overwhelming need for a total understanding of the physical aspect of the actor's craft. Instructors do not share a vocabulary that allows students to make connections, to transfer the movement work to their acting and develop a viable technique on their own. This situation could be turned into something useful if the contradictory information were to be brought to their attention as being at its core the

same thing only from a different approach. In this way the actors could develop an understanding of the connections between the various aspects of what they are learning. For this to happen however, the instructors must share a common vocabulary as well as a common vision.

The important questions to ask in the development of a unified vocabulary and pedagogical approach as one addresses the learning environment are:

- What challenges are posed by semester systems that are not present in a conservatory style program?
- What keeps the classes from being integrated in programs where they are not?
- How are or can the classes be connected?
- What is the difference between pedagogy and a curriculum?

What Challenges Are Posed By Semester Systems That Are Not Present In A Conservatory Style Program?

The semester system on which many training programs are based poses almost insurmountable challenges largely due to the fact that the training gets broken up in such a way as to make very difficult the accomplishment of needed momentum and intensity of experience in one area. Classes often meet either twice a week for ninety minutes or three times a week for fifty minutes each. The length of the individual classes then either becomes too short or the time between when the classes can meet becomes too long. In an environment where a pedagogical approach is not well defined, the possibility of the student making organic connections in the work and processing the existing relationships

in the training can happen only in the most advanced students. In many cases, if it happens at all, it occurs as a matter of chance rather than by design.

In many programs the training is broken up both in terms of the actual schedule on which the classes meet and the diverse backgrounds and approaches from which the faculty come. The degree to which the training is broken up depends on the nature of the program being presented. For the most part BFA and MFA programs tend to be more focused and less general than BA and MA programs. It is not the different types of degrees the students are getting but the level of understanding they are able to achieve that is the focus here. Learning outcomes are based on the methods of teaching, the level of understanding of the teachers and the focused nature of the program itself.

In a conservatory style program, on the other hand, the separation of the various classes and approaches to those classes becomes less pronounced if present at all because of the intensive nature of the training itself. Classes meet every day or every other day and the students are involved in a continuous practical exploration of craft. This is the ideal situation for a training environment. Both the body and the mind retain the memory of successes and failures and the student is more able to make progress quickly. The intensity allows for progress and connections. Connections tend to happen even when a unified pedagogical approach is lacking.

What Keeps The Classes From Being Integrated In Programs Where They Are Not?

Several factors stand as challenges in finding a way to integrate the aspects of acting, voice and movement in existing training programs. The vast majority of teachers and department heads have come from a tradition of training wherein the aspects of voice, movement and acting have been separated. In some cases where the need is recognized, there is no foundation of understanding as to how to make the necessary changes in the approach.

The diversity of approaches and the understanding of those approaches is a result of how theatre artists have been trained in the United States since the mid twentieth century. Only recently has the importance of the physical aspect of the training been brought to the fore in the United States. It is understanding the function of the human body as an instrument not only in the creation and performance of a role but also as concerns the awareness of how audiences see and understand, that is opening mindsets to more integrated methods of training and the role that movement plays. The challenge is that many teachers have been trained in a system where the various aspects of the training were kept separate from each other.

Traditionally acting, movement and voice have been viewed as separate areas with an eye toward emphasizing each as a different discipline. Acting has been approached from a purely internal point of view emphasizing the intellect and work with text; movement training has focused on the teaching of skill sets, strength and alignment and an outside-in approach; voice classes often fall to articulation exercises, anatomy of the breathing mechanism, dialects and the teaching of the international phonetic alphabet.

It is important to note that no area of the actor's discipline can be left out or seen as more or less important than the other. It is not common practice yet to see each area as an integral part of one large area of training and to begin to identify the crossover between the classes so that the voice teachers, the movement teachers and the acting teachers all have a common understanding and are teaching essentially the same class.

In addition to the separation of acting, voice and movement in the training, there has been in the past a separation of an approach to acting from an internal perspective and an approach to the acting process from a more physical external perspective. The internal camp has approached the work as follows:

- The actor approaches the action with the question, "why am I doing this?"
- The actor approaches the creation of a character through the development of a psychological profile and an emotional history.
- A character's emotional response is based on past emotional situations (of the character or of the actor).
- Physical action is a result of the emotional state.
- The character is me.
- Theatre is a re-creation of daily life.
- Psycho-drama

The external camp has approached it in the following way:

- The actor approaches the action with the question, "what am I doing?"
- The actor approaches the creation of a character through the creation of the character's silhouette and the finding of the character's center.

- A character's emotional response is the result of the action, the "playing" of the situation.
- Emotional state is a result of the physical action.
- The manner and behavior of a character and the style are interrelated, dependant upon each other.
- Theatre is "extra-daily life."
- A theatre of action.

How Are Or Can Classes Be Connected?

Since the mid 1970's, mainly in Europe, there have been teachers and methods of approach to the training of actors that have grown out of the knowledge that not only are acting, voice and movement are integrated, and for the training process to be most effective they must not be separated. It is possible to train for all three in a single exercise. What is needed now are teachers who have developed an understanding of the physical instrument, the craft and the processes of learning and who can establish training systems that are holistic. The challenge is to develop a complete integrated curriculum and a pedagogical system that addresses all aspects of craft and performance in each exercise. An example of the holistic approach can be seen in a combination of the physical training of the Lecoq School, the voice work of The Roy Hart Theatre and the current approach to method acting. This combination exploits

- a school that has at the foundation of its teaching a unified pedagogical approach to all aspects of its training

- an approach to voice training that connects vocal production to physical movement and emotional response
- an approach that emphasizes an internal emotional approach and connection to the creation of character

Many other combinations of methods and approaches are ultimately possible once an understanding of the connections is learned.

What Is The Difference Between Pedagogy And Curriculum?

The ability to integrate the classes in the training is connected to the understanding of the difference between pedagogy and curriculum. A curriculum is the suite of classes required of a student in order for that person to complete a degree or a program. The building of a curriculum involves the looking at how one class builds from another and the deciding on the type and number of classes necessary in the training of a well rounded actor. The pedagogy is the how in the process of learning. Often a unified pedagogy is ignored or left out either because the need for it is not recognized or because the various instructors in a program come from such varied backgrounds and training that it is difficult to find a common vocabulary or a common understanding of the overall objectives in the training.

In order for training to be most effective and for the student to make the connections between the varied aspects of the training, and between the training and the act of performance, the pedagogical approach and a shared vocabulary among the instructors must be present. To be most effective the structure of the learning

environment must reflect the lessons themselves. An integrated curriculum and unified pedagogical approach in its structure should reflect a well written play. The entire journey the student makes should have a clear beginning middle and end.

The current learning environment in American training programs is for the most part disconnected in its approach to the teaching of acting, voice and movement. The diversity of approaches, the structure of the program and the traditional methods of teaching all tend to lead the student in multiple directions. A unified approach and an understanding of acting, voice and movement training in an integrated way is missing from many of our training programs.

CHAPTER FIVE

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

An untrained body is like an untuned musical instrument – its sounding box is filled with a confusing and ugly jungle of useless noise that prevents the true melody from being heard. - Peter Brook

An effective teaching methodology leaves the student with a profound understanding of all aspects of craft. An effective methodology provides the student with a vocabulary and a way of understanding that allows for connections to take place between other performers, the play and the style. A teaching methodology should train the performer to respond kinesthetically and intuitively in the moment.

The following remembrance exemplifies the lasting impressions and skills an effective methodology can impart:

In January of 1999, Jacques Lecoq, one of the greatest master teachers and theatre minds of the 20th century, died. A group of former students gathered in Washington D.C. for a memorial and a celebration. Some of those attending were asked to partake in the performance of a Greek Chorus. On the day of the memorial a small group gathered on the lawn of The Center for Movement Theatre. All were dressed in white, most had never actually met before, introductions were made, there was a slight breeze and the sun

was rising in a cloudless blue sky. Dodi Desanto, the director of the Center, stood in front of the group and demonstrated the opening movement to the chorus. The group then took positions on the lawn to begin. For a moment there was total stillness. Then, the group simultaneously took a breath, their weight shifted, the right leg of each raised slightly off the grass and all stepped forward on the diagonal, leaned into the space breathing out and at the end of their exhale came to stillness once again as a single body, alert and ready for the next moment. The world moved and then was still again waiting and listening.

In the shared moment of absolute stillness, in the quite before the next moment of discovery, the collective impulse of the group and in the moment of a dynamic connection to the space, the teachings of Jacques Lecoq became suddenly and overwhelmingly clear. The memory of the work and teachings of the school was still present in the bodies of this group of strangers. Held in common was a language and a physical vocabulary that connected the group through an awareness of rhythm, gesture, impulse, breath and play. A corporeal understanding of style, a conscious economy of movement and a single moment held within it all the essentials of the training.

In the following chapter the pedagogical approach of the Lecoq School in Paris, France, will be used to exemplify an effective teaching methodology. It is not the author's intention to suggest that the pedagogical approach used by Lecoq is the most effective way to train actors. There are many aspects of the Lecoq system that are incomplete. As a pedagogical approach however, the teaching can be held as an example of a unified approach that addresses the training of an actor very effectively.

The pedagogical approach of the school revolved around a quest for the moment of “c’est ça,” “that’s it.” It is the moment when all aspects of the actor’s instrument are present, active and engaged making the performer an exciting, living and dynamic presence. The approach treated every moment of training as every other moment. Every exercise was every other exercise. Each aspect of the school was connected through a common vocabulary and pedagogical approach. The approach, *via negativa*, contained within its structure the objectives of the training. The “*via negativa*” sought to find the successful moment by defining what it was not and so drove the student to a place of economy of thought, of process and of movement. This method also created both an atmosphere of curiosity and urgency in the learning process.

The difficulties and challenges of the teaching methods of the school not only developed within the students a profound understanding of craft but also changed them as human beings. The teaching approached the work of the actor through opening him to the world at large and maintaining a connection with the universal aspects of life and living shared among all people of all cultures. Always there was an attempt to transfer understanding and awareness immediately to the creative act. The idea took second place to the successful moment. The actor always had to be present and alive. New paths to viewing the self and to viewing the world were opened and the struggle of the work became a reflection of the inner struggles of the student actor. The act of becoming a better artist became married to the act of becoming a better human being. The school taught one an understanding of the universals shared in the human life experience. Keen awareness of what exists inside and the resulting outer manifestation of the inner life was

born in the student. A play filled conversation with the space and the audience became the driving force in the work.

As a teaching method the pedagogical approach of the school concerned itself with a movement approach to an understanding of theatre and performance. The pedagogical approach accomplished several training objectives a single exercise. Each exercise contained the essentials of the two year program. Every aspect of the training was introduced and critiqued with a vocabulary directly related to theatre and acting.

Many other approaches to movement training, because of their origins are more distant from acting as a craft. Very few have come to the process of actor training as part of a pedagogical method or have been born out of a direct and immediate training for the actor. Lecoq, Meyerhold, Grotowski and Chekhov are unique in this aspect of the work. Others developed methods that were intended initially as physical therapy or belonged to another performance discipline before being adapted and applied to actor training. In these methods the immediate transfer to performance is less obvious and completely dependant on the teacher to provide pathways for the performer in the understanding of craft. All methods and approaches attempt to achieve the same results in the training. Each comes to the process of understanding and to the fundamentals of craft from a slightly different perspective.

The following lists contain the major objectives of the major approaches to movement training for actors. The lists by no means encompass the totality of each approach. They are an attempt to communicate the major points of each teaching. The Lecoq approach emphasizes:

- Economy of movement
- Awareness of the space
- Sense of physical release
- Sense of gestural meaning
- Touch
- Awareness of relationships
 1. Body to body
 2. Body to space
 3. Body to audience
- Awareness of universal rhythms
- Breaking down of physical actions
- Body breath connections
- Expansive sense of the physical self (presence)
- Neutral point of departure
- Play (jeu)
- An architectural understanding of dramatic structure
- Physical understanding of style

Meyerhold's biomechanics is designed with the following objectives:

- Body as word equivalent
- Translation of rhythm and tempo to language and movement

- Ability to analyze, synthesize and construct a movement to enable the actor to feel balance and center of gravity within himself, that is, to develop complete control over his own body
- To enable the actor to position and coordinate himself three-dimensionally in relation to the stage, the space, ones partner and the stage properties. In other words, to facilitate the development of a “good eye” so that the actor becomes a moving part of an harmonious whole
- To develop in the actor physical or reflexive arousal for instantaneous and non-conscious reaction (MacFarland 99)

Grotowski's goals in the training were in part to build:

- Awareness and connection to the space
- Awareness of the self in action
- Trust in one's instrument
- Ability to follow organic impulses
- Spontaneity in a highly disciplined environment
- Supple and available physical instrument
- Ability to find a concentration for the work
- Ability to apply the whole instrument physically and emotionally to the moment
- An elimination of the actor's habits in the work
- Universal understanding of the human condition as viewed in performance

Michael Chekhov's teachings lead to:

- Psychophysical connection to the work
- Understanding the mind and body as one
- Awareness of the internal and external aspects of the acting process existing simultaneously
- Use of imagery to motivate action
- Responsibility toward the audience
- Awareness and connection to the atmosphere of the play
- Understanding of psychological gesture
- Use of the body as a point of departure

Laban work initiates a grasp of:

- How to observe and repeat movement
- How movement affects and is affected by inner states
- The body as an instrument of expression and impression
- Qualities of movement
- Rhythm and its effects on the body and the bodies relationship to space
- Physical efforts in movement and gesture
- Relationships between movement and meaning
- Pathways of movement in space

The guiding principles of the Alexander work are:

- Openness and ease under the demands of performance
- Freedom from habitual efforts and tensions
- Optimal use of breath, and vocal function
- Unity of the human organism
- Sensory appreciation
- Expanded field of attention
- Primary control
- Conscious direction
- Use and functioning of the physical instrument

Suzuki training brings comprehension and awareness in:

- A heightened relationship to the floor
- A grounding and centering of voice and breath
- An expanded imagination
- Large, graceful, specific movement
- Non-verbal communication with the ensemble
- Breath body connection
- An expansive sense of self
- Economy of movement
- Self consciousness of the interior of the body

- The body's relationship to the text
- A state in which success requires a confrontation and/or collaboration of physical and mental stamina

Bogart's work in Viewpoints builds:

- Understanding of the body's relationship to space and the other bodies in space
- Awareness of gesture
- A view of physical behavior
- A kinesthetic response to environmental stimulus
- Awareness of rhythm and tempo
- Understanding and effectiveness of repetition
- Sensory awareness
- The ability to listen with the entire body
- A sense of spontaneity and extremity
- A sense of surprise, contradiction and unpredictability

What is seen in these lists is an emphasis on the physical aspects of the acting process. The implication is that the physical is as important if not more so than the intellectual and emotional aspects of the work. Without a well trained physical instrument the inner life of the actor cannot be seen or experienced by an audience. Coming to the craft of acting without considering the importance of the physical and addressing the fundamental aspects of body training would be the equivalent of thinking

through the emotional content of a Chopin sonata and then attempting to interpret it on a piano without ever having had a lesson, practiced scales or learned to read music.

In using the Lecoq approach as a reference point to discuss a unifying vocabulary it is important to note that the words “emotion” and “feelings” were absent in the two year program of the school. The emotional connection to the work was found through a complex and very specific exploration of universal rhythms and imagery connected to the world as it exists outside of the students. The body became the instrument of exploration and understanding of the emotional life of a character. Instead of doing emotional recall or emotional connection exercises, the student was taken on an explorative journey of the four classical elements of air, earth, water and fire. Through a physical exploration of the rhythmic nature and movement qualities of these elements, the student began to discover anger, angst, fear, joy, lust, love, desire, hope, despair, etc. This discovery was applied to work with the neutral mask. Students also engaged in the same type of physical exploration of the colors of the spectrum (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet) as well as physical and rhythmic explorations of the passions. Animal re-creation exercises were also part of the movement explorations. The animal work at the Lecoq school was unique in the depth and specificity of the work. In the animal stage every attempt was made to recreate the life rhythms, the physicality, the outlook on life and the state of being of a particular animal to as great a degree as possible. The work existed on a level of extreme detail and involved a re-creation of animals observed in real life or on film. Following the animal work there was a transfer to the emotional life of character. The work with imagery concerning the elements, the colors, passions and materials as

well as the themes associated with the involvement in new work which dealt with the creation of environments allowed the actor to create a space in which an emotional response could take place. The actor could then come to an understanding physically of emotional response as it relates to the space of the play. Space in the body, space between the actors and the relationship to the space between the performers and the audience became necessary for honest emotional response.

The more esoteric movement exercises such as the exploration of elements and color were used to develop a common understanding of movement principles and life rhythms which eventually transferred to character development and a physical connection to emotional response. For example, one found physical rhythms and movement qualities associated with rage, anger, lust and jealousy in the physical explorations of fire. The same discoveries were revisited in the physical exploration of color and then refined in the abstract physical exploration of the passions themselves. The layered explorations helped the actor to clarify differences in certain emotional responses and provided many tools for the creation of character and the connecting of emotional response to physical action in an honest way.

Every approach to a teaching method or pedagogical approach, be it the approach at the Lecoq School or the systems of training set forth by Suzuki, Meyerhold or Grotowski was developed as a response to the needs, the time and the culture of the inventing practitioners. Each approach possesses weaknesses as well as the strengths already described. The Lecoq work as it addresses many aspects of an actor's craft and his physical instrument leaves out the voice-body connection and any work for vocal

techniques and production. Grotowski is relatively unconcerned with the audience in his training approach. Laban, although very useful in the training process and well adapted to acting, was originated as a way to notate dance choreography and the instructor must help the actor to draw connections between the vocabulary of the approach and the acting process. Suzuki training is very useful in building a supple and dynamic performance instrument both on a physical and a vocal level but is culturally foreign to the western student. Bogart's movement work also does not address a vocal connection to the physical instrument nor does it address the play of physical actions. The Alexander work does not address the expansive nature of performance presence or the play of the actor. Each method or approach provides essential elements and each needs the others to complete the training process and provide what the young American actor needs as she prepares for a life in the theatre.

An effective teaching methodology addresses the essentials of an actors craft holistically. This means that the essentials of acting, voice and movement need to be addressed in a unified manner. An effective methodology can combine many approaches so as to address the needs and learning modalities of each student. Effective training leaves the student with the ability and the knowledge to develop a complete and effective understanding of craft.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ESSENTIALS OF MOVEMENT TRAINING

An education that allows you to use yourself badly is almost valueless. -Aldous Huxley

In the previous chapter, lists of essentials common to particular approaches are shown. The following outline introduces a comprehensive overview of essential in all movement approaches.

Essentials which address the overall craft of acting

Rhythm awareness

Internal

External

Universal

Understanding of Universals

Understanding of stillness, presence and resonant empty space (dramatic tension)

Discovering dramatic action (jeu) (authentic physical and emotional behavior)

Physical dimensions of style

Essentials which address the instrument; the personal (the actor)

Versatile well trained instrument that can be depended on in any situation.

Awareness of personal organic physical and vocal mannerisms

Physical Awareness

Awareness of space

Understanding circles of awareness

Awareness of self

Awareness of self in relationship to the ensemble

Awareness of self in relationship to the ensemble and the performance
space

Awareness of self in relationship to the ensemble, the performance space
and the audience

Physical state of readiness

Understanding a state of constant discovery

Understanding an economy of movement

Spontaneity with emphasis on sensory impulses: listening and reacting

Physical risk taking

Connecting breath and movement

Connecting voice and movement

Human and character vulnerability

Developing a physical language for character development and scene work

The ability to approach each new role from a completely different perspective

Essentials related to the conditioning of the body

Alignment

Flexibility and strength

Special skills (*combat, *circus skills, *physical comedy, *pantomime, period movement, dance styles)

Tools used in guiding the actor toward an understanding of the essentials.

Mask

Clown

*Physical comedy

*Circus skills

*Acrobatics

*Pantomime

*Combat

*Skill sets that can also be used as tools for the understanding of the actor's process depending on the vocabulary used in his teaching.

As seen above the essentials of craft being addressed in the movement part of a training program can be broken into four areas of emphasis as concerns a teaching approach.

- Essentials which address the overall craft of acting
- Essentials which address the personal (instrument), the actor
- Essentials related to the conditioning of the body
- Tools used in the teaching process to guide the actor toward an understanding of the essentials.

The following will break out selected elements from the given outline of essentials on pages 41 – 43. Each selected element will be expanded and discussed and examples of exercises will be given to show how the essentials are addressed in the training. Not all of the essentials in the outline will be covered in this document.

Essentials Which Address the Overall Craft of Acting

Rhythm Awareness (Internal External & Universal)

And

Understanding Universals

The first essential element is rhythm. Rhythm is at the base of all artistic expression be it in the visual arts (painting and sculpture), music, dance or theatre. The rhythmic characteristics of the work that the actor must be aware of are the internal rhythms, external rhythms and rhythms that are shared and understood universally. Internal rhythms are those that could be associated with emotional response and actual life rhythms of a character based on a variety of internal responses. External rhythms are those that either manifest themselves as a result of the internal life or are those that are placed on the actor and cause an internal response. For example, the quick turn of the head could result in a sense of surprise. At the very least the image of a quick turn communicates surprise to an audience. Universal rhythms are those that exist in the world around us. They are connected to nature's environmental events such as a rain storm or a summer breeze and also to the dynamic life patterns of a small town or a large

city. They can also be associated with human life rhythms and cultural life rhythms, both of urban life and of life in more rural settings.

Awareness of rhythm in the work of a performer is essential in that it connects the actor to the space and to the audience in a very particular way. Rhythm is connected to comedy in timing, in character to pace of life and is inherent in the text an actor is given. It is necessary for the actor to be locked into the overall rhythm of a scene and ultimately the entire play. An awareness of rhythm, however, for an actor needs to be a visceral one, one that exists in whole body understanding of movement instead of purely as an intellectual concept. A complete understanding of the life rhythms related to those of performance allows for a breaking down of life so that it can be rebuilt in a performance setting.

As well as rhythm, a performer needs an understanding of universals that encompass the human condition. Charlie Chaplin had this understanding. His understanding of life rhythms allowed him to relate to an audience cross culturally. Here is an artist that captured through a particular physical style of performance universal aspects of the human struggles in life. Chaplin portrayed a particular archetype, a character common to all cultures and placed that character in situations that are also commonly shared. Chaplin's work in the style of the silent film displayed a physical approach to performance, emotional response and imagery that evoked a sense of story in the viewer. There is a difference between an exploration of universals and the presentation of a cliché. The former is searching for an understanding of shared experience and perception; the latter comes across as shallow and incomplete. Grotowski

addresses this as he speaks of the equation of personal, individual truth with universal truth (Grotowski 23). The cliché appears when only the idea is present in a superficial representation of the stereotype. The cliché could be described as idea with the absence of truth or, in the case of the student actor, the indication of a moment rather than a fully committed emotional moment lived in action with intent and clear objective.

Lecoq's pedagogical approach is based on an understanding of universal rhythms, the movement of the human body and the relationship of these elements to the performance space. He has taken truths and observations of the natural world and applied them to an understanding of, and a way of teaching, theatre. Avner Eisenberg, one of Lecoq's students, referred to the pedagogical philosophy in the following manner:

If you sit in a really quiet forest you discover there are subtle little movements all around you. They produce a feeling in you. . . . If you can capture that movement and recreate it somehow then you can create that feeling in someone else. It is an organic and all encompassing approach to movement. And movement is what we do. From the very first breath we take (Interview, Eisenberg 1996).

The pedagogical approach attempts to instill in the student an understanding of "these little movements," and the rhythms that are present in the world around us, in the world that is within, in music, in text, in emotional response, in color, in texture and in space. The ultimate goal, once an individual has developed a sensitivity and awareness, is to apply this new understanding to the creation of theatre. Dodi Disanto, The Director of

The Center For Movement Theater in Washington DC describes the craft of acting as follows:

It's all based on resonating with universal rhythms. That's what the elements and mask work is all about. It's about dropping out of your personal self. Coming to a larger place where by virtue of the fact the body is a microcosm of the macrocosm, that we all have the ability to identify rhythmically with everything in nature. Everything that is the macrocosm. The work, the approach is really about getting people to see that the body has a rhythm. . . . That if you put stock in the body it can take you there. It is not psychological or emotional at all. It is without regard to psychology or emotion. It is putting yourself in the hands of the human organism which has the ability to really resonate with all that is out there. . . . That is what is so brilliant about the pedagogy because he is trying to teach you to respond from your physical self in order to find the truth in movement. That equals justice and that justice is what everybody responds to (Interview, Disanto 1996).

A movement analysis exercise which begins to address rhythmic understandings is the "*Gamme*." It is an exercise that teaches rhythm and dramatic build. It is a series of steps set to a drum beat that breaks down a build step-by-step. The exercise begins with the student performing a simple action (raking leaves, digging a hole, sawing a board, etc.). As the student mimes the action, a drum beat sounds indicating the first level of awareness. A second beat sounds a few minutes later indicating the second level and so on up to six. The levels are as follows:

1. The actor notices but does not react, the work continues.
2. There is a small reaction, the work continues.
3. The actor begins to work slower, he is interested, the work continues.
4. The actor stops working, he knows where the sound is coming from, he looks, he begins to work faster.
5. The actor stops, looks, finds where the sound is coming from, sees it, the work does not continue.
6. The actor dives to the floor for cover.

An exercise such as this is introduced and assigned just as it is presented here, with no explanation as to why, or what the student should get from it. The lesson will not come until later during the improvisational work or ensemble work when an individual or a group in an exercise goes from level one to level six without going through three, four and five and is criticized for it. One finds that by changing the rhythmic approach to the build, the story and the emotional response to the situation change dramatically.

Explorative exercises help a student to gain an understanding of universal rhythms. The following example illustrates of all of the specific understandings being reached for in the explorative exercises. The exercise is carried out as a game. A perfectly rectangular space is defined in the center of a room. The students place themselves on the periphery of this space so as to create a perfectly symmetrical distribution of bodies around the rectangle. The rectangular space created by the actors is now imagined to be suspended by a single point in the middle. The game begins with one actor entering the space and walking to the center so as to position himself over the

imaginary suspension point. He then steps off the center into the space in any direction chosen. In order to maintain the balance of the space another actor must now enter to counter the movements of the first actor. The first person, the one who begins the game, is at the start the leader. The second person entering follows by countering and maintaining the balance. When the time is right the second person becomes the leader and when the time is right a third person enters the space and takes the leadership causing the others to become the counter balances to maintain the equilibrium of the space. The game continues with a new actor entering when the time dictates the entrance, or at such a time when the equilibrium of the space is thrown off to the degree that someone must save the plateau from completely falling off its center.

This is an exercise in which the actors are learning to sense the rhythms from within the exercise as well as what is being sensed and perceived by the audience. The changing rhythmic dynamics dictate when the game must change. It is a game in which the struggle for the equilibrium of the space is sought rather than a constant balance of the space.

Both the participants within the game and the ensemble on the outside are observed by the instructor. The ensemble is critiqued on their ability to follow their impulses connected to the needed changes in the game.

- Are they entering at the right time?
- Are they following the impulse to enter when the impulse occurs?
- Are they noticing the changes within themselves in relationship to what is taking place in the performance space?

- Are they maintaining a focused dynamic connection to the game as it is being played?

The players in the center are critiqued on:

- Their ability to make clear and strong entrances
- The clarity with which they change leadership
- The clarity with which they maintain interesting rhythmic relationships with one another
- The dynamics of their spatial relationships
- Their ability to maintain the struggle for equilibrium rather than seek a constant balance

The pedagogical objective of this game, which could be described as neutral improvisation, is to build a reference point for the work to come as well to begin to develop a physical sensation of successful rhythmic relationships in a heightened performance setting.

Neutral mask work is a tremendous tool for the exploration and understanding of universal rhythms that pertain to the craft of performance. The neutral mask work is combined with the abstract physical exploration of the four classical elements: air, earth, water, and fire. Because the actor is asked to enter a world governed by forces that are greater than himself, and once there, to deal with rhythms which, although true to the natural world and universal in nature, go beyond normal human response, he is forced into a situation wherein he must go beyond the personal. Reactions to a situation can no longer be based on personal history or psychological distress. Instead, the actor's

relationship to the action becomes a visceral response connected to the fundamental physical components of the present situation. The factors at play become the body, its rhythms and the space. The student is guided toward a state wherein body isolations and rhythms of movement provoke changes in the emotional state. What makes the exercise so powerful, and what takes it beyond an abstract exploration of movement, is that there is a search for the “just” rhythm and dynamic force of each element as it truly exists in creation (i.e., the rhythm and force of fire, the grandeur and strength of a great body of water or its raging force, the unpredictability and weightlessness of wind, the slow dynamic forces of a slowly changing mass of earth). Discoveries made are directly applicable to the dramatic situation. The rhythmic and spatial characteristics of this work become fundamental in the exploration of the physical dimensions of style.

Another work that builds a deeply ingrained sense of how rhythm can be the foundation for visceral emotional connections and responses is a hybrid of the Grotowski plateau work. The work is introduced in the following steps:

- The actors are taught first the physical isolations referred to as the *plastiques*. These are the isolations of the knees, hips, chest, head, shoulders, wrists, hands, fingers, elbows, as well as the undulations and the tossing isolations of the arms and hands that resemble the throwing of a discus.
- Next, the actors are taught the elements of the corporals. These are the acrobatic moves that allow for traveling through space which include forward and backward opening jumps, forward rolls, dive rolls, front, back and side falls, shoulder rolls and aikido rolls.

- Once the corporals and the plastiques are learned and they begin to become technically specific in a very rudimentary way, the actors are asked to begin a physical play in which they move from element to element following after natural impulses rather than a predetermined chorography or suite of decisions.
- As the actors gain understanding of the impulse work the ensemble can begin moving through the space in a game similar to the rectangular space exercise, in which they are engaged in a struggle to maintain an equilibrium of the space.
- At this stage it becomes necessary for the actors to become conscious of the rhythms in the work so that they can make use of them to maintain a varied dynamic connection to the impulse work. If the individual gets caught in the same rhythmic attack over and over again he loses an organic connection to his own work as well a connection to the ensemble. Equilibrium of the space, referred to as a plateau, is lost.

The critique at all stages of the work focuses on the developing an awareness of what is being released into the space and on the connections to the space and to the ensemble that exist outside of the actor. Attention to the rhythmic changes in the work is constantly being demanded of the student. One is admonished to be playing with extremes, to find new pathways and to constantly keep the work alive.

At the end of the impulse work each day, the ensemble moves into a game in which they are running as a synchronized group balancing the plateau as in the rectangular space exercise. While they are running to maintain the equilibrium of the space the students are tossing to each other a five-and-a-half foot long, three quarter inch

thick oak stick. The motor that drives the movement is the search for equilibrium and the stick essentially become the text being exchanged between the actors. When the play becomes all about the stick and not about the space, the game fails. In order for there to be success the ensemble must find a shared rhythm of balancing the space and then, integrated with that, a rhythm of tossing the stick. Immediately as the ensemble finds success with one stick the number of sticks can be increased to three and then, depending on the size of the group, to five. The critique of this game centers around the ensembles rhythmic relationship to the space and to each other.

Understanding Of Stillness, Presence And Resonant Empty Space

In the following discussion the elements of stillness, presence and the state of being present are linked. The understanding is that the present actor is in a constant honest state of readiness and availability. For one to be present there is an expansive sense of the self and listening with the whole body. It is this state that creates presence. A stillness filled with inner movement is at the foundation of presence and the present actor.

One must consider the capturing of a sense of stillness and the comprehension of what makes an actor present to be an important part of the overall understanding needed in the training. Both of these qualities are necessary as one comes to a sensibility of tensions in space and the relationship of the action to the audience.

The in-depth research oriented animal re-creation exercises described earlier build a heightened sense of stillness and presence. Through the act of detailed observation and

the subsequent total re-creation of an animal, its inner state, its point of view, its life rhythms, its needs and desires an actor is carried into a world in which only one objective is carried out at a time. It is a perspective from which listening to the world and stillness becomes the bases for approaching life in general.

The Suzuki statue exercises, as well as certain Viewpoints exercises, accentuate heightened worlds of stillness and a strong expansive sense of self. In the case of the Suzuki approach the focus is on the individual in space whereas in Viewpoints the focus is the relationship of the individual to the space and the ensemble. On the viewpoints plateau, rhythm also plays a large role in defining moments of stillness within the work.

An introductory exercise that begins to address and define presence is a basic entrance introduction exercise in which the student goes out of the space to begin. She then enters the space, walks to the center of the room faces the observers, stops, introduces herself, stops, says one thing about herself, stops, turns and exits the room. The objective of the exercise is to remain present in the space from the moment before the entrance begins until the moment after the actor has exited. At a very basic level the exercise is asking the student to simply be in the moment and to communicate simply and honestly without performance or "shtick." In order to be present at this pre-performance level the actor must be truly who she is, not her idea of who she is.

At the start of the exercise, the student enters the room, executes her introduction and then exits. Generally she is asked to repeat the exercise three times to see where changes, if any, occur or if she begins to "perform" more or to "perform" less. The instructor then enters and approaches the student. Standing next to the student he begins

a personal interview about the various aspects of the student's life. The interview serves two purposes. One is to put the student at ease talking simply about things she knows about and likes. Second, the interview attempts to define what the student is passionate about in life both in the context of performance and outside of the theatre. Also, in the interview an attempt is being made to define physical activities with which the student is familiar. The instructor and the student then enter into a physical and mental game designed to lead the student toward a state of physical and mental exhaustion. Elements of the game have been invented based on the interview. The ensuing activity is thus connected to the student. The instructor and the student play the game side by side following the same action. The game could consist of playing tag, some form of soccer, stepping up onto and down off of blocks while singing or reciting text, running in place while translating English text into a foreign language out loud, lying down then standing up repeatedly both quickly and in slow motion. At the moment the student opens up and/or surrenders to the physical work of the exercise she is asked to immediately, without pause, exit and repeat the exercise of introduction. A student may also be asked to repeat the introduction exercise in every detail five times in thirty seconds, or to enter and complete one rotation of the introduction exercise taking five full minutes from beginning to end. In the slow version the student is asked to constantly move very slowly but not in slow motion. A game of freeze may also be played wherein the instructor snaps his fingers causing the actor to freeze and wait until the fingers snap again and then continue until the next snap. With all of the games being invented during the exercise the instructor is looking for a way into an honest open moment. Once achieved, the student's

attention is brought to that moment or suite of moments so that she begins to understand both from an observational point of view and a performance point of view what is being looked for. The instructor is at all moments searching to get the student to play, to let down her guard, to be vulnerable, to listen and to enter into honest communication with the audience just as herself.

This introduction exercise can be repeated at various moments of the training process. Once the initial pre-performance level of presence is understood the actor can then be directed to enter with a level of presence directly related to the style of performance. For example, in the melodrama the actor enters into the story of the play, in the commedia the actor enters into the style of the play, in the tragedy the actor enters into the space of the play and in the clown the actor enters into a direct conversation with the audience. In each case the actor brings the style with him in the way that he enters the space.

The neutral mask is a tool in teaching the actor the physical sensation of an expansive sense of self, a self that is present in and fills the space. The mask admonishes the actor to be sensitive to how the body is adjusting itself to its environment and the space. It is also requiring of the actor to enter and exist without judgment. To support the neutral mask is to be in a constant state of discovery in which one exists only in the present being driven into the future through a curious resolve as discovery follows after discovery, driving the action of the moment into the future. The actor supporting the neutral mask is simple physical presence. He is a body without text, a body without story.

An exercise given to students toward the beginning of the neutral mask work that begins to teach an awareness of the physical expansion and the tensions present in style is the seven States of Dramatic Tension. The states are:

1. Total relaxation
2. American (loose)
3. Economical
4. Alert
5. Action
6. Passionate
7. Frozen/fixed

The students first try the states individually scattered throughout the space and then come together as a group to move from one end of the room to the other while making transitions from one state to the next. The students cross the room concentrating on the passage, the natural transition from one state to the next. They are instructed to think with the body first and then with the head.

The next level of the exercise is to incorporate the states into a themed narrative of the students own creation. Lost in the desert searching for water is an example. The understandings gained through an exploration of tensions inherent in style give the actor different ways of being present in relation to the text he is approaching.

All mask work, be it expressive/character, larval/basel or commedia builds in the actor a heightened sense of performance in relationship to the space and the audience. The understanding of how to honestly engage in the “extra-daily” energy necessary for

performance is at the foundation of the mask work and provides a basis for the understanding of presence. For the young student of performance the simple act of keeping the mask present to the audience provides for a heightened awareness of the self in performance. If the mask is truly being supported by the actor the heightened sense of self becomes a tool of craft rather than the self-conscious state that manifests itself in a moment of “acting.”

Discovering Dramatic and Authentic Physical and Emotional Behavior

Once a sense of stillness and simple presence is established, then the actor must understand dramatic action. At the heart of this understanding is the ability play. A sense of play (*jeu*) is central the connection of an actor to the dramatic action of a play. It is in play that the imagination meets the character in action. It is in play that the actor finds honesty, truth and a sense of discovery. A heightened sense of play demonstrates a grasp and understanding of a rhythmic and a dynamic build. In understanding the structures of play the actor concludes that action must precede reaction. Lecoq notes:

The longer the interval between action and reaction, the greater will the dramatic intensity and the more powerful will be the dramatic performance if the actor can sustain this level (Lecoq 35).

It is a sense of honest play that allows for authentic physical and emotional behavior.

Understanding play can begin with an exercise in which the play of performance has been removed. The students begin with an improvisation in which they must enter the space as if it is their childhood room. The objective is to, as naturally and as honestly

as possible, rediscover the room and its contents. This exercise takes place before neutral mask work. It is an exercise of discovery intended to be executed without commentary on the part of the actor. The exercise lays the foundation for honest discovery to be explored in the neutral mask work.

Part of the work with the neutral mask involves a physical exploration of the elements of air, earth, water and fire. This physical exploration lays a rhythmic foundation for the emotional work. Following the work with the neutral mask the students begin to make a transfer of the elements work to character. Fire becomes a character whose inner life is based on the rhythms and qualities of fire. The same progression occurs with water, air and earth. The characters enter into improvisation. The scenarios become character based given that conflict is inherent in a meeting of the elements. Very similar work with the colors of the spectrum and with the passions follows. In each case a deeper more complex inner life is layered into the makeup of character. With greater complexity comes the need for objective and intent in the play of action.

The improvisational themes are conducted with an eye to the dynamic rhythmic relationships occurring between the character and the play of the actors as it relates to the audience. The actors are asked to develop an awareness and a sense of listening to the action that allows them to make decisions based not only on the progression of action but also the action as it is experienced by the audience. The actor then plays into or against expectation.

Other approaches to the development of listening and interactive skills related to the actor's play exist in the Grotowski plateau work. The actors are working toward an understanding of physical sensations related to the following of organic impulses. As the actors become more sensitive to the sensation of organic impulses, they begin to guide more the impulses in relationship to the rhythms of the ensemble and the needs of the space. Eventually the actors begin to form partnerships or to respect partnerships that occur naturally during the exercise. The partnerships ultimately change the individual's work and through a play of action and impulse the actors find a shared dynamic in the work that is different from either of the individual's work. Found is a dynamic moment that is a sum of the two rather than just a combination of separate parts.

The psychophysical work developed by David Leong at Virginia Commonwealth University has many of the same objectives as the impulse work in the Grotowski training. In the base exercise two actors are engaged in a resistance activity in which one is trying to reach for and gain possession of an object and the other is keeping him from doing so. The exercise is one in which one actor is constantly redirecting the energy of the other. The actor whose energy is being redirected respects the physical suggestions of the partner. Once the suggestion has been respected, a new path is sought to obtain possession of the object. The game continues in a constant struggle as the level of tension through which the game is played is increased. The game can succeed only if the partners develop a heightened sense of listening and a shared rhythmic approach. They must constantly play off each other and stay true to their own urgent individual needs.

The commedia embodies the principle of play (le jeu). The actor must leap with absolute abandon into the commedia. It is based on the meeting, at a high level of intensity, of human passions, pushed to their maximum. John Rudlin, the author of Commedia dell'Arte: An Actors' Handbook observes that, "Lecoq progresses towards use of commedia masks both through exercises which raise the level of intensity of expressing emotion: each feeling, for instance, can be progressively 'scaled up' by every new character entering a scene" (201). The commedia is a world where there is an urgency to life. Lecoq describes it as the struggle to live rather than just life. The commedia is like a child who constantly acts and immediately reacts directly to the situation. It is where the gesture and speech are united and happen in the same moment (Lecoq, Le théâtre 113). The commedia is always played at the highest level of intensity, at a level that is beyond laughter and beyond terror (Felner 163). Theatrically the style implements:

1. Rapport between the actor and the mask
2. Gesture begetting character
3. Movement for survival not for superficial gesturing
4. Word meeting gesture
5. Improvisation through lazzi
6. External and internal rhythm
7. Character relationships
8. Play of attitudes
9. The gesture that is the sum of all gesture

10. The word that is the sum of all words (Felner 64)

The commedia is a style that, although comic, rests essentially in tragedy and revolves around fundamental themes such as fear, fear of death, fear of life, fear of everything. It is cruel, in the present, and without remorse (Lecoq, Le théâtre 113). The commedia dell'Arte, as Lecoq sums it up, is a style where, "*c'est le jeu qui est en jeu*," the play is in play.

Clown is an extremely useful tool in the final stages of an actor's development as regards one relationship to play (jeu). The last term of the Lecoq school concerned itself with the search for and the development of one's personal clown. It began with an exercise in which Lecoq was seated at the top of a semicircle of benches peopled with the students of the second year. The students were to enter the semi-circle one by one; the goal, "make me laugh," said Mr. Lecoq. One by one the students passed, each trying absurd and ridiculous things. Some told a joke, some tried tricks of various sorts. Nobody was funny. Finally, someone entered the space afraid and reluctant to try, knowing that impending failure loomed overhead. Out of exasperation and embarrassment he looked at the audience and sat on the floor for lack of a better idea. We laughed and the exercise was over.

What the spectator laughs at is not how clever or how skilled the clown is but at his humanity. When he fails because of his honesty, because of his innocence, the spectator sees himself and laughs. It is the survival through failure that brings us to the clown. Because the performer must discover and exploit his own personal foibles, he must come to a much deeper understanding of the self. Lecoq took the student on this

journey of self discovery, and the discovery of using oneself as the basis for creating material, as the basis of *le jeu*. Again, Lecoq was, in this final lesson, stripping away from the student all that is unnecessary. Concerning the school, Antony Frost writes:

The center of this work (clowning) is learning how to be at home on the stage even when the clown has nothing to fall back on except himself, his audience and what can be created between them in the moment of performance. Sending the clown out to amuse an audience armed with absolutely nothing (no gags, no jokes, no script, perhaps not even speech) is a way of “de-cabotinising” the student actor. (Frost and Yarrow 23)

Mira Felner comments:

It deals with bringing out of each individual the child which has grown up inside him, and which society does not permit him to express. The inner child has become for many of us a source of shame. This buried being made of solitude missed experiences and hidden faults belongs to us. . . . To express one’s clown, that means to stand face to face with one’s self, yet still stand outside one’s self, at the small distance where humor is located. It is an indispensable dimension in the search for knowledge. (165)

Students wear the mask of a clown: a small round red nose. This mask distorts the nose and makes the face appear round and open and the color pulls our attention to the face. The nose looks stupid and the clown wears it happily (Frost and Yarrow 67). The mask exaggerates the absurdity of the clown and gives him permission in the eyes of the audience to take the stage. The nose permits us to accept his stupidity, which he

glories in and generously shares. The human condition is one full of absurd irony and the clown accepts and embraces the absurdity often attacking it with a ridiculous sense of logic, of freedom and of naiveté. He does not mind making a fool of himself. As Frost puts it: "He is vulnerable, and happy to be so. His face is a disarming icon of happy stupidity" (67).

The search for one's personal clown is an important part of understanding play. Early exercises such as explorations of the elements and materials are for the development of knowledge about the world. The work of the clown is to gain knowledge of the self. The primary element at play in the world of the clown is the clown himself; it is "*le personnage qui est en jeu*." The motor driving the clown's performance is the audience and his relationship to it. There is no text, no story; it is the conversation that is important. He has only himself to rely upon. For Lecoq it was this last step in the journey that was to become the basis for all of the student's work in the future--a point of understanding from which to begin.

Essentials which address the instrument; the personal (the actor)

A Versatile Well Trained Instrument

The physical training should provide for the actor a well trained tool that he can depend on in any given situation. The training provided should:

- Preserve the individual's organic sense of movement
- Leave the actor with a supple, strong well aligned body
- Offer a host of physical skills that lead to the ability to follow impulse
- Provide for physical awareness such that physical action can be immediately understood and repeated

Although training such as ballet, mime technique or fencing can be useful in developing strength, flexibility and a sense of center, they can also lead to complications later if the performer has become immersed in a codified physical language of training. One needs to develop an instrument that can respond to inner impulse in a dynamic and organic fashion without mannerisms or affection.

Awareness Of Self

The first step in providing for an available instrument is a bringing of the actor to an awareness of personal organic and physical mannerisms. The performer must be made aware of his own "isms"; personal rhythms, mannerisms, places of tension, sense of alignment, vocal mannerisms and habitual methods of approaching the work. Once made

aware of the personal, the actor's attention must be brought to the physical instrument and how it manifests itself in performance. Here is where an understanding of the body as text becomes key. Grotowski clarifies this point when he speaks of the body of the actor being also the body of the spectator (32). One must be able to see or sense what the audience sees in order to, with clarity, communicate with its members. Potter writes, "in performance, the artist's body, and all that it entails—alignment, shape, senses, impulses, sounds, gestures—tells the story (ix).

Awareness Of The Space

The most important awareness in the training is that of the space. The body's relationship to the space is central to every aspect of performance. Without awareness of the space, without engaging the space, no act of theatre can take place. Awareness of space allows for:

- Interaction between the characters
- Communication with the audience
- The "Extra Daily Life" of performance
- Differences in performance styles (naturalism, melodrama, tragedy, classical, commedia, etc.)
- Dramatic tension
- The existence of a dynamic dramatic structure

Understanding of the physical instrument and the space must then be brought together as a consciousness is developed concerning circles of awareness. The circles are:

- Awareness of self
- Awareness of self in relationship to the ensemble
- Awareness of self in relationship to the ensemble and the performance space
- Awareness of self in relationship to the ensemble, the performance space and the audience

The goal is to reach a state in which the performer is constantly aware of himself, the ensemble, the space and the audience. When this state is reached every action, every moment and every reaction become precise and connected to the style, the story being told and the theatrical language used to tell the story. It is a conscious application of the last circle of awareness that allows for all the actors to be together in the same play.

An exercise that lays the foundation for the circles of awareness is a hybrid of the Grotowski plateau work. The work of the plastiques and the corporals, as executed in a constant balancing of the space, is taught building levels of awareness. The first level is a listening inwardly to the impulses within the body and a building of technique. The second level is an awareness of self in relationship to others on the plateau. The third level is a searching for shared impulses among all of the student actors engaged in the exercises. The last is the work of balancing the space, the sharing of impulse and an awareness of the rhythms of the game as viewed by the audience. To achieve a deep level of understanding and awareness in which the ensemble and all of the individuals

within the ensemble are playing at a level of true understanding can take two semesters of work and exploration.

The role of the space and an awareness of how to connect physically to the environment as relates to the style of a play is necessary. As an example, one might consider how two actors relate spatially in the three different styles of realism, melodrama and tragedy. The space of each of the styles is quite different from that of the others. In realism the actors find themselves in a very intimate space; in the melodrama the space between the actors is expanded to create more room for physical tension; in the tragedy the space is increases yet again both on the horizontal and on the vertical. Both a character's inner sense of passion and outer movement must adjust to the dimensions of style. A change of spatial relationship between the players also changes the timing, the dimensions of relationship, the size and extension of a given gestural response and the sense of dramatic tensions.

One finds that the spatial dimensions of a style provide the environmental context to which all the elements of the actor's play must respond. Furthermore, the character and the style have a symbiotic relationship. The character cannot find complete life unless it exists wholly within the style, as the style cannot reach its full dynamic proportions unless each character plays accordingly. Playing a given style is much like playing a particular mask. An actor must react to, conform to, and bring life to elements much greater than himself. All of the elements of play are connected to the space and without an awareness of the space, without a connection to it, no dynamic act of theatre can take place.

Physical State Of Readiness

A dynamic and present actor is one who is living in the moment. Being in the moment can also be described as a simple state of readiness of what is to come next. The basic starting point is a state of non-knowing. It is a condition which is the basis of a dynamic extension in space (Eldredge 65). The state of readiness is in essence a highly charged pre-play state of being.

From readiness arises a constant state of discovery. It is a state of discovery that allows the actor to play rather than manufacture and indicates what she would like the audience to understand. A constant state of discovery implies a continuous flow of action in which every aspect of what is happening becomes a playable action. Gesture, relationship, objectives, text and thought all fall into this category. Herein lies a conscious attention to external form as one reacts to an internal stimulus.

Understanding An Economy Of Movement

For an actor to be specific in movement and gesture it is absolutely necessary for there to be an economy of movement. For the body to exist in as present a manner as possible and to communicate only the story desired all noise must be removed from the movement. Economy of movement is also at the foundation of impulse work. It becomes impossible for an actor to respond to physical impulses if the body is doing several things at once. In an absolute economy of movement is found the universal. It is

here where the gestures speak the loudest and communicate the most. It is in an economy that the actor finds the least amount of movement and energy needed to accomplish an action. "When necessity, economy and heightened energy all merge . . . the movements have a nobility and grandeur, qualities that are associated with the Greek ideal of universality and with the approach to God or Spirit." (Rolphe, Behind 21)

Spontaneity With An Emphasis On Sensory Impulses

The physical dimensions of impulse and spontaneity are at the base of an actor's play. Once an economy of movement and a state or readiness are realized the actor can begin to listen inwardly to impulses arising and begin to follow, thus allowing impulse after impulse to arise. The play of impulse then becomes a game between the following of the absolute organic impulse and the guiding of the impulses to a particular moment. Plugged into an awareness of the other performers and the space, the actor then begins to recognize and follow impulses generated through his relationship to what is going on outside of himself. It is also a dynamic sense of listening, a reacting that heightens one's personal presence to one of performance. The constant following of impulses arising keeps the actor in a constant state of discovery, in a place of the unknown and in the moment.

Physical Risk Taking

Physical risk taking is a tool in the training process that leads the performer to a state wherein she is willing to let the physical instrument take over. The student is placed

in, or places herself in, a situation wherein she must allow the body to simply be and to take over. The mind must be left behind as the body is committed to the action undertaken. In the moment of commitment the actor is freed to react completely and holistically in the moment. The state of release discovered in these moments is important to the process of learning to follow impulse as well as just allowing the body to be and to react kinesthetically and intuitively.

Physical risk taking and human character vulnerability are linked in the training process. For the actor to draw the audience into a moment he must be vulnerable and open. There must be an honest emotional connection to the moment. Understanding this state of being and how to recreate it in performance is necessary. For the actor to be emotionally connected, however, all other aspects of the training have to be in place and the body must be fully available. Action-based physical improvisation can accentuate the vulnerability of the actor. The success of the improvisation depends on the performer's ability to connect on all levels in a single moment. The improvisations follow the simple formula "action-reaction-interaction." Physical improvisation works with the student's perceptions of communication, dramatic communication and human action. The improvisations lead the student toward an understanding of the self in a performance situation, as well as leading the student to a sensory level in which the body knows when a moment is dynamic and alive and when it is not. Physical improvisation is, as Yarrow puts it, "pitting the student face to face with himself in a state of perpetual discovery" (Yarrow 73).

Stage combat can be used in the teaching of physical impulse, risk taking and the heightening of human character vulnerability. Combat deals with primitive emotions and violent physical activity. When a full organic, guttural yelling supports the violence, awareness of the relationship of emotion, voice, movement and the shape of the movement come to the fore. The combat sharpens kinesthetic sensitivity and solidifies a link between movement and emotion. By its very nature combat also allows for an altered kinesthetic sense of self and others. The environment of combat requires the actors to touch each other with the hands and with the entire body. The importance of tactile communication is achieved without an environment in which the actors are awkwardly self aware. The combat leads to a more positive view for the actor of her instrument. At the same time the combat develops the body; it works to foster the physical and emotional development of the actor (Rubin 91).

Making use of the same objectives of the Alexander work, unarmed combat can be of value in the breaking of old established movement patterns. The physical extremes demanded can lead a student away from usual movement behavioral habits. Once these patterns are altered it is easier to effect changes in thinking and feeling. By changing the muscular memory and therefore the physical response one also changes the way of thinking and feeling. Used in conjunction with exercises to reinforce pattern changes, unarmed combat can serve as a means of reducing "isms" (Rubin 92).

Connecting Breath And Movement

For the actor to be freed so that he can be emotionally present and vulnerable in the work, there must be a true connection of breath and body as well as voice and body. Heightened emotional states are dependant on a visceral connection to breath and voice, and for a moment to be realized in such a way as to be released into the space, neither the voice nor the breath connection can be manufactured by the performer but must be as spontaneous and organic as the rest of the physical response to the action.

Constant attention in the training process must be drawn to the breath. An actor's breath patterns affect the physicalization of character, the emotional response, the ability to take physical risk and the relationship to the audience. In clown training the importance of breath, as it relates to how an audience responds to a moment, is fundamental. The entrance of the clown is where the awareness of breath is begun. One finds that there is a moment where the clown must breathe, in order for the audience to be comfortable with the developing relationship. Then the clown can guide the audience response based on when and where he breathes. One finds that when the performer is not breathing the audience is not breathing or at the very least is uncomfortable in the moment.

Not only is the connection of breath to movement essential but the rhythmic treatment of breath is the key to finding emotional response as well as communicating externally what is happening internally. The series of movements, referred to as the twenty movements at the Lecoq school, teaches the actor an organic connection between

the movement of the human body and breath. Economy of movement, effort, simplicity, and readiness are all connected to breath.

Understanding An Economy Of Movement

Imparting an understanding of gesture and an economy of movement and its role in a score of physical action is essential to the training process. The technical work of breaking down gesture and movement occurs so that the actor can understand what has taken place in a rehearsal or an improvisation and then recreate it over and over again in performance. Through the movement work, the actor is slowly brought to an understanding of when a movement resonates in space: when a movement is not overextended, when it is extended or when it is just right. The goal of the work is to understand the movement on an organic level. The historical, stylistic, stereotyped, beautiful or artistic gesture, as well as the narcissistic gesture or gestural aestheticism end in the same result as the cliché (Felner 155). All place the actor outside the moment commenting on it. In movement work, the goal is to send the student back to a cognitive level so that he can find the gesture that precedes the word. From a primitive point of view, "gesture" is at the basic level of all communication. In addressing the training Lecoq writes, "The gesture and the word are recognized on the level at which they merge into one another. A word must be charged with the impression of the body and can only become clear in so far as it is so" (Lecoq, Mime 119). Mira Felner, in her book, The Apostles of Silence, speaks of the importance of gesture in the technical training:

Anyone can imitate life without being able to act on the stage. The difference comes from what the talented, skilled and trained actor extracts consciously and intuitively from what he observes--a common point of gesture among all men, a sort of common denominator. (153)

Understanding of gesture can provide the student with a profound understanding of the body in movement not only of the arms and hands but of the whole body. The work does not remain purely technical, however. A difference must be drawn between movement that is purely physical and movement that is expressive.

A refined sense of gestural response leads to a refined ability to make the most out of the props the actor is given. Everything the actor then handles becomes an extension of his body. The prop essentially becomes a mask. An example of this occurring in a contemporary play would be the jar carried on by the scientist in the beginning of Metamorphoses by Mary Zimmerman. The jar is a metaphor for the entire play and the actor must play the jar as he is speaking the text. The text must be spoken through the jar or, said in another way, the jar must be handled such as to support the text. In either case the jar is an extension of the actor and must be animated in much the same way a puppet would be brought to life. Like the jar, the vial and the dagger in Romeo and Juliet take on significance according to how they are handled. The relationship to the prop is dictated by how the object is handled, how it is approached and how it is let go. This type of awareness can be developed through mime techniques and in-depth movement analysis.

The explanations of the essentials and the exercises given in this chapter are intended to show a connection between movement training the acting process. Through the training, the actor is brought to a deeper understanding of the physical aspects of performance. Understanding essentials in the training leads for an expressive body that is available to the performer. The objective is to create a physical instrument for the actor that is present, dynamic and readable by the audience.

CONCLUSION

The American theatre education system in its teaching methodology or its pedagogical approach to training, has not fully addressed the integrated nature of what a theatre artist does nor has it fully addressed the overwhelming need for a total understanding of the physical aspect of the craft. On the other hand, the recent publication of numerous books describing the various approaches to training promoted by master teachers, directors and performers of the 20th century, as well as the eclectic nature of job advertisements for theatre professors and instructors, would suggest that the educational community is on the cusp of a holistic understanding of the diverse nature of the training process.

There is a need to create theatre artists, performers and--most importantly--teachers who can recognize truth in the moment as concerns performance. Once being able to recognize the truly successful moment, one must come to a refined understanding of why a moment is successful and what process was involved in getting there. It is a total understanding of what Lecoq referred to as the "extra daily life" that is performance. At the core, understandings, must be physical, kinesthetic and intuitive.

Training must lead to a profound understanding of craft and lead the student to an understanding of performance that removes all superficiality and seeks to go below the surface. Training must address the essentials of craft in every exercise. Training must be about learning what the essentials are and how to get at them. Possessing understanding

on a deeper level will allow the actor to stand in the theatrical space as a dynamic presence, constantly in the moment and engaged in a continuous act of discovery. Understanding gained should allow the performer to repeat night after night a sensitive, dynamic and successful performance.

Effective movement training happens when the various aspects of acting, voice and movement come together. Since the body is the common denominator that exists in all performers, a total understanding of the physical instrument and its role in performance is key. It is here, in this understanding, that movement training for the actor moves beyond teaching skill sets, and begins to play an instrumental role in the training process. Within this understanding comes the awareness that all aspects of the training are all other aspects of the training. They can not be separated. Classes in acting, voice and movement can be considered the same class in which certain facets are simply emphasized. Movement training then goes beyond the teaching of skills and becomes a foundation for understanding.

The next step for the book project, once the essentials of the movement aspects of training and the essentials of acting and voice training have been thoroughly identified, will be to identify the objectives of a particular program. For the book project a model program will be invented to present as an example for the development of a unified pedagogy. Once the objectives are clear, a vocabulary and a pedagogical approach will be suggested. It is important to note that any vocabulary proposed must be directly linked to a pedagogical approach. The suggestion will be made that the proposed pedagogy can be applicable to various training programs and environments. This will

separate vocabulary and pedagogy from curriculum. Through providing a clear and specific approach, the expectation is that, for programs and situations that are radically different, a pedagogy and vocabulary specific to that particular situation can be designed. The clear and specific approach can be summarized in a formula. The formula can be depicted as follows:

Cultural learning environment + Program + Essentials + Objectives =
Vocabulary/pedagogy

The overall objective of this project is to provide a way for educators within various programs to collaborate and, by so doing, to present a more unified approach to the educational process. Through this unification, the students gain a deeper understanding of craft and a more profound level of training.

Like the great teachers and theatre revolutionaries of the past, we, as educators, must raise the bar for the theatre of tomorrow. It is our responsibility.

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APPENDIX A

Book Outline and Time Line

Outline:

Section One I – Introduction to Book

Overview of what we have written

Section II – The Current System

Where we are/ The problem

Overview of American System and movement place therein.

Pyramid

Chapters to be determined

Section III – The Essentials

Chapters on:

Overall (art form)

Rhythm awareness

Internal

External

Universal

Understanding of Universals

Understanding of stillness, presence and resonant empty space (dramatic tension)

Discovering dramatic action (jeu)

Physical dimensions of style

Personal (instrument)

Versatile well trained instrument that can be depended on in any situation.

Awareness of personal organic physical and vocal mannerisms

Physical Awareness

Physical state of readiness

Understanding a state of constant discovery

Understanding an economy of movement

Spontaneity with emphasis on sensory impulses: listening and reacting

Physical Risk taking

Connecting breath and movement

Connecting voice and movement

Human and character vulnerability

Connecting authentic physical and emotional behavior

Developing a physical language for character development and scene work

The ability to approach each new role from a completely different perspective.

Related objectives:

Alignment

Flexibility and strength

Special skills (combat, circus, physical comedy, period movement, dance styles)

Tools:

Mask

Clown

Circus skills

Acrobatics

Clown

Pantomime

Combat

These chapters are to be written in the following format:

- Lecoq's understanding and approach to teaching of concepts
- A hybrid approach to teaching of concepts
- An example of a class in which the exercises are taking place
- Another approach addressing the same concepts
- Meanwhile in the acting class/Meanwhile in the voice class

Section IV – Pedagogy and Vocabulary

Syllabi and curriculum matters

Unified vocabulary

Timeline:

Section II and III completed rough drafts by June 15th, 2005

Section IV and I completed by December 1, 2005

APENDIX B

Word List

Lecoq:

Jeu

Specificity of gesture

Styles

Theatrical languages

Physical dynamics and special relationships of styles and languages

Difference between a theatrical a language and a style

Universal rhythms

Individual's rhythms

Relationships

- body to body
- body to space
- body to audience

Analyzing of movement

Breaking down of physical actions

Breath body connection

Alignment

Strength flexibility

Release

Impulse

Neutrality is a condition of pure action unencumbered by psychology – Lecoq

Mask:

Philosophy

- contradictions
- both history and the moment
- constrains and liberates

Physically

- encourages spontaneity, frees expressive nature
- demands a physical approach
- demands clarity of gesture
- heightens spectators awareness of awkward of unnatural gestures

Theatricality

- stimulates audience imagination
- creates distance between actor character
- mask can be changed transformed
- mask can show as different perspectives of the same character

(Pitches 58)

Lecoq based combat experience teaches:

- 1) The presence of appropriate actions
- 2) Selection of appropriate actions
- 3) Committed physical and emotional responses to the situation
- 4) Acceptance of the imagined situation in which the fight is contained
- 5) The need for mental images, focused outside the actor
- 6) Development of kinesthetic sensitivity and ability to improvise in space
- 7) A continual movement toward "other consciousness"
- 8) An understanding of the importance of "phrasing"
- 9) Development of physical efficiency through exercises preparatory to the combat experience and through an understanding of the flow and effort
- 10) Maintenance of Stanislavski's two perspectives of a role
- 11) An appreciation for discipline as a source of freedom

(Rubin 93)

More objectives of unarmed Rubin, 90

Neutral mask objectives Rubin 76 – 84

Mask work

- clarifies
- channels expression through the body
- liberates the actor

(Callery 52)

Basic skills:

Precision

Balance

Coordination

Efficiency

Rhythm

Expressiveness

Responsiveness

Playfulness and discipline

(Pitches 113-116)

Meyerhold:

Unseen elements of biomechanics are:

Rhythms of actors discipline of the ensemble

Constant surprises

Gestural patterns of the performers

Dance-like quality of the action

Extensive play with props

Conscious attention to external form

Responsiveness of the actors

(Pitches 105)

Space is important to overall

Design is crucial in dictating movement of individual performers physical relationship between characters composition atmosphere of a particular scene. (Pitches, 99)

Biomechanics trains:

- 1) balance (physical control)
 - 2) rhythmic awareness both spatial and temporal
 - 3) responsiveness to the partner, to the audience, to the other external stimuli especially through the ability to observe, to listen and to react.
- Meyer
 - (Hodge 43)

Principles of biomechanics:

The whole body is part of every movement

Each movement is formed of 3 factors

- a) intention
- b) equilibrium
- c) execution

Orientation in space of a large number of persons
(McFarland 135)

Movement qualities:

Smooth/flowing/legato
Sharp/quick/staccato
Balance
Coordination

On Biomechanics:

“The objective is to develop in the actor the ability to translate rhythm and tempo into language of movement.” (McFarland 102)

Biomechanics allows for the ability to analyze, synthesize and construct a movement.
(MacFarland 99)

Biomechanics is designed with the following objectives:

- 1) To enable the actor to feel balance and center of gravity within himself, that is, to develop complete control over one's own body
- 2) To enable the actor to position and coordinate himself three-dimensionally in relation to the stage, the space, one's partner and the stage properties. In other words, to facilitate the development of a “good eye” so that the actor becomes a moving part of a harmonious whole
- 3) To develop in the actor physical or reflexive arousal for instantaneous and non-conscious reaction (MacFarland 99)

Meyerhold's system deals with energy flow and understanding beginnings, middles and ends

Meyerhold is a scientific approach to the form within

Meyerhold Principles

- a refusal, a reversal
- a sending out, to or away
- a point or dot

- a stop or stance
- a brake
- a pause or interval

Chekhov:

Gesture work

- staccato
- Flying floating/flowing, molding, radiating
- Expansion/contradiction
- Ease, form, beauty and the whole

(Potter 23)

Laban:

- Space
- Time
- Dynamic (weight)
- Flow

(Hodge 181)

Deals with movement qualities and a vocabulary that allows the actor to understand and apply the idea of quality and direction.

Weight = strong/light

Time = urgent/sustained

Space = direct/indirect

Flow = bound/free

Laban

- qualities – 21 movements
- Efforts – justification
- Tension – tension
- Rhythm – rhythm

Efforts

- light
- flexible
- direct
- bound
- free

- sustained
- sudden
- strong

(Newlove 70)

Weight = strong/light

Time = urgent/sustained

Space = direct/indirect

Flow = bound/free

Efforts:

- press
- wring
- glide
- float
- thrust
- stash
- dab
- flick

Weight = strong/light

Time = urgent/sustained

Space = direct/indirect

Flow = bound/free

Bogart:

Viewpoints of time

- tempo
- duration
- kinesthetic response
- repetition

Viewpoints of space

- shape
- gesture
- behavior
- expressive

(Bogart 20)

9 Viewpoints

- spatial relationship
- shape
- kinesthetic response
- repetition
- gesture
- architecture
- tempo
- duration
- topography

(Bogart 114)

Alexander:

- Posture (alignment)
- Movement patterns
- Breathing patterns
- Mental attitudes

“divine neutral” as regards the super objective of Alexander. A total balanced instrument flexible and adaptable. (Rubin 2)

Based on:

“- the desire to do something (the stimulus) and the unconscious impulse to use too much effort in the process of the doing (habit).”

(Potter 66)

Guiding principles:

- use and functioning
- expanded field of attention
- sensory appreciation
- inhibition
- unity of human organism (self)
- primary control
- end-gaining and means whereby
- conscious direction

(Potter 67)

Allows the student to identify and realize tensions so as to arrive at a supple instrument that is continually available to the actor.

Mind body integration (Potter 65)

Motivation

Intent

Physical awareness

Kinesthetic awareness

Sensory awareness

Communication

Supplemental gestures serve to:

- to repeat
- to illustrate
- to accentuate
- to modify
- to contradict

(Alberts 34)

Grotowski:

“The body does not have memory it is memory. What you must do is unblock the body memory.” – Grotowski (Hodge 203)

The corporeals help the actor to redevelop a trust in his own mechanism. – Grotowski (Hodges, 201)

Other teachers:

Gestural categories:

- functional gestures
- conventional gestures
- social gestures
- nonfunctional gestures
- emotional gestures
- shadow gestures

(Sabatine 120)

Basic Building blocks:

- Character interaction
- Body position

- Posture
- Body orientation
- Placement
- Distance
- Mirroring
- Eye behavior
- Touching behavior
- Physical content
- Emotional display

(Alberts 127 – 130)

Types of touching:

- Professional
- Social
- Friendly
- Intimate
- Sexual

(Alberts 119)

Posture has two elements:

- Overall tension
- Position of the body

(Alberts 51)

Four types of character movement::

- Basic
- Primary
- Secondary
- Actions of reaction

(Alberts 40)

The actor is part of the ground and must have a strong physical relationship with it.
(Suzuki 9 the way)

Reasons for movement training:

- 1) Improved physical ability
- 2) Ability to reveal emotional and psychological life of a character
- 3) Ability to understand and reveal the impulse to action created by the script
- 4) Ability to work through person/role conflict as these are manifested physically

- 5) Ability to establish rapport and build ensemble
 - 6) Ability to spontaneously react to what is presently happening
- (King xiii)

...neutral alignment is not bound to habit. (King 13)

Problem with some methods is that they are too technical to make an inner life come to life or to esoteric.

The approach and the vocabulary must approach various learning modalities

Posture
Tensions
Space and shape
Rhythm
Breath
Eye-head relationship

All methods speak to the removal of habits and tensions – flow of energy through the body

Presence = the creation of a larger image

Accomplishing more with less effort = Alexander – Grotowski – Lecoq – Meyerhold

Stillness

5 primary functions of physical behavior:

- 1) express emotion
 - 2) regulate interpersonal relations
 - 3) to present ones own personality
 - 4) to convey interpersonal attitudes and relationships
 - 5) to replace or accompany speech
- (Alberts 15)

Emotional Paths:

- 1) free expression
 - 2) repressed or concealed expression
- (Alberts 16)

4 attributes assigned to gesture:

- 1) range = space of gesture
 - 2) frequency = repetition
 - 3) duration = length of time
 - 4) intensity = expenditure of energy
- (Alberts 12)

Removing noise from the work

Play implies movement

- Step 1 = strength, breath, flexibility, alignment
 Step 2 = play/action
 Step 3 = Space
 Step 4 = circles of awareness

Movement-rhythm-language

Character is personality

Vocabulary should evoke images and action

“The actor’s body needs training for flexibility, coordination to be centered, and to be capable of great diversity of economical and expressive movement.” (Rolph 11)

Alexander and Feldenkrais inhabiting your body

Actor must learn:

- Proper alignment
- Proper balance and related tension
- Proper breathing techniques
- Proper warm up techniques

An understanding of his/her body

An understanding of his/her own personal mannerisms.
 (Sabatine 15)

Mind-spirit-body

Thought – emotion – action
 (Sabatine 11)

Expression implies intent. (Alberts 10)

3 Senses which we are aware of movement:

- Kinesthetic sense
- Static sense
- Visceral sense

(Penrod 2)

What is done

How it's done

Physical process of acting:

- contact
- experience
- behavior
- recognition

(Potter 160)

VITA

Jonathan Becker has performed throughout Europe, Asia and the United States and has worked as a member of the SunDance Institutes Playwrighter's Lab, a laboratory founded by Robert Redford to develop new works for theatre and film. He has appeared as an actor in programs with most of the major symphony orchestras in the U.S. and Canada performing in such venues as Lincoln Center. He co-founded and was Co-Artistic Director of two theatre companies: Les Senokrates in Luzern, Switzerland and The Brodeur Brothers in Paris, France. Since 1988, Jonathan has helped in the development of fifteen original plays. His teaching credits include work as a guest artist in professional theatres, colleges and universities. He has taught young performers throughout Europe and the United States and has been a member of the core faculty at The National High School Institute for fourteen years where he is currently the Associate Director of the Theatre Arts Division. As a teaching artist he has worked for Disney Theatrical on The Pride Rock Project, an educational outreach program associated with *The Lion King* and for Bravo, the arts and entertainment cable channel. In addition to acting and teaching, he is the owner/operator of Emerald Green Studios at www.theater-masks.com a full service production shop servicing the international theatre community, which creates masks and puppets for the theatre. Jonathan has a conservatory certificate from The International School of Theatre Jacques Lecoq in Paris, France, a BA in Theatre from The College of Wooster, an MA in Acting and Directing from The University of Akron and an MFA in Theatre Pedagogy from Virginia Commonwealth University.