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In Corporation: Physical Theater, Cognitive Science, and Moving Toward a
Paradigmatic Revolution in Epistemology

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor
of Philosophy

in

Drama and Theatre

by

Maiya J. Murphy

Committee in Charge:

      Professor Nadine George-Graves, Chair
      Professor Stephen Barker
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      Professor John Rouse

2013

The Dissertation of Maiya J. Murphy is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form

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<div align="right">Chair</div>

University of California, San Diego
University of California, Irvine

2013

DEDICATION

To my dear parents, Patty and Tom Murphy, for giving me a love of making art and talking philosophy.

To my beloved husband, Scott Devoe, for his support, patience, and unflagging commitment to making me take study breaks.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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 "The Weave of the Lecoq Pedagogy's *Auto-cours*: Gathering Up Postwar Europe, Theatrical Tradition, and Student Uprising," with Jon Foley Sherman in *Collective Creation in Contemporary Performance*. Kathryn Syssoyeva, ed. Palgrave (to be published August 21, 2013)

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

In Corporation: Physical Theater, Cognitive Science, and Moving Toward a
Paradigmatic Revolution in Epistemology

by

Maiya J. Murphy

Doctor of Philosophy in Drama and Theatre

University of California, San Diego, 2013
University of California, Irvine, 2013

Professor Nadine George-Graves, Chair

This dissertation asserts that physical theater reveals itself as a movement to not only

generate body-based aesthetic performance, but also advocate an overall epistemological

paradigm shift based in embodiment. This project investigates Lecoq's figure of the

actor-creator through the lens of cognitive neuroscience, cognitive linguistics, and

cognitive philosophy. It demonstrates how cognitive neuroscience has given clear voice

to embodied philosophy, finally allowing body-based performer training practices to be

understood in their full context and range. It outlines how body-based performer training hijacks preexisting cognitive abilities, rendering a cognitive state of theatrical creativity in which the actor-creator is fully equipped to both make and inhabit theatrical creation. The dissertation opens out to other body-based practices, including the Viewpoints of SITI Company and the work of Jerzy Grotowski, to explain how this coalition of physical work has ramifications beyond practice, advocating an embodied epistemology and ontology. The dissertation draws out how theatre has long been intimately involved with philosophy, but how this involvement has been plagued by a deep anti-corporeal prejudice. This prejudice–despite insights from the arts, social sciences, and other fields– has prevented an embodied philosophical approach from taking hold in western philosophy. Using Thomas Kuhn's stages of scientific revolution, this project traces the development of physical theatre in relation to western theatre, and ultimately western epistemological history. This project culminates by explaining how physical theatre practices have always sought to overthrow the linguistically based epistemological tradition, and envision the conditions and qualities of a corporeal epistemology.

Introduction

Digging for Epistemology and Excavating Value from Embodied Action

The body is more than a mere visitor to the scene of writing: the body *is* the drama of its
own re-markability.
–Vicky Kirby

Physical theater practices foreground the body in performer training, aesthetic creation, and performance. Taking as a point of departure one of the most influential training systems within physical theater, the pedagogy of Jacques Lecoq, this project works through physical theater exercises to excavate their implicit embodied epistemology. Through this episto-archeological process, physical theater reveals itself as a movement that not only generates body-based aesthetic performance, but also advocates an overall epistemological paradigm shift based in embodiment.

A Tradition of Devaluing the Body

In the western philosophical tradition, the body has often stood in for the object, served as the vehicle of decadence and excess, or acted as the abject foil for spirit and intellect. This western "body" has been configured in different ways and endowed with more or less access to epistemology and ontology, but most often stands in as servant to spirit and/or intellect. Deep-seated and longstanding philosophical and religious tradition continues to mold and reinforce this limited view of the body. In mainstream western religion the body is either an object rife with desires to be overcome and/or material best submitted to the wisdom of the purer spiritual realm. In western philosophy, the dualistic mind and body configuration that runs through important philosophical touchstones such

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as Plato and Descartes does not even consider mind and body as halves equal in value. Rather, intellectual, reflective, and spiritual qualities are ascribed to the mind and prioritized in value. While there have been western philosophical and religious challenges to this configuration, the weight of this dualistic body and mind is extraordinarily heavy and continues to bear down on both conceptions of and actions involving mental and bodily capacity.

Likewise, the mind has reigned as the primary epistemological and ontological generative node of the body/mind binary. Descartes's proclamation "I think therefore I am" crystallizes this position that the mind not just confirms, but indeed determines epistemology and ontology. This tautological structure reveals the far reach of the privilege of the mind, and exploring this structure and its subsequent function uncovers how mind-privilege implicitly determines, legitimates, and valorizes its own content. Just as Descartes' tautological configuration of the mind reveals the status of its own privilege, Jean-François Lyotard's explanation of the tautological structure of knowledge reveals how it endows itself with value (Lyotard 37). What is at stake in the body/mind binary is not simply the revelation of the privilege of the mind, but the revelation of how that privilege determines value and in turn, how it bears on people's lives.

As postmodernity has rendered suspect the possibility for stability in truth claims, the definition of knowledge as the apprehension of "truth" has atrophied. The fact of "truth" becomes beside the point, and this turns us to an inquiry into the structure, process, and function of knowledge production. In this way "what knowledge does" becomes more significant and useful than "what knowledge is." Indeed, "what it is" becomes determined by "what it does," rather than the other way around. Lyotard's work

in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* becomes a useful guide because

he explores it through categorizing its forms, not evaluating its truth claims. Through

analyzing the forms, Lyotard proposes how they intrinsically legitimate, or bestow truth-

value to, the knowledge produced within. He outlines two main categories of knowledge:

narrative and non-narrative. From the outset it is clear that Lyotard is using language-

based metaphors, particularly to describe narrative knowledge. Just as this knowledge

owes its metaphorical structure to language, we can see a certain debt to writing,

intellectual organization, and ultimately the providence of the mind. According to

Lyotard, narrative knowledge is structured to totalize its content, offering the impression

of positive development toward a conclusion, made possible by an implied truth-value.

Non-narrative knowledge, on the other hand, belongs to postmodernism, and is marked

by fragmentation and a skepticism of stability in meaning. The breakdown of the

language-based metaphor of the narrative creates a productive lack of certainty that

promises the possibility for the reconfiguration of knowledge. This lack of certainty is

significant because, as Lyotard suggests, forms inherently produce their own legitimation

structures. Legitimation determines what is given the authority of truth-claim, or in less

stable but no less powerful terms, bestows value. In narrative knowledge, legitimation is

built into its structure as a tautological system that simultaneously determines what

knowledge is and deems it valid, only answerable to its own system. Lyotard explains

how legitimation itself is eroded in postmodernism and therefore does not bind the

system together in non-narrative knowledge as it does in narrative knowledge (39). Since

value is determined by internal legitimation forces, the standard processes of determining

value are also eroded as the legitimation structures break down. This breakdown of

legitimation offers another promise beyond the possibility of a reconfiguration of knowledge: the promise of reorganizing value. Therefore when looking at a tradition of undervalue, the key lies in pinpointing how the legitimation function is constructed and granted authority. Because legitimation is imbedded in the knowledge structure itself, to change that which is valued demands changing the knowledge system altogether. From the vantage point of a tradition of a devalued body, the promise of the postmodern is that from within the cracks of its fragmentation other possibilities might emerge.

Before considering any possibility of change, however, dissecting the epistemological organization of fields, even those in which the body stands at the fore but remains devalued, reveals the extent of the entrenchment of the body's undervalued status in western epistemology. The weight of this entrenchment in turn informs the profundity of the countermeasures necessary to change these epistemological formulations. Thanks to the powerful influence of Saussurean semiotics, linguistics became not just a form of communication or representation, but the foundation for subjectivity, epistemology and ontology. Semiotics in effect spurred the development of a twentieth-century language- and text-based philosophical foundation. In this structure, knowledge can only be generated and understood through language. The anti-corporeal bias in semiotics has its roots in articulations of representation. Here the body is not only absent, but any hint of its presence becomes actively threatening. Imbedded into western theories of representation is the Platonic anxiety that dwelling on representation is a distraction from reality. In the allegory of the cave, Plato describes how representation masquerades as reality and that humans are incapable of accessing the reality that is so close to them. In Plato's cave, people are chained in such a way that there is a fire behind

them, and a wall in front of them. As things move in front of the fire, shadows are thrown on the wall in front of the prisoners. Because the prisoners are restricted to looking at the wall, they take the shadows to be reality, unable to understand that they are merely projections. Because Plato suggests that philosophers are people who have broken free of the chains to apprehend reality, he suggests that all other people are merely prisoners to representation. Therefore for the majority of people, representation is automatically suspect. For Plato, reality does exist, however it exists where most people cannot access it. Even for those specialists who might be able to apprehend reality, it is situated in distinction to representation, always outside of it. Following this line of thought, when materiality participates in representation, as in the theater, materiality itself becomes complicit in the great representational ruse that threatens to distract people from their relationship to the real world. As Semiotics began to reign over linguistics, representation, and philosophy, this anti-corporeal bias hovered about as its omnipresent cloud. As the body is the most intimate and constant materiality in human experience, the body often stands in for this cloud. In this way it is the body that always hovers on the outside: at its most powerful a threat, and at its least powerful abject. It is here that the dualistic body is not only locked in opposition to the intellectual substance of ideas and thought, but is necessarily the less valued position through whose abjection the "superior" value of the mind is articulated.

Drew Leder complicates the critique that the privilege of the mind is entirely responsible for the devaluation of the body. He reveals the body's "intrinsic tendencies toward self-concealment" (3). In *The Absent Body*, Leder ventures through philosophy and science to outline how the body's absences and appearances fuel the body and mind

binary and its subsequent devaluated status of the body. Leder describes the disappearance of the body in a positive sense: the body possesses a natural tendency to recede from attention, or erase its own presence, in order to function, as in the case of our perceptive faculties and internal organs (18). In other words, the fact that the body is not announcing itself is evidence that it is working well. On the other hand, the body's dys-appearance is the phenomena whereby the body makes itself known precisely because there is a problem, as in the case of symptoms of illness or death (127). The fact that the body is making itself extrinsically known is a signal that something is wrong. Leder points out that the body, both in disappearance and dys-appearance, supports the body's absence in philosophy. However, the nature of that absence determines the value of the absence. Disappearance, the positive absence of body, contributes to a benign philosophical absence. On the other hand, dys-appearance, the negative presence of the body, contributes to a philosophical absence that views the body as threatening (127).

In addition to the possible intrinsic qualities of the body that contribute to dualism, there are factors internal to specific fields that compound the persistence of the binaristic. In dance, the ephemerality of performance poses a problem for people to experience it beyond is original context. Since the advent of video and its increasing user-friendliness, some of this challenge has been mitigated. However before the video age, the many experiments in dance writing and notation were aimed toward translating corporeality into text in order to preserve it. Because the archive was originally founded on the preservation of texts, its value is founded on the legitimacy of text as a reliable intellectual storehouse. These experiments in dance notation and preservation remained while the embodied performances disappeared. In this sense, textual attempts to preserve

embodied experiences mark the body's absence. While the source of the value of the dance performance is in embodiment, dance's own ephemerality worked against itself because it left no traces to circulate in its absence and participate in larger conversations upon which it might bear, including philosophy. Within theater studies, a certain text/performance split that pits playtexts in opposition to the act of performance rehearses the familiar and enduring text/ephemeral body opposition from dance in a different form. Therefore the twentieth-century epistemological and ontological landscape has already been shaped by an anti-corporeal bias (in semiotics and philosophy) and an anti-performance bias (within theater studies), effectively evacuating the epistemological and ontological value from body-based performance.

Efforts to Bring the Body Back

In the face of the body's persistent recession from value, many fields have sought to bring it to the fore of the discussion and resuscitate its participation in epistemological and ontological conversation. In the social sciences Marcel Mauss and Pierre Bourdieu are among the thinkers who have ascribed epistemological value to body-based, body-executed, and body-transmitted practices. Mauss's lecture "Techniques of the Body" considers how even the most quotidian body practices and postures, like walking, are manifestations of deeper cultural behavior that changes within changing contexts. Bourdieu, who also wrote extensively on language, builds off Mauss to articulate quotidian practices as the origin of social structures. In this way the body manifests culture and shapes social structure. Philosopher Michel Foucault sees technique and discipline as cultural power bearing down on body to perpetuate itself. This may be a

relatively benign process-as in the case of sports or dance technique–but it also encompasses the more pervasive and serious processes of educational, military and carcerial institutions. Here the body not only manifests culture, but even deeper, realizes and sustains power. In another corner of philosophy, phenomenologists wrenched epistemology and ontology from language. They posited that because the first human encounter with the world is through the body and its interaction with the external environment, the philosophical point of departure most germane to the human experience should be one centered on bodily contact and sensation. Thus the foundation for phenomenology is the body as it radiates outward, encountering the world through perception and interaction. Here the body sheds its identity as screen to write upon or material to mold, and begins to take on more constitutive epistemological and ontological capacities. Drew Leder uses the notion of "incorporation" to express how things external to the body can be absorbed into it, offering itself up to the body's disposal (83). Leder identifies both temporal and spatial aspects to incorporation, and suggests that this corporeal process applies to skills, tools, and even other peoples' affectivity. In this view the body not only interacts with the world but also absorbs it into its own arsenal to express agency (33-35). Judith Butler's notion of gender construction focuses on the body's ability to perform gender as the constitutive power of gender itself. In this way the body no longer biologically determines gender, but is recast as a surface on which gender is produced by powerful social factors. Vicky Kirby celebrates Butler's ability to bring the body back to epistemological and ontological discussions in the face of a linguistically based philosophical framework. However, Kirby pays homage to Butler by pursuing her work even further: Kirby suggests that through a detailed reading of

feminist studies she can uncover that Butler and others still articulate a body in psychoanalytic terms, reinscribing nature/culture and body/mind binaries to detrimental political effect (5). She proposes that, but not entirely defines, a new kind of body-based inquiry, or "corporeography," needs to be developed in order to articulate the body but avoid the problems of dualism (96).

While rallying around "the body" may offer new insight into a corporeal philosophy, the inherent essentialism of taking one body to stand in for many or all bodies often proves problematic. In the postmodern age when essentialism's tendency to generalize and freeze categories into permanency has been seriously called into question, it has become important to understand the roots and ramifications of the differences in bodies. To generalize the body, in the postmodern line of thinking, is to obscure the biological and social forces that conduct power founded upon the differences of living bodies. For postmodernism, essentialism is a strategy that is at best naïve and at worst totalitarian. In this double bind, essentialism loses all discursive legitimacy. Therefore to begin to theorize from "the body," is to begin from a place of inherent discursive suspicion. However, scholars of the corporeal have also noted that essentialism also provides a certain philosophical purchase[1]. In other words, to begin to work through a concept, that concept must have a certain coherency in order to put it in relationship with other concepts. A permanency, even provisional, lends the conceptual integrity necessary

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[1] I first encountered the term "purchase" from an essay in *Reclaiming Identity*: John H. Zammito's "Reading Experience: The Debate in Intellectual History among Scott, Toews, and LaCapra" 293. Zammito uses the term to explain how experiences could be salient tools in the process of understanding. I take up this term not only to suggest the same utility of experience, but also to express physical contact as a traction point in embodied epistemology. My conceptual idea of purchase in Lecoq pedagogy, and physical theater training in general, is indebted to the postpositive realists in *Reclaiming Identity* and their ideas about identity and how to navigate it through reorienting both postmodernism and essentialism to give way to a more complex understanding of how identity works and is wielded in the world.

to work through discursive inquiry. Corporeal theorists often face the stumbling block of essentialism by deploying it side by side with the philosophical fruit of non-essentialism. This productive essentialism aims to root out the naivete of generalism and the destructiveness of the obfuscation of difference, but to maintain the theoretical integrity that essentialism's purchase offers. Kirby shows that any kind of politics depends on essentialism to circumscribe constitutive political groups or issues. To challenge human rights equality necessitates being able to articulate who has power and who does not, who benefits and who suffers. While the particularity and diversity of those groups is necessary to digest in the conversation, to evacuate any commonality from the group is to disintegrate the discussion. Diana Fuss suggests reorienting how we look at essentialism: rather than assuming it has a positive or negative value, Fuss proposes that the key to understanding essentialism is to look deeper into how and why it is being used (Fuss xi). In *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism,* a collection of essays investigates how a postpositive realist approach can depolarize essentialism and postmodernism, reframing the conceptual tools to better understand identity. To dispense with essentialism is to dispense with the purchase of commonality that gives shape and force to both understanding and action. This will also bear on theater practice, for performer pedagogy is contingent upon the assumption that the body can do and experience a certain range of common things. In this way, theater pedagogy constantly negotiates essentialism, both theoretically and practically.

Physical Theater is Theory in Practice

This is the context in which physical theater practitioners function: their primary point of entrance into the work–the body–is widely categorized as something without epistemological value. Moreover, the body is not just simply evacuated of value, but actually stands outside the field of value as a threat to that field's stability and coherence. Joining efforts in other fields to resuscitate the epistemological and ontological value of the body, physical theater takes its stance by working in two levels. Through creating and executing performances they are not only working aesthetically, but are simultaneously manifesting the body's work as that which carries epistemological value, thereby enacting a philosophical position. This dual-level is essential to physical theater's project precisely because it needs to simultaneously challenge the existing structure of value as it makes its work. Physical theater practices are a collection of widely varying approaches, among which difference and opposition thrive, that hold one thing in common: the privilege of the body in both performer training and the act of performance. In this project I juxtapose Lecoq-based pedagogy with the training practices of SITI company and the work of Jerzy Grotowski. I enter through Lecoq-based pedagogy because that is the practical tradition in which I have been trained. Moving *from* embodied practice outward *to* interpretation, creation, and intellectual engagement is a central tenet in physical theater practice. I mirror this path through extending my own embodied practice outward into philosophy in order to uncover physical theater's own embodied epistemology. In this way I am also suggesting that first and foremost, Lecoq-based pedagogy teaches actors how to access a particular epistemological outlook, rather than teaching a recognizable style. In addition, Lecoq-based pedagogy is a useful point of departure because it incorporates many of the major Western corporeal methods for

actor-training, not to mention physical education, from the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries. Much, if not all, of Lecoq's material–including mime, mask, *commedia dell'arte*, and clown–was not invented by Lecoq. Rather, Lecoq's great contribution to actor training is the way in which he incorporated and synthesized practices into a developmental progression, elucidating a full-fledged practice for theatrical creation and philosophy of movement. Because his private school welcomed students for nearly fifty years during his lifetime, continues to do so after his passing, and spawned Lecoq-inspired schools run by his students, his work has consistently been disseminated in the west and throughout the globe since the middle of the twentieth-century.

Physical theater challenges the dominant undervalue of the body's epistemological potential because it offers what I call "body-bound theory." Body-bound theory refers to how body-based knowledge, once performed in physical theater practice, is born from the body (in this case out of physical exercise and improvisation), and finds value only in the efficacy of its reapplication to the body. In other words, out of the body-based material generated by the physical theater regimen, only a portion of that material will then be "performed," in either a formal theatrical sense, or in the more esoteric applications of physical practices such as in the work of Jerzy Grotowski. Physical work validated through reapplication carries its own internal criteria for validation, specific to each process, project, and moment. Here this selection process is tautological–the process is endowed with its own right to determine value. This tautology comprehends the particularities of the material and contextual factors of every moment in the process. Theater can expose this process of valoration precisely because it is manifested through material means, necessarily arising out of the interdependence of the agent and the

material world. Part and parcel to body-bound theory is this situatedness–its inherent connection of the agent to its environment. In this way the epistemological result is not something detached from its context.

Another unique feature of physical theater's embodied epistemology is its widespread anti-theory strategy. Even the most divergent practices in physical theater offer up the imperative of action before intellectual engagement. This reverses the Cartesian mind/body split, prioritizing the body. In this way physical theater practices confound the integrity of the mind/body split, forcing practitioners to work in an opposite mode where action is prioritized, and in turn valorizing the physical work as primary. Therefore physical theater practitioners advocate for embodied epistemology simply through enacting the principles of their work. Lecoq pedagogy has touchstones in mime and movement analysis. He clearly articulates the ramifications of performing physical theater technique: "Miming is a way of rediscovering with renewed freshness. The action of miming becomes a form of knowledge" (Lecoq, *The Moving Body* 22). Here Lecoq refers to not the virtuosity of pantomime, but the more basal ability of the body to mime its environment in order to "know" it. For physical theater practitioners, their epistemological framework is simple: embodiment generates epistemology.

The drawback to this anti-theory approach is that it has alienated the physical theater community from other disciplines for over twenty years, isolating itself from larger conversations that might digest how its embodied philosophy might bear on larger questions of the body. Lecoq-based training overtly distances itself from theoretical discourse and any philosophical traditions that are based on discursive models, which includes most major movements in Western philosophy. Lecoq's major writing came at

the very end of his career, two years before his death in 1999, demonstrating that it was less important to publicly formalize his work in writing than it was to develop his pedagogy in the studio, with the bodies of his students, for over forty years. The standoff between physically based practice and scholarly inquiry has meant that, despite over fifty years of training actors in Europe, Lecoq's legacy, not to mention those of other physical theater practitioners, has been sparsely documented in historical and practical terms, but the theoretical and cultural ramifications of his practices have not yet been fully digested.

Recent work in cognitive science can bridge this gap between practice and scholarship because of the ways in which it reframes the body's participation in cognition. Cognitive scientists and philosophers such as Shaun Gallagher, Alva Noë, George Lakoff, and Mark Johnson have articulated how the material abilities and capacities of the entire body (not limited to the brain) directly participate in the most foundational to the most complex cognitive structuring and functioning. This participation, by extension, is responsible for cognitive function in language formation and philosophical inquiry. By drawing out this chain of influence, these authors have privileged the body in cognitive formation, language structure, and meaning-making. This privilege parallels Lecoq-based pedagogy's privilege in the field of theatrical creation, which is, in effect, the conscious fabrication of meaning in an aesthetic environment. "Meaning," in this sense, refers to theater's ability to convey value, contouring representation to manifest potential actions, rather than staking claim to truths. This parallel between the body in such cognitive scientific circles and Lecoq pedagogy is reinforced by the fact that both of these moves to privilege the body do not simply invert Cartesian mind/body dualism, but rather reconceive the mind/body

relationship. A body in opposition to the mind, in the most simplistic of Cartesian terms, comes into alliance with everything that *is not* connected to the mind. This body comes to stand in for passion and emotion, and becomes responsible for all of the faculties that are irrational and uncontrollable. This body, as defined by Cartesian dualism, necessitates at least control and at most annihilation to preserve both individual and societal coherence. Both Lecoq pedagogy and authors such as those mentioned above privilege the body in order to resurrect its presence from a duality that abjects it altogether. The purpose of privileging the body is first to resurrect it from its abjection, then to use it as a lens to reveal the shortcomings of privileging the mind, and finally to articulate an entirely different framework with which to think about the mind, body, creativity, and knowledge–all unhinged from the strictures of the Cartesian binary.

In addition, applying the scientific principle of "falsifiability" (McConachie 556) offers another way to think about "truth," and objectivity. Falsifiability allows an objectivity to circulate that is not absolute, but can be reached in better or lesser ways, whose standard of judgment is in relationship to complex contextual factors. Therefore falsifiability allows for a contingent epistemological success–one that never claims absolute success, but one that measures the validity of solutions through incremental success. Applying certain cognitive scientific principles that privilege the body to the Lecoq pedagogy opens out the pedagogical system, making it accessible to questions of meaning-making, and putting it relation to philosophical and discursive traditions rather than in opposition to them.

Essentialism at Work in Jacques Lecoq's Pedagogy

Teasing out how essentialism is revealed and deployed in Lecoq pedagogy demonstrates how physical theater practices are inextricably entwined in the complexities of essentialist philosophical principles. As poststructuralism led the way in unmooring essentialism as a legitimate theoretical stance, it revealed how attempts to align practices and principles with essentialism naturalizes and therefore disguises the many power vectors that create and sustain those practices and principles. This is the gift of postmodern thinking: identifying the instability of essentialism permits the revelation of power at work. This pressure on essentialism, however, has also led to the reign of relativism–if nothing has an essence, and everything is mired in instability, everything is deeply relative. The only thing to trust is the phenomena of contingency. Thomas Prattki–Lecoq-trained instructor, the first pedagogical director of École International de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq after Lecoq's passing, and founder and head of the London International School for the Performing Arts (LISPA)–discussed managing Lecoq pedagogy's essentialist features in the postmodern world. He noted that the current students all inevitably work in this postmodernity, in what he called a "soup of not knowing" (Interview). Therefore the larger issue for performance pedagogy is how to train artists who live and work in this soup–if nothing is "knowable," art is nothing but acts of floundering about in the soup. This challenge to art is also a challenge to any kind of creation or action. When there is no dependable knowledge, artists, activists and anyone interested in taking action have no traction, no ability to make alliances, no principles on which to depend to give shape to their action. This predicament[2] leads to the notion that

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[2] Used in the sense of the title: *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and The Predicament of the Postmodern*.

because any action or creation is built upon such dubious ground, all action is inherently pointless. Postmodernism, extended to its ultimate conclusion, results in the paralysis of action. At stake in the legacy of poststructuralism is not just the promise of revealing power, but also the paralysis of action. The paralysis of action–political, philosophical, artistic– marks the limit of the utility of postmodernism. In practice, contemporary activists, artists, individuals, and other action-oriented people have always navigated their way through essentialist and postmodernist thinking, capitalizing on the ability of postmodernism to reveal power, while simultaneously assigning cohesion among certain principles in order to create traction or "purchase" for their action.

In an essay in *Reclaiming Identity*, Satya P. Mohanty works through Naomi Scheman's essay about a woman who initially joins a consciousness-raising group professing feelings of guilt and depression. Through interacting with the group, Alice reinterprets those feelings as a result of a deeper anger due to her relationship to certain personal and social factors (Moya and Hames-Garcia 34). Mohanty explains that a postmodern view of this situation would suggest that there is no way to consider personal feelings epistemologically dependable enough to use as a lens to understand a personal situation much less a collective situation or social location because feelings are socially constructed. Mohanty reorients the postmodern/essentialist binary and suggests that, "'personal experience' is socially and 'theoretically' constructed, and it is precisely in this mediated way that it yields knowledge" (Moya and Hames-Garcia 81). In other words, he takes up the postmodern concept of mediation not as something that renders experience invalid, but as something that produces value because of the way this mediation reveals a relationship of the person to wider social forces that construct the

experience. Mohanty explains that Alice and the consciousness-raising group relate her experiences to both her personal circumstances and larger external notions of women and society that bear upon her personal experience. Through this collective process of reformulation, Alice and the group avail themselves of both essentialist and postmodernist perspectives to come to an understanding of Alice's situation and how her own identity plays a role in this process (Moya and Hames-Garcia 36). Mohanty illustrates that, consonant with his overall theoretical move to unhinge the essentialism/postmodernism binary, seeing essentialism as *productively* mediated can open up the theoretical traction of essentialism and mobilize postmodernism to expose the forces of power at work. This example illustrates how people, in the practice of their own lives, navigate essentialism and postmodernism in non-binaristic, nuanced and complex ways, finding purchase in order to move forward theoretically, socially, and personally. In this way embodied practice itself–the practice of personal action, social action, artistic action, etc.–offers up ways of rethinking postmodernism and essentialism beyond the stasis of the philosophical binary[3].

For theater artists, the solution to paralysis is manifesting purchase in the process of training and creation. I use this term to suggest that there are provisional points of stability that can function as traction–something to push off of–in order to move. This movement is not necessarily a progressive one. This is traction to move anywhere, to take action, to transform static principle into active processes. In other words, this changes the theoretical and practical focus from what the body is, to what the body can do. These

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[3] I will continue to refer to the essentialism/postmodernism binary instead of the more common essentialism/constructionism binary to not only situate my work within the postpositive realist framework, but also draw attention to the larger, temporal, and philosophical force at work which gives birth to constructionism.

points of purchase create a series of temporary "truths" to impel action. These "truths" do not need to be proven true (if they ever could be) at all. Rather, they only need to be understood as temporary, provisional "truths" for a specific task, and their truth-status may change as the task moves forward. For example: a person needs to cross a river and does not want to get wet. This person needs to take action while navigating the success of that action and keep from falling into the water. If the person sees a series of "stones" and successfully steps on them to cross, in a sense it does not matter whether they are actually stones, logs, old tires, or even an inert alligator. There is a certain utility to these stones that help accomplish the action. The person's belief in these as stones is what allows the person to complete the action. If the person wholeheartedly clings to a postmodern skepticism that she can never ever actually know what those "stones" are, she will become paralyzed and cannot cross. In this sense, a total devotion to postmodern skepticism prohibits movement altogether. This person's ability to provisionally believe that those spots in the river are stones is what propels her to action and enables her to reach the goal of crossing the river. There is, of course, the situation where the person might believe that an alligator is a stone, and because of this inaccurate belief in her provisional truth, gets her foot taken off. This demonstrates that there are perils to buying into provisional truths and points of purchase. These perils are the very ones that thinkers fought against when they chipped away at essentialism. This marks the limit of accepting points of purchase–there is always the risk of peril. In that sense, there is always a certain risk that must be accepted to move forward–to construct and cleave to points of purchase. Drawing inspiration from the sciences (in the same way that McConachie proposes "falsifiability" in the humanities) Mohanty finds purchase by asserting a kind of

objectivity that is theory-mediated and changeable (Moya and Hames-Garcia 42). This kind of objectivity is understood to be fallible, and further experiments and new information may discount the current objectivity, to give birth to a new one.

> This conception of fallibility is thus based on a dialectical opposition between objectivity and error. Since error in this view is opposed not to certainty but rather to objectivity as a theory-dependent, socially realizable goal, the possibility of error does not sanction skepticism about the possibility of knowledge. Such skepticism (postmodernist or otherwise) is usually the flip side of the quest for certainty (Moya and Hames-Garcia 42).

To apply the concept of fallibility to the example of crossing the river, this would mean that as a person crosses the river, she might come to notice that if the stones have a particular texture, relationship to the water, or look like they are moving, they might be more or less suitable to use for crossing. In this way the person can avoid the paralysis of total skepticism, but can face the perils of finding purchase through information they learn in the process of doing. In the way that Mohanty expresses this notion of objectivity, he reorients objectivity (and essentialism) from an absolute into an ideal of inquiry (Moya and Hames-Garcia 12). This postpositive realist objectivity, as a goal, induces a process whereby it functions as something to be reached, maintaining a contextual dependability, but all the while acknowledging its own limit.

I submit that physical theater artists deploy essentialism in this postpositive realist manner–using postmodernism-informed essentialist concepts as changeable and fallible ideals of inquiry in order to find purchase in the creative process. The Lecoq pedagogy has a complex relationship to essentialism–at times navigating itself in a postpositive realist way, and at times revealing its limited point of view. Employed as a fallible

essentialism, Lecoq pedagogy aims the students for certain horizons, such as neutrality, and is unconcerned with evaluating the truth-value of neutrality itself. On the contrary, these horizons propel the student into a process of discovery that is both personal and generalizable. In the way that postpositive realism suggests that the reorientation of the postmodernism/essentialism binary better comprehends the complexities of identity as it plays out in personal and social contexts, I suggest that a postpositive realist view of Lecoq-based pedagogical practices better comprehends the complexities of theoretical premises at play in its practical work. Furthermore, applying postpositive realist conceptions of essentialism to Lecoq-based pedagogy expands the possibilities of connecting this embodied practice to interdisciplinary conversations about practice and essentialism, rather than isolating Lecoq-pedagogy as an essentialist, impenetrable, unknowable, and dismissible practice.

Lecoq employs essentialism in several different forms including the search for permanency, the practice of essentialization, and a desire for internationalism. These are all made possible by an overall essentialist mandate to universalism that Lecoq locates as the "universal poetic sense," which he describes as:

> an abstract dimension, made up of spaces, lights, colors, materials, sounds which can be found in all of us. They have been laid down in all of us by our various experiences and sensations, by everything that we have seen, heard, touched, tasted. All these things are there inside us, and constitute the common heritage, out of which will spring dynamic vigour and the desire to create. Thus my teaching method has to lead us to this universal poetic sense in order not to limit itself to life as it is, or as it seems. In this way the students can develop their own creativity. (*The Moving Body* 46)

Paradoxically, Lecoq sees this journey toward universality as something that both ultimately fosters individuality through guarding against limitation.

In order to approach universality, the Lecoq pedagogy's search for permanency provides the students with a shared point of reference from which "students discover their own point of view" (Lecoq, *The Moving Body* 20). This search for permanency, led by the instructor, is a sustained and collective search for essentials as manifested in physical performance. The process of this collective search creates a loosely unified goal for the essentialist practices. For example, as the class collectively searches for "treeness" through trial, error, and instructor commentary, they create a collective understanding of the basic component of "treeness". The "treeness" they seek is the collection of the permanent qualities that belong to all trees, regardless of variation among specific type. During this search they may fix upon certain qualities, such as a physical rootedness to the ground, and will aim to perform these as accurately as possible in accordance with the collective definition. Because these permanencies are a manifestation of essentialism, which is–as postmodernity has taught us–an impossibility, actors are bound to fail in degrees at accurately performing them. However, it is in the relative success and failure of the attempt at reaching these permanencies that the individual qualities and quirks of the actors are exposed. It is through the attempt of physically performing total rootedness that the actor discovers both her ability to execute rootedness and the ways in which she does not or cannot. Permanencies provide the goal for the search, and its sustained process forges the actor's individual voice.

The goal of reaching permanencies is accomplished through the process of essentialization, or the practice of distilling creative material to its foundational components (Lecoq, *The Moving Body,* 165). Essentialization is an incisive process where the actor must consider a large category of items, identifying and physically

performing only the elements that the specific items have in common. Essentialization teaches the actor to look at movement as something to penetrate in order to arrive at its constitutive qualities.

As a practical, specific, and contextual strategy for realizing universalism as a horizon in his school and pedagogy, Lecoq aimed for and integrated aspects of internationalism. Lecoq-based practices with text encourage students to use their mother tongue, welcoming a diversity of language in actor preparation. Evidenced by the "International" in the title of Lecoq's school, he also aimed for a certain international contingent of students and instructors contributing to the work at the school. In these ways, essentialism shaped Lecoq's school, pedagogy, and theater theory, and resembles Plato's theory of forms. Plato's theory of forms (also known as his theory of ideas) is both straightforward and slippery. In this concept the form (or idea) is an immaterial, primary aspect of reality. The material manifestation of the form is merely a representation of the form. Like the shadows cast in the cave, representations of the form are secondary in priority. A particular chair, in other words, is a secondary representation of the primary and immaterial "chairness." Lecoq pedagogy works through this notion of forms and the primacy of the immaterial essence. As Lecoq pedagogy moves through the identification process (discussed in detail in Chapter two), the goal of the actor is to find the essence of the theatrical "dynamic," rather than its cliché or any particular representation. For example, as the actor works to corporeally identify with fire, Lecoq-based pedagogy pushes the students to discover the physical dynamic of fire. In a postmodern view, there is no specific, unchanging quality to fire, and therefore, any particular interpretation of "fieriness" is no closer to the actual quality of fire than any

other interpretation. In this sense, postmodern improvisation may authorize, by default, every possible interpretation of fire as "accurate." Regarding theater, Russell mentioned that Lecoq would often say "Anything is possible, but not anything goes[4]" (Interview). This suggests that Lecoq's broad openness to the limitless possibilities of the theater of the future was tempered by what he saw as certain unchanging principles. In contrast to a pervasive "anything goes" perspective of some acts of postmodern improvisation, in postmodern dance for instance[5], the Lecoq pedagogy's provocation to discover fire suggests that there are unchanging theatrical dynamics of "fire," an essential "fieriness," that the actor must access. Through repeated exercises with multiple students, students start (even if by accident) to give examples of this dynamic, and the audience of students, led by the instructors, begin to understand what it is. "Fire" is recognized as having a specific pace, rhythm, space, and timing–quick, sporadic, and intense movements that explode outward in an uneven rhythm. Led by the instructors, the group of students begin to agree upon certain characteristics of fire, never verbally identifying or cataloging them, but building a common corporeal language for fire. Through identifications, Lecoq pedagogy suggests that the actor can find and manifest the "essence" of fire, giving it corporeal form. In Platonic terms, the form or idea is fire, while the person's movement is the manifestation. Lecoq's notion of "essentialization" butts up against the challenges of essentialism in language, epistemology, and ontology posed by postmodernism. A purely

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[4] "Tout est possible, mais pas n'importe quoi." English translation by Amy Russell.
[5] Here I am referring to postmodern dance starting with the Judson Church Dance experiments and later. This is not to say that postmodern experiments did not employ rules or internal principles, but rather that many of the experiments served to demonstrate that "dance" was not made of up any essential qualities. When legitimate dance was considered something performed by dancers trained in technique, postmodern dancers employed non-trained dancers in their pieces; when legitimate dance was considered something accompanied by music, postmodern dancers danced in silence or to text. For more information on postmodern dance, see Sally Banes's *Democracy's Body: Judson Dance Theater 1962-1964.*

postmodern analysis of essentialism renders these exercises invalid and impossible. If postmodernism has called into question the stability of essences, what, then, is "discovered" in the Lecoq-pedagogy's investigation of fire? Plato's theory of forms also poses problems of interpretation. Philosopher William A. Welton explains the challenge to understanding the purpose of Plato's theory of forms:

> Forms are often thought of as what came to be called "universals," and are at least ancestors of those long-lived denizens of ontological dispute. Yet forms also seem to be paradigms or standards, ideas by which the qualities of particular things can be judged, absolute whereas the particulars are relative, perfect where they are imperfect. Scholars disagree over whether forms are best thought of in one of these ways or the other, whether Plato's views on this point changed, or whether they were simply inconsistent. (Welton 4)

Similarly, Lecoq speaks of universal principles at play, such as neutrality, but simultaneously disavows the possibility of their certainty:

> Of course students also need to have their own point of view. In their work they must have ideas and opinions. But if these ideas are not grounded in reality, what use are they? The same phenomenon can be found in painting: Corot, Cézanne or Soutine were able to paint all kinds of trees, to transfigure them or to capture a particular facet, an unusual light for example, but if 'The Tree' had not been there in the painting, nothing would have happened. We always return to the observation of nature and to human realities. I have a strong belief in permanency, in the 'Tree of trees', the 'Mask of masks', the balance that sums up perfect harmony. I realise that this tendency of mine may become an obstacle, but it is one that is necessary. Starting from an accepted reference point, which is neutral, the students discover their own point of view. Of course, *there is no such thing as absolute and universal neutrality, it is merely a temptation.* [Emphasis mine.] This is why error is interesting. There can be no absolute without error. I am fascinated by the difference between the geographic pole and the magnetic pole. The north pole does not quite coincide with true north. There is a small angle of difference, and it is lucky that this angle exists. Error is not just acceptable, it is necessary for the continuation of life, provided it is not too great. A large error is a catastrophe, a small error is essential for enhancing existence.

> Without error, there is no movement. Death follows. (*The Moving Body* 20)

Here Lecoq moves in two directions: he simultaneously affirms universals and exposes their stability as a "temptation." While not functioning exactly like Mohanty's fallibility or McConachie's falsifiability, Lecoq's error still mediates permanency and its impossibility. Error, in moderation, is not just productive, but necessary. Just as Mohanty accepts the productivity of mediated objectivity, Lecoq sees the theoretical permanency as always mediated by the practical contingencies of the material world. Lecoq brings up the geographic and magnetic poles as an example where geographical theory mapped on to actual magnetic forces does not line up. Similarly, in any practical endeavor, such as Lecoq training, theoretical principles meet practical contingency in the studio. Through this relationship between theory and practice, the fact that they do not exactly "line up" is productive, and this dissonance is part of the actual result of training principles applied upon and through the body.

Moments where essentialist rhetoric and practical application are particularly dissonant reveal certain limits of the productivity of Lecoq-based pedagogy. For example, Prattki, the Lecoq-based instructor, led a workshop in Abijan, Ivory Coast with locals and attempted to lead a segment of Neutral Mask work[6] (Interview). The participants in Abjian have their own sacred traditional mask practices. The workshop participants refused to use the pedagogical neutral masks that Prattki had brought, saying that they wanted to lead the mask work themselves in their own way. They suggested that what Prattki proposed was too profane and not suitable for the sacred treatment that

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[6] Neutral Mask work is covered in more detail in Chapter 1.

masks demanded. Prattki obliged, and the next day the participants returned with their

sacred masks and performed their traditional mask work. As a result, the foundational

neutral mask work of Lecoq-based pedagogy never occurred during the course of this

workshop. The limit of the essentialist practices here were such that in this particular

context they could not be used at all. The difference between the theoretical principles

and the local context were too great. The local sacred mask practices had to take the

neutral mask's place. Another example is made explicit by the experience of one my

fellow students at The London International School of Performing Arts (LISPA), Lazlo

Pearlman, who describes himself as "a creator, performer, director, lecturer and teacher

whose work is often but not always generated by his FTM[7] transgendered experience"

(Pearlman website). The neutral mask training includes two masks, one female and one

male. The difference in masks is that the female mask is smaller and has a slightly

differently contoured forehead. The fact of multiple masks intrinsically troubles the

essentialism of Lecoq's neutrality as a totalizing category. While our instructors at

LISPA did not regulate who wore which mask, the students, before performing neutral

mask exercises, would have to pick which mask to wear. This is one of the most overt

ways in which gender essentialism can play a role in Lecoq-based pedagogy. Pearlman,

much of whose work–well before his training at LISPA–had to do with the complexities

of sex and gender, expressed the difficult experience he endured with Lecoq-based

pedagogy overall. Pearlman cited that he never felt comfortable with the Eurocentric,

heterosexual, and male-centered nature of the training (Interview). However, with regard

to neutral mask work, Pearlman suggested that there is a benefit to it that has to do with

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[7] Female-to-Male

the actor's relationship to the audience. In this instance, the essentialism of the training–

which permitted the circulation of gendered, racialized, and heteronormative practices–

met a limit as it encountered the particular embodied experience of Pearlman. The result

of this marked dissonance was the pervasive and enduring discomfort Pearlman felt in the

course of the training. Simultaneously, however, even in one of the most gendered

practices in Lecoq-based pedagogy, Pearlman finds value in neutral mask work, and

expressed a desire to modify the practice to retain its utility but evacuate it of its

problematic elements (Interview).[8] In this proposition to modify the practice, Pearlman is

in effect suggesting to lessen the dissonance between the essentialist theoretical structure

and the context of practice through modifying the theoretical structure.

Regarding internationalism as a variation on essentialist practice, Prattki notes

that not only does Lecoq's pedagogy clearly stem from a European approach to theatre,

but he also describes how the actual international reach of Lecoq's work was not

something he could actually anticipate in the 1956 when he opened his own school

(Interview). This highlights the paradox of Lecoq's espoused internationalism that bears

heavily on his practices. In order to categorically reject the Franco-centricity of his own

theatrical context, Lecoq espoused the extreme opposite: global reach. In reality he did

not have access to the cultural traditions and practices of the entire world, nor did the

entire world have access to him[9]. While Lecoq had always wriggled out of the

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[8] Pearlman, like instructor Amy Russell, detailed in Chapter 1, suggests that the word "neutral" be removed from the title of the practice. For more ways in which instructors and practitioners negotiate essentialist practices in the studio, see Chapter 1.
[9] Lecoq did spend time abroad, during his formative years as an artist and teacher, in Italy. This cemented in his work the generative potential of traveling to other countries to experience their theatrical traditions. In one sense Lecoq's theatrical work inherently included an aspect of cross-cultural exchange. I am arguing

narrowness of his own French theatrical tradition, and in so doing upheld a vision for an international approach and practice for creating theatre, what this meant in 1956 was a diversity of *European* influences, practices, and students, not an actual global one. In this way, despite the fact that the seed for internationalist aspirations may have been planted through his own international introduction to theater, the fact that his work might reach beyond Europe was not something that he could have foreseen. Therefore internationalism as both an aspiration and an influence on pedagogy was born in a specific and restricted context, but as it faced the reality of actual reach beyond Europe, its own limits were revealed. While Lecoq trained teachers and students do come from multiple different countries, the reality of a global international student constituency and a global pedagogical approach was no doubt framed by the economic and cultural abilities of instructors and students to travel, live, and work or study in Paris. For many potential students in the world, this would have been a financial impossibility. Just as Prattki's school bears "International" in the title like Lecoq's, Prattki suggests that the practice of internationalism has always been and still can be considered to be a vision (Interview). I locate Lecoq's vision of internationalism as part of his essentialist impulses. In this case, however, by extrapolating and generalizing through internationality, he created a promise that could be filled neither literally (with a global student population and a global pedagogical participation and structure), nor theoretically (with an approach that can comprehend the complexity of a global existence). In this situation, just as in the case of the neutral mask work in Abijan, the material context is so

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however, of the limit in scope of this cross-cultural exchange, particularly in view of the internationalism he espoused. (Lecoq, *The Moving Body* 3-8)

far from the essentialist principle that the difference is not productive, but rather, marks a current limit to the pedagogy. However, in addition to Lecoq's admission of the impossibility of permanencies, scholar Jon Foley Sherman identifies, within Lecoq's devising process called *auto-cours*, a fundamental "belief in the generative powers of failure and incompletion" (Sherman 90). Within Lecoq's pedagogy, essentialist practices are repeatedly coupled with agitative principles or practices that destabilize essentialism at the very moment it is deployed. In this sense, many of Lecoq's essentialist tendencies are consistently mediated, using Mohanty's terminology, ultimately short-circuiting a conception of essentialism and universality that is stabile. Essentialist principles give purchase to action, however the short-circuit of those principles allow for action to be informed by the contingencies of its context. In this way, essentialism and universality function at moments as essentialist stumbling blocks, as in the examples of Prattki and Pearlman, but more widely circulate as Mohanty's "ideal of inquiry" which transforms the focus of the pedagogy from static truth-assignation toward action and investigation, marking its significance as a process.

Science and Lecoq-based Pedagogy in Conversation

The approach of this project is to crack open the practices and principles of physical theater by interfacing it with cognitive science and Thomas Kuhn's principles of scientific revolution. Putting physical theater, cognitive science and Kuhnian principles into conversation allows us to see how physical theater not only generates knowledge but advocates for an overall paradigmatic change in the way we create and value epistemology. This is significant because while these physical theater practices have been

ongoing, along with other efforts to prop up the value of embodiment, the current framework for understanding knowledge and its basis in language has restricted the way we are enabled and allowed to understand physical theater practices.

As the field of cognitive science itself has taken a corporeal turn it has revealed new ways to understand how the entire body, not just the embrained mind, creates and participates in cognition. This has been made possible through both new instruments that can literally better see cognitive processes and the development of new ways to think about the body. This corporeal turn allows cognitive science to be smoothly applied to body-centric practices such as physical theater. Cognitive science is inherently interdisciplinary–incorporating disciplines such as biology, neuroscience, psychology– and focuses on how these processes collaborate to shape human meaning-making. Therefore, to apply cognitive science is not merely to apply a scientific discipline, but rather to gather up a host of approaches that consider the body in the material world and how it experiences and participates in meaning-making and value-creation. In particular, I focus on the concept of "neural exploitation[10]" whereby the body's cognition hijacks pre-existing cognitive systems to accomplish something new that the system was not initially or primarily developed to do. I suggest that physical theater practices participate in "neural exploitation" to create an extension of quotidian cognition that serves aesthetic aims. Thus physical theater training is not for the accumulation of skills to be applied as character traits in a play, but rather to foster an overall cognitive framework for fictional aesthetic creation in a real material world.

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[10] This term explains how certain human biological abilities primarily applied to one function can also be exploited by other functions for different uses (Gallese and Lakoff, "The Brain's Concepts").

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, cultural studies and literature entered

into an enduring conversation with cognitive science to reimagine ways to understand

and theorize cultural processes[11]. Theater studies joined this effort shortly after, and

staked a claim in the interdisciplinary conversation with the appearance of *Performance*

and Cognition: Theatre Studies and the Cognitive Turn, edited by Bruce McConachie

and F. Elizabeth Hart. Scholars including McConachie, Rhonda Blair, and John Lutterbie

apply cognitive scientific principles to various aspects of the theatrical experience

including the audience's experience, embodiment of texts, and the process of acting.

Scholars such as Mary Thomas Crane, Amy Cook, and Evelyn B. Tribble have

reexamined Shakespeare's plays with cognitive scientific principles, while McConachie

has tackled the spectator's experience. In addition, McConachie has written about why

the field of theater studies has something to gain from interfacing with cognitive science.

In "Falsifiable Theories for Theatre and Performance Studies," McConachie calls for

theater and performance studies to apply Karl Popper's scientific principle of

falsifiability as an evaluative tool to give shape to and organize the priority of the theories

that we apply. McConachie explains that falsifiability posits that knowledge and theories

are formulated within a structure that implicitly endows theory with both stability and

provisionality: "By falsifying provisional theories and constructing alternatives that better

account for the evidence, scientists gradually forge new possibilities that offer more

robust explanations" (McConachie 571). This is similar to what Mohanty, in *Reclaiming*

Identity calls "fallibility". While researchers aim for what may be "true" or "right,"

falsifiability unhinges this goal from a static position of truth-value and recognizes these

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[11] For an outline of this history, see Lisa Zunshine's *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies*.

truths as provisional. Rhonda Blair, through her contribution to *Performance and Cognition*, and her own book, *The Actor, Image, and Action: Acting and Cognitive Neuroscience*, considers the heritage of previous conversations between science and acting processes. Blair goes on to look to take a fresh look at imagination and action in a variety of Stanislavsky-based acting trainings through cognitive scientific concepts such as global workspace theory, conceptual blending, and computational theories of mind. John Lutterbie–in both *Performance and Cognition* and his book *Toward a General Theory of Acting: Cognitive Science and Performance*–applies Dynamic Systems Theory across a range of different types of acting theories. Lutterbie does consider Lecoq-based training among his range of subjects, and Rick Kemp has recently also looked at Lecoq-based pedagogy and cognitive science in *Embodied Acting: What Neuroscience Tells us About Performance*. My unique contribution is to specifically attend to the fact of physical privilege in actor training, probe the principles at play within the structures of physically based training, and uncover what the cognitive ramifications of this privilege have to reveal about embodied philosophy. The field of cognitive science and theater studies continues to grow with an increasing number of scholars working within panels and working groups in major American academic societies[12]. These theater studies scholars draw upon a wide range of scientific sources in cognitive science, but many of the sources that recur in theater studies often pair scientists with philosophers or are written by scientist-philosophers themselves. These scientists, philosophers, and interdisciplinary scholars have already taken the leap from science to the humanities,

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[12] Including the Association for Theater in Higher Education (ATHE) and the American Society for Theater Research (ASTR).

drawing out how science bears on language, meaning making, and value production. It at this juncture that I apply their ideas to the privileged body in theater training and theater making. The cognitive scientist-philosophers and interdisciplinary teams significant to theater studies include Mark Johnson, George Lakoff, David McNeill, Evan Thompson, Francisco J. Varela, Eleanor Rosch, Shaun Gallagher, Drew Leder, and Alva Noë. As a team, philosopher Mark Johnson and cognitive linguist George Lakoff's *Philosophy in the Flesh: the Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* looks at how cognitive science and cognitive linguistics bear upon the western tradition of philosophy. Lakoff and Johnson argue that because of the body-privilege in cognitive development, basic western philosophical concepts, such as the Cartesian binary, have been rendered invalid. In the face of this, Lakoff and Johnson consider how cognitive scientific principles propose new philosophical foundations. Their concepts that play an important role in my work include the notion of the embodied mind, image schemas, and basic level categories as part of the structure of primary metaphors. I use Lakoff and Johnson's work from *Philosophy in the Flesh* to orient the perspective of physical theater creators who insist on privileging the body in training and practice, and then I align their embodied practices with the philosophical principles that they espouse through their work. Mark Johnson's single-authored book, *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding*, builds off of his work with George Lakoff to demonstrate how many of the body's meaning-making capabilities are rooted in aesthetics. Through Johnson's close association of meaning and aesthetics I demonstrate how physical theater creators, through aesthetic work, are more fundamentally concerned with human meaning-making structures and how they reveal an embodied philosophy. Psycholinguist David McNeill,

in *Gesture and Thought* and *Hand in Mind*, focuses on gesture, and details a complex

theory of gesture's relationship to language. In this way, McNeill demonstrates how the

body participates in linguistic meaning conveyance. Through showing the complexity of

the body's participation in communication, McNeill helps to erode the privilege of

language over the body, a privilege that physical theater practitioners actively work

against. Francisco J. Varela (biologist, philosopher, and neuroscientist), Eleanor Rosch

(cognitive psychologist), and Evan Thompson (philosopher) co-wrote *The Embodied*

Mind: Cognitive Science and the Human Experience, looking at embodied cognition in

relation to both western and eastern philosophical traditions. I use this book to help

envision alternatives to western philosophy based on the physically based principles in

embodied cognition. Evan Thompson's book, *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology,*

and the Sciences of the Mind, delves into consciousness and philosophy, directly

interfacing phenomenology and multiple scientific disciplines. This book gives an

extensive overview of conceptions of philosophy of the mind and their connection to the

sciences. Philosopher and medical doctor Drew Leder's *The Absent Body* details how

bodily experience and physical function that manifest as absences, instead of presences,

contribute to philosophical conceptions of the body. Leder's work demonstrates ways in

which the body can be considered to conspire with Cartesian dualism in philosophy.

Philosopher Shaun Gallagher's *How the Body Shapes the Mind* looks at ways in which

physical movement, even in utero, contributes to the development of human cognition.

He uses neuroscientific information to theorize how corporeality as a whole makes what

we consider to be "the mind." His distinctions between body schema and body image are

particularly important to my conception of how Lecoq-based physical training induces an

overall aesthetic cognition. Philosopher Alva Noë's *Action in Perception* details the concept of "enactive perception," which counters the predominant view that perception is a passive act of receiving what is in the environment. Noë proposes, to the contrary, that perception is an active pursuit and is enabled by the facts of human corporeality's ability to engage with the world. I use Noë's work to detail how perception is involved in physically based actor training. The strategy in applying cognitive science and philosophy to physically based actor training systems is to be able to work from a theoretical perspective that the body is privileged in human processes of cognition, perception, and ultimately, meaning-making. In this way, this project seeks to demonstrate that, due to the body's participation in cognition, aesthetic attempts at meaning-making are simultaneously philosophical propositions. Since the aesthetic work that I take up is necessarily embodied and physically privileged, this partnership with cognitive science and philosophy demonstrates how they are ultimately advocating for the value of embodied philosophy.

Thomas Kuhn's *Structures of Scientific Revolutions* proposes the process of how science changes from one paradigm to another. According to Kuhn, these paradigms structure particular ways of seeing science, and promote particular questions that science should ask. In other words, science is not the act of revealing phenomenal truths, but rather a structured and limited way of looking at phenomena and endowing results with priority and value. Applying Kuhn's scientific theory of paradigmatic shift to knowledge is to suggest that knowledge is not an accumulation of discoveries and facts but a specific framework of generating, understanding, promoting, and evaluating epistemology. In this way I am suggesting that embodied knowledge operates within an entirely different

paradigm than linguistically based knowledge, and advocates for embodied knowledge are not just producing embodied knowledge but are promoting the need for a paradigmatic shift founded on embodiment as a solution to the limits of a linguistically based epistemological paradigm. Seeing embodied knowledge as a movement toward a paradigm shift also illuminates physical theater's relationship with Asian corporeal practices and eastern philosophical notions about the body. This overall movement toward embodiment unveils that epistemology is neither absolute nor unchangeable, laboriously cracking open the possibilities of human agency in both epistemology and the determination of the epistemological value.

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Chapter 1

Making Somatic Sense: How Cognitive Science Articulates Lecoq's Aesthetic Cognitive Foundation[13]

> Outer movements resemble inner movements, they speak the same language.
> –Jacques Lecoq, *The Moving Body*

> It may even be possible to say that bodily movement, transformed onto the level of action, is the very thing that constitutes the self.
> –Shaun Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*

The performance pedagogy of Jacques Lecoq asserts that all physical, psychological, intellectual, and emotional performance registers[14] can be accessed primarily through physical preparation. Therefore, a Lecoq-based approach is in contrast to dominant principles of method acting that privilege working through emotion and psychology. While Lecoq pedagogy does not discount these performance registers, normally considered to belong to the "internal" world of the actor, his work carves a route to them as a product of physical creative action, and considers it possible to learn how to shape and manage these registers through mastering the body as creative theatrical agent.[15] This assertion not only reiterates and inverts the Cartesian mind/body dichotomy, but also confounds its integrity, reorienting the relationship of body and mind. This reorientation expresses a somatic intelligence initiated and accomplished

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[13] An earlier version of this chapter was presented to ASTR's Cognitive Science in Theatre and Performance Studies Working Group in November 2010, chaired by Amy Cook and John Lutterbie. I am very grateful to the working group's comments and suggestions on this work. I am also grateful to John Lutterbie and Rhonda Blair for commenting extensively on various versions of this chapter.

[14] By using the term "register" I am referring to its musical usage. Musical instruments inhabit distinct musical domains: the tuba can work within the lowest register while the piccolo can work within the highest. By applying this term to the realm of theatrical performance, I am using it to describe the discrete (yet interconnected) domains in theatrical performance including the emotional, the intellectual, the psychological, the physical, and the imaginative.

[15] See Kemp's *Embodied Acting: What Neuroscience Tells Us About Acting* for a description of the inside-out versus outside-in debate in relation to neuroscience.

through the physical act of doing. Physical theater's notion of embodiment advocates that the entire body's engagement in physical investigation allows direct access to not only creative tools, but also epistemology, and even ontology. Key to this conception of embodiment is the idea that the process of theatrical creation begins and ends in a material matrix: the moving body investigates its subject matter, accessing epistemology and creativity, and manifests the results of this process in the form of a concrete creative work. Lecoq pedagogy does not deny the existence or importance of the non-material in the creative process, but rather conceives of engaged corporeality as the direct route to all creative registers. Gallagher and Noë explore the philosophical ramifications of recent work in the cognitive sciences that underscores the corporeal foundations to human cognition. Interfacing Gallagher's definitions of *body image* and *body schema* and Noë's notion of *enactive perception* with Lecoq pedagogy elucidates how such a series of exercises and improvisations does not merely equip the performer with theatrical technique, but more significantly induces a cognitive augmentation aimed for creativity by enhancing the body schema and perceptual abilities. This manifests as Lecoq's ultimate theatrical figure–the "actor-creator." This conversation between Lecoq, Gallagher, and Noë that I am proposing further fleshes out the territory between cognitive science and theater, unearthing the epistemological and ontological potential of the moving body, and reimagining how theater thinks.

A Creative Matrix as Cognitive Matrix

The primary aim of Lecoq pedagogy is to equip actors with the ability to create theater that does not yet exist, theater that they will fashion in response to their respective

times and places. While the pedagogy does venture into various styles, including

commedia dell'arte, Greek tragedy, and melodrama, it does so with the aim of

investigating how that style grows out of a broad theatrical bedrock of possibilities and

manifests in a particular dramatic context. This is why there is no particular Lecoq

"style" (Lecoq, *The Moving Body* 18). Lecoq pedagogy sees style as transitory–a result of

a particular crystallization of theatrical dynamic in a specific context. Not only does

Lecoq pedagogy move beyond the notion of training an actor in a particular style, but it

moves beyond the notion that the actor's main function is to correctly interpret

preexisting roles or styles. The ultimate goal of Lecoq-based pedagogy is to forge the

actor-creator. The actor-creator is a figure that is responsible for the entire process of

theatrical creation who may not only become an actor who can interpret roles in various

styles, but can be an author, designer, or director as well. This total theater artist, versed

in the most foundational principles of theatrical creation, may take on a single creative

position at any particular time, but bases her work on a deep, broad, and visceral

understanding of overall theatrical composition and realization. Therefore, for artists who

may have a particular interest in aspects of theatrical creation other than acting, this

pedagogy engages them as well by leading them through a corporeal investigation that

can be applied to their area of interest.

It is this foundational state that I align with Gallagher's notion of body schema to

articulate how theatrical embodiment might cognitively manifest an actor-creator able to

encounter a wide array of theatrical inspiration and material. By the end of the training

process, the actor's body has been altered; she has moved her way into her body that, in

addition to its capabilities for quotidian life, expresses sensibilities and abilities of the

actor-creator. Shaun Gallagher describes two related levels of body function–body image and body schema: "A *body image* consists of a system of perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs pertaining to one's own body. In contrast, a *body schema* is a system of sensorimotor capacities that function without awareness or the necessity of perceptual monitoring" (24). Here, body image is not about how a person perceives her own appearance in comparison with societal style or norm, as this term is often colloquially understood. When a person is enacting a perfectly quotidian task, such as deciding to enter a room through a standard-sized doorway, Gallagher's body image is the collection of self-reflexive experiences, perceptions, and attitudes that suggest that she can and should enter the room without hesitation. These might include the perception of the height of the doorway, the knowledge that she is short enough to fit cleanly through, and the confidence that walking through doorways is something completely acceptable for humans to do. Gallagher's body schema, on the other hand, is the set of unconscious sensorimotor abilities that coordinate her balance, motion, and maintenance of her vital functions to allow her to walk through. These two levels continuously cooperate for the body to be able to take action for the sake of daily living. Cognitive science continues to reveal the complex workings of the body schema and body image which involve multiple human body systems including neurological, cognitive, and anatomical function. Discussions of body image and body schema are not simply muscular and skeletal, but rather involve the body, brain, and mind, and both address questions straightforward function and lead to metaphysical issues such as consciousness. By understanding body image and body schema, we come closer to understanding some of the ways humans live lives that encompass and extend beyond material existence in a material world. By

analyzing the way that Lecoq pedagogy leads its actors to creating actor-creator bodies, it reveals how Lecoq pedagogy commandeers the pre-existing workings of body schema and body image, employing and enhancing these cognitive systems to manufacture the artistic sensibilities of the actor-creator. This aesthetic enhancement to the body schema is a set of capabilities created by the Lecoq pedagogy's particular physical engagement. This enhancement works through the body's corporeal-cognitive architecture and action, ultimately absorbing itself into the overall body schema of the actor. The goal of this process, which can be achieved through repetition and enforcement, is that the lessons from the previously conscious physical and imaginative exercise become unconscious aesthetic sensibilities guiding the creative activity. Therefore the function of Lecoq's pedagogy is not to literally mold a new creative physical body, but rather to harness the existing human cognitive functions at work to chart new cognitive abilities, placing both of them in the service of the students' aesthetic creations.

Before Shaun Gallagher makes a distinction between body image and body schema he details the fraught history of the terms which have at times been used interchangeably or in myriad different ways, creating mass confusion and no amount of consensus that might allow these processes to be used within and/or across disciplines. As Gallagher takes great pains to distinguish between and specifically define each of these processes, he clarifies: "So the difference between body image and body schema is like the difference between a *perception* (or conscious monitoring) of movement and the actual *accomplishment* of movement, respectively. . . . [B]ody schema operates in a *close to automatic way*" (24-26). Body schema is a system of unconscious workings, while body image is created through conscious perception. While Gallagher identifies the

distinctions between body schema and body image in order to clarify these two processes that have been muddied by poor definition, he also notes the way in which they work together: "[T]o the extent that we can become aware of what the body schema usually accomplishes prenoetically [operating underneath the level of conscious awareness], this awareness becomes part of the body image" (35). As the body schema and the body image work within their own discrete realms, their operations can still affect one another. Furthermore, while the distinction regarding conscious and prenoetic function of the body schema and body image is important to make, Gallagher, citing Gurfinkel and Levik, also cautions that their functional relationship is much more complex on a behavior level:

> The dancer or the athlete who practices long and hard to make deliberate movements proficient so that movement is finally accomplished by the body without conscious reflection uses a consciousness of bodily movement to train body-schematic performance. Various experiments show that visual awareness of one's own body can correct or even override body-schematic functions. (35)

Therefore while the body schema functions, as Gallagher calls it, "in excess" of conscious awareness, it is not impenetrable to conscious effort (27). Rather, the body schema absorbs and annexes such conscious training into itself. The organization of such absorption does not occur, Gallagher reminds us, because of prenoetic sensorimotor function, but because of the intention of the agent (38). In other words, it takes conscious intention-determined practice to hit a tennis ball with a tennis racket. This triggers the absorption and reorganization of new body schematic abilities. This organization is indeed in excess of consciousness, but the trigger that provokes that new organization is conscious.

Through the case of Ian Waterman, Gallagher reveals how manipulation of body

image can affect, and even functionally substitute for, missing components of body

schema. Gallagher explains that Waterman, due to illness in his teenage years, lost all

sense of touch and proprioception: the ability, through multiple sensory and kinetic

systems, to know where your body is in space in relation to other things without directly

accessing it through movement–a general sense of bodily orientation. Therefore

Waterman had a sense of neither posture, nor where his body was located in space. Right

after he was stricken with the loss of touch and proprioception, Waterman could not sit

up straight. Gradually, he developed the ability to walk, drive, hold down a job, and move

in everyday ways. He did this not through recovering proprioception, but through careful

visual attention to his body in motion. Because Waterman was previously able to walk,

he knew what walking correctly looked like. He learned to constantly monitor every

movement in order to achieve balance and mobility. Consequently, he developed this

incredibly detailed and taxing ability to visually monitor every micro-movement,

constantly looking, judging, and compensating to accomplish such intricate tasks as

balance, which mobile people take for granted. In this exhausting process, Waterman

became increasingly better at mobility, although he never looked what might be

considered "normal" in his movement. Therefore Waterman "is forced to compensate for

that loss [of body schema] by depending on his body image in a way that normal subjects

do not. . . . For him, control over posture and movement is achieved by a partial and

imperfect functional substitution of body image for body schema" (Gallagher 44*)*. In a

sense, Waterman "remade" his body schema's function through this substitution.

Waterman's case is significant because it demonstrates how the very unconscious

workings of the body schema can be accessed to a certain extent through conscious

effort: "in place of the missing body schema processes, we might say that Ian has

substituted a virtual body schema–a set of cognitively driven motor processes. This

virtual schema seems to function only within the framework of a body image that is

consciously and continually maintained" (Gallagher 52). This relates to all body-based

training programs because it suggests that conscious work on the body can, in fact, affect

the subconscious motor and cognitive workings. While Waterman's example

demonstrates how conscious ability did function in place of his missing body schema, an

actor with an intact body schema would be merely enhancing that schema with the

pedagogically induced cognitive abilities via conscious intention. Gallagher reminds us

of the malleability of motor programs: "Motor programs, a repertoire of motor schemas,

are, on the behavior level, flexible and corrigible patterns. Some are entirely learned;

others, which may be innate, are elaborated through experience and practice" (47). These

processes are the very ones that Lecoq pedagogy hijacks in order to enhance the body

schema. The pedagogy operates consciously through movement analysis and exercise,

with the aim to manufacture an unconscious creative life that can spring to action without

time consuming conscious reflection. The ultimate goal is oriented toward the moment

when the actor-creator leaves the classroom studio; ideally, she departs with this

underlying schematic augmentation with which to create work that is specific to the

values and aims of Lecoq pedagogy. The actor-creator's body schema enhancement

affords her an aesthetic and body-based prenoetic creative foundation.

Part of the cognitive augmentation that occurs in Lecoq-based actor training could

be the development of a new manner of perception that feeds into theatrical creation and

performance. Philosopher Alva Noë is an expert on the intersections of cognitive science, philosophy, and consciousness. He has developed a theory of "enactive perception" that defines perception as something enabled by sensorimotor abilities. From this perspective, the actor-creator is capable of perceiving the world differently and in turn, creating new theatrical worlds. Traditional approaches to perception are modeled after the snapshot: the notion that human perception is analogous to a camera, and functions due to our total ocular access to the environment (Noë 48). In other words, the snapshot theory suggests that when we view our environment, our brains take a detailed shapshot of everything within the scope of our visual field. It is due to this snapshot that we perceive our environment and can move within it. However, Noë disproves this theory[16], explaining how there is no way that vision can act like a camera, for the mechanics of the eye can only take in tiny parts of our visual field at once. The feeling of having access to the whole field of vision is something else entirely, created through a complex sensorimotor process. Furthermore, Noë suggests that science has discovered that while vision certainly plays a role in overall perception, it is neither exhaustive nor foundational to the phenomena. Rather, Noë's enactive approach states that perceiving "is a way of acting. Perception is not something that happens to us, or in us. It is something that we do" (Noë 1). Noë's enactive theory of perception suggests that only through the possibility of physical movement and encounter with the external world do we activate perception. Noë emphasizes, "I argue that all perception is touch-like in this way: Perceptual experience acquires content thanks to our possession of bodily skills. *What we perceive* is determined by *what we* do (or what we know how to do); it is determined by what we are

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[16] See Noë's *Action in Perception* for the scientific details and the full debate.

ready to do….we *enact* our perceptual experience; we act it out" (Noë 1). Noë suggests

that the reason we have the *feeling* of encountering a complete perceptually accessible

panorama adjacent to us is because, based on corporeal experience, we have a certain

confidence in our ability to move around and probe our object of perception with all of

our sensorimotor abilities. Therefore Noë is referring to the foundation of perception on

two levels: the *actions* of sensorimotor ability to investigate the environment, and the

resulting and enduring *confidence* in those sensorimotor experiences due to prior

sensorimotor experience. When we encounter a tree, we perceive it as an entirety in three

dimensions not because we probe every single tree with each sensorimotor ability (which

would be a highly inefficient way to live), but rather because we have probed the

environment before and maintain a confidence that, for instance, if we walk around the

back of the tree, we will still see the other side of it. Because we have probed the

environment with our sensorimotor capabilities before, we know that it is possible to do it

again. Experience of the sensorimotor creates an inherent confidence in the stability and

pervasiveness of sensorimotor possibility. "There is no sense, then, in which the enactive

approach is committed to the idea that perceivers have cognitive access to the content of

experience prior to their grasp of sensorimotor knowledge. Sensorimotor knowledge is

basic" (Noë 120). When Gallagher describes how the sensorimotor constitutes the basal

level of human cognitive abilities, he is referring to such foundational strata as neuronal

levels. Noë's notion of perception may have repercussions as deep, but he is most

explicitly referring to less deep sensorimotor capabilities such as literally walking around,

touching, or darting the eyes about the object of perception. To consider the conclusions

of Gallagher and Noë together, basic cognitive structures such as body schemas, body

images, and basic cognitive actions such as perception do not just work *for* or *with* a moving body, but work *because* of one. This attitude carries deep resonance with Lecoq-based pedagogy as this performance training is founded on an analogous principle that only through attending first to movement does the actor-creator discover, create, and perform.

Out of the Glass Box and Into Cognition: Mime as an Act of Embodiment

By joining Lecoq's theory of mime with the cognitive scientific notions of body schema, body image, and image schema, physical embodiment is revealed as not only the key to understanding, but also the guiding principle for how to act in the context of a world that encompasses bodies, minds, selves, and others. Here the body indeed enables understanding, but it also produces know-*how*. In other words, the engaged body cannot help but produce knowledge that is tethered to the external world, poised for cooperation, and aimed for action.

Know-how, as produced through the body, is built upon the structures of corporeal understanding. Mime is central to Lecoq pedagogy as a tool for understanding and making theater. Lecoq has long justified mime as a primary working method by asserting that it is an inherent human ability. Lecoq finds a touchstone in philosophy: "[Mime] is implicit in the phenomenon of human life itself. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle wrote that: 'man is, of all human animals, the one most drawn to mime and it is through miming that he acquires all his knowledge'" (*Theatre of Movement and Gesture* 4). Here Lecoq situates mime as central to not just theater, but human epistemological acquisition in general. Always taking care to couple theory with

practical observation, Lecoq finds his second touchstone in childhood, "Children gain

their understanding of the world around them by miming it: they mimic what they see

and what they hear. They replay with their whole body those aspects of life in which they

will be called on to participate. In this way they learn about life, and, little, by little, take

possession of it" (*Theatre of Movement and Gesture* 1). For Lecoq, miming both makes

contact with knowledge, and through repetition and accumulation, leads to ownership of

it. What, exactly, Lecoq means by "mime" is important, for he is not referring to the

silent, trapped, white-faced pantomime panicking in a glass box fashioned out of

gestures. Lecoq refers to pantomime, and all other style-focused mime, as *mime de forme*

(formal mime) (Felner 149). On the other hand, Lecoq espouses *mime de fond* (a more

fundamental act of miming), and sees this as a process of investigation (Felner 149). In

the process of *mime du fond* the actor mimes her subject by observing and embodying it.

If the actor takes a cat as her subject she would, as closely as possible, take on the body

position, movement contours, respiration, speed of movement, etc. She does it, first and

foremost, to grasp what this cat is. This process works with anything–people, animals,

objects, even abstract things such as colors and music. Through miming her subject, the

actor comes to understand it. If the actor were to then transpose this knowledge into a

product-oriented mime performance of this cat, she would be employing *mime de forme*.

Lecoq warns that too much emphasis on product-oriented mime can hinder mime's very

ability to function as a process (*The Moving Body* 22). In Lecoq's pedagogical work, he

excises *mime de forme* from the general term to point directly to "mime" as an active

process. Mastering the miming process (the epistemological investigation) becomes the

requisite foundation from which the actor explores how movement can be theatrically

transposed into different styles. The focus of this corporeal process, as always in Lecoq pedagogy, is not the body in tableau, but the body in motion.

Mime scholar, Mira Felner, agrees that Lecoq's pedagogy seeks to operate on the most basal levels of human creativity, "[t]he goal of Lecoq is to send his students back to the level of cognition" (150). Cognitively speaking, Gallagher also focuses on productive potential of the moving body. He suspects that the moving body is responsible for creating body schema (the collection of unconscious motor and proprioceptive abilities) even as early, again, as in utero: "it may be movement (motor experience) that one requires for the formation of a body schema." (Gallagher 95). For Gallagher, body movement, or motor ability, makes cognition. For Lecoq, body movement makes aesthetic ability. From both Gallagher's and Lecoq's perspectives, active embodiment enables first of all, understanding, and second of all, engagement.

This engagement is the know-how to act within a world that always encompasses the self, other, mind, and body. It is not an isolated engagement; it is always an engagement within a particular matrix of context and constant interaction. The entry point into this know-how is the moving body, and both cognitive science and Lecoq pedagogy outline how the moving body accesses this comprehensive know-how, confounding the binaries of mind/body and self/other. The cognitive scientific principle of the image schema elucidates how physical interaction with the world enables concepts that give rise to language, metaphor, and value systems, determining the ways in which people interact with the world. The team of philosopher Mark Johnson and cognitive linguist George Lakoff develops the practical and philosophical ramifications of the image schema. Not to be confused with either the body schema or the body image, the

image schema is a language concept that explains how corporeal encounters with the world form the basis of ideas that are expressed in language. In contrast to the body schema that Gallagher articulates as the physically induced basal matrix for consciousness and existence, Lakoff and Johnson's concept of the image schema works *because of* and *on top of* the body schema. Lakoff and Johnson have interfaced science and philosophy to envision a hierarchical, yet intertwined, system whereby the most basic structures inform the development and existence of higher cognitive function. Just as a vine crawls up the wall, using that wall's shape, texture, and architecture for form and height, an image schema can only function because it crawls through preexisting body schematic processes. Johnson defines the image schema as, "a dynamic, recurring pattern of organism-environment interactions. As such, it will reveal itself in the contours of our basic sensorimotor experience" (Johnson 136). Johnson goes on to give an example, "because of our particular bodily makeup, we project right and left, front and back, near and far, throughout the horizon of our perceptual interactions" (Johnson 137). The reason that we have concepts such as right and left is because of how our bodies are situated within the world. For Lakoff and Johnson, the image schema, guided by sensorimotor experience, orients our relationship to the environment, giving birth to cognitive concepts. These concepts, in turn, feed language and communication systems. It is this chain of events that articulates how the body, always already in dialogue with its environment, participates in meaning-making and communication. Johnson clarifies the ramification of image schemas: "Although they are preverbal, they play a major role in the syntax, semantics, and pragmatics of natural language. They lie at the heart of meaning, and they underlie language, abstract reasoning, and all forms of symbolic

interaction" (145). In this context "natural" language means the verbal languages spoken to facilitate communication in local communities.

Johnson explains that there are categories of image schemas, and one in particular resonates with a key principle in Lecoq pedagogy: "Because of our ongoing bodily encounter with physical forces that push and pull us, we experience the image-schematic structures of COMPULSION, ATTRACTION, and BLOCKAGE OF MOVEMENT[17]" (Johnson 137). These structures contribute to the way humans understand their experience, world, and communication, and guides the kinds of meaning we fashion from experience. More importantly, image schemas demonstrate how structures based on corporeal encounters can extend the logic of sensorimotor experience to abstract thought (Johnson 137). Lecoq pedagogy routinely extends the corporeal lessons of miming to abstract thought. This process, through Lecoq's notion of mime, proposes a certain continuum between the concrete and the abstract as accessed through the body. In this continuum, physical interaction not only teaches physical principles and offers physical know-how, but also by extension teaches dramatic principles and know-how, and even suggests overarching philosophical propositions.

Lecoq isolates three "modes of physical action" which he locates at the heart of dramatic dynamic: I push or pull, I push or pull myself, and I am pushed or pulled (Lecoq, *Theatre of Movement and Gesture* 4). Actors undergo a variety of exercises from literally pushing and pulling themselves and each other to exploring where the dynamic of push and pull appears in different dramatic contexts. This is Lecoq's recurring

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[17] Here I replicate the cognitive scientific convention of capitalizing image schematic structures. This convention clarifies that the writer is referring to the image schematic structure rather than the general concept.

technique of moving from the sensorimotor to the abstract. Because this technique parallels how image schemas function, Lecoq pedagogy is actually teaching actors about how image schemas work by inducing an experience in image schema development. Through this experience, actors are taught how to identify the more foundational components of image schemas in dramatic dynamic, and how to install them as central animating forces in their own theatrical moments. In theatrical terms, if a scene has no "conflict," there is no drama. Lecoq-based pedagogy translates that concept of "conflict" into a set of actions that can be literally performed, calibrated, and fashioned to resonate beyond the literal. Through an experience of the development and dramatic application of image schemas, Lecoq pedagogy shows one how to *make* conflict, not just that it exists.

While Johnson emphasizes the body's role in image schemas, he also asserts that this is not in an effort to remove the mind from within the structure and process of image schemas: "image schemas are not to be understood as either merely 'mental' or merely 'bodily' but rather as contours of what [John] Dewey called the body-mind" (139). As Lecoq pedagogy enacts an aesthetic image-schema education it is also privileging the body in one sense, but ultimately demonstrates a collaborative and dynamic "body-mind" where inextricable mental and corporeal processes work together for the sake of aesthetic creation.

The principle of the image schema also articulates a union between the self and other. The moving body's role in the development of the body schema, which provides the foundation for the image schema, proposes an inextricability of self and other, also conceived as a union of the self and the environment. Gallagher identifies this inherent relation in body schemas: "Body schemas, working systematically with proprioceptive

awareness, constitute a proprioceptive self that is *always already* 'coupled' with the other"(81). Even the body schema, so fundamental to how the individual organizes herself on an unconscious level, necessarily exists and functions in relation to the other. This destabilizes the very notion of a strict divide between self and other. Lecoq, using the example of the mime, offers another way to think through how the self and the other might be connected: "The greatest of mimes can touch the very rhythm of life, which they draw from the universal poetic sense, composed of time, space, tension, thrust, colour, light and matter, like the comic actor, who draws from the raw material of life the characters he represents. But this raw material is also present within him" (*Theatre of Movement and Gesture* 5). Lecoq's poetics always assumes that this "raw material" is something that exists both in the mime and in the other, running through basal levels of existence. The way that Lecoq enacts this sensorimotor-cognitive coupling is by assuming that at the most basic level, the body, mind, self, and other all stem from the same substance. Significantly, however, Lecoq finds and accesses the potential of these relations through action–miming in particular–which is an active physical engagement accessing both external and internal processes simultaneously. For Lakoff, Johnson, Gallagher, and Lecoq, it is through privileging the body that they articulate how humans access the matrix of inextricability containing self, other, body and mind. Just as embodiment teaches knowledge and know-how, it is simultaneously dispensing with the problem of the binaries of body/mind and self/other by demonstrating how these oppositions do not hold. Instead, these thinkers and doers demonstrate that by focusing on and privileging the body, we can see and articulate a new cognitive, creative, and philosophical configuration of dynamic cooperation.

Masks and Cognition: Projecting the Actor into Three Dimensions

Because our body schemas can incorporate external objects, mask work takes advantage of this cognitive ability to forge an actor that can attend to the changing relationship between three dimensions: actor, space, and audience. Applying the concept of extending the body schema demonstrates how mask work augments cognition, permitting a recalibration of these three dimensions. Lecoq makes use of many masks first and foremost as pedagogical tools. Later in the training, masks designed for performance in specific styles are incorporated into the pedagogy. Masks first appear as apparatuses that cover the face. Eventually, this concept is revealed to extend to many things. Lecoq pedagogy instructor, Giovanni Fusetti explains, "A mask is a structure of movement. In theater, everything is a mask. A character is a mask, a costume is a mask, the clown is a mask, the red nose is a mask, even scenography is a mask-a mask of the space. A mask is something that reveals a body that is other than the body of the performer" (Fusetti 96). Significant to the mask, therefore, is a margin of difference between the mask and the performer. Lecoq instructs that a mask must maintain a certain literal distance from the actor's face, and must not be the same size as the face of the performer (*The Moving Body* 36). Lecoq explains the principle, "it is precisely this distance which make it possible for the actor to play" (*The Moving Body* 36). In this way, it is difference that enables a creative state. Difference, in the case of masks, enables the actor to forge an augmentation to the body schema and perceptual abilities. By donning the mask, the actor exploits the difference between herself and the mask, changing the

way she moves in the mask, and therefore acting upon her own body schema, body image, and perceptual abilities.

Masks, although often literally limited to the face, shape the entire body. They make the actor use her whole body, responding to the specific provocations of the particular mask. In this way masks are often used in actor training as a tool to locate an actor's expressivity in the entire body, rather than just the face. Masks immediately project the actor into a unique mode of performance composed of a heightened three-dimensional relationship between the actor, space, and audience. While any theater actor encounters this relationship, the actor trained for mainstream psychological realism is taught to preserve the integrity of the fourth wall. In other words, many Stanislavsky-based acting exercises are designed to help the actor behave as if the audience were neither watching nor there. In this way, the actor's success is dependent upon the ability to focus her efforts on herself to, paradoxically, release her normal self-consciousness. This imperative to preserve the fourth wall produces a certain negative relationship with the audience placing the psychological actor's focus on her own behavior, and therefore, on herself. Versions of psychological acting, such as Meisner technique, ground the actor in relation to other actors on stage, but few psychologically based trainings attend so heavily to space or audience. Masks, on the other hand, project the actor outward into the dimensions of space and audience, fashioning the actor's physical action as that which is for the sake of the three-dimensional relationship. The mask teaches that this three-dimensional engagement *is* the theatrical dimension, which may shift according to style–such as forms that incorporate the audience into the theatrical world to a greater or lesser degree–but is an enduring, basic dramaturgical architecture for stage performance. Masks

force the actor to attend to each of the three dimensions simultaneously, juggling them in each moment of performance. The mask shapes the body while the thematic provocation given by the instructor feeds the specific contextual use of the mask in relation to space and audience. The nature of mask work emphasizes the importance of audience reception by virtue of its construction. If the mask covers only the front of the face, the back of the actor is not masked, and therefore the mask is only playing when the actor is facing forward. To learn to perform wearing a mask is to maintain the mask's visibility to the audience so as not to loose the cohesion of the illusion of unity created by the mask and the rest of the actor's body. The audience's ability to read the mask is paramount in masked acting. Therefore the actor must constantly monitor, in the course of her movement, that the audience has access to the mask. This is a very clear tool to teach maintaining a direct connection between actor and audience, no matter the style of playing. Different masks, however, provoke a different kind of three-dimensional relationship. Lecoq describes the mask's function as a filter, provoking the actor to make physical and spatial choices within a more limited range as inspired by mask's shape and theatrical potential (*The Moving Body* 53). Scholar Mira Felner notes that Lecoq expressed that masks "facilitate the discovery of a central point, the essence of a relationship, or a conflict" (157). In Lecoq pedagogy, masks serve as distillers, tools to make choices and refine performance within the parameters of the three-dimensional relationship between masked actor, space, and audience.

Lecoq asserts that, through continued use, the mask's functions are absorbed into the actor's work (Lecoq, *The Moving Body* 38). At a certain point, the lessons learned through mask work will remain with the student even if she is no longer wearing a mask.

Cognitive science also describes how tools and objects can become absorbed into the body schema, participating in its very formation: "[The body schema] frequently incorporates into itself certain objects-the hammer in the carpenter's hand, the feather in the woman's hat, and so forth . . . Such extensions of the body schema are most often based on intentional usage of the tool or object" (Gallagher 37). Applying this principle to Lecoq's mask work, we can see how it does not merely advocate performance style or characterization process, but instead feeds into the foundational formative processes of Lecoq's aesthetic enhancement to the body schema. This function profits from the dynamism of the body schema, organized under the imperative to perform action. In Lecoq's mask pedagogy, the "theme" proposed by the instructor becomes the intention that organizes the incorporation. Gallagher succinctly expresses the result of such object-absorption into the body schema: "the carpenter's hammer becomes an operative extension of the carpenter's hand" (32). In effect, the actor's mask becomes an extension of the actor.

Lecoq's neutral mask, the first and most important pedagogical mask, is fashioned from brown leather made by the famed mask makers, the Sartori family of Italy. It is a full-faced mask, calm in expression, with a relaxed mouth, cheeks, and forehead, and large oval-shaped eyes. While participating in and observing a Lecoq-based neutral mask workshop at LISPA in January of 2011, I noticed that the pigment of leather masks were closest to the skin color of the black student, while the features most closely matched the white students. While intended as a mask that is not particular to any one culture, the features are generally Eurocentric in shape, and there are two versions: male and female. The difference between the two is that the female version is smaller with a slightly

different forehead contour. The predominance of Eurocentric features combined with the

word "neutral" reveals the problem of conflating Eurocentricity with universality, and is

an example of Lecoq's essentialist practices employed for pedagogical and theatrical

purchase discussed in the previous chapter. Lecoq instructors, along with Lecoq himself,

have had to wrestle with the conflict between the pedagogical promise and potential of

essentialist practices and language, and the restrictions and elisions that result from its

Eurocentricity. Therefore the essentialist "neutral" of the neutral mask has proved a

sticking point for not only scholars, but also instructors who have had to negotiate this

conflict. Instructors have imagined ways to reckon with it, trying to preserve the

pedagogical purchase of the exercises while remedying the problematics of the concept

and language of neutrality. Efforts include altering the pigments of masks to a variety of

shades to suggest that neutrality has a spectrum[18], and using a more abstractly shaped

mask instead of the traditional leather Sartori mask[19]. In this case, the intervention comes

from either trying to redefine what "neutral," means (in the case of acknowledging a

multiplicity inherent in neutrality), or to in fact make the mask more "neutral" through

abstraction in a complex, multi-racial, multi-cultural world. Intervening from the

linguistic side rather than altering the mask itself, Amy Russell, Deputy Director of

Pedagogy at LISPA, suggests that neutral mask work does not depend on the

connotations and denotations of this word, and the practice of it might actually be

hindered by them. She suggests that neutral mask work could be accomplished, and

might be better accomplished, without using an adjective to describe the mask in the first

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[18] I have tried this in my neutral mask teaching practices, inspired by my 2005 work with a dance company comprised of mostly Chicano and Black dancers.

[19] Eldredge expresses his own experience as an instructor feeling that the Sartori mask is not suitable in a contemporary global educational context, and provides a pattern for an abstract-shaped neutral mask, 49.

place (Russell). Here, Russell jettisons the word and relies on the features of the mask to do the pedagogical work. This struggle is indicative of the fact that Lecoq-based mask teachers value the process and results of the neutral mask, and aim to recuperate those results while overcoming the drawbacks to the concept and articulation of "neutrality."

An acknowledgement of range within neutral mask practices is already present within Lecoq's neutral mask work because of the existence of two types of masks. Lecoq explains this initially as a practical issue, but suggests its resonance within the concept of neutrality, "There are those who would like to see it as neither man nor woman. They have to be sent back to physical observation: men and women are not identical. The neutral mask is not a symbolic mask. The idea that everyone is alike is both true and totally false. Universality is not the same as uniformity" (*The Moving Body* 40). The mask work, via the physical gender attribution to the masks, suggests an incorporation of difference. This does not mean, however, that different themes are given to different female mask wearers or male mask wearers. While participating in and observing a Lecoq-based neutral mask workshop at LISPA in January of 2011, I tried, for the first time, to wear a male neutral mask while performing a neutral mask exercise[20], and had to stop the exercise instantly because it was much too large for my face and it kept falling off. While I am a smaller-than-average woman, the size of the masks mandated that I self-enforce wearing the female neutral mask. The fact of gendered masks, along with the imperative to neutrality instantiates a paradox within the practice, prohibiting the practice

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[20] Again, the instructors at LISPA do not regulate who can wear which mask. It is up to the student to decide whether he or she wants to wear a male or a female mask.

of neutrality to function as fixed. This emphasizes the process-nature of mask work and forces the mask wearer to work within the concept of neutrality as a negotiation.

The complexities of the mask as a tool, practice, and concept, reinforce the notion that "neutrality" and "universality" cannot absolutely exist, and that there is a certain instability in the concept itself. As previously mentioned, Lecoq calls absolute neutrality a "temptation" (*The Moving Body* 20). Imbedded within Lecoq-based practices of neutral mask is an agitation to the principle, that constantly contradicts it while simultaneously aiming toward it. This is the pedagogical purchase of the neutral mask-it induces an impossible struggle toward neutrality, or equilibrium, and through this struggle, the student learns to orchestrate the theatrical dimensions of mask, space, and audience in a non-psychologically based way. Lecoq suggests that work with neutrality creates "a series of fulcrum points" for further theatrical work because through struggling to find theatrical equilibrium, the student can understand the range of theatrical expressions, which allows expressions of characters in unbalanced, conflicted states (*The Moving Body* 38). From the struggle to equilibrium, the actor can learn to follow trajectories out of neutrality, which is where most theatrical conflict resides. This is why the neutral mask is the first mask, and foundational to the actor's development. In terms of the neutral mask and its relation to the three dimensions of space, audience, and actor, it is also the most foundational mask because the goal of the neutral mask is for the actor to face space and audience directly. This is not to say that the mask uses direct address. Rather, the mask's neutrality inspires the actor to clearly communicate the movement-based images

to the audience through the space. The neutral mask does not have subtext[21]; it does not seek to comment on the action separate from inhabiting it. The neutral mask has direct and clear relationship to space and audience. The neutral mask's inhabitation of the action *is* the action. In other words, the mask's action does not contradict any possible internal state of the "character" the mask portrays. If the masked actor moves toward something to make contact with it (another actor, an imagined scene) the masked actor is playing a desire to make contact. In no way is making contact a psychological strategy to move away from contact. The neutrally masked character is simple and direct.

Scholar Sears A. Eldredge suggests that the neutral mask work is based on imagery through sensory experience (60). I want to refine that assertion with a nod to cognitive science to suggest that neutral mask work is based on the *sensorimotor,* and distinguish that from psychological realism's practice of "sense memory[22]." Outlining a sensorimotor analysis of neutral mask exercises reveals how the sensorimotor creates the three-dimensional experience. Neutral-masked actors are given a broad theme such as "the neutral mask moves through the forest."[23] After the theme is given, the masked actor begins the exercise, entering the dynamic of mask, space, and audience. In the empty space, the actor is responsible to all of the three dimensions simultaneously, and begins to draw upon sensorimotor material to give the image of the theme to the audience. For example, the masked actor spontaneously chooses between a host of possible forest

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[21] Except for subtext (cultural, racial, or otherwise) unintentionally imbedded in the mask's structure.
[22] "Sense memory'' (also known as "affective memory") is where the actor seeks to trigger emotions from a heightened moment in her life. To do this she does not access the emotion directly, but rather calls upon the sensory material of the moment such as the sights, sounds, tactile sensations, smells, and tastes of the context in which the emotion occurred (Krasner 150). While sense memory employs external sensation, I note that the most direct focus is on the emotion of the actor, not the space or the audience.
[23] This is part of a larger exercise called "the journey" where the mask moves through a series of varied landscapes.

imagery to perform which might include miming moving through branches to walk through the forest, stepping over logs, or bending under tree branches. Neither the audience nor actor is required to recognize or use actual situations from the actor's life. Rather, performing a sensorimotor engagement with forest items (such as touching bark, walking through leaves, or negotiating the forest floor's impact on the human step) gives birth to forest images. The actor then begins to distill what is most useful. The actor is not just *within* a forest, but has to *move through* the forest. This requires a physical engagement that activates sensorimotor imagery. In this way the struggle to move through is exactly what gives the neutral masked actor the ability to offer images of "forestness" to the audience. The instructor gives feedback to the actor, including what "read," meaning what was clearly communicated as forestness, in this case. It is not important in these exercises, however, that every micromovement is literally understood. However, as the masked actor learns, the more specific the sensorimotor images she creates with her physical encounter with the space, the more clearly she communicates imagery to the audience and the more successfully she creates an overall sense of forestness. In this way, the actor begins to fashion her every move with this responsibility in mind, linking herself, the space, and the audience. This kind of an exercise reveals itself to be sensorimotor because it is not necessarily working based on actual memory of being in a forest, it is through the sensation of encountering forest-like items. If an actor has never been in a forest, she can still do the exercise. And, unlike sense memory as something that gets the actor to a particular emotional or psychological state, the sensory engagement of the neutral mask is focused on imagery aimed at the audience. One of the tenets of psychologically based acting is that if the actor feels the emotion, the audience

will feel it as well, automatically and correctly registering the actor's internal emotional state. Lecoq-based actor training, on the other hand, does not accept this one-to-one correspondence and transfer of emotion. It does not concern itself with what the actor feels and, rather, focuses on delivering imagery to the audience which may have emotional resonances. The sensorimotor work of the neutral mask is *not* the sense memory of training based in psychological realism. Rather, in neutral mask work, sensorimotor capability is what links the three dimensions and highlights them as a foundational theatrical relationship.

This sensorimotor sensitivity is installed as a permanent departure point for any style of mask or unmasked performance because it helps the actor develop the ability to calibrate the relationship between these three dimensions. As the mask incorporates itself into the body schema of the actor, it augments that body schema and that body's perceptual abilities. This demonstrates how masked acting seeks to move the actor beyond a quotidian body. By augmenting the body schema and perception, the neutral-mask-trained actor moves through her creative activities in a new way. The calibration of the three-dimensional mode of actor, space, and audience is made possible through the way in which sensorimotor abilities affect the body schema and enactive perception. This is harnessed and organized through the intention provided by mask work. Masks work upon the actor at a deep cognitive stratum, effecting not just skills to inhabit particular styles, but basal abilities of perception, movement, and creation.

Language: The Creative and Cognitive Debt to Movement

During the course of the training process, Lecoq is very strict about starting from silence and gradually moving toward speech. Initially, he categorizes it as a practical issue that pedagogically situates the actor in a state of receptiveness: "We begin with silence, for the spoken word often forgets the roots from which it grew, and it is a good thing for students to begin by placing themselves in the position of primal naïveté, a state of innocent curiosity . . . when no words have been spoken, one is in a state of modesty which allows words to be born out of silence; in this state strength comes from avoiding explanatory discourse" (*The Moving Body* 29). Lecoq sees silence as the bedrock from which words spring, envisioning a heritage of language that is given life from the very potentialities already inherent in silence. Cognitive science also sees language as something that should necessarily work on top of, or because of, the capabilities of the silent, moving body. For both Lecoq and Gallagher, movement enables the structures that give birth to language. In this way language is a higher-order cognitive function. Gallagher explains the significance of the relationship between movement and language: "Some theorists go so far as to claim that the propositional and metaphorical structures of language and thought are shaped by the non-propositional movements and movement patterns of the body" (107). Johnson warns, however that by recognizing this hierarchical relationship between movement and language, it would not be accurate to emphasize the difference between these orders: "[Cognition theorized as embodied] is a nondualistic ontology built around the principle of continuity, according to which there are no ontological ruptures or gaps between different levels of complexity within an organism. 'Higher' cognitive processes have to emerge from complex interactions among 'lower' level capacities" (Johnson 145). Sensorimotor abilities give rise to the body schema

which gives rise to image schemas which give rise to language. The way that Lecoq structured his pedagogical layering process, saving language (and text) until the physical processes are underway, mimics our cognitive interactive and hierarchical processes. The structure of this creative hierarchical system, similar to the cognitive system the enables human language processes, does not suggest that more complex systems are more important or are the goal of the lower systems. In other words, while the articulations of both cognitive and creative structures are founded upon the physical, it does not mean that language is more important than the body. On the contrary, it suggests that without the body there would be no language. Lecoq is neither avoiding words nor advocating a turn away from text, but is instead building a solid foundation of aesthetic cognition based on and accessed through the actor-creator's physical engagement.

The Roundabout Path to the Center of It All

The Lecoq instructor employs two major pedagogical techniques to guide the development of the actor-creator's aesthetic cognition: essentialist rhetoric and the *via negativa*. As introduced in the beginning of this dissertation, essentialist rhetoric is often coupled with a force that destabilizes essentialism's assumptive stability. In this case, Lecoq's overall essentialist attitudes are destabilized in practice through the *via negativa*. Just as Mohanty introduces the notion that mediated objectivity is valuable because it gives information about the context of objectivity, tying it to larger forces, the *via negativa* allows the student's individual context to inform the way in which essentialist principles are put into practice. Murray likens the primary student-instructor relationship during improvisation in Lecoq pedagogy to Grotowski's *via negativa*: "It was Grotowski

who first used the phrase *via negativa* to describe an approach to learning which sought

to eliminate inappropriate solutions and choices simply by saying 'no' to what the

individual student or group had presented. In the *via negativa* prescriptions are not

offered and it is up to the student to continue proposing possibilities until the most

effective receives some kind of acceptance or affirmation" (Murray 49). In Lecoq's *via*

negativa, the actor is given a general theme, but she is not told how to do it. This forces

the actor to make choices regarding how to realize the theme. Actors employ a variety of

techniques to make dramatic choices, and many focus on alleviating interference from

intellectual analysis. The individual actor, even more than the instructor, often restricts

the kinds of information that initiates her creative process. John Lutterbie, one of the

pioneering theatre scholars to apply cognitive science to theatre, zeroes in on the

individual actor's creative process when he sets out to untangle what actors are doing

when they claim to be, in colloquial acting terms, "getting out of their heads." This

common concept across acting styles, a cognitive impossibility, strictly speaking,

suggests that intellectual and rational cognitive abilities can be suspended while

emotional, intuitive, and creative cognition can take precedence during the creative

process. Lutterbie applies principles from cognitive science to argue the following: "the

distance between emotionally based creativity and rational objectivity is minimal; the

paradox that an intellectual choice is made to avoid being intellectual is to a large extent

illusory; and what really matters are the kinds of questions being asked and the

bracketing undertaken to explore the issues under consideration to arrive at

understandings that are complex and empowering" (156). Lutterbie emphasizes how this

act of "bracketing" carries weight during the creative process, inviting certain kinds of

information and associations. Actors, ostensibly through both practice and training, come

to learn what kind of associations are useful in their creative processes, desiring to access

that which is helpful and avoid that which is not. He writes that the actors "seek

associations that support and disrupt their preconceived notions of what comes next. But

in order to find these associations, they need to pose a question for which there is no

simple, concrete answer. Nonetheless, it is a question that allows for the proliferation of

possibilities making use of images that arise from neural cross-modality and from our

ability to combine metaphors in interesting and powerful ways" (Lutterbie 163). Here

Lutterbie is specifically addressing the individual actor during the creative process, but I

extend his conclusion into the realm of actor preparation. In particular, it is the

essentialist rhetoric and the process of *via negativa* that combine to ask very particular

questions to all of the actors in the process of Lecoq training. Not only do these questions

demonstrate a way to ask theatrical questions, but they also fashion the very process of

creating the multilayered aesthetic cognitive apparatus of body schema, body image,

image schema, and all subsequent processes that combine to forge the actor-creator.

When the instructor provokes the neutrally-masked actor to perform "the neutral mask

wakes up for the first time," they are not only asking the actors to perform a dramatic

scene, but also marshaling intention to confront them with a specific set of metaphorical

instructions that simultaneously instigates and models a particular creative framing

process. The fact that the question is so open-ended facilitates the bracketing that the

actor must do to take ownership of her choices.

Certainly not every actor is able to work within this framework. Some actors

never choose Lecoq-based programs, and some try them and leave. The successful

student exercises and strengthens the ability to bracket within the constraints of the

pedagogy and learns to productively navigate essentialist and postmodern practices,

unhinging them from a binaric relationship. I suggest that the actor who continues in a

Lecoq-based program but who cannot or refuses to bracket within the constraints of the

Lecoq-based pedagogy may benefit from particular exercises but experiences a great deal

of friction between her own work and the constraints of the pedagogy. I have witnessed

this kind of student retain a sort of postmodern creative sensibility that cleaves to the

equal value of any and all theatrical propositions. In contrast to Lecoq's famous refrain to

which I previously referred, "anything is possible but not anything goes," this

postmodern sensibility asserts, "anything is possible *and* anything goes." I see this failure

to successfully bracket within the constraints of Lecoq-based pedagogy as a result of a

deep dedication to a postmodern aesthetic–be it conscious, unconscious, willing or

unwilling. This failure to bracket reveals an unwillingness or inability negotiate the

essentialist-postmodern relationship as anything other than a binary.

Essentialism and Framing

Lecoq training strongly embraces the notion that the theater artist must first be

able to tap into a universal poetic sense (*le fonds poétique commun*) (*The Moving Body*

168). Therefore, universality becomes the desired destination, and "essentialization" the

process. This overt practice of essentialism often repels scholars from contextualizing

Lecoq's theoretical principles. Taking a cue from Fuss, I shift from the futile task of

evaluating truth-value to uncovering the function and context of these essentialist

practices to understand what kind of embodied philosophical principles they enact.

Cognitive science offers theories about how humans create truth-value in meaning structures, not truth itself, in order to smoothly function in the world. Since uncovering the manufacture of truth-value reveals what purposes it serves, uncovering Lecoq's creative essentialist practices reveal what sorts of aesthetic aims they support. Similar to the way Lecoq situates "neutrality" within neutral mask work, Lecoq acknowledges a constant instability within essentialist concepts. When he speaks to his essentialist tendency Lecoq isolates the productive quality of error that can allow essentialism to breathe, becoming useful instead of oppressive and static. In the previously quoted passage about error, Lecoq notes its productive nature. In this sense, error does not mean "mistake," but rather a margin of difference, the productive gap created when perfect coincidence of the theoretical goal and the manifested realization of that goal is not accomplished. This is similar to the productive difference that Lecoq describes as necessary between a mask and the mask-wearer. This is an important point in Lecoq's theory, for it reveals that his notions of permanencies and essences are not as rigid as they might seem. It also demonstrates that in the classroom, Lecoq pedagogy uses language and metaphor that are designed to fail, in a sense, to be trumped by the moving body.

The concept of basic-level categories in cognitive science illuminates a function of such essentialist rhetoric:

> Consider the categories *chair* and *car*, which are "in the middle" of the category hierarchies *furniture-chair-rocking chair* and *vehicle-car-sports car*…such mid-level categories are cognitively "basic" –that is, they have a kind of cognitive priority, as contrasted with "superordinate" categories like *furniture* and *vehicle* and with "subordinate" categories like *rocking chair* and *sports car*…*It is the level at which most of our knowledge is organized*. (Lakoff and Johnson 27-28)

Lakoff and Johnson also explain that, through our evolution, these categories have come

to "optimally fit our bodily experiences of entities and certain extremely important

differences in the natural environment" (27). In other words, these basic-level categories,

concepts born out of an imperative to corporeal utility (out of the desire to make life as

easy as possible for the human body in the world), maintain priority and are widespread

for the sake of corporeal-cognitive ease. Therefore these concepts do not represent truth

claims, but utility claims. Utility, different from truth, is provisional and context-specific.

Techniques to reach utility can change as circumstances change. Truth, on the other hand,

is frozen and does not permit change. Basic-level categories have continued to be

cognitively enduring because they evolved out of a bodied engagement with the world

and account for the most foundational attributes of human cognition. A concept's high

degree of utility gives it cognitive priority. Because of the cognitive priority of these

categories, they are among the ones that are most widespread across varied cultures

because humans are so close in the way that their bodies interact with the world, on the

deepest neuronal and sensorimotor levels. The way in which Lecoq leads his students to

search for "permanency" functions like the concept of basic-level categories. The

exercises force the student, through an embodied engagement with imagery, to distill all

of the "levels" of trees, to borrow the cognitive scientific terminology, into the one that is

the most salient for the body-world-cognitive interaction. For example, the student may

be using the neutral mask to move through the forest. The student has a wide option of

trees to use for the sensorimotor image work: blue spruces, palm trees, bonsai trees, etc.

If the neutral mask student picks to activate the sensorimotor experience of encountering

a bonsai tree, the audience is more likely to be confused, and unable to read "forestness." This is because bonsai trees are tiny and often on tables or on the ground. If the neutral mask encounters a table in the forest to mime manipulating a bonsai tree, while this may be an accurate mimetic encounter, it will fail to allow the neutral mask to move through a forest. On the other hand, if the actor wearing the neutral mask chooses to work with a twenty-foot-high palm tree, she has nothing to sensorially encounter other than a large trunk. She can also perhaps look up into the sky at the palm leaves, but this is such a general gesture that to specify it as an encounter with a palm tree would not be efficient in neutral mask work. When students search for "treeness" they go through a complex process of distillation to discover what kinds of qualities are the most salient between their own bodies, the space, and the audience in order to offer up a theatrical dynamic of treeness. This does not mean that the tree qualities they use to perform are any more "tree" than the qualities they did not use. The actors make utility judgments for the sake of their particular context, rather than truth judgments. In this scenario, Lecoq pedagogy provides the basic-level category for the students, and it is the student's responsibility to translate that into something that can be performed into space for the sake of an audience. Lecoq's rhetoric of "permanencies" is not actually about the permanent. Rather, it pushes the student to learn to create based on basic-level categories in order to facilitate smooth communication with the audience. This is also why Lecoq's practice of "essentialization," while reiterated throughout the whole training period, is specifically and most explicitly taught during the beginning stages, functioning as the foundation upon which the particulars of varied styles will be built.

Conclusion

Placing Lecoq pedagogy and cognitive science into conversation does not merely articulate how the pedagogy works through the lens of human cognition, but also leverages physical practices out of their isolation in practice. Such embodied practices, tethered to physical and material contingencies, propose embodied theories that spring from and answer to corporeality, or "body-bound" theory. This theory that is bound to and bound for practice suggests that the world of practice and theory are inseparable, and can offer a new lens through which to engage all discourses, but discourses on the body, power, and meaning, in particular.

Applying Lutterbie's conclusions on framing in the creative process, and Gallagher's work on body schema, we can see how practicing embodied theory can fashion creative cognitive capabilities, binding such theory to the practitioner's physical life and theatrical aesthetic. The key to this process, and this kind of body-bound theory in general, is found in an engaged body and in a durational process of construction. Far from a static state or inherent capability, this body-bound theory is born from and finds value in corporation. Paradoxically, it is through privileging the body in both cognitive studies and in Lecoq pedagogy that Cartesian dualism is overthrown, and new relationships between body and mind, and therefore the possibility of new values, arise.

Johnson emphasizes the challenge and promise of recognizing these unities:

> If we could only disabuse ourselves of the mistaken idea that thought must somehow be a type of activity *ontologically* different from our other bodily engagements . . . then our entire understanding of the so-called mind/body problem would be transformed. We would cease to interpret the problem as how two completely different kinds of things (body and mind) can be united in interaction. Instead, we would rephrase the problem as that of explaining how increasing levels of complexity within

> organisms can eventually result in the emergence of progressively more reflective and abstractive cognitive activities, activities we associate with "mind." (Johnson 140)

In rephrasing the problem we can open out the application of such body-bound theory to discourse. Just as Lutterbie alights on the power of framing, as opposed to the determination of truth-value, as that which is at stake in the creative acting process, I am suggesting that body-bound theory can in turn rephrase and reframe discursive engagement. Such fields of engagement include, but are not limited to, questions of the body and power, and might reshape important discussions with theorists such as Michel Foucault and Judith Butler when we can shift our point of departure toward a body that is always already involved in manufacturing meaning just as it interfaces with meaning that is being thrust upon it. Just as Lecoq warned against pantomime that ossified the dynamic qualities of miming, embodied performance theory that is hermetically sealed in the container of practice closes off body-bound theory to wider application. By excavating the workings of the privileged creative body, muted body-bound theory is made articulate, finding its footing in movement and speaking its theory beyond its own borders.

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Chapter 2

Embodied Epistemology: the Lecoq Pedagogy's Process of Reckoning with the Other

Just as a cognitive scientific lens may reveal the cognitive workings of Lecoq's

physically based pedagogy, applying a philosophical analysis to those workings reveal

their theoretical assumptions about embodiment. One of the first practices Lecoq-based

pedagogy introduces is the "identification" process. This practice finds its way into many

of Lecoq's exercises and lies at the heart of Lecoq's pedagogy and philosophy. In this

process the actor picks an object of her attention–be it a material object, person, thing, or

movement–anything that is external to her. Objects of attention range from the concrete

to the abstract, and may be in her presence, memory, or imagination. Some of the first

objects of attention that Lecoq-based pedagogy proposes to its students are the four

elements: fire, air, water, and earth. The identification process unfolds in three stages:

seeing, embodying, and taking a position for or against the object of attention. The key to

this process is that each of the stages must be completed both fully and in sequence. It is

significant to note that Lecoq uses a term from psychology to name this process.

"Identification," in psychological terms, is a complex set of ideas describing the way in

which the self interacts with the other. Doctors Sander M. Abend and Michael S. Porder

explain that "Freud's earliest clinical references to the idea of identification all seem to

assume its commonsense meaning: a psychic connection based on a perceived or

imagined quality of sameness" (463). Lecoq, while embracing psychology and the

psychological dimension of life, is critical of a psychological approach to actor training.

"The third phase of the work with neutral masks consists of *identifications*. Of course we

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do not mean total identification, which would be worrying, but rather playing at

identification" (*The Moving* Body 42-43). Here Lecoq highlights that imposing a full

psychological process of identification is dangerous, demonstrating his dislike of

conflating actual human psychological processes with actor training. He directly assaults

psychological processes within actor preparation:

> In my teaching I have always given priority to the external world over
> inner experience. In our work, the search for self-enlightenment and for
> spiritual bliss has little attraction. The ego is superfluous. It is more
> important to observe how beings and objects move, and how they find a
> reflection in us…. I prefer to see more distance between the actor's own
> ego and the character performed. This allows the performer to play even
> better. Actors usually perform badly in plays whose concerns are too close
> to their own. (19)

Since Lecoq's terminology clearly marks a distinction between the psychological

processes of life and his priorities in actor training, the fact that he calls upon psychology

within the scope of his training process may seem puzzling.[24] The connection between

psychology and his physical training, however, is forged in order to demonstrate the way

in which the body can be wholly responsible for accessing psychology within the actor

training process. By calling a corporeally initiated process "identification," Lecoq binds

contemporary psychological notions to the moving body, demonstrating that inner life

can be accessed and mined for theatrical purposes entirely through the body. Lecoq's

identifications are initiated by, grounded in, and owe their efficacy to the corporeality of

their processes. Chapter one explained how applying cognitive science to physically

based pedagogy confounds binaries such as body/environment and self/other. The

concept of body schema, body image, and image schema express how the body is

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[24] Lecoq also uses the psychologically connoted term "the transference method," to describe the process by
which his identification process is applied to the theatrical realm (*The Moving Body* 44).

inextricably connected to its environment, demonstrating how the self is always constituted in connection to the other. Lecoq founds his explanation of this "coupling," as Gallagher calls it, based on the principle that the actor and that which he mimes share a fundamental substance, which permits the actor's access. This chapter articulates how the reorientation of the binary of self and other bears upon epistemology. It uncovers how the process of identification weaves imagination, body, and material dimensions of space and time into a cognitive operation aimed for creativity but whose ramifications extend further, revealing embodied epistemology as a reckoning of the relationship between the self and other.

When the actor begins the identification process with the element of water, for example, she first imagines any particular body of water that she chooses–an ocean, a lake, or a river. This initiates the "seeing" step. It is important here that it is not just a general kind of water, but that there is a certain level of specificity in the body of water which will effect, in the later stages of the process, how the water moves. This act of imagining water is linked to the actual space around her as she imagines with her eyes open in the studio space. The preamble to the next step of embodying the water is for the actor to encounter this imaginary water in the space with her own body. If she is imagining a puddle she may walk through it, splash around in it, and experiment with ways for her own physical body to encounter this imaginary water. If the actor is imagining an ocean she may improvise swimming through it (simulating the gravitational difference between moving on land and moving within a body of water). It is important in this preambular step that the actor not imagine these encounters in her head but rather, despite the fact that the body of water is imaginary itself, stage the encounter in the space

with her actual material body. In the second step of "embodying" the water, the actor fuses this encounter between body and imaginary water to the extent that she takes on the physical dynamic of the water that she has just explored. She "becomes" the water. This is not an imperative to necessarily psychologically or emotionally become the water, although it is implied that through this physical process, psychological and emotional resonances may arise. This imperative, rather, is for the actor to take the movement dynamic of the water into her own body, moving in the way that it moves, as if her body is made entirely out of that substance. The final stage of "taking a position for or against" the object of attention is not actually about a judicial or moral judgment. Rather, it refers to the way the actor-creator uses what she learned through the second stage of embodiment. In other words, on the most basic level she either works in accord with or in opposition to the movement dynamics she has just embodied. In a larger sense, this final stage is about putting embodied knowledge to use, rendering embodied knowledge into creative fodder. In the exercise of embodying water, the actor may then use what she learned in an improvisation to transpose her watery movements into characterization, dramaturgically structure a scene with the rhythms of the water dynamic that she embodied, or juxtapose watery rhythms with their opposite for a particular theatrical effect. At this stage the work is silent. As previously discussed, Lecoq pedagogy begins work in silence, and identification is first of all a corporeal process. Transposition, however, could very well include a vocal or sonic component. In Lecoq-based pedagogy, the intermediate step of embodiment is key; embodied knowledge is the prerequisite for creation.

During the identification process, the actor-creator is encouraged to proceed through each step methodically, encountering and eventually embodying the object of attention without preconceived notions. Approaching an object of attention entirely objectively is impossible, of course, but the encounter is staged as one of discovery, as if the actor-creator were discovering that object of attention–water, cling wrap, or a painting–for the first time. This attitude of discovery, coupled with the imperative to embody the object of attention as directly and faithfully as possible, aims to distance the actor-creator from cliché. Cliché–sedimented, perpetuated, ossified, and unquestioned cultural artifacts and attitudes–must be cast off as much as possible in order to create the theater for the future that Lecoq envisioned. An attitude of discovery puts responsibility on the senses to investigate the object, putting the person in phenomenological relationship to the object of attention, even if it is imagined. This sensory-based imaginative process forces the actor-creator to relate herself to the material reality of the objects in space including its weight, relationship to gravity, texture, and range of motion. The final stage of taking a position, or putting the embodied knowledge to use, places this material and spatial embodied exercise in service of theatrical creativity. The movement that the actor-creator has generated, inspired by the encounter with her object of attention, gives birth to dramatic, emotional, psychological, and aesthetic dynamics which can be exploited for theatrical purposes. No matter how far this exploitation moves away from a literal use of the object of attention, the creativity generated by the embodied process ensures that it is always anchored to a sensorial experience in space and time.

The Cognitive Link Between Understanding and Imagination

Lecoq-based pedagogy considers both actual material objects of attention (such as other people, animals, or paintings) and imagined objects of attention (such as bodies of water that are not present in the studio) as equally suitable for the identification process. This includes both sentient and non-sentient objects of attention. While many of the imagined objects of attention are common things that most people have encountered at some point in life–fire, water, a cooking egg–if a student has never been to the beach it does not mean that she cannot participate in the identification process with an ocean. This pedagogy does not split hairs over the difference; rather it emphasizes the ability to activate the imagination and body to engage in a sensory-based investigation. The ease with which the actual and the imaginary are collapsed into the same category may seem curious to a body-based pedagogy that places so much emphasis on materiality. However, recent studies in cognitive neuroscience suggest that cognitively speaking, imagination and understanding are so closely linked that they share the same basal properties and function as a result of a single cognitive matrix. In this light, the principles elucidated by neuroscientist Vittorio Gallese and cognitive linguist George Lakoff suggest that there is a similar operation at work, and for the purposes of the identification process, they are born from the same function and can claim a certain working equivalency.

In Gallese and Lakoff's article, "The Brain's Concepts: The Role of the Sensory-Motor System in Conceptual Knowledge" (*Cognitive Neuropsychology 2005, vol 21*), the authors introduce their argument by explaining how cognitive science's traditional conception of they way in which "understanding" works perpetuated a myth of

understanding as disembodied and abstract. Conceptual understanding was conceived as based on linguistic structure. In Fodor's theory "concepts" were the "language of thought."(2) Because linguistic theory saw language as entirely symbolic, when knowledge was envisioned as patterning itself after the structure of language, knowledge too was symbolic and abstract, and in this way it became totally untethered from any physical or bodied experience in the world.

Current conceptions of understanding, as introduced in chapter one, see sensorimotor ability as the very building block of cognition. In other words, the mechanisms of bodied experience and the information gained through corporeal encounters enable abstract thought. When Gallese and Lakoff explain "neural exploitation," they articulate how the sensorimotor continues to maintain its most basic function while being simultaneously coopted by more complex cognitive operations (2). Far from being unnecessary to the cognitive process, sensorimotor capabilities are what make the cognitive processes possible. The basic-level category, as detailed in chapter one, is one of the structures that clearly trace how physical encounters with the world shape the ways in which we think.

The basic-level category is founded upon the scale at which human bodies interact with the environment; in other words this category, as explained in the previous chapter, originates at the point where the sensorimotor system most directly encounters the object. For example, the category of CHAIR is a basic level category. There are more specific kinds of chairs–wingback chairs, dining chairs, folding chairs, sofas even–however the "chairness" of what they have in common, and why they all might fit together in a larger category (one in which you would *not* find a "car" for instance) have to do with the fact

that our sensorimotor systems deploy in a similar way to sit on these objects. You can, of course do other normal things with the objects including lounging, lying, and even standing on them. But cognitively, the act of sitting on a chair is the most common practical use for these objects, gathering them into a single general category. Understanding a chair, then, has to do with both perceiving the chair and imagining how to sit in it. This dual operation creates the category of chair in the person's cognition. The basic-level category is merely one example demonstrating how understanding itself is not only tethered to, but made possible by physical interaction with the world. Lecoq's identifications are also enacted through the human scale of sensorimotor interaction, and in this way provide another entry into the cognitive development of aesthetic basic-level categories.

Cognitive science also conceives of imagination as a necessarily embodied process. Gallese and Lakoff explain that "imagination is mental simulation." In this light, imagination is meant for projecting possibilities for a material body into a material world. Conceiving of imagination as wholly abstract misses both its function and point. Gallese and Lakoff connect imagining and actual perception by explaining that parts of the brain used in seeing are also used when someone *imagines* seeing (2). It is because of our bodied experience in the world that we can even imagine things we have never seen, as those imaginings are based on our previous physical encounters with the world. As Noë explained, even actual perception itself is based on the body's ability to encounter the world. Just as the perception of the actual world is based upon the sensorimotor, imagined worlds exist as an extension of somato-sensory information.

What shapes our interaction with the world, therefore giving shape to doing, perceiving, and imagining alike, is directed, or purposeful action. Independent neural functions are gathered up by purposeful action; they are organized by it. A common example in cognitive science is grasping for a cup of coffee. The purpose of grasping harnesses multiple sensorimotor abilities not limited to visual perception and manual motor programs. Gallese and Lakoff clarify, "the very same neurons that control purposeful actions also respond to visual, auditory, and somato-sensory information" (5). In the process of action and imagination, somato-sensory information both informs and is the result of directedness. Purpose (whether it be actually grasping a cup of coffee or imagining water babbling down a brook) channels somato-sensory information into action that can be taken.

The key to recognizing how action and imagination work in the same way in both life and Lecoq's corporeo-imaginative exercises is to see how understanding, perceiving, imagining, and doing are all cognitively connected. Because actions have both motor and perceptual components, this means that "doing" is not just carrying out some sort of predetermined command by a disembodied brain, but rather, necessarily incorporates the functions of perceiving. Since perception itself is made possible by action and its potential, actions and perceiving are necessarily created from the same sensorimotor material. To even further collapse cognitive differences between doing and perceiving, Gallese and Lakoff call upon research in the Mirror Neuron System (MNS) to explain that "the firing of a single neuron may correlate with both seeing and performing" (Gallese and Lakoff 4). This could mean that, from a different perspective than Noë, as far as the brain is concerned "doing" and "perceiving" are much the same thing. This

refers specifically to an observer watching someone take action, and the possibility of the observer cognitively experiencing the action as if she were taking the action herself. The MNS is controversial; most of the evidence of the way these systems function has only been verified in monkeys. Because there is a high rate of similarity between this particular brain function in humans and monkeys, scientists who support this interpretation of MNS function are working from the educated assumption that it works the same way in humans. While it may work the same in humans, this has not yet been verified. Scientists who strongly disagree with applying the monkey data directly to humans suggest that until we can verify this function in humans we cannot responsibly apply its principles to humans. The support of applying this interpretation to the MNS in humans is also strong; many scientists (including many who work in the field of autism research) are indeed proceeding as if it were true because they believe that the evidence is sufficiently salient to do so. Gallese and Lakoff suggest, "some of the same parts of the brain used in action are used in motor imagination (imagining you are acting). Thus, imagination is not separate in the brain from perception and action" (9). If this is true, then the identification process takes advantage of this structure to imagine you are acting and ignite the parts of the brain that are therefore used in motor imagination. It is in this way that, for the purposes of the identification process, imagining an interaction with water and basing a physical improvisatory encounter with that imagination is firing our cognitive abilities that operate when encountering real water. In other words, the actor engaged in the identification process is not merely working within a flimsy framework of make-believe, but hijacking her own cognitive processes in relationship to the material world. Furthermore, the body, not only the brain, is imperative to this process because as

Gallese and Lakoff remind us, "imagination, like perceiving and doing is embodied, that

is, structured by our constant encounter and internalization with the world via our bodies

and brains" (9). Since our full-embodied encounter is responsible for imagination,

perception, action, and understanding alike in human cognition, imaginative work can

harness the same raw materials as actual perception, action and understanding. The

identification exercise creates purposeful action, organizing sensorimotor material for the

sake of imaginative worlds.

The way in which imagination, perception, action, and understanding are related

does not result from an overarching organizing principle. The concept of an umbrella that

gathers and organizes functions underneath it, or supramodality, would suggest that there

is some sort of "higher" function that is in control of integration and abstraction. On the

other hand, imagination, perception, action and understanding are multimodal. This

means that they function by grabbing from multiple modes and integrating them within

their execution. Gallese and Lakoff explain how action is mulitimodal:

> to claim as we do, that an action like grasping is multimodal is to say that
> (1) it is neutrally enacted using neural substrates for both action and
> perception and (2) that modalities of action and perception are integrated
> at the level of the sensorimotor system itself and not via higher association
> areas. (4)

This highlights how the sensorimotor system itself is capable of integration. The way that

the identification process directly engages the sensorimotor system forces the actor to

work at this level, tapping into the varied integrative and abstract structures and

capabilities of the sensorimotor systems. Therefore it is not necessary to have an overall

aesthetic umbrella to harness the sensorimotor, all it takes is to activate them, which is

what physically based exercises such as Lecoq's do. Through activation, the sensorimotor integrates itself.

Gallese and Lakoff explain that imagination and understanding share the same neural substrate (2). The substrate is the soil in which cognitive abilities develop and express themselves, and the substrate is nourished by sensorimotor systems. Just as cognitive abstraction is built upon the capacities of the sensorimotor–and made possible through a physical encounter with the world–the Lecoq-based practice of identification starts from the sensory motor, envisioning it as the pathway to abstraction. In the progression of the identification process, the actor begins first by improvising a physical encounter with the element–playing with water, molding clay, or building a fire. From that material imaginative encounter the task is to calibrate varying levels of abstraction–touching the water, to becoming the water, to abstracting the water as a character's quality of movement or speech. The structure of identification makes the action purposeful, organizing the sensorimotor. Because understanding and imagining are functioning due to the same foundational processes, using either a material or imagined "other" in the identification process is indeed physically encountering that "other." This material encounter, in turn, will be recycled back into a material response by the actor-creator. In this way creation founded upon the identification process always has material and embodied roots. While imagining and understanding are not the same thing, because they both are founded upon embodied structures in engagement with the world, the identification process can harness this similarity for apprehending knowledge and creating artistic material. This knowledge, even when it is manifested in more abstract

forms, is ultimately always embodied knowledge, tethered to the material world and related to and born from human bodied encounters with the world.

While the identification process is taught as a kind of pedagogical strategy within movement analysis, its principles form the core of the rest of Lecoq-based pedagogy as well. The 'twenty movements' are a series of movements that range from mime to abstract movement. There are movements based on sports (discus throwing, ice skating), along with basic acrobatic skills (the cartwheel), and include some of Lecoq's more abstract movements (the undulation and éclosion). The actor learns these twenty movements either by miming what the instructor models, by performing the identification process in response to an instructor prompt, or some combination thereof. While the actor learns these over the course of the first year, the goal is for each actor to perform them in front of the school at the end of the year. Each performance will be original in that the student must do all of the twenty movements, but may put them in any order. For the twenty movement performance piece the actor then has to wrestle with the theatrical dynamic of each movement as she decides how to weave them together. The heart of this twenty movement project is also the identification process: the actor first sees the movement either as an instructor example, or imagines it; next the actor embodies that movement trying to be as faithful to the example as possible; and finally the actor uses this embodied knowledge as creative fodder to create an original performance piece within the parameters set by the exercise.

Mask work also functions in this way, for it takes the contours and dramatic potential of the mask as the primary other to propel the student into the theatrical world in which the mask lives. Whether the actor is working with a neutral mask, larval mask,

expressive mask, or *commedia* mask, the mask is the original "other" that must be met by the performer. "Meeting the mask" is to say that the actor first sees it, then embodies the kind of theatrical dynamic suggested by the mask. This then propels the actor into the fictional world. Finally, being able to improvise and perform within this masked theatrical world is the way that the actor "takes a position," using her creative resources to mold a performance.

Even the practice of *auto-cours,* where the actors gather in groups and create short pieces in response to the instructor prompt, operates on the basis of identification principles. When this creation group is given a prompt such as "The Exodus," a theme given in tandem with neutral mask work and meant to employ neutral masks, they are discouraged from talking too much about the project, or intellectually creating something *before* improvising in the space. In this case, the actor "sees" the prompt, "embodies" possible responses to the prompt, and finally "takes a position" through creating and presenting the performance. The challenge in this exercise is the fact that there are multiple people engaging this process in different ways which forces the group to undergo not only an individual identification process, but a collective one as well. Even in collective work, Lecoq-based pedagogy insists on embodying proposals in the space, not simply talking about options. This is because getting ideas on their feet, so to speak, propel the idea in the space and in material relation with the theatrical environment. This familiar imperative to act first and analyze second is actually an imperative to engage the sensorimotor in the acts of both gaining knowledge and creating theatrical material.

In the second year of training, students study different genres, otherwise known as "territories" (Lecoq, *The Moving Body* 13). As students approach various genres such as

commedia dell'arte, Greek chorus, tragedy, melodrama, or clown, the students are in

effect embodying those territories in order to understand them. In the tradition of the

identification process, and in the Lecoq-based spirit that seeks new forms, these historical

genres are not meant to be replicated, but to be put to new use or to inspire new forms

altogether. To understand how these forms theatrically function is to understand the

dramatic architecture of a genre. As students move through different genres they can

begin to have an embodied vocabulary of how forms work. When they apply this

knowledge, they are "taking a position" by putting those forms into new relationships or

creating entirely new forms. This is why the investigation is not and cannot be an

intellectual investigation into historical genres. In both movement analysis and genre

work, the instructor leads exercises that anchor the actor to sensorial stratum in order to

provoke this process of identification. In other words, if an actor has never been to the

beach, the instructor might first lead her toward some sort of sensation she knows–sand,

heat, water–to build up the sensorial experience and allow her to launch her imagination.

For work in a genre such as Greek tragedy, the instructor begins through a developmental

series of exercises where groups of people learn to speak text and move together as an

organic unit. This will eventually become the chorus of a Greek tragedy. It is only

through embodied knowledge that they can put to use that which they learn from the

historical forms. Identification is not just one exercise in Lecoq-based pedagogical

exercises, but is the founding principle upon which the pedagogy operates.

Indirect Pedagogy as the Direct Path to Aesthetic Cognitive Development

The Lecoq-based pedagogy's indirect approach, exemplified by the *via negativa* as mentioned in the previous chapter, seeks to provoke the actor to access theatrical principles through her own investigation and improvisation, rather than through rote internalization of prescribed principles. The *via negativa* also agitates the essentialist components of the pedagogy. Lecoq describes how indirection is a recurring pedagogical strategy in his work:

> Whatever its dramatic style, all theatre profits from the experience an actor gains through masked performance. This is an example of teaching which does not operate directly, but through a ricochet effect, as in training for particular sports. Training to be a good shot-putter necessitates running; for a judo champion it requires body-building. Just such a sideways approach is also needed in the field of theatre. The whole school works indirectly: we never proceed in a straight line towards our students' goal. If someone says to me, 'I want to be a clown,' I advise him to work on the neutral mask and the chorus. If he is a clown, it will come through. (Lecoq, *The Moving Body* 53)

Here Lecoq likens this pedagogical approach to the "ricochet effect," highlighting its indirect effects. Reorienting his examples from both sport and theater suggests that there could be a direct relationship between the training and the end goal. Just as bodybuilding might offer a certain strength, skill set, and kinesthetic awareness to form a strong foundation for judo, mask work is not a separate skill from clown, but rather forms the foundation for work in any specific style. So while certain practices in Lecoq-based pedagogy might seem to work indirectly, pairing these practices with cognitive science suggests that they are actually working in a quite direct manner to cultivate aesthetic cognition, the foundational state for any kind of creative theatrical work. In other words, these practices work directly on shaping cognitive processes, even if the actions of the exercise (working on neutral mask in order to cultivate the actor's clowning abilities)

seem to be developing the desired skills indirectly. By looking at identification as a direct process rather than an indirect one, process and relationality become key features of the practice.

An important difference between Lecoq-based training and psychologically oriented actor training resides in their respective goals. While character interpretation becomes key in psychologically based training aimed for realism, something more basal is cultivated in Lecoq-based training. Lecoq's goal for his training is for the actors to create the theater of the future, that which does not yet exist. However, just as I am suggesting that Lecoq pedagogy operates on a more foundational level of creative cognitive development, I am also suggesting that the ramifications of this body-based cognition reveals aspects of embodied knowledge that go even deeper than aesthetic creativity. Articulating the process-nature of identification reveals how it offers an investigation into relationality, and thereby constitutes knowledge as the result of an active reckoning between self and other.

The process-nature of identification is clearly important because each stage is to be completed in its entirety and in the prescribed order. Because the end result is not determined, the process is trusted to give successful results. In other words, as an instructor leads the actor through identifications, how the actor then applies that embodied knowledge would never be deemed incorrect, even if it was in a way that the instructor had never witnessed before. Students are chided, however, if they short circuit the process by applying clichés of the other that they investigated, rather than applying the result of their own embodied investigation. Therefore the instructors are responsible for upholding the structure of the process instead of the result. The process of

identification is animated through a shifting proximity of relation to the other. In the "seeing" stage, the actor recognizes her distinctness and distance from the other, and evaluates the other by virtue of total separation. In the "embodying" stage, the actor exchanges distance for full imaginative immersion in the bodied and material existence of the other. In the "take a position" stage, the imposed binary of self versus other is dissolved, and the actor is invited to determine the relationship between self and other. Therefore the goal int of this process is for the actor to create relationality. Through the course of the entire identification process, the actor is not possessing the other, but instead passing through it to harvest knowledge and actively create relationality. Just as Lecoq calls this process "playing at identification" he destabilizes the possibility of the actor to completely "possess" the other (*The Moving Body* 42). By undergoing the identification process, the actor approaches the limits and possibilities of taking on the other's material engagement with the world and its relationships to its environment. The processual nature of this examination into relationality is central because identification is about constant negotiation: an ever-shifting inductive engagement rather than a fact of acquisition or even a static state. This is why Lecoq was so critical of corporeal mime, for it focused on the frozen form without acknowledging the more profound possibilities in the act of embodying something other than the self. While even Lecoq may point out the indirect nature of his pedagogy, it is actually the direct cognitive path to forming aesthetic cognition and to accessing and harnessing the potential of relationality between the self and the other.

Identification as an Epistemology

For the Lecoq pedagogy, knowledge is required before creation can happen. Recall how Lecoq describes the function of mime in his pedagogy, "miming is a way of rediscovering a thing with renewed freshness. The action of miming becomes a form of knowledge" (Lecoq, *The Moving Body* 22). This knowledge however, is not just any kind of knowledge but rather, but the very kind of embodied knowledge to which identification gives access. In this sense, creation, according to Lecoq pedagogy, is a rematerialization of embodied knowledge, a kind of recycling process. The knowledge, apprehended through the body is then fashioned by the body for the purposes of theatrical creation. Lecoq describes this process using a poetic language evoking the natural sciences from physics to geology:

> The main results of this identification work are the *traces* that remain inscribed in each actor, circuits laid down in the body, through which dramatic emotions also circulate, finding their pathway to expression. These experiences, ranging from silence and immobility to maximum movement, taking in innumerable intermediate dynamic stages, remain forever engraved in the body of the actor. They are reactivated in him at the moment of interpretation. It may be many years later, when an actor finds himself with a text to interpret. The text will set up resonances in his body meeting rich deposits awaiting expressive formulation. The actor can then speak from full physical awareness. For in truth nature is our first language. Our bodies remember! (*The Moving Body*, 45*)*

Lecoq sees the identification process as something that taps into a preexisting material world. Furthermore, it is only in the material that even the non-material dimensions, such as emotion and psychology, are accessed. In this way the identification process, at its heart, is an embodied epistemology.

Inherent in the identification process, as in human cognition, is the ability to move from the concrete to the abstract. To abstract this process into other realms, not just that of the theater, is merely to apply the knowledge in a different arena. This is also one of

the important ways in which Lecoq-based work is not simply a tool for actors to learn movement skills for the theater, or a way to acquire physical virtuosity. Lecoq-based work teaches how to know through the body. The body is key to this process of identification because this kind of knowledge is about the body in the world and the way materiality enables and restricts us in reckoning with the other. Although identification operates on a certain assumption of the unity of self and other because it assumes that the person has enough material knowledge, experience, and imaginative capacities to conjure the other as something connected to but different from the self, identification is really about the *process* of reckoning with this dynamic relationship between the self and the other. For it is through this process across time and space that knowledge of the other is cultivated. Identification is not a fact of connection; it must be painstakingly enacted, without skipping any steps. To skip steps is to disembody the knowledge, to assume things about the other without taking material ramifications into consideration. Cognitive science demonstrates how cognitive development is dependent on experience in the world. This experience, in turn, becomes knowledge that is available for us to apply to abstract thought. In other words, abstracting from physical encounters is something humans already do, so the identification process merely reproduces this capacity for aesthetic ends.

Understanding the identification process in this light, it is clear that injunctions against talking or thinking about water before embodying water is not an injunction against using the intellect in the creative process. Rather, this attitude recognizes that talking about water without having gone through the material process of reckoning with it short-circuits the ability to embody the relationship. This attitude forces a return to the

sensorimotor and the processes that integrate it to constitute embodied knowledge. In effect, physically based training programs are marking a paradigmatic break, mandating the cultivation of knowledge through embodiment, and therefore mandating that the actor materially reckon with the other. This is why what physically based practitioners do is significant: they are advocating embodied knowledge as multi-dimensional, for it accounts for relationality. The way that the identification process forces the actor to materially know the other ensures that the other is accessed in context and in relationship. Here, materiality is the way to access interconnectedness, and the identification process harnesses material-based cognition, rooted in the human's primary materiality, the body. The body is our only way to access materiality, and materiality is our only way to access interconnectedness. This is why physically based epistemological processes like the identifications in physical theater are not proposing technique, they are proposing embodied epistemology and ultimately a new paradigm for looking at knowledge altogether.

The Significance of Paradigmatic Shift

Privileging the body advocates a shift to a new epistemological paradigm, simultaneously marking out the inadequacies of the current paradigm. Kuhn explains that one paradigm gives way to another because the new paradigm offers "better" solutions to questions that remain unanswered in the current paradigm (Kuhn 18). Kuhn predicts that the new paradigm will inevitably produce new unanswered questions that can only be answered by a future paradigm (Kuhn 18). In this instance, a body-based paradigm shift

directly removes language from its primary position in the epistemological process. Language becomes secondary.

This point of shift creates a break with, and a disconnection from, the old logocentric paradigm where language reigns supreme in epistemology, subjectivity, and ontology. Just as body privilege creates this break, it marks its distance from the linguistic paradigm and its mistrust of language-based intellectuality by featuring silence. This silence highlights a fundamental incompatibility between the physically based paradigm and language-based epistemology and ontology. When Kuhn describes the relationship between the old and new paradigms, he articulates that a key feature of their difference is that they can only partially communicate to each other, for the founding principles of each paradigm are necessarily different (Kuhn 149). Therefore, built into this paradigmatic change in theater training and even more broadly, epistemological processes, is a certain necessary mutual incomprehensibility. As a result of this fundamental and necessary paradigmatic incomprehensibility, the anti-intellectual prejudice makes its way into physically based training. Therefore, the imperative not to think or talk in the training process is not actually an injunction against the intellect, but rather a wedge creating distance between knowledge and words, in effect creating a space for the body to take a privileged epistemological position, allowing it to demonstrate its value in a largely logocentric world. This paradigmatic clash gives birth to both the conditions for an embodied epistemology and the framework from which to see its value, which is necessarily obscured by the previous paradigm. When cognitive science and Kuhn's theories of paradigmatic change illuminate the practice of physical theater, it reveals that anti-intellectual prejudice, sometimes cloaked as an aversion to "theory,"

"language," or "thinking," is actually a strategy to make way for a new kind of knowing,

theory, communication, and thinking grounded in embodiment and the abstract potentials

of the sensorimotor. The practice of Lecoq's identification contributes to and profits from

the structure of an embodied paradigm, claiming that knowledge is at heart a corporeal

reckoning of the relationship between self and other.

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Chapter 3

Circumscribing Embodied Epistemology in Physical Theater: Encounters with Jerzy

Grotowski and the SITI Company

While this dissertation has moved through cognitive scientific principles to reveal

a fundamental embodied epistemology at work in Lecoq pedagogy, other physically

based actor training regimens differ in their methods and goals, but also move the body to

the forefront of creative and epistemological processes. This discussion now shifts from

looking at the ways in which cognitive science reveals the body's role in creative

cognition to analyzing how other body-based forms stake their particular claims on

epistemology. In this chapter, I will not be detailing how cognitive science illuminates

the ways in which body-based training in other traditions participate in aesthetic

cognition. Instead, I will move directly to the ways in which their practices claim their

own epistemological territory in order to circumscribe the contours of physical theater as

a wider epistemological movement.[25] Two important features various body-based

performer trainings share, despite many points of divergence, include a prioritization of

physical action in the training process and a strategic distancing from intellectual and/or

verbal engagement with studio work. Previous chapters have detailed how these two

features function within Lecoq-based training. Because these features recur in physical

regimens that are vastly different, it becomes apparent that they function as basal

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[25] For treatments of Grotowski's work in relationship to cognitive science see Rick Kemp's *Embodied Acting: What Neuroscience Tells Us About Performance* and Teemu Paavolainen's *Theatre/Ecology/Cognition: Theorizing Performer-Object Interaction in Grotowski, Kanto, and Meyerhold.*

principles in body-based work as a whole across techniques and aims. The widespread

application of these two features points to the fact that there is a diverse, yet loosely

unified, family of twentieth- and twenty-first-century pedagogies that advocate not just

for an embodied performer training process, but an embodied epistemology as an antidote

to the dominant discursive epistemology. By looking at two other influential body-based

training systems in Western theater, the work of Jerzy Grotowski and the SITI

Company's training regimen, this chapter traces the way the body comes to the fore of

twentieth-century training, and how this has larger implications for Western

epistemology.

In Response to a Problem

　　Lecoq's work and pedagogical approach developed in an effort to revive what he

saw as cultural decay in the theater. Lecoq's own theatrical life was born in a battered

Europe after World War II. In a conversation with Dario Fo, he talks about how their

time together in Italy was at a moment at which artists felt as if their work was to make

theater that could contribute to rebuilding a devastated world (*Les Deux Voyages*). This

impulse to make theater in order to renew culture, coupled with Lecoq's reaction against

the ossification of mime into pure form, reveals the impulse of his work as a vivification

of theater. Even when Lecoq harks back to historical forms, such as *commedia dell'arte*,

he does so in order to put them in service of new and original work. For Lecoq, his

response to cultural and theatrical decay was to orient his work toward making theater for

contemporary times and future contexts, and to do so through focusing on movement.

The trajectory of the work of theater artist Jerzy Grotowski (1933-1999) can also be situated as a response to a problem: he saw the theater's decadence as a move away from its roots and fundamental purpose. In this way, his work seeks to contribute to a revolution in the theater, and like Lecoq pedagogy, uses the body as the primary tool in this process. In his quest to refresh the theater by discovering its core, Grotowski not only alighted on the actor as the central figure, but dove so deeply into her abilities and potential that he had to remove her from the structure of the theater altogether to continue this process. The actor no longer became defined as a figure who works within the confines of the theater. Through the progression of his work, Grotowski's actor needed fewer and fewer of the trappings of the theater–such as play, narrative, or audience–to define herself. As Grotowski set out to return to the most important elements of the theater, he began to focus his efforts on how to cultivate an ideal actor, which in his view, was accomplished when the actor could psychophysically lay herself bare before the audience. For Grotowski, acting became a route for the actor to uncover herself, revealing acting to be a voluntary, sacrificial endeavor. In other words, for Grotowski, the ultimate expression of the theater occurred when the actor sacrificed herself for the sake of the theatrical event. Grotowski contrasts this function of the actor with what he saw as the prevailing definition of an actor which he likened to prostitution, calling it "the courtesan actor" (33). Rather than "selling" the body for money and notoriety, Grotowski's actor offered herself up for an act of "self-penetration" meant to catalyze a similar experience in the audience (Grotowski 34).

Co-Founder and Artistic Director of SITI company, Anne Bogart, has been widely critical of traditional American theater training. The three problems she and Tina

Landau outline are: "The Americanization of the Stanislavsky system," a "Lack of

ongoing actor training," and "The word 'want' and its effect upon rehearsal atmosphere

and production" (Bogart and Landau 15-17). The problem of no ongoing actor training

points to the way in which Western actors, unlike musicians or dancers, have no way to

simply exercise their skills independent of any particular production. Therefore if the

actor is not involved in a production, she has no way to maintain and develop her skills.

The other two problems, the Americanization of the Stanislavsky system and their

discontent with the word "want," point to their overall dissatisfaction with

psychologically based approaches to actor training. These artists go on to explain how

their practices–Viewpoints and Composition in this context–allow performers to take part

in a rigorous system for ongoing training and unhinge the actor from the drawbacks to

psychological training. Their training, contrary to mainstream actor training, focuses on

the actor as an engine for creativity on her own, unhampered by assumptions of

limitations in the creative process (Bogart 19-20).

     The way in which Bogart and Landau describe their work as a successful solution

to Western actor training's lingering problems recalls Kuhn's assertion that new

paradigms are born to solve problems that the old paradigm could not successfully

address. In this light, Bogart and Landau are not merely adding new tools to the actor's

training kit, but rather proposing an entirely different way of training the actor and an

entirely different definition of what the actor does. Grotowski's redefinition of the actor

also suggests a new way of understanding this figure, not merely a shift of technical

focus. Combining these with the Lecoq pedagogy's shift in the paradigm of the actor, the

ramifications of a larger shift in actor training comes into view. This shift is led by

neither style nor pedagogical aim. Instead, this shift comes from a revolutionary impulse united only through a practical and theoretical privilege of corporeality.

Goals, Concepts, Histories: Grotowski

As previously outlined, the goal of Lecoq pedagogy is to fashion an actor-creator, as opposed to merely an actor-interpreter, and to enable this figure to create the theater of the future. In light of Lecoq's historical context, a certain distrust in the establishment continuously framed the development of his pedagogical work.

Grotowski considered his work, most obviously evidenced by his early projects created for theater, a continuation of Konstantin Stanislavsky's. In this sense, Grotowski might be considered not an iconoclast, but rather a committed student extending, developing, and deepening the work that Stanislavsky initiated. While this figure was not directly connected to religion, she certainly operated within a meta-quotidian realm that Grotowski dubs the "secular sacrum" (49). The celebrated performer Ryszard Cieslak, Grotowski's student, embodied this ideal actor, and Grotowski's theatrical productions began to enjoy great critical acclaim early on in his career (Milling 21). Even in the midst of Grotowski's most traditional theater work, he concentrated on fostering this actor figure, or the "holy actor" that could penetrate herself for the sake of the audience (Grotowski 34). However, as he deepened his investigation into the development of the "holy actor," the constraints of the traditional theater were too restrictive, and he had to eventually leave it altogether. While Grotowski may have set out to rediscover the theater, the search led him back to ritual. Despite the many developments in Grotowski's

vast career, the body's capabilities and limits have remained his work's portal to self-transcendence.

By following the figure of the actor and her body, we can see how Grotowski's work follows a single trajectory toward epistemological and ontological revelation. Each stage marks a different context: Theatre of Productions (1959-1969); Paratheatre or Theatre of Participation (1969-1973); Theatre of Sources (1976-1982); Objective Drama (1983-1986); and Art as Vehicle (1986-1999). During the Theatre of Productions, Grotowski's most traditional work blossomed as he trained actors for theatrical productions. After great international acclaim as a theater director, he moved into the Paratheatre or Theatre of Participation stage where he first stepped outside the bounds of theater altogether envisioning a community encounter of actors and performers that had the power to penetrate their lives. In this stage the spectator was not a passive recipient, but actively took part in the event. While the spectator was still present in this stage to a certain extent, everyone became actors (Slowiak and Cuesta 34). The following stage, the Theatre of Sources, influenced by his travels abroad, sought to find the common roots of cultural practices. He traveled to countries where he felt indigenous cultural practices were alive and well including Haiti, Nigeria, Mexico and India (Slowiak and Cuesta 42). He and his international team learned these practices by rote. It was in this stage that he began working across cultures with the assumption that his team could penetrate to a deeper common root in these practices beyond particular cultural context. In the final stage of Ritual Arts or Art as Vehicle, the spectator becomes unnecessary in a process aimed at discovering "a performative structure that functions as a tool for work on oneself" (Slowiak and Cuestra 53). In this final stage, there is no audience at all–each

person is necessarily an actor working on herself. Grotowski's work begins with the actor and ends with the actor. It is in this way that Grotowski's work can be seen as a single thread following the function and potential of the actor in such a dedicated way that by the end there is no other figure necessary to the process, and even the scaffolding of theatrical structure is no longer necessary. By the end of this journey, Grotowski is working directly on the area of epistemology: he attempts to create an encounter for the express purpose of self-knowledge.

If the goal of Grotowski's work is self-knowledge, then the body takes several tactics to accomplish this. In the first stage of the Theater of Productions, knowledge is apprehended through a negative process of the revelation of what is already there but often obfuscated. This came to be known as Grotowski's *via negativa*, "the decisive factor in this process [of self-penetration] is humility, a spiritual predisposition: not to **do** something, but to **refrain** from doing something" (Grotowski 37). As previously mentioned in the context of Lecoq pedagogy, the *via negativa* described the relationship between instructor and actor and the way in which the instructor does not prescribe what to do but rather guides them by telling them what not to do. In the Grotowskian context in which this concept was born, the *via negativa* refers to the way in which the actor herself refrains from doing something. In this sense it is a much more internal and personal process. However, in later stages, the performer actively embodies cultural practices of both their own ancestors and other groups. Just as this raises questions about the problematic potential of this transcultural process divorced from cultural context, it also demonstrates how Grotowski endowed the performing body with the power to access not only one's own cultural past, but also cultures to which the performer had no connection.

This is a controversial point that provocatively suggests that through performing cultural practices, some sort of ancestral substance can be accessed. A process, of course, that cannot be verified. In these processes the key was not to just study these practices, but rather to be able to perform them with the body. The assumption at work, then, is that embodiment brings forth a kind of knowledge that transcends time and culture. The body's power to reach across time and space, along with its self-sacrificial prowess moves it well beyond the realm of the theatrical. Grotowski's pseudo-mysticism complicates his own position as a director, teacher, researcher or potential guru. While he repeatedly asserts that he is not advocating a religious turn to performance, he often uses religious language to describe his work. This ambivalence in language may be more than simple hypocrisy, but rather the signpost that Grotowski's body is moving beyond the quotidian physical experience, beyond the theatrical experience, and even beyond epistemology. Through self-penetration, the body in Grotowski work is not only endowed with the possibility of knowing itself and to therefore know others, it also viewed as knowing everything there is to know, accomplishing Grotowski's "total act," a fundamentally ontological state. These kinds of metaphysical signposts within Grotowski's theory demonstrate goals in practice that are impossible to know and/or verify. In this way we see the goals in Grotowski's work as distant horizons–even beyond epistemology:

> the moment when the actor attains this [total act], he becomes a phenomenon *hic et nunc*; this is neither a story nor the creation of an illusion; it is the present moment…This human phenomenon, the actor, whom you have before you, has transcended the state of division or duality. This is no longer acting…" (Osinski 86)

"*Hic et nunc,*" Latin for "here and now," becomes the ideal state, one that fully

encompasses the present moment. In this way, the Grotowskian body aims to pass

through and exploit an epistemological investigation to ultimately access ontology.

While Lecoq pedagogy takes no direct responsibility for the body's ontological

life beyond the theater, comparing Grotowski's process of embodiment with Lecoq's

identification process helps to reveal the ontological reach of Grotowski's body. Since

Grotowski's process is a negative one, rather than one of accretion, and is accomplished

through the material body, it advocates moving *beyond* the material *through* the material.

As Grotowski consciously left the realm of the theater, he began to place faith in

embodying cultural practices as a primary tool to access both epistemology and ontology.

In the final stages of his work, Grotowski focused on folk songs. By learning and singing

these songs, Grotowski's students were accessing both their own heritage, that of others,

and in turn, aiming to reach the roots of a common humanity. In this configuration the

actor embodies the cultural other, and in so doing comes to uncover, reveal, and know

herself. This practice has encountered fierce opposition as its fundamental operating

principle smacks of cultural appropriation. In these practices, there is no process to digest

the power structures at play, for example what it means for a Westerner-led company of

performer/researchers to so easily "possess" cultural practices and transfer them to their

colleagues. Jane Milling and Graham Ley underline further concerns in this debate:

> the sources of funding for the projects are primarily Euro-American:
> Grotowski makes no secret that this is his research and the participants
> function as resource material… The sense of appropriation also occurs
> because of the ideology that, in the very choice of participants, constructs
> these traditions of ritual as closer to the 'origin' and the primal. There is a
> fetishization of the work of these practitioners as 'pure', as opposed to
> corrupted for show to others like tourists, and not subject to its own

> history and the contingencies of cultural development. (Milling and Ley
> 137)

Grotowski must sidestep the specter of cultural appropriation in order to endow the body

with the vast properties upon which his work depends. For Grotowski, cultural life is a

layer that lies on top of common human stratum, which can only be penetrated through

embodying cultural practices. Further penetrating the common human stratum then leads

to the present moment, and therefore an ontological state. Here, as Grotowski navigates

essentialism in his work, finding purchase to create theoretical and practical traction, he

encounters the peril of cultural appropriation. To recall the analogy of crossing a river on

"stones" in order to reach the other side, as Grotowski finds purchase by having faith in

the fact that the stone-like objects are indeed stones, one of those stones turns out to be

the alligator of cultural appropriation. Not only does this "alligator" threaten to harm the

community from which he borrows practices, it threatens to unravel the ethics of his

theoretical structure. Authors and practitioners Jairo Cuesta and James Slowiak respond

to the charge of cultural appropriation in Grotowski's work: "These accusations do not

really have any basis in fact. Grotowski acknowledged that any contact with a tradition

will have some reverberation (positive and negative) for both groups" (57). In one sense,

Grotowski admits that a few toes might come off in the process of crossing, and is willing

to move forward at that cost. On the other hand, Cuesta's Slowiak's rebuttle to Milling

and Ley also reveals how the alligator may not have actually been an alligator after all.

They go on to say that in practice, the degree to which the company members tried to

fully absorb cultural traditional practices was "modest" (Cuesta and Slowiak 57). In

addition, they prefaced this by saying how these practices (mostly concentrated in the

period of Theatre of Sources) "never came to fruition" (56). In explaining this failure,

they note how Grotowski suggests that this vision for a Theatre of Sources (similar to

Lecoq's vision of internationalism) is just a premise (56). While suggesting that the

realization of this premise could not happen now, Grotowski does not foreclose on the

possibility that it could happen, but defers it to some far-off time (56). Cuesta and

Slowiak note how Grotowski suggests that this cultural work is more of a field of

possibilities (56). Again we see how a very bold vision based in essentialism actually

diminishes its essentialism in practice. This reveals the essentialism as a theoretical

horizon, a point of theoretical purchase. This shows once again how body-based practices

perform a more nuanced negotiation of essentialism than their theories might advertise.

Grotowski's practices also negotiate the perils of essentialism, and boldly claim ontology

as a result.

Goals, Concepts, Histories: SITI Company

Saratoga International Theater Institute, or SITI Company, was founded in 1992

by Anne Bogart and Tadashi Suzuki. Based in the US, the company focuses on creating

new theatrical work and reinventing classic material. SITI is also known for its actor

training regimen and methods of collaborative creation. SITI's methods have gone far

beyond the walls of their rehearsal room, as they routinely teach their methods in

workshops all around the world, and company members and students have gone on to

teach in actor training programs, conservatories, and university programs. Their training

is comprised of a three-faceted approach where each facet accomplishes something

different in the actor. Together, the three components (Viewpoints, Suzuki, and

Composition) are aimed at creating an expressive and flexible actor, along with fostering

the actor's ability to create material as an active member of the authorial process.

Viewpoints is perhaps the most-transmitted practice of SITI company. This

practice began as a tool for postmodern dancers developed by New York choreographer

Mary Overlie. In the 1970s, Overlie invented and began using the six original Viewpoints

(Space, Shape, Time, Emotion, Movement, and Story) as a framework for creating dance

(Bogart and Landau 5). Bogart encountered this practice at the Experimental Theatre

Wing of New York University, where she worked with Overlie. Along with her

collaborator, Tina Landau, Bogart actively expanded the Viewpoints and applied them to

theater making. This inclusion of Viewpoints as a permanent and repeatable part of their

company's preparation served to not only provide an actor training regimen but also

allowed the actors to become part of the creation process. Bogart and Landau expanded

these Viewpoints to two overall categories: a set of Physical Viewpoints (Spatial

Relationship, Kinesthetic Response, Shape, Gesture, Repetition, Architecture, Tempo,

Duration and Topography) and a set of Vocal Viewpoints (Pitch, Dynamic,

Acceleration/Deceleration, Silence and Timbre) (Bogart and Landau 6). A Viewpoints

exercise begins when the exercise leader calls out a particular Viewpoint. The

participants respond by improvising focused on the Viewpoint at play and in relation to

the other participants. The complexity of the exercise grows as multiple Viewpoints are

layered into the exercise so that many are at play simultaneously. Bogart likens the

experience of Viewpoints to juggling, "First there is only one ball in the air, then a

second is added, then a third a fourth, and so on–how many balls can you keep in the air

before they all drop?" (Bogart and Landau 36). The exercise fosters action via sensitivity

and responsiveness, creating a constant state of readiness as the foundation for creativity.
This quality of responsiveness is rehearsed both as an individual actor and as a member
of an ensemble.

Suzuki training, the second element of SITI's regimen, comes from Tadashi
Suzuki, Bogart's initial collaborator and company co-founder. Suzuki exercises focus on
the body's connection to the ground, emphasizing how physical effort can emanate from
the lower half of the body. Suzuki, a director and pedagogue, created this system inspired
by Noh theater performance and its grounded movement. Suzuki training also explores
voice and upper body movement, but does so by taking the body's connection to the
ground as its point of departure (Cormier 108). The basic form of foot stamping activates
the body-ground connection and becomes the foundation upon which other movement
and speech is layered. This rigorous process poses an opposition of downward energetic
movement coupled with simultaneous upper body movement and/or speech. The
challenge for the actor is to remain focused and present in the moment of action despite
oppositional forces within her own body. Albeit in a different manner from Viewpoints
work, Suzuki also trains the actor to become responsive. The Suzuki-trained actor is able
to respond to the demand of text recitation even during the act of intense physical
exertion. If Viewpoints trains the actor to creatively respond to both abstract principles
and fellow actors, Suzuki provokes the actor's body to state of readiness through a
continuous psychophysical battle.

Composition is a practice for performers to generate theatrical material. The
exercise leader gives certain constraints and mandatory elements for inclusion, providing
pressure and inspiration to create short works. These pieces are often given a very short

time limit for creation, and may include a host of elements for inclusion such as "objects,

textures, colors, sounds, actions" (Bogart and Landau 13). Bogart first encountered

Composition practice as a Bard College student, working with choreographer Aileen

Passloff. An important component of this practice is the structured discussion of the work

after it is performed. Bogart and Landau prescribe how to do this:

> After performing some Composition work, have the entire group sit
> together. Ask everyone to close their eyes. Talk to the group about each
> Composition performed that day, one at a time, and ask people what they
> remember. This process of remembering should not be an intellectual or
> analytical exercise, rather, each individual should relax and focus on
> her/his memory of each composition to see what *floats up* into
> consciousness. Then ask everyone to state aloud what has *stayed* with
> them (not what they liked and disliked). People should keep their eyes
> closed and listen so that they can hear each other; individuals should speak
> clearly and loudly and try not to overlap…The focus should remain on a
> concrete account of events and images, rather than their effect or
> interpretation. This time of reflection represents a fundamental tool in
> creating work for the stage. Although analytical criticism and theoretical
> discussion will play a significant role in the feedback, one's own body and
> memory can be the most meaningful barometer in the artistic process.
> (Bogart and Landau 182)

The detailed prescription for talking about the material is significant; while many

physical theater practitioners bar talking about the work in the studio, the Composition

allows it, but offers a very specific manner to go about it. First, this description prioritizes

physically working before engaging in a discussion about the work. This discussion is not

peppered into the composition process, but necessarily takes place at the end. By

instructing the group to close their eyes, the Composition process directs the participants

inward to their sensorial experience of the material, privileging a responsive meditative

state where the salient sensations should "float" toward the participant, rather than

advocating for the participant to actively "go after" their memories of the experience. By

directing the participants away from opinion and toward sensation, intellectual powers

move away from judgment and toward evaluating the sensorial saliency of the material.

At the end of this passage, Bogart and Landau reveal that they have been discussing a

corporeally based process of "body memory" and how to access it for creative purposes.

In this light, this portion of the Composition process is actually just an extension of the

corporeal process of creating material. Composition as a whole applies Suzuki and

Viewpoints work to the creative realm, realizing a figure as not just an actor-interpreter

but also an actor-creator.

Each of the three SITI training practices addresses a different point in the

development of the performer. The Viewpoints actor is flexible and spontaneous, able to

act upon creative impulse in relation to creative prompts and fellow performers. The

Suzuki-trained actor becomes grounded and capable of performing in the midst of

physical struggle. Composition allows the actor to become an agent in the creation

process, not merely an interpreter, similar to the Lecoq pedagogical goal of developing

actor-creators. Bogart often writes about the importance of listening as an actor, and she

and Landau dub it the "defining ingredient" in effective theater-making (Bogart and

Landau 33). This listening is, of course, not a passive state of non-action, but rather the

ability and sensitivity to establish a responsive state, available to participate in relation to

the other elements in the creation process. Cormier takes up Bogart's refrain of listening,

and points out how it operates in Viewpoints and Suzuki work,

> The approach to listening is different in each. The Viewpoints teaches the
> actor how to listen in 360°, with all of his/her senses, allowing him/her to
> respond to anything in the performance space. The Suzuki Method first
> teaches the actor how to listen to his/her own body. After learning to

accept the information that the body is giving the actor s/he then realizes
that s/he is also listening to his/her fellow actors. (Cormier 168)

I submit that the Composition process too, makes use of an ability to make work through

"listening" to the constraints and mandated elements. If the fundamental operating

principle of SITI company's training is "listening," as Cormier discusses, receptivity

becomes the ideal creative state and goal for training.

The mission of SITI resonates with the mission of Lecoq pedagogy beyond

simply empowering the actor to become a full-fledged creator. Formally, SITI declares its

mission as: to create new work, train young actors, and collaborate internationally

(Cormier 3). While SITI company's commitment to internationalism is made evident in

their mission statement, it recalls both Lecoq's and Grotowski's own complicated

commitments to internationalism. While Lecoq pedagogy aims to create the theater of the

future, it does so only through fostering young creators, not by formally producing their

work. Except for a brief stint at the beginning of his teaching career, there was no Lecoq

performing company. Lecoq saw a company connected to a school as a drawback to the

students' development, feeling that in this configuration the students' training would

inevitably be aimed at auditioning new performers for the company. In a company-school

partnership, Lecoq believed that the school, whether or not it intended to do so, would

inherently serve to perpetuate the needs of the performing company, ultimately placing

limits on the students' originality (*The Moving Body* 7). The fact of SITI's performing

company adjoined to many of its training practices places a focus on a finished product in

a way that Lecoq-based pedagogy does not. The force of Anne Bogart's presence on

SITI's work has been contested; whether she is a leader or a collaborator equal to all

other company members has been hotly debated. Bogart suggests that she plays more of a collaborative role, which is confirmed by reports from the rehearsal process (Cormier 181-224). In Lecoq pedagogy, the instructor's influential power is wielded in movement analysis, improvisation, and intermittently in the provocation and commentary on the short collective creation pieces. However, the student's work really begins when she leaves the school. In this configuration, the external power of the pedagogy is completely removed, and whatever power the pedagogy continues to exert on the actor's process is a power that has been internalized. The SITI company, however, continues to train and create together focusing on upcoming production demands, in addition to any other teaching responsibilities they may hold. For the SITI company members, the training exerts a sustained influence on the actor, in addition to the demands of the current production that shape the training process. For actors who are trained by the SITI company but who are not members of the company itself, their relation to the work is much more akin to the relationship between Lecoq-based pedagogy and its actors. Even in this case however, the very fact of a company suggests that there are actors who uphold the example of successful training (suggesting that there is a "right way" to perform the exercises), and there is a company one could aspire to join. By comparing the SITI company members and students of Lecoq-based training reveals, however, that these training processes exert different kinds of power over the actors, exemplifying two different relationships of body-based training to performance. Outlining the difference between these practices distinguishes the work, but also highlights how diverse methods and outcomes hold certain goals in common, circumscribing a larger and varied field of body-based pedagogy.

Restrictive Principles

Restrictive principles, constraints in pedagogy that shape how it encounters the actor's training experience, form the skeleton of the training system and reveal its pedagogical mechanism. As we have seen in Lecoq's approach to "essentializing," Lecoq work operates through points of theoretical and practical purchase aligned with qualities of nature. Therefore, the Lecoq-based pedagogy's restrictive principles are essential states and qualities of the natural and material world. In this sense "nature" includes both the world of nature and that which can be directly observed–a Ferris wheel, for instance, is not something found in nature, but it can be directly observed by an actor and therefore its dynamic and "essential" nature can be investigated. This forms the framework and the limit for the pedagogy placing the highest value on encountering the environment and investigating nature. This does not, however, mean that all theatrical material must also be based in nature. Rather, this value of nature, the environment, and the observable world are considered key for the actor, but not key in the audience's experience. For example, an actor trained in the Lecoq pedagogy may have based a character on the physical dynamic of a rubber ball, dramatically transposing its movement onto the physical, emotional, and psychological qualities of the character. In the preparation process the actor may have literally played with the ball and embodied the motion of the ball. However, it is of no consequence to the actor whether the audience can tell that the character is based on the rubber ball. These restrictive principles do not dictate outcome or style, but rather, a kind of fundamental value of creating based on the natural world, using it as a creative point of reference. There is, however, an underlying assumption that

because both the actor-creator and the audience live in the same terrestrial realm, the

commonality of this experience connects them across the footlights, providing a smooth

conduit of communication. Lecoq-based pedagogy, therefore, takes the experience of the

natural world as its touchstone for both actor preparation and the actor-audience

communion. This is not to say that Lecoq-based pedagogy sees the audience experience

(or range of interpretation) as necessarily monolithic. Lecoq-based pedagogy does,

however, place the responsibility of clear communication directly on to the actor-creator.

That is to say that part of the actor-creator's task is to craft a theatrical experience that the

audience apprehends completely and intelligibly. Any notions of challenging this

traditional actor-spectator relationship, such as creating a piece that self-consciously

refuses to determine meaning and insists that the audience produce the meaning or

collapsing the actor-spectator role in a ritualistic configuration, would be traversing

outside of the bounds of the pedagogical framework. For the SITI company, on the other

hand, the restrictive principle thrives in an even more abstract world. In the Viewpoints

practice, the Viewpoints themselves (Spatial Relationship, Kinesthetic Response, Shape,

Gesture, Repetition, Architecture, Tempo, Duration and Topography) inspire the actors to

focus on realizing conceptual ideas and relationships. As the actors work within the

Viewpoints, they have to answer the question "tempo of what?" and "duration of what?"

They answer this in action and with by physically engaging with the space and their

fellow actors. In this practice, conceptual ideas form the framework within which actors

create.

Lecoq-based pedagogy's trust in the natural world, and the Viewpoints' trust in

abstract concepts may speak to the contexts in which the practices were developed. Lecoq

pedagogy developed over time after World War II when European artists felt a certain

mandate to rebuild a destroyed continent. Having lost faith in the political-technological

advances of the war that led to cycles of destruction, Lecoq returned to popular theatrical

techniques and found inspiration in the natural world. A faith in platonic essences of the

natural world reveals a confidence in people's connection to nature, and a belief that this

connection provides access to revitalization and creativity. Because the Viewpoints was

born through postmodern dance, its birth also comes at a historical moment of a deep loss

of faith. Bogart and Landau begin their first chapter in *The Viewpoints Book* by outlining

the "seismic cultural shift" of America in the 1960s (Bogart and Landau 3). Because

movements such as the civil rights movement and Vietnam War protests sought to

overthrow longstanding and abusive normative power relations, the inability to trust

normative power structures was a sentiment at the very forefront of the artistic

community. Aesthetically speaking, this manifested as doubt in the stability of meaning.

In response, artists produced groundbreaking work that either questioned the stability of

form to directly communicate meaning, which resulted in the invention of new forms or

the elevation of pedestrian movement to "formal" status, or refused to determine meaning

altogether. It was through acknowledging and exposing the inherent relativity, instability,

or non-existence of meaning that these artists revitalized their broken world. Faith in

stable meaning and in absolutes shattered, only the ability to investigate and create in an

anchorless world remained. Therefore the only principles that could be relied upon were

abstract, relative and relational. In the absence of stable meaning, abstract concepts were

put into relation with one another to experience meaning. Time, shape distance, and

rhythm became tools, and the tools became the only dependable element since the

outcome could never be considered stable. In this light, the restrictive principles of

Viewpoints are much more broad than the restrictive principles of Lecoq-based

pedagogy. The Viewpoints enter the physical work through abstract relations, taking

inspiration from abstraction and manifesting concrete responses through the body.

Suzuki, on the other hand, offers very literal physical restrictive principles, forcing the

actor to struggle within a very narrow mandate of action and effort, turning the restrictive

principles inward upon the actor. The restrictive principles in Composition practice are

more obvious in that they are specific to the particular Composition exercise, and are

given at the outset of the process. Here the individual constraints may vary from

Composition to Composition, but the fundamental restrictive principle comes from

outside the actor, which may include a combination of abstract and concrete elements,

creating an internal creative urgency. In the combination of SITI practices, these

restrictive principles force the actor to listen to abstract principles in the Viewpoints, to

listen to the internal struggle initiated by Suzuki, and to listen to the constraints of

Composition.

Looking at the function of restrictive principles outlines how listening is valued

and fostered, paradoxically creating an active state of receptivity. The state that Lecoq

pedagogy emphasizes is playfulness.

> *Play*… [occurs when], aware of the theatrical dimension, the actor can
> shape an improvisation for spectators, using rhythm, tempo, space, form.
> *Play* may be very close to *replay* or may distance itself through the most
> daring theatrical transposition, but it must never lose sight of the root
> anchoring it to reality. A large part of my teaching method involves
> making students understand this principle. (Lecoq, *The Moving Body* 29)

This state too, gives the actor access to abstract qualities of creation, some of which are actual Viewpoints, and others which are strikingly similar. However, the difference is in the way that these qualities are accessed. The importance of the "anchoring it to reality" emphasizes Lecoq pedagogy's dependence on the actor's relationship to embodying the material other, as articulated by the process of identification. The responsiveness of SITI's training regimen is replaced by playfulness of Lecoq-based pedagogy. While both states certainly contain elements of both, for instance SITI's listening contains an active element to it, and Lecoq's playfulness responds to the material reality from which it takes inspiration. The overall emphasis on a passive versus active orientation returns us to the cultural and historical contexts of each. The SITI company training, developed on its global stage, comes to fruition at a time when artists were questioning American dominance, acknowledging a need for it to take part in the global community in a new way. Rather than merely asserting its dominance, citizens and artists saw active imposition as the problem, and a responsive stance as a solution. As artists were urging the US to listen to the rest of the world, they adopted listening and other responsive acts as a creative strategy that allows the US to put itself in a new relationship to the global community. Lecoq pedagogy, on the other hand, developed when Europe had already been destroyed, and active creativity was the only solution.

Prioritizing Action over Intellect

In Lecoq-based pedagogy, the imperative to prioritize physical action over intellectual analysis endows the body with access to not only physicality and the material world, but also arenas normally associated with interior human experience such as

emotion and psychology. "Whatever the actor's gesture, it is inscribed in the relationship between the actor and the surrounding space, and gives rise to an inner, emotive state. Once again, the outer space is reflected in the inner space (Lecoq, *The Moving Body* 67)." To prioritize movement over intellectual engagement is not to discount the intellect, but rather to propose a hierarchical process to both guard against bifurcated Cartesian body/mind and invest in the body's full range of capability.

SITI's work also prioritizes action over discussion, or the verbal expression of intellectual engagement, as mentioned with regard to Composition practices. Bogart and Landau explain this imperative to action in Viewpoints work:

> in order to introduce the basic concepts behind Viewpoints, it is necessary to move through certain fundamental exercises, which are very difficult to talk about. As the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote: "If you can't say it, point to it." The following exercises "point to" important principles that are best understood through doing rather than describing. Encourage the participants to savor the experience of the exercise and do the best they can in every moment. Explain that the crucial issues will be reviewed verbally only at the end of the session. (Bogart and Landau 22)

They categorize the work as something that is hard to talk about which necessitates the prioritization of doing, and that they are "best understood doing." Here they acknowledge a shortcoming in discursive description and the advantage of understanding by doing. In this view, embodiment is preferred, intellectual principles can still be accessed fully, but only at the end of the physical work. They also categorize analysis as actively negative in several instances, including as follows:

> The key to Composition work is to do a lot in a little time. When we are not given the time to think or talk too much (because someone has set a time limit), wonderful work often emerges; what surfaces does not come from analysis or ideas, but from our impulses, our dreams, out emotions. (Bogart and Landau 138)

Clearly the suggestion is that work from analysis or intellectual ideas is at worst bad or at least not as good. But similar to the previous example about Composition, they do give a format for integrating intellectual work, but it must be done in a specific way and in a specific order–control of this process seems significant. Once again, body-privilege becomes the solution. For SITI company, to embody is to know, and to embody is to listen.

Grotowski's version of the physical training imperative "don't think, just do" is also not a ban of intellectual knowledge but rather a prioritization of corporeality over intellectuality. An intellectual approach can suggest extensive mental analysis before action, and can also manifest itself as a prioritization of text as the heart of the dramatic event. In an interview in 1967, Grotowski responded to the question, "What is the task of theatre in respect to literature?" by emphasizing the act of communion, "The core of theatre is an encounter" (Grotowski 56-57). This response is not just an avoidance of the discussion, but actually reorients the question, refusing to take the text as the basis for theater. Lisa Wolford discusses her experience as a participant in the Objective Drama Research project at UC Irvine in the 1980s, "From my first day of practical work, I was confronted with the distinction between discursive/intellectual knowledge and somatic perception, the knowledge discovered in action" (Wolford 109). This distinction of and interdiction against discursive/intellectual knowledge is rarely explained or explained through metaphor. Wolford however, articulates the potential problem privileging intellectual knowledge in the context of physical action, "More often, intellectual knowledge can lead to uncommitted behavior. The moment the participant stops exploring the technique or activity because it is 'known,' the moment she loses the active

attention that insists she be fully present in every moment, her work begins to die, to become mechanical" (109). Here Wolford points out that intellectual knowledge can actually affect the execution of behavior, eroding the open and curious attitude necessary for commitment to the physical process. If the activity is assumed to be "known," and the end is assumed before experiencing the process, the process tends to feel superfluous, which is catastrophic to process-based physical activity. One of Grotowski's foremost students and inheritors of his work, Thomas Richards, suggests something far more urgent in not just distinguishing between intellectual thought and action, but rather barring intellectual thought in certain parts of the physical process. Wolford explains, "Richards discusses the need for the mental voice to be silence[d] in order for the actor to attain full organicity" (109). For Richards, in the midst of the training process, the mental voice should be "silence[d]" altogether. Both Wolford and Richards employ the life/machine dichotomy to express the "death" of something within the actor's work that has been affected by mental processes. In Richards' words, the metaphor becomes more metaphysical, expressing not just practical concern as Wolford does, but rather an ontological one.

Claims for Epistemology

The SITI regimen and Lecoq-based processes both advocate that through the actor's embodiment of an other, they can harness a knowledge within themselves that can then be projected into a relationship beyond themselves in the creation of a theatrical encounter. If these two pedagogical approaches, with many similarities in common, diverge so fundamentally at their approaches to creation, using Lecoq's identification

process as a lens for the SITI regimen can help define the SITI actor's body in relation to the other. If Lecoq-based pedagogy embodies the natural and material world, isolating what the SITI company training embodies reveals the kind of knowledge to which it claims access. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Lecoq-based pedagogy's identification process advocates an active method of encountering the other suggesting that to know something, you have to embody it first. In the Viewpoints practice, actors are embodying abstract principles in relation to the other Viewpoints participants. In Suzuki practice, actors embody an individual struggle. The composition process, then, is the equivalent node of "taking a position" where they use the embodied knowledge they gained through Viewpoints and Suzuki to create theatrical work. While Lecoq pedagogy works though the concrete to the abstract (embodying an actual fire to abstracting the "dynamic" of fire), SITI training skips the concrete level and moves directly to the abstract concept, indicative of how postmodern art saw that bypassing the concrete was bypassing the falseness of its certainty and fixity. To a postmodern or contemporary actor, Lecoq-based work may seem nostalgic or folksy, harking back to the days when a tree was indeed a tree and there was certainty in the stability of that knowledge. In a postmodern world, embodying abstract concepts may seem more comfortable through bypassing the problem of accessing truth. One topic at which SITI work and Lecoq-based pedagogy converges is music. The exercises are quite similar and involve putting the body in different relation to music–moving with the music, moving against it, moving in anticipation of it, etc. Music is already in abstraction as it is a product of a concrete operation, manipulating a musical instrument. Where abstract embodiment is necessarily the first step, these training regimens work in much the same way. In Lecoq-based

pedagogy, the "other" is most often another material thing, whether it be a person, object, or movement dynamic. Most often this "other" functions as the catalyst in the creative process, but is not necessarily present during performance. In SITI's embodiment process, "the other" takes shape as abstract principles and/or other people in the creation process. In Lecoq-based pedagogy, the other is revealed in the actor-creator, but that is just the preliminary step. The process ends with the step to "take a position" which then puts that knowledge into relationship with something else for the sake of creating a theatrical dynamic. Because Lecoq-based pedagogy anchors itself to the world of the theater and places responsibility on the performer to direct a smooth communication process, the identification process is always completed with a view to eventually performing in an actor-spectator relationship. Therefore this process to harness embodied knowledge necessarily moves from the other to the actor and eventually outside of the actor to the audience. The SITI regimen is known for developing a strength and skill in the actor, "Their actor-training is designed to develop bodies, capable of virtuosic movement" (Cormier 231). Virtuosity is only a result of an extra-daily body knowledge, for by definition it goes beyond the quotidian. So if this is the case, there must be some kind of knowledge that is accumulated in the actor's body, in addition to a process that sparks knowledge in their creative partners. Longtime company member Ellen Lauren uses the term "other" in describing her own experience from Viewpoints,

> it's the sense that the answer is always in the other–the answer to being on
> the stage, to the moment, the depth of the profundity of the moment on the
> stage, how to solve it, lies in the other partner or the player up on the stage
> with you, as opposed to something you've got to get yourself into or out of
> individually. And that sense of compassionately working toward
> revelation in the other has had big influence on me. (Potter Location 7464)

The SITI regimen and Lecoq-based processes both advocate that through the actor's embodiment of an other, they can harness a knowledge within themselves that can then be projected into a relationship beyond themselves in the creation of a theatrical encounter.

Because the career of theater artist Jerzy Grotowski spanned such diverse contexts, some see it as disjunct and scattered, unanchored to any central concern. However, a faith in and focus on the actor's body remained consistent throughout each stage of his work. By tracing the function of the body in Grotowski's work, it becomes clear that Grotowski's stages are parts of a singular project that uses the body as the primary tool to access both epistemology and ontology. Through Grotowski's physical exercises in and out of the context of the theater, the body is used to know itself, and this self-knowledge is featured as the foundation of all knowledge. As his research led him to an epistemological investigation, Grotowski saw only one kind of knowledge, and it was that which is engendered by the body. Lisa Wolford recalls his statement, "'Knowledge… is a matter of doing.'" (Wolford 108). For Grotowski, embodied knowledge is really the only kind there is. Applying this to the further stage of Grotowski's work that moved through and past knowledge, his work ultimately also suggests that being is a matter of doing.

Conclusion

Looking across these three different body-based pedagogical systems, despite divergence, they all make a broad claim on the body's ability to access knowledge. Lecoq pedagogy starts with knowledge of the natural and material world. SITI company's body

first makes contact with abstract concepts and relationships. The Grotowskian body turns

toward itself and cultural life to make the broadest claim on both epistemology and

ontology. In this light just as the Lecoqian encounter is a reckoning of the self and the

other, the Viewpoints reckons the self with abstract principles, and Grotowski work

reckons the self with the self. The faith that these systems put into the body to access

knowledge (and beyond) suggests that they all depend on the body's capacity as conduit.

In order to realize the potential of body-as-conduit, however, each finds a way to

reprioritize the body's relationship to the analytical mind, which often puts these systems

at odds with text, intellectual digestion of their material, discursive theory, and academia

to some extent. At best this new relationship may produce a strained relationship to

academia and intellectual engagement, and at worst there may be an assumed

incompatibility. All of the physically based systems value the body as the leader of an

epistemological process where action necessarily precedes discursive engagement in

order to prevent a short-circuiting of the physical process. This body privilege is

significant in the current western epistemological paradigm that depends upon a

mind/body split and the prioritization of intellectual capacity as the engine for

epistemology. These systems therefore are not just proposing another way of looking at

epistemology (and ontology) but rather advocating for a paradigmatic revolution. This

advocacy comes in the form of enacting these practices, spreading them, and also by

sometimes resisting writing extensively about them. The major force of their advocacy is

in the bodies of their performers, students, and collaborators who participate in the

training. The extent to which these principles and practices can take hold in performer

training is the extent to which the paradigm can establish itself. SITI company's bodies,

Lecoq-based pedagogy's bodies, and Grotowski-trained bodies are all epistemologically productive bodies, capable of making knowledge, meaning, and in some cases, ontology. While these bodies may be conduits, they are not just vessels, nor are they static; rather, they are active conductors, processes at work and in motion.

One important common feature among all of these systems is that they are activated indirectly in some way. For SITI company, the kind of presence and fortitude created by Suzuki training is accomplished through prompting a conflict within the actor, which the actor must overcome in order to speak poetic language. In Viewpoints the actor does not simply complete commands, crystallizing physical edicts, but is provoked by the exercise leader and must find her own way to create relationships with concepts and fellow participants. Composition too, despite the "ingredients" that the exercise leader dictates, forces the actor to overcome the obstacle of constraints to create material. In Grotowski work, exercises become a way for the actor to reveal herself; she cannot just want to penetrate herself and then do it, she needs the process to work indirectly on and through her body so that she can access it. The Lecoq pedagogy, as mentioned in the previous chapters, also claims indirect access to activate the body's potential. This agreement among diverse pedagogical approaches suggests that in epistemological and ontological processes, the body is not accessed directly, but indirectly. That is, these instructors do not round up bodies and tell the students to proceed to know with their bodies, they have to create the conditions for the body to be indirectly guided to this potential. The pervasive, "don't think just do" imperative appears in each of these body-based systems precisely to create the conditions for this indirect access, for it moves intellectual access out of the prioritized position to allow the body to step to the fore in

epistemological and ontological processes. Furthermore, as I suggested when interfacing Lecoq pedagogy with cognitive science, this perceived indirectness may actually be, cognitively speaking, the most direct way to send the body through an epistemological process. By privileging the body and activating the body as the primary epistemological (and ontological) force, these three physically based performer training regimens take their place in a movement to enact a new embodied epistemological paradigm.

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Conclusion

Incarnations: Theorizing From the Body Beyond the Body

The ramifications of physical theater training and practice move beyond theatrical efficacy, enacting a move toward paradigmatic philosophical shift. Physical theater's intervention in philosophical discourse is a result of the way in which its physically initiated and embodied action emphasizes the situatedness of the doer. This situatedness expresses how every act of doing marries generalized and abstracted notions of the act to the specific details of that single iteration. This contact between the general and the specific forces a reckoning between binaristic formulations such as the self/environment, mind/body, and practice/theory.

Situatedness, a necessary quality of body-bound theory, is where "the rubber meets the road"–where contact forces a practical and material solution that must take both theory and practice into consideration. For example, in a Lecoq-based improvisation with the neutral mask, the improviser at once manages generalized notions of how to successfully work with a neutral mask with the concrete and material specifics of that particular act. General concepts and practices that the actor might employ in this instance include manifesting a physical state of calm readiness by funneling her levels of physical tension into a balanced state able to move and respond to the provocations of the exercise prompt. Specific factors that come to bear on the exercise might include the condition of the floor, any injuries or physical obstructions to normal movement, the orientation of the room, the details of the exercise prompt, and the faces of the audience members looking back at the actor. This moment-to-moment reckoning of the general (often the

"theoretical" in the sense that the improviser can only act based on a set of principles she has garnered before the moment she occupies) immediately becomes modified when the actor enters the reality (practice) of the particular situation, at which moment the general and the specific must face each other to work together, no matter how diametrically opposed they may be. The significance of this marriage of the general and the particular is that the improviser's activity in the moment exceeds binaristic configuration. In the example of the neutral mask, the actor who is working toward embodying the impossible state of total balance and readiness also confronts the host of her own particular realities including race, gender, biology, and all other qualities and features that inform and bear upon her life. Here this enacted moment defies the practice/theory binary because while theoretical premises often make up the matrix with which the actor meets the moment to be performed, the practice of unfolding the moment, and its subsequent material realities, in turn feeds and shapes the theoretical matrix. Here, theory and practice are informing each other. This cooperation is not to suggest that they are the same entities, however, and it is only through the action of the doer that her situatedness makes the cooperation between practice and theory possible. It may be useful from a conceptual standpoint to single out theory and practice, but from the body-bound theoretical standpoint, the binaristic configuration is ultimately limited, for theory and practice are always in inextricable collaboration. In fact, any knowledge produced in the realm of physical theater depends upon this collaboration and would not exist without it. Whatever knowledge is produced, through a contact between and cooperation of theory and practice, is then at the ready for future embodied action. The goal of this process, in other words, is that the knowledge produced from it may be made available to inform

embodied action once again. This is not necessarily only a tautological construction of knowledge feeding back into itself for its own sake. The reapplication of embodied knowledge helps to determine its value–or the ways in which or extent to which the knowledge is reapplicable. This is how body-based knowledge, once performed, becomes body-bound–bound *to*, born from, the material imperative (of a cooperation of practice and theory) from which it came, and bound *for* another iteration of embodied action whose application will determine its value.

This dissertation is grounded in practice both because it begins by exploring how particular Lecoq-based exercises work, but also because it was born out of my experience as a practitioner. The vantage point of the practitioner, to the linguistically based scholarly audience, may seem too subjective and not capable of scholarly rigor. However, this vantage point, as I have suggested throughout this dissertation, contains within it a host of embodied epistemological potential. While this potential may be initially harnessed for theatrical purposes, as they were created under the auspices of theater and performance, this potential is not limited to the theatrical realm. By applying cognitive scientific theory to physical theater exercises, I have excavated the way in which physical theater exercises augment human cognition. This augmentation is in contrast to the notion that movement preparation merely offers physical tricks or character skills to apply to theatrical performance. By gathering up the diverse practices of Lecoq-based pedagogy, SITI company, and Jerzy Grotowski, I have shown how they share a common reliance on the body as the primary epistemological conductor, which circumscribes a larger movement of theater practitioners invested in the epistemological and even ontological potential of the body in action. The model that I outline here is that practice begets

performance, but it also necessarily begets epistemology. By reorienting our focus on the epistemological results, we can see how it is taking a metaepistemological stance on the value of embodied knowledge in the western philosophical tradition. In particular, physical theater's embodied epistemology questions the utility and ramification of the philosophic binaric configuration, many of which these artists confront including: mind/body, theory/practice, and self/environment. In the face of the western dependence on a Cartesian system that limits the body's access to knowledge in order to privilege an embrained and disembodied mind, physical theater's embodied knowledge provides an alternative way of seeing and practicing how the body not only participates in epistemology but in so doing drives the structuration of value, elucidating an ontological state that emphasizes process over stasis, and productivity over the revelation of truth.

Theatrical Contributions to Philosophical Thought

One of western theater's major points of origin, ancient Greece, also marked many flashes of conflict between theater and philosophy. Just as Plato's hostility toward theater was unveiled in philosophical treatise, and Greek comedy mercilessly lampooned philosophers, Martin Puchner, in an essay in David Krasner and David Z. Saltz's *Staging Philosophy*, suggests that this repeated conflict reveals more of an interrelatedness rather than incompatibility:

> the opposition between Plato and Aristophanes is in fact situated *within* the field of theater, between two types of drama: Plato's philosophical dialogues and Aristophanes' old comedy…Theatrical philosophies and philosophical dramas tend to be regarded as marginal phenomena, when they are recognized at all. Still, they assert themselves, against all odds, in the histories of both disciplines with some frequency (Krasner and Saltz 42).

As this western antagonism between theater and philosophy agitates their relationship, it

also obscures the way in which they have informed and could inform each other. David

Krasner and David Z. Saltz highlight a recurring problem within theater in that since it

more frequently borrows theoretical tools *from* outside disciplines rather than offering

theoretical tools *to* outside disciplines, it seems to accidentally trumpet its own

philosophical paucity (Krasner and Saltz 8). However despite this illusion that theater has

nothing to offer philosophy, other disciplines make frequent use of the theatrical

metaphor to explain social configurations and processes expressing common phenomena

such as "theater of war," "operating theater," and Erving Goffman's sociological notion

of dramaturgy. For example, Puchner outlines how Kenneth Burke's "dramatism"

developed an overall philosophical framework that relies entirely on theatrical structure

for its foundation or what Burke calls a "metaphilosophy" (Krasner and Saltz 48):

> Once theatricality is firmly installed at the center of philosophy, Burke
> classifies and analyzes each and every philosopher worth mentioning-
> Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Spinoza, Berkeley, Hume, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel,
> Marx, James, Santayana, the list goes on…Those philosophers who
> foreground the scene are materialists; those focused on the agent are
> idealists; those putting emphasis on agency are pragmatists; those invested
> in the purpose are mystics; and those interested in the act are realists.
> (Krasner and Saltz 48)

Burke's model uses theatrical structure to organize philosophy by likening predominant

features to theatrical elements and then putting that in relationship to history (Krasner and

Saltz 48). Puchner goes on to clarify that this formulation of philosophy is essentially a

Hegelian dialectic, and takes this even further to suggest that because the dialectic

emerges from the dialogic philosophy which in turn was born from dialogic theater, the

dialectic owes its very existence to theater. (Krasner and Saltz 49). If this major principle

of the dialectic in western philosophy was made possible by theater, it demonstrates a great debt western philosophy owes drama. Here theater is not just giving shape to understanding philosophy, it has given shape to philosophical principle itself.

In another essay in *Staging Philosophy,* Julia Walker also pinpoints the relationship between theater and philosophy in the Hegelian dialectic, but she arrives at this connection through comparing the text/performance split in theater to the analytic/continental split in philosophy. In this comparison, Walker sees both binaries as a result of a more basal inside/outside binary. (Saltz and Krasner 20):

> Where, in the text/performance split, the reader is either "inside" the text he or she performs or "outside" explicating its meanings, in the analytic/continental divide, the knowing subject is either "inside" the object of its investigation by means of a transcendental consciousness or "outside" the formal language in which that object's truth value is recorded. (Krasner and Saltz 20)

Walker goes on to suggest that each node of the two binaries have something to offer the opposite node, and through taking them both into consideration, the split between the two nodes becomes a bridge. In essence, Walker proposes the Hegelian dialectic as a remedy to both philosophical and theatrical splits. However, she sees an irony in her own proposal that the Hegelian dialectic solves a split in theater where a simultaneous inside *and* outside (analytic and affective) experience occurs. I suggest that this is no irony, but rather points to the underlying debt of the dialectic to the theater outlined by Puchner.

To discern how the theater is foundational to the dialectic, Walker's notion of "oscillating" becomes useful in that it implies both an organization and an action (Krasner and Saltz 38). In order to "oscillate" there needs to be two fixed nodes between which the action of travelling occurs. In this configuration the separation becomes a

productive space, and the emphasis of the relationship becomes the action of travelling rather than the space between the nodes. These two nodes might manifest as subject/object relation, inside/outside relation, or a host of other binaric propositions. The oppositional stance of the binary sets up the distance that gives it organizational and productive shape, which ultimately valorizes the binaric structure.

While the embodied physical theater perspective also uses binaric structure, it does so to absorb it, reveal it, and propose an exit to epistemological closure of the binaric structure. The epistemological efforts of physical theater aim to change the conversation altogether. By first inverting the privilege of the mind in the body/mind binary, physical theater first brings attention to the fact that this binary exists and reveals how it results in the mind's hegemonic privilege. By highlighting the structure and privilege through inversion, it questions the truth–value of the hegemonic mind revealing that both binaric structure and its resultant hegemonic value is created. Similar to the discourse of identity construction led by Judith Butler, revealing that something is created by people themselves does not suggest that it is not important or flimsy. Constructed identity can still bear upon individuals and communities in such a powerful way as to make it seem "natural" and unavoidable. Similarly, physical theater practice's mode of embodiment consistently insists on revealing how meaning and value are made, constructed, and valorized by people themselves.

The embodied practices of physical theater offer not just an understanding of how binaric configurations may be experienced as both dualities and a unity, but even more profoundly suggest a way to exceed the limitations of binaric structure because they reveal how epistemological structures and value are manufactured, ultimately suggesting

that new epistemology and value can be created through embodiment. As these practices show how we are both inside and outside epistemological structure, our presence inside allows us the parasitic power to move from the inside to shape the outside. For physical theater practitioners, the key to this parasitic epistemological pursuit is the ability of the body to let us both see and manifest our own epistemological generativity.

At Heart an Epistemological Project

As I draw out how the practical contributions of physical theater practices bear on epistemology, I am also suggesting that the specific kind of epistemology that it advocates is part of a movement toward an epistemological paradigm shift. To demonstrate this, I compare Thomas Kuhn's concept of how scientific paradigms shift in "normal science" to the way in which physically based theater training makes its own shift. For Kuhn, the work of "normal science" is the work of experimenting within, using the tools of, and understanding the results with a specific scientific paradigm. Doing normal science is the relatively stable, prescribed, and restrictive act of working within the accepted norm (10). As Kuhn marks change in scientific practice and philosophy, he debunks the common-sense notion that scientific advancement is merely an accretion of discoveries leading toward an ever-more comprehensive understanding of phenomena (2). Rather, Kuhn sees paradigms as structures born out of specific socio-cultural-scientific conditions that *permit* and *encourage* specific ways of thinking and perceiving in science. Paradigms not only allow "puzzles" to be solved, but in fact determine what the appropriate puzzles are, and how they can be investigated (37). According to Kuhn, new paradigms arise when anomalies increasingly appear in the dominant paradigm.

Gradually, questions that the paradigm cannot answer accumulate, put pressure on the dominant paradigm, and create a crisis, making room for a new paradigm to coalesce that better answers those pressing questions.

In the history of western actor training too, there have been moments where prevailing systems of thought have given way to a new method of thinking. For example, western actor preparation underwent a massive change as it transformed into systematized form during the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries. Previously, apprenticeship was a popular way of transferring theatrical technique and knowledge. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century theater artists (including Jacques Copeau, Konstantin Stanislavsky and others) saw a certain ossified performance in the acting of their day, and felt that the theater was in crisis. Both of these artists, along with many others, turned to new corporeal exercises or attitudes to develop a systematized way of working. Most early twentieth century artists acknowledge that what they sought were not rigid and closed systems, but rather a host of principles on which they could rely to create what they saw as a more organic and dependable approach to acting. Not only did these artists place a new focus on the body's participation in these systems, but they often harked back to older, more corporeally based, theatrical forms such as *commedia dell'arte*. Through all of these theatrical experiments, Stanislavsky's work (and its psychologically based variants) took strongest and most pervasive hold on the west, forming the core of most training programs in the US today. This shift from apprenticeship to actor-training marked a significant shift in prevailing attitudes and practices, and mirrors two of Kuhn's stages of paradigmatic progression: revolutionary science and normal science. As theater artists began to seek ways to organize actor training, a period of great theatrical

experimentation in actor training took place across the west, taking inspiration from a host of factors including past forms and eastern training practices. This stage corresponds to Kuhn's revolutionary science, where scientists are dissatisfied with the current paradigm, and seek to find new methods to answer the questions that the current paradigm cannot. At the end of the stage of revolutionary science, a paradigm will emerge that better satisfies the scientists and the new will paradigm will take hold, shifting into the stage of normal science. During normal science, scientists will work within the paradigm, asking the questions it most easily allows, and solving them with the tools provided by the paradigm. Anomalies (exceptional situations that do not fit within the paradigm) will always exist within the paradigm, but at a certain point, more anomalies will arise which puts increasing pressure on the current paradigm. The point at which this pressure becomes stronger than the inertia to maintain the current paradigm, a crisis appears, which gives way to the stage of revolutionary science once again. Just as psychologically based actor training became the prevailing western method of actor preparation all throughout the twentieth-century, there were always alternative systems and perspectives on acting. Even though the body was often predominantly figured into the development of both mainstream and alternative methods, physical theater practices, as I have explained, privilege the body to a much higher degree. Physical theater practices, infiltrating and yet still on the edge of the mainstream, continue put pressure on the dominant theatrical paradigm. I suggest that this paradigm shift has not yet occurred, but these artists, along with those in other fields that center on corporeal privilege, make up the movement that presses toward full scale paradigmatic crisis advocating the change to a new corporeal paradigm in culture and knowledge production.

At the point of scientific paradigmatic change, the new framework offers new solutions to problems, but may simultaneously produce new questions that it cannot answer (Kuhn 167). Systematized actor training offered the solution for a more dependable method for actors that has proved effective in both theater and television. Opponents to the psychological paradigm suggest that it has in fact forgotten the entire body and produces a potentially dangerous reliance on the exploitation of the actor's actual personal psychology. Anne Bogart categorically denounces the theatrical utility for one of the foundational exercises in psychological acting technique, "emotional memory." In this exercise the actor calls upon actual emotions from her personal life to fuse into an imaginary situation:

> This business of contacting an emotional memory and using that in relationship to a text causes a sort of narcissism that I find unbearable. I think that emotional recall is particularly dangerous because it works beautifully on film and television…The technique doesn't work in the theatre. (Diamond, 33)

 If a shift indeed occurs to a corporeal paradigm in actor training, according to Kuhnian analysis, it will simultaneously present solutions to existing problems in the current paradigm and new problems that may or may not be anticipated. In fact, Kuhn suggests that a certain "blindness" occurs within a paradigm so that its advocates may not even be able to see what those problems are when they present themselves (167).

Another feature of the scientific paradigm is that it does not easily communicate across another paradigm. Paradigms are inherently tautological as they make evaluations with their own internal criteria and tools, and inform even what questions may be asked in the context of their normal research. This kind of partial paradigmatic communication also exists between psychological and body-based training. This does not mean that

certain practices cannot work together or that they are totally incompatible. However, often when psychologically based technique and physically based technique work together, they do not do so on equal terms. That is to say that while many physically based practices find their way into even the most mainstream actor training programs, the body based practices are refigured to be supplemental to the psychological practices. While physical practices such as Lecoq-based exercises and Viewpoints exercises may have proliferated throughout US actor training programs, the more profound claims that these practices make on the agency of the actor and the creative ensemble are drastically reduced or eliminated altogether. In this combination, Viewpoints is only valued for its ability to create an actor who is responsive to other actors, or the way it helps an actor create a theatrical moment in a text-based play. The Lecoq-based practice of identification suggests that the actor can transpose her explorations into theatrical forms that do not yet exist. However, in psychologically based actor training programs, the identification practice becomes only a tool to shape characterization. Such tasks are often left to the movement teachers whose duty is to offer up a flexible body to mainstream styles. While body-based practices can certainly be used in this way to participate in psychological realism, they must be evacuated of their more far-reaching claims in order to do so. This compromise is evidence of the way in which these two conceptions of theater don't directly and fully communicate with one another. To take seriously the full reach of what these physically based practices seek to accomplish is to acknowledge that they are meant to go beyond psychological realism (or any other pre-existing style) into the unknown. These practices may use style in their investigations, but they are not meant to be bound by it–the agency lies in the creator rather than in the dictates of the style. In

this way it becomes apparent that physical theater, practices far from supplemental bodywork, fully functions within an entirely different paradigm altogether.

As physical theater's epistemological value emerges through practice, it also takes its place within an embodied epistemological paradigm shift. The epistemological stage corresponding to Kuhn's normal science period is the linguistically based epistemological tradition that valorizes intellectual knowledge as based on language. Even in its more abstract versions that seek to demonstrate the indeterminacy and instability of meaning that is born from intellectual knowledge such as the deconstructive tradition, epistemology is still bound to text- and grammar-based linguistic structure and application. This tradition has been upheld and championed by the literary-based fields, and its discoveries have been applied to many different disciplines–even those that have more (or everything) to do with practice in quotidian life and very little to do with text, such as race or gender studies. Fields that found their footing in practice, including feminist studies and theater, were often forced into an epistemological machine that first awkwardly transmogrified those fields into something literary in order to address them at all. But the pressure of this mismatch revealed that these body-based fields were anomalies to the linguistic paradigm. These anomalies continue to exacerbate the integrity of the linguistic paradigm, and to conduct their own epistemological experiments to find another paradigm that can understand and value their fields' epistemological contributions. In so many of these fields where the body figures in a prominent position, scholars had no choice but to work within the current linguistic paradigm even when they were trying to unearth how corporeality changes that paradigm. But because they had to work within the linguistic paradigm, they often either

demonstrated or directly expressed the way in which they could not seem to break out of certain constraints, and therefore could never fully realize the borders and ramifications of corporeal epistemology. In *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex,"* Judith Butler articulates her own doubts on philosophy's ability to address the body appropriately:

> the vocational difficulty of those trained in philosophy, always at some distance from corporeal matters, who try in that disembodied way to demarcate bodily terrains: they invariably miss the body or, worse, write against it…if I persisted in this notion that bodies were in some way constructed, perhaps I really thought that words alone had the power to craft bodies from their own linguistic substance? (Butler ix-xi)

In *Telling Flesh: The Substance of the Corporeal*, Vicky Kirby explains how despite Butler's acknowledgement of the catch-22 in which she finds herself, she continues to exile the body from her analysis (Kirby 101-128). *Telling Flesh* critiques corporeal political discourse and inquiry, revealing its inability to escape its own linguistic and semiotic heritage. Locked in the prison of semiotic epistemology, Kirby suggests that this necessarily leads to corporeal omission, no matter how inadvertent. Kirby details how a close reading of this tradition exposes its own limits and therefore the limit of their semiotic tools with respect to corporeality. Kirby offers what she calls "corporeography" as a solution to this problem (96). While this word seems to suggest a certain primacy and agency of the body to mark itself, Kirby points to what it could do, but doesn't fully explain it. This lack of articulation however, syncs up with her claim regarding the inherent limits of linguistically-based epistemology. Like the "don't think, just do" strategy of physical theater training, by stopping her articulation of corporeography short,

Kirby makes space for a corporeally based epistemological intervention to flesh out her concept.

The crisis in the linguistic paradigm is at the border where it fails to incorporate the body's experience in epistemology. It cannot comprehend embodied experience. Therefore, the revolutionary epistemological experiments in this period of normal epistemology include those in phenomenology, sociology, anthropology, politics, and of course, physical theater. As fields such as these focus on better comprehending corporeal epistemology, they collaborate with and inform each other, gathering themselves into a movement that presses for a paradigmatic revolution. If indeed a new corporeal paradigm is born from this crisis, new problems and anomalies, even those as of yet unimagined, will be born with it. For example, one of the areas in which corporeal paradigmatic experiments often come up short is how to deal with their tendencies toward essentialism. Postmodern movements in the humanities have shown many dangers of strict essentialism insofar that it overlooks context and specificity, creating generalized categories that remain merely theoretical, sweeping away social, material, and political contextual realities that bear upon actual lives. One solution–via Diana Fuss, the Postpositive Realists, Kirby and others–is to partially embrace it. By reclaiming the value of essentialism to harness key commonalties and putting it in relation to those useful discourses that demonstrate essentialism's limitations, this strategy offers ways to comprehend specificity, multiplicity, and particularity, working to overcome the negative effects of the binary inherent in essentialist rhetoric. The way in which scholars who want to talk about the body simply miss it, as warned by Butler, is indicative of the way in which paradigms cannot smoothly communicate with one another. These scholars,

searching for the new paradigm, cannot directly and fully address the body unless they work within an embodied paradigm. To fully address the body, they have to break out of the linguistic paradigm. Scholars/artists/practitioners such as physical theater artists are offering something new to this problem because they recognize that addressing the body has to come from a system germane to the way the body functions and comprehends itself. It is this recognition that they must work within a completely new paradigm, not just say something about the body with the old paradigm, that is at the heart of their revolutionary contribution. This is also why a field as specific as physical theater does not limit its contributions to the artistic realm, but automatically addresses the larger field of epistemology.

Seeing a Movement-in-the-Making

By joining physical theater practices, cognitive science, and Kuhn's concept of paradigmatic structure, this project begins from practice, plumbs the depths of the details of corporeal aesthetic function, and propels these results outward into philosophy, unearthing the embodied epistemology at work. This combination of tools is important to the epistemological investigation because while physical theater's experiments into epistemology are not new, the results remained isolated, unable to gather purchase as a contribution to a larger movement. Physical theater's epistemological experiments are joined by other fields including anthropology, sociology, cognitive science, and philosophy creating a larger, multidisciplinary movement toward an embodied epistemological shift. These scholars see bringing the body and its capabilities to the fore as the solution for a new paradigm that better articulates their worldview.

For example, in philosophy, phenomenology uses the body as the point of departure from which epistemology and ontology emanate outward based on the body's lived experience of the world. Sociologist/anthropologist Pierre Bordieu investigated how practice might be understood in research on its own terms, critiquing the limits and privileged position granted to intellectual research. Cognitive science has also taken a turn toward embodiment as new tools have allowed scientists to actually see cognition in action, uncovering the whole body's (as opposed to the embrained mind's) participation in cognitive development and execution. These new tools have led cognitive scientists and philosophers to develop new frameworks for understanding the body in cognition and explore its philosophical ramifications. Cognitive science allows us to "see" what is happening in physical theater training, revealing that which physical theater practitioners could only express via metaphor or phenomenological account. Kuhn's conception of paradigmatic revolution reveals how knowledge is produced and transmitted only within a permitted set of boundaries and potentials prescribed by the current paradigm. Kuhn's paradigmatic framework also offers an explanation of body's absence in the current epistemological paradigm, and provides clues for how other conditions might contribute to instigating an epistemological paradigmatic revolution. In other words, applying cognitive science and the Kuhnian paradigm to physical theater allows us to first "see" the body at work in a neurological and cognitive way, and then permits us to understand how its epistemological product is contextually situated in the twentieth- and twenty-first century western epistemological structure. This link between physical theater, cognitive science, and Kuhn also sheds light on how the "don't think, just do" physical theater approach functions. This approach first produces a gap between the theatrical work and

the dominant linguistic epistemological paradigm. In this sense, it has nothing to do with prohibiting thinking, rather it seeks to wrench the physical work from being absorbed by and comprehended through the linguistic epistemological paradigm. This act of distancing then leads to privileging the body as the main epistemological strategy. This is how body-bound theory works: it creates the necessary tautological paradigmatic structure based on the body to propose and advocate for a way of knowing that is born from the body, created through the body, and answers to the body's ability to reapply what it has generated.

Seeing Beyond the West, Seeing Beyond the Binary

Joining physical theater practices, cognitive science, and the Kuhnian paradigm also reveals the function of the eastern gaze in corporeal inquiry. Western artists and scholars, theater researchers in particular, have looked toward a host of Asian practices for inspiration in their own work. These artists and researchers hold this gaze in common, but are more or less informed about the context of these practices: some artists only heard about practices secondhand or watched limited performances out of cultural context, and others, particularly in the twentieth-and twenty-first centuries, have been able to study these practices in their original context and with local masters. This exchange is also always in the context of cultural imperialism, and as such, the fact that these western practitioners could so freely take inspiration and technique from easterners begs the question of power. These westerners did not wield this power to simply claim the forms for their own, but instead used elements of these practices to inform the development of new practices that they felt refreshed their own tradition. Western artists felt that their

forms were suffering, and found a remedy in eastern practices. These artists may not have

pinpointed their aesthetic ailments, and the breadth of eastern tradition from which they

drew inspiration might suggest that there were a host of western ailments. Antonin

Artaud saw Balinese Opera a model for a physically based theater that fully realizes

spiritual conflict; Jacques Copeau had very little direct connection with Noh theater but

still attempted to reconstruct a Noh production with his company; Stanislavsky

temporarily integrated yoga into his actor training practices; and SITI company's training

is the result of a western and eastern partnership between Bogart and Suzuki. Beyond the

surface of offering a new way of thinking about gesture, movement or actor training,

these eastern practices, despite their great diversity, were founded upon Asian

conceptions of the relationship between the mind and body. Therefore that which these

artists sought was not technique or form, but founding principles that value embodied

epistemology.

These founding principles propose a new relationship between mind and body.

The accomplishment of mind/body unity spans myriad spiritual, martial, and cultural

practices. Comparative philosopher, Yasuo Yuasa explains that because of the

pervasiveness of Buddhist philosophy across Asia this principle underlies a diversity of

eastern practices across genre and culture (83-98). Westerners could relatively smoothly

comprehend and integrate this principle because it does not simply suggest unity. Rather

it focuses on the process of creating unity out of a binary, and thus takes its point of

departure in a duality which is reminiscent of but not identical to Cartesian duality. The

goal here is not unity, but rather an *accomplished* unity. Shigenori Nagatomo describes

Yuasa's notion of the eastern relationship between body and mind as "epistemologically

dualist and ontologically non-dualistic" (Sheets-Johnstone 62). Nagatomo goes on to

suggest that accomplishment means that praxis is the conceptual space that body and

mind share, and through which they can transform into a configuration of unity. In this

way western artists could smoothly enter this epistemological and ontological

configuration because the starting node was reminiscent of the western state of duality.

Yet, entering into the eastern conception of mind and body was also the way in which

they could work through practice to transcend their own static dualistic state. By

incorporating eastern philosophy and practice these western artists aimed to transcend

Cartesian duality and were granted entry into working toward an entirely different

philosophical and practical standpoint: the unity of body and mind. For western theater

practitioners, it may have seemed as if theater is renovated through the body, but as a

result, and even more profoundly, theater was renovated through enacting the principle of

the accomplishment of the unity of body and mind.

This goal of unity between the body and mind has its critics, however. John

Matthews, in *Training for Performance: A Metadisciplinary Account*, criticizes physical

theater's tendency to zero in on the Cartesian binary as the source for the denigration of

the body. He suggests that the strict Cartesian binary that totally disconnects mind from

body is at best a narrow reading and at worst a misunderstanding of Descartes (Matthews

ch. 2, loc. 803). I agree with Matthews that taking Descartes' work as a whole, the strictly

bifurcated mind and body is too simplistic to account for his entire explication of body

and mind. However, I suggest that whatever Descartes actually said or meant as a whole

is beside the point. The disembodied mind of a Cartesian split did not begin with

Descartes, nor did it end with him, but rather manifested an enduring binarist Western

cultural outlook. In other words, the dualistic current that runs through Plato and

Descartes and others may take different forms and function more or less strictly, but it is

this philosophical undercurrent that these body-based practitioners find themselves in and

work to find their ways out, not the details of Descartes. Matthews goes on to suggest that

the "divide" between mind and body is not really at issue in these discussions, but rather,

theater's preoccupation with it points to points to theater's own insecurity in its value

(Matthews ch. 2, loc. 1021). I agree with Matthews here that it does indeed come down

to value–how knowledge is rendered more or less valuable, and by what standards it is

judged as such. Matthews focuses on the action of how theater functions, rather than the

self reflective gaze of what theater is, and alights on the term, "metabolize" to describe

his process-based notion of how the body works within theater:

> As a medical term, metabolism literally describes the continual
> 'overthrow' of fixed relations in a body's interaction with its environment
> and encompasses both anabolic processes whereby matter is assimilated
> into an organism at a molecular level and catabolic processes by which
> complex molecules are broken down and excreted. It represents an
> understanding of a body as inherently linked to its environment via
> continually changing relations, the maintenance of which are fundamental
> to its biological existence and central to its continued survival. (Matthews,
> ch. 2, loc. 1126)

This notion of "metabolizing" is useful to point out both the process-nature of the body's

epistemology, and its necessary inextricable connection to the world. At the same time, it

functions as a similar strategy to the physical theater practitioners' prompts to "not think,

and just do," in that it invalidates the Cartesian binary by sidestepping it altogether, by

changing the conversation. In the end, the dimensions of the split in the Cartesian binary

are not the most important. Rather, what is important is the ability to reshape the

configuration, often through incorporating a body-based action or concept, and in this case a body-based biological concept.

Physical theater practices necessarily incorporate their inextricability with the environment as part of the embodied epistemological process. Working from within this situatedness, physical theater artists are always in excess of binaric configurations because they are focused on actions where both ends of the binary are simultaneously engaged–at once a mind and body, at once a self connected to an environment. As the actor-creator engages in an identification exercise with fire, she is using her imagination, but she is also dealing with the actual material conditions of the room–perhaps darting here and there on the floor or responding to the contours of the studio walls to embody the fiery dynamic. These physical theater artists temporarily privilege the body, but only to initiate a process-based epistemology. The way in which physical theater work emphasizes the primacy of the body focuses the actor on action in an imaginary context, but also in a material context. This body privilege, then, epistemologically activates both process and context. In this way, body privilege is not just inverting the mind/body binary for an inverted Cartesianism, nor is it aiming for wholism as its end point. By actively engaging an alternative to Cartesianism, it demonstrates the constructedness of Cartesianism itself, and by extension, epistemological configuration. Because physical theater practitioners are not simply deconstructing epistemology, but making something anew, their position is an empowered one whereby they make epistemology, determining formations of value, as they are making theater. Their very acts are acknowledgements of the self-manufacture of value. In this way, physical theater's epistemological offering is not a new configuration, but instead the revelation of fundamental epistemological

manufacture and therefore the possibility of change. This possibility for change is not necessarily easily won, however. The heart of the gift that this embodied epistemology offers is not just an embodied paradigm but the ability to crack open the static binaric configuration. This act of cracking open is not one of closure into embodiment but rather the proposition that to reveal manufacture is to also crack open the possibility for determining the very structures of value.

Battling Binaries and Breaking Bounds

Physical theater's body-bound theory that emerges from and subsequently answers to the body offers three levels of epistemological intervention. In the first level, it serves to reveal underlying epistemological and value structures. This can be applied to any field in which the body bears upon its processes. This casts its net wide as most fields somehow incorporate people into its inquiry including sociology, anthropology, political science, etc. This can also include where the body is not present but a surrogate body still circulates, such as cybernetics. In these fields adapting body-bound theory to each particular context would serve to unearth each's epistemological structures and values, reflecting their material reality back on themselves to see how they determine value in their own field. Augusto Boal's *Theater of the Oppressed* moves his body-based theater work in the direction of politics to help reveal the community to itself. For example in a series of exercises, Boal conducts a community dialogue about their present conditions and hopes for the future. He does not do this in a group-therapy type session, but rather he asks them to physically embody a tableau of the issue. In the next stage, he asks them to change the tableau to their ideal state of affairs. Taking his work one stage further, he

may also encourage an audience member to step into the scene and theatrically enact an intervention toward change. In Boal's series of exercises, embodiment is key to seeing socio/politico/economic factors and is also the way to see the constructedness of these factors and imagine alternatives. The second and third stages of Boal's exercises brings us to the second and third levels of epistemological intervention. In the second level, it confounds the integrity of binaries at play, destabilizing them as natural and unchangeable. When Boal's "spectactor" figure (she who may watch but may also intervene) directs a tableau different than the normal state of affairs, the participants see how, no matter how intractable the situation is, alternatives exist. Where there are corporeal alternatives there may be political alternatives. This corporeal initiative confounds the mind/body binary because thinking through a political process becomes an embodied one. This second level addresses not only the mind/body binary but all configurations where duality suggests that one pole is mutually exclusive of the other. In the third, level body-bound theory becomes a wedge to exit existing paradigms and to imagine new ones. By proposing the material creation of hypothetical structures (whether it be a play or a tableau of a solution to the city's water problems) the work supposes that the current structure is not fixed, and that as-of-yet undetermined possibilities exist.

What physical theater offers to this body-bound approach is the marriage of the imaginative to the material. While theater as a whole is certainly concerned with the imaginative, physical theater's emphasis on the body translates into a stronger emphasis on the connection of the imaginative to the body and by extension to the material environment of theater-making. By focusing on the body's theatrical generative ability, physical theater imbeds material contact into the process. This material contact

necessitates that the actor reckon the hypothetical (the imaginary) with the material (the moment-to-moment physical reality of making theater). This contact imperative confounds binaries such as body/mind and self/and environment because the actor must reckon with all of them in every moment–an action that resists separating out the nodes of the binary. Because these actions span the material into the imaginative, the material becomes a springboard into the hypothetical, rather than something that is opposed to it. This hypothetical then is made up of decisions cast in a material reality. The openness of the hypothetical realm allows artists to cast material choices without having to deal with actual repercussions. In this way the imaginative is pressure-free zone where creativity can offer endless possibilities. Body-bound theory then proposes the final step-to reapply these possibilities back on to the material body. In realms other than theater, this process may be more or less fraught with challenge. However, it is only in being able to imagine alternatives that change can become a possibility. For physical theater practitioners, embodying and imagining are one in the same. From the bedrock of corporeal action, physical theater reveals materiality's complicity with imagination and their joint pathway to epistemological and meta-epistemological horizons. With this unique quality, physical theater joins its fellows in a movement movement: a collective action that pushes toward the adoption of an embodied paradigm that can determine, comprehend, and value corporeal epistemology.

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