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**RE-IMAGING AND RE-IMAGINING CURRICULUM
THROUGH THE THEATER REHEARSAL PROCESS**

A Thesis in

Art Education

by

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The sense of the verb “to imagine” contains the full richness of the verb “to see.” To imagine is to see most clearly, familiarly, and understandingly with the eyes, but also to see inwardly, with “the mind’s eye.” It is to see, not passively, but with a force of vision and even with visionary force. To take it seriously we must give up at once any notion that imagination is disconnected from reality or truth or knowledge. It has nothing to do either with clever imitation of appearances or with “dreaming up.” It does not depend upon one’s attitude or point of view, but grasps securely the qualities of things seen or envisioned.

—Wendell Berry, Jefferson Lecture for the National Endowment for the Humanities, 2012

It is the first day of rehearsal for a local community theater youth production. As the director, I have been preparing for this day for months. Casting is done. Preliminary set designs have been given to the carpenter. The artistic team has discussed costume choices. Now, for the first time, the cast will come together. A group of individuals who, over the course of six weeks, will grow from kids who barely knew each other to a close-knit ensemble, a family of sorts, that has a wealth of shared experiences and whose success depends upon one another. As we enter the rehearsal room on the first day, the mood is nervous, excited, eager, and almost giddy. The anticipation is palpable, equal parts desire to get started, curiosity about how we will approach the show, and apprehension about working with a group they've never met. It is an inviting, almost electric environment. And it is an environment that is a far cry from the atmosphere of many school classrooms today.

Introduction

Today's curricular landscape is one in which "examination-driven curricula" (Pinar, 2004, p. 3) have transformed our schools into factories and corporations whose main product lines are skills and knowledge (Pinar 2004) and in which the "curricular focus on achievement, accountability, and accreditation" (Callejo Pérez, Breault, & White, 2014, p. 2) has fostered disengagement in the classroom. However, over the last twenty years, this examination-driven and standards-based concept of curriculum has been challenged and disrupted by curriculum scholars (Aoki, 1993; Callejo Pérez et al., 2014; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995; Pinar, 2004, 2011; Slattery, 2013) who have provided new perspectives for understanding curriculum in ways that acknowledge students' (and teachers') lived experiences and that create

spaces for more textured and dynamic learning. Through this thinking, curriculum development or curriculum studies has undergone what Slattery (2013) calls a “reconceptualization...[f]rom a field concerned with the development and management of curriculum it has evolved into a field more concerned with scholarly understanding of several dimensions of curriculum” (p. 65).

One of the key ideas within this reconceptualization is William Pinar’s (1995, 2004, 2011) focus on moving from thinking of curriculum as a noun to thinking of it as a verb—*currere*. For Pinar (2011), “it is the lived experience of curriculum—*currere*, the running of the course—wherein the curriculum is experienced, enacted, and reconstructed” (p. 1). *Currere* can be understood as an autobiographical method (Pinar, 2004), that asks us, as educators and students, “to slow down, to remember and even re-enter the past, and to meditatively imagine the future” (p. 4). The focus on lived experience and on self-reflexivity in Pinar’s (2004) work has “emphasized the significance of subjectivity to teaching, to study, to the process of education” (p. 4) and has pointed to dialogue and complicated conversations as essential sites of learning. Indeed, *currere* “occurs through conversation, not only classroom discourse, but also dialogue among specific students and teachers and within oneself in solitude” (pp. 1-2), and it understands “that understanding is simultaneously intellectual and emotional, and that it is always embodied” (p. 7). Understood this way, curriculum is dynamic and engaged; you cannot have a curriculum separate from the lived experience of it.

Pinar’s idea of *currere* and the overall reconceptualized understanding of curriculum have largely transformed the approach to curriculum studies at the university level. However, as Slattery (2013) acknowledges, while ideas associated with the reconceptualization of curriculum have “begun to filter into museum education, school districts, and elementary and secondary classrooms” (pp. 65-66) there are still many gaps of understanding—and practice—among

various stakeholders, including curriculum developers, policy makers, teachers, students, and the general public. As a result, far too many primary and secondary schools are still characterized by disengaged and distant classrooms, and scholars and educators are still looking for ways to effectively bridge these gaps and broadly translate expanded ideas of curriculum into concepts that are understood more broadly and that are embodied in school practice and curricular reform.

In this thesis, I offer a theoretical framework that seeks to address this gap by combining reconceptualized ideas of curriculum (Aoki, 1993, 2003; Pinar, 1995, 2004, 2011) with an understanding of the theater rehearsal process. Rehearsal spaces—rich spaces of play and participation—provide a stark contrast to the disengaged and disempowered classrooms that the dominant curriculum-as-plan (Aoki, 1993) mentality creates. Likewise, I argue that these spaces offer a powerful possibility for re-imaging and re-imagining curriculum that not only expands curricular thinking, but that also informs teaching praxis in pragmatic and transformative ways. This framing of curriculum and theater rehearsal differs from much of the research that has been done on theater and education in the past in that it looks at the impact of theater at a curriculum theory-level rather than at an instructional or skill-specific level. Indeed, significant and important work has been done on the use of theater in education around specific topics such as theater and drama therapy (Bannister, 1997; Holmwood, 2014; Jennings, 1997, 2009; Salas, 2009), theater in literacy and language education (DuPont, 1992; Edmiston, 2007, 2011; Edmiston & McKibben, 2011; McGuinn, 2014; Rhoades & Daillo, 2016), theater education (Holmwood, 2014; Gallagher, 2010; Radulescu & Fox, 2005), theater and performance-based instructional strategies and pedagogies (Deasy, 2002; DuPont, 1992; Edmiston, 2008; Gallagher, 2010; Flynn, 2007; Fontichiaro, 2007; Franklin, 2009; Garoian, 1999a, 1999b; Rhoades & Daillo, 2016), and theater and civic engagement (Franklin, 2009; Lement, 2013). Many of these

areas of study also fall loosely under the larger movement of Theater in Education (TIE) that emerged in Great Britain in the 1960s and that continues to evolve and grow today. TIE, broadly understood, encompasses a variety of theater and theater-based practices that aim to engage students (youth and adults) in participatory, immersive learning across disciplines and topics, for example, using role playing to understand history or using theater to teach about artifacts in a museum (Jackson & Vine, 2013). However, very little, if any work has sought to understand the implications of theater and rehearsal at a curricular level where rehearsal is understood *as* curriculum rather than as a subject that *has* a curriculum or practices that can be built *into* a curriculum. I believe that by looking at theater from this systemic—or perhaps, more appropriately, ecological and phenomenological—perspective, we are better able to see the larger implications for theater on teaching and learning that stretch beyond the implications of a specific practice or subject to the impact of seeing education in a fundamentally different way.

In order to demonstrate how the rehearsal process can help us think about, and more importantly enact, curriculum differently, I first explore the relationship between rehearsal and curriculum, specifically ideas of *currere* (Pinar, 1995, 2004, 2011) and lived-curriculum (Aoki, 1993, 2003), and develop a framework for understanding these forms in relationship to one another. To guide this exploration, I propose that by understanding the rehearsal process *as* curriculum through five major characteristics of rehearsal—relaxation and awareness (Bogart & Landau, 2005; Rotté, 2000; Strasberg, 2010); textual analysis and complicated conversation (Efros, 1975/2006); physical and psychological work (Merlin, 2003; Stanislavski, 2008); adaptation and contingency (Mitter, 1992; Rotté, 2000; Efros, 1975/2006); and community and ensemble building (Bogart & Landau, 2005; Efros, 1975/2006; Rotté, 2000)—we arrive at an

image of curriculum that is both a metaphor for understanding curriculum and a model for enacting this curriculum in the classroom.

Next, I build on this foundation to explore how the curriculum of rehearsal inherently integrates numerous and diverse theoretical and pedagogical approaches. Rehearsal is a process that is concerned with an individual's and group's emotions, intellect, physicality, and environment, and consequently incorporates different theoretical approaches to developing and encountering each of these sites directly into the lived landscape of the rehearsal process and, by extension, the curricular space. In the second section of this thesis, I will show how three specific theoretical and pedagogical frameworks—embodiment (Barbour, 2004; Francesconi & Tarozzi, 2012; Johnson, 1987, 2007; Powell & Lajevic, 2011), socio-materiality (Bennett, 2010; DeVincentis, 2011; Fenwick, Edwards, & Sawchuck, 2011; Landri, 2015; Latour, 1996; Leonardi, 2013; Sørensen, 2009), and critical pedagogy (Boal, 1974/2008; Freire, 1970/1996; McLaren, 1994; Rhem, 2013; Sandars, 2017)—are woven into the rehearsal process and discuss why this makes rehearsal such a rich and important model for curriculum.

After this thorough theoretical review of both rehearsal as curriculum and rehearsal in relationship to a complex network of theoretical approaches, I show how these elements come together in the lived-experience of rehearsal. Using a narrative, phenomenological approach, I reflect on and describe my experience as a participant in the rehearsal process while attending a week-long international physical theater residency. The residency is a lab for performing arts practitioners who all work in different styles, techniques, and genres to come together and engage in practical research of contemporary performance practice, with a focus on learning about ensemble building and structuring the rehearsal process. Through the use of various field texts including session notes and reflective journaling, I document, describe, and seek to

understand and communicate what it means to undergo a rehearsal experience, how knowledge and meaning are created through the rehearsal process, and the feeling and lived-ness of rehearsal.

Lastly, I combine all of these understandings of rehearsal—rehearsal as curriculum, rehearsal as a layered theoretical space, and rehearsal as lived-experience—into a complex, nuanced, and unified image of curriculum *as* rehearsal. Throughout the whole, I try to offer new a way of imagining curriculum that sparks the desire for change and inspires students, educators, and community members alike to re-encounter their entrenched ideas of curriculum and school. Rehearsal provides a powerful, even disruptive image as it is a lived practice that integrates and intertwines practices that cultivate multiple ways of knowing, create community, and develop awareness and self-reflexiveness. To read about rehearsal is not enough; it only exists in its practice. What if we thought this way about curriculum? What if we engaged with curriculum in a way that to read a curricular plan was unquestionably understood as incomplete, and that curriculum was understood only as the messy, changing, exciting practice that it is? To truly internalize this understanding offered by Aoki (1993, 2003), Pinar (1995, 2004, 2011), and others, is at best a revolution and at least an invitation to imagine curriculum as an image of exploration, discovery, participation, and encountering, instead of seeing it as an image of structure, distance, requirement, and stasis. Indeed, given this image, what kind of weight might we feel lifting off our chests, what kind of tingling excitement might we feel course through our veins, what kind of anticipation and eagerness might keep us up at night, and what kind of joy might infuse our posture of learning? In this thesis, I offer an invitation to explore what it might look like to live out a re-conceptualized curriculum as the joyful, sometimes difficult, always challenging, and inherently creative journey that it could, and ought, to be.

Section 1: Understanding Rehearsal as Curriculum

Without imagination — the ability to enter alternative realities, to bring an ‘as if’ into being, to look at things as if they could be otherwise — we would be sentenced to perpetual literalness.
—Maxine Green, 1999, p. 2

Framing the Conversation: Reconceptualizing Curriculum

Over the last two decades the examination-driven concept of curriculum has been met with resistance from curriculum scholars and the field of curriculum studies has undergone what Slattery (2013) calls a “reconceptualization...[f]rom a field concerned with the development and management of curriculum it has evolved into a field more concerned with scholarly understanding of several dimensions of curriculum” (p. 65). One of the key ideas within this reconceptualization is William Pinar’s (1995, 2004, 2011) focus on moving from thinking of curriculum as a noun to thinking of it as a verb—*currere*. For Pinar (2011), “it is the lived experience of curriculum—*currere*, the running of the course—wherein the curriculum is experienced, enacted, and reconstructed” (p. 1). *Currere* can be understood as an autobiographical method (Pinar, 2004), that asks us, as educators and students, “to slow down, to remember and even re-enter the past, and to meditatively imagine the future” (p. 4). The focus on lived experience and on self-reflexivity in Pinar’s (2004) work has “emphasized the significance of subjectivity to teaching, to study, to the process of education” (p. 4) and has pointed to dialogue and complicated conversations as essential sites of learning. Indeed, *currere* “occurs through conversation, not only classroom discourse, but also dialogue among specific students and teachers and within oneself in solitude” (pp. 1-2), and it understands “that understanding is simultaneously intellectual and emotional, and that it is always embodied” (p. 7). Understood this way, curriculum is dynamic and engaged; you cannot have a curriculum separate from the lived experience of it.

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In their 2014 book, *Curriculum as Spaces*, Callejo Pérez et al. offer a possible suggestion for how to accomplish this transformation of practice—metaphor. They suggest that “while we cannot mandate coursework in educational theory for every parent and politician, we can create images that help them imagine the function and purpose of schools beyond the current language of measured achievement and world-class standards” (p. 5). This means that we have an opportunity and responsibility, to “create within the minds of educators, parents, and the general public a new image of curriculum that pushes the boundaries of the current simplistic calls for achievement” (p. 5). For Callejo Pérez et al. (2014), the use of metaphor and images is important because it allows us to engage with and explore the complex nature of concepts and phenomena and to move beyond our common understanding to create new possibilities and dwell in multiple meanings. The idea of using images to educate stretches back to the ancient Greeks, most notably Plato (Callejo Pérez et al., 2014; Krempa, 2017). In *The Republic*, Plato, through

Socrates, offers a series of images, perhaps most famously the “city in speech” and the musical education of the guardians. In order to understand what justice might look like in the soul, Socrates employs the image of the city, offering that as the city is bigger, one should be able to find justice there and then compare it to justice in the soul (Krempa, 2017). Socrates offers a metaphor to help understand justice and in doing so, also offers a model of what justice could or should look like. However, Socrates’ image is not purely prescriptive, and its pedagogical value does not merely lie in presenting a model or ideal that is meant to be achieved, as is sometimes believed to be the case. Rather, as Krempa (2017) writes, the “city in speech” is “a literary image of an ideal society that serves a distinct purpose within the dialogue: to be a model for investigating justice and injustice in the soul. It is a model-image, but it never purports to be a model-image for any sort of real-world political organization” (p. 59). The image doesn’t just offer an answer for what a good city looks like; it opens up spaces for investigation and inquiry. Indeed, this understanding of the image within Plato’s dialogues is in some ways more resonant with contemporary views of the pedagogical role of the image, including ideas of Jacques Rancière. As Callejo Pérez et al. (2014) summarize, for Rancière, “dissensus, or those moments where questioning, whether of self or police-imposed impressions, can abound, represents an aesthetic counter to the taken-for-granted and imposed understandings of self and place that reinforce the reproductive imperative of contemporary education” (p. 28). In this understanding, both beg for and resist interpretation, and because of this they resist reduction and simple explanation by speech (Lewis, 2011). Rather, it creates a “re-configuration of the distribution of the common through a political process of subjectivation” and it “re-configure[s] the fabric of sensory experience” (Rancière, 2010, p. 140). Similarly, Maxine Greene (2011) points out, what a metaphor “does most remarkably is to reorient consciousness, to make us see differently, to

give us an unexpected perspective of what lies around” (p. 62). For both Greene and Rancière, the role of the image must go beyond creating understanding; it must provide the foundation for and inspire action to do, live, or participate differently. As Greene (1999) writes, “The idea of aesthetic education is to arouse people to become more than passive onlookers, to be willing to engage” (p. 69). Indeed, this is what I, along with Callejo Pérez et al., hope for in offering these images of curriculum—that by engaging with these images new possibilities are created for our schools that are not just reflected upon but that lead to concrete action and change.

In these ways images provide a powerful pedagogical opportunity for understanding the complexities of and opening up new possibilities for curriculum. As such, an image, as Callejo Pérez et al. (2014) point out, must be concrete enough that it offers those who engage with it something tangible, without being so concrete that it is understood as being fixed or certain. The question then becomes, what image—that functions pedagogically both by presenting a new model to aim for and by opening up spaces for dissensus and new possibilities within a familiar concept—can we offer that resounds in the hearts and minds of the public and demonstrates the emancipatory possibility of a new curriculum? Pinar’s idea of *currere* offer us an image of running a course, but it remains fairly abstract for stakeholders trying to translate the image into a real-world example of what curriculum conceived of this way might look like. Callejo Pérez et al. (2014) suggest that “seeing curriculum as spaces offers images that help us respond to schooling and to one another as we ponder purpose, potential, and significance within our work” (p. 9). While I agree that this image offers helpful possibilities for re-thinking flat and static notions of curriculum, it too remains fairly abstract, and while it does important theoretical work, it may not provide a robust-enough image to provide a diverse group of stakeholders with a new way of perceiving, conceptualizing, or working toward enacting curriculum. In the hopes of

creating an image that is both complex yet accessible, I offer the image of the rehearsal process as an option that provides both a metaphor *and* a model for the possibilities of a reconceptualized curriculum. The hope is that this image is vivid enough to produce a fruitful imagined possibility, while simultaneously creating spaces for interpretation, adaptation, and engagement that prevent the image from becoming fixed or over-simplified.

Understanding Rehearsal as Curriculum

In order to understand how rehearsal functions as an image of curriculum, we must first better understand the rehearsal process and how it lives out many of the principles of Pinar's *currere*. There are many schools of thought and systems of practice when it comes to acting technique and rehearsal processes, among the most well-known being those of Konstantin Stanislavski, Bertold Brecht, Jerzey Grotowski, and Peter Brook (Mitter, 1992). Each has their own philosophies of performance, theater, and directing that manifest in decisions about elements such as the relationship of the audience to the performance and the actor's approach to the role (Mitter, 1992). While each of these directors have significantly impacted Western, and specifically American theater practice, I will focus here most significantly on the approach developed by Konstantin Stanislavski. Stanislavski has had what is often considered to be the largest singular impact on American acting and directing technique (Merlin, 2003; Rotté, 2000; Strasberg, 2010) both through his own work and through his influence on other leading directors, actors, and teachers of the 20th century including Lee Strasberg and Stella Adler (Rotté, 2000; Strasberg, 2010). However, while this paper will draw most heavily on characteristics of Stanislavski's 'system,' many of the rehearsal practices and traits described here are also characteristic of other systems and rehearsal approaches. To best understand the rehearsal process and how it functions as curriculum, I focus on five key elements of the rehearsal process

that I have identified as reoccurring themes across rehearsal literature, approaches, and my personal practice: relaxation and awareness; textual analysis and complicated conversation; physical and psychological work; adaptation and contingency; and community and ensemble building. Each of the elements is both a critical characteristic of rehearsal and also relates directly to understanding Pinar's *currere*. Below, I describe each of these characteristics and how they take shape in the rehearsal process, before specifically discussing how they embody the running of the course.

First, relaxation and awareness are foundational rehearsal practices across schools and systems. In theater, the body and the self are the instruments and mediums of the art form, and as such, knowing and cultivating those instruments is an essential first part of an actor's training. Many rehearsals begin with physical and mental exercises that cultivate relaxation and concentration. For Lee Strasberg (2010), "[t]he heads and tails of the coin of acting are relaxing and concentration. You relax in order to show that you have control over yourself. Then you concentrate to have control of the imaginary objects you wish to create" (p. 5). In rehearsal relaxation exercises serve multiple purposes. For Strasberg (2010), the purpose of these exercises is to "eliminate fear, tension, and unnecessary energy, and to awaken every area of the body" (p. 5), acknowledging the fact that "[m]uch of what stands in the actor's way aren't acting problems, but their personal issues that have nothing to do with a scene or its interpretation" (p. 5). These exercises are also used to cultivate the body and to break down walls between other actors and ensemble members. For Stella Adler, as for many other directors, "the beginning of being in the theater is not to have a wall between yourself and another human being" (Rotté, 2000, p. 36). In order to achieve this, actors must first become aware of themselves and aware of the world (Rotté, 2000). By building awareness, actors build and re-build understanding of different

situations, of different roles, and of who they are, and they open themselves to redefining, reshaping, and reconstituting each of these understandings by being constant students of the world.

One method that specifically focuses on this kind of awareness and the movement, stories, and staging it can produce is Viewpoints. Viewpoints was developed by choreographer Mary Overlie in the late 1970s and then expanded into a method for theater by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau in the late 1980s. It focuses on nine Physical Viewpoints—Viewpoints of Time and Viewpoints of Space—that cultivate sensory perception and generate action based on sensory awareness (Bogart & Landau, 2005). Viewpoints provides a specific set of exercises that heighten awareness of the senses; the exercises “are meant to teach the importance of an intense awareness of what other people are doing, where they are, and when they are doing it” (Bogart & Landau, 2005, p. 33). The approach is fundamentally grounded in the development of awareness and the power that this awareness can have for creation—creating with the whole being, rather than with just one of the senses (vision is most dominant in our culture)—and for freedom, by becoming more aware of differences and possibilities.

The primacy of relaxation and awareness exercises in the rehearsal process show how the rehearsal process, like *currere*, is a “method of self-understanding” (Pinar, 2004, p. 5). If there is not understanding of self in theater, there can be little else; the body and the mind will remain blocked and tense and will not be able to be molded for the work of the play. Additionally, for Pinar, *currere* “is not a matter of psychic survival, but of subjective risk and social reconstruction, the achievement of selfhood and society in the age to come” (p. 4). Likewise, rehearsal relaxation exercises are not focused on “freeing” the actor (Strasberg, 2010) or providing for psychic survival. Rather, they are focused on creating the conditions in the self that

allow for risk and reconstitution of subjectivity through the role and that empower observation of the world so that it can be constructed and reconstructed through the creation of the play.

However, these lessons of awareness are not limited to the stage; if the actor is truly doing this work, then these experiences and ways of reconstituting of the world cannot help but have a profound impact on the individual.

A second foundational element of the rehearsal process is the process of textual analysis that is a key part of bringing to life any kind of written play. Often the first rehearsal is a read-through of the play in which all actors sit around the table and read the play out loud, each character speaking their own lines. This initial process is followed by a period often called table work, in which the script is heavily analyzed and discussed by the actors and the director together to reach a shared, complicated, and nuanced understanding of the play. This crucial step of textual analysis and investigation leads to deep understanding, which is the basis for developing a character's rich inner life, full of the nuance, the conflict, and the complexity that characterizes our lived experience. If this first step is skipped, then actors will be guilty of what Anatoly Efros (1975/2006), the renowned Russian director and student of Stanislavski, called one of the actor's first mistakes: starting "to do something without really analyzing the material and without finding the most interesting solution" (p. 23). The outcome of this mistake is often that performances become shallow or hollow; actors' craft sinks from participation to representation. Without deeply encountering and interpreting the situation and the material, the actors' actions will be reduced to empty motions and movements that are not motivated within the world or trajectory of the play. The beauty of scripts is that they do not offer a singular meaning and they simultaneously require the development of rich inner life for the characters by the actors. As such, the script creates a space of play for the director and actors in which a vast

number of possibilities arise and learning happens through analysis and conversation that brings each individual's experiences to bear. As a director, I acknowledge my subjectivity by sharing personal experiences—of frustration, pain, jealousy, disdain—that may help us understand the characters, and I invite my actors to do the same. Personal, subjective experience becomes a critical part of the curriculum of the play and are acknowledged as invaluable in the actor's learning and ability to understand, create, and empathize with the characters.

The situation embodies Pinar's (2004) ideas of "emphasiz[ing] the significance of subjectivity to teaching, to study, to the process of education" (p. 4). In order to push actors to develop full characters, rather than flat caricatures, the script and the rehearsal process demand that directors further "the complication of students' understanding of the subject they are studying" (Pinar, 2004, p. 2), with the actors in this situation being the students. Similarly, this analysis and discovery phase of the rehearsal process brings to life Pinar's (2011) ideas that "[curriculum] is conversation...among students and teachers, actually existing individuals" (p. 1) and that "[c]urriculum conceived as a verb—*currere*—privileges the concept of the individual in curriculum studies" (p. 2). The processes of investigating the text and sharing personal experiences take the form of complicated conversations, which the individuals then interpret to create their own manifestation of their character.

However, in rehearsal, textual analysis can never occur alone. As Efros (1975/2006) writes, "[a]nalysis and etude must not exist separately. One follows from the other. Analysis is part etude and an etude is psychophysical analysis" (p. 41). For the rehearsal process, as well as for *currere*, it is understood "that understanding is simultaneously intellectual and emotional, and that it is always embodied" (Pinar, 2011, p. 7). Stanislavski saw internal and emotional work and external, physical work as "two sides of the same psycho-physical' coin" (Merlin, 2003, p. 39).

Stanislavski's system comprises two main parts "in which the student first learns the process by which the inner life of a character is created and then how this is expressed in physical and technical terms. The result is a unified, coherent psycho-physical technique" (Benedetti, 2008, pp. xv-xvi). Indeed, for Stanislavski (1938/1953/2008), "all the elements of the outer creative state must be exercised and trained to ensure that your embodiment is as subtle, supple, clear, and physically expressive as the capricious feelings, the elusive life of the spirit it is called on to reflect" (p. 580). Like for *currere*, rehearsal is concerned with the lived experience of the script. It is recognized as both physical and psychological, and it is recognized that these cannot be separated. It is not measured by the distillation of the play into simple answers; it is measured by the multiplication of the play into real experience, interaction, and reflection.

A fourth key characteristic of the rehearsal process is adaptation and contingency. When directors speak about their process for staging a play, adaptation of their process for what is being required by the play and the adaptation of their system or another system as a whole are both common themes. A rehearsal system is not a monolith, but rather a constantly evolving practice in which each practitioner—director or actor—adapts it to fit his or her time, place, and self. According to Rotté (2000), "Adler knew the [Stanislavski] System not as a fixed set of rules or codified ways of performing" (p. 16), but rather something to bend and adapt for the context. For Efros (1975/2006), in each system he believed that "[t]here must not be blindness and rigidity. Any artistic school, if it is not in continuous motion, becomes routine in the course of time" (p. 33). Strasberg and Adler are both examples of adaptation of another system; they interpreted Stanislavski's system to create their own systems, rooted in his work but with branching strains and new shoots of practice. Peter Brook, one of most highly regarded English directors of the twentieth century, drew heavily on Stanislavski, Brecht, and Grotowski to form

his system of rehearsal that was more imitation than new creation (Mitter, 1992). However, this borrowing and adapting is not a failing of ingenuity; rather it is a core part of the rehearsal process. The rehearsal process is about finding what works—for the show, the actors, the director. As a process, it is fundamentally contingent, recognizes itself as such, and accordingly is structured in such a way that flexibility is a requirement, not a failing, of both the director's work and of the system's design. This point is well illustrated in the introduction to the *The Viewpoints Book* by Viewpoints creators Ann Bogart and Tina Landau (2005):

The Viewpoints Book is not definitive, not gospel, not absolute truth. It is written out of personal experience and belief. While we both stand firmly by the notion that Viewpoints is an open process rather than a closed methodology, we do hope that anyone interested in the work will approach it with the depth and rigor and the same soul-searching that we both hope we have done over the years. Our wish is not that these pages be read as a prescriptive instruction manual, but rather as an array of possibilities, a call to further examination and personalization on the part of the reader. (p. x)

However, contingency is not only important in the enactment of an acting approach, but it is also a core part of acting itself. The rehearsal process is not about finding a singular right answer but about being present in any given moment or any given scene and responding based on that specific context, a context that is therefore always contingent and evolving. This responsiveness, also a key component of the approach of Sanford Meisner, is key to keeping a scene or play fresh, vibrant, and resonant for the audience. To identify one way of playing a role and to attempt to repeat that way, rather than continuing to explore and adapt, is to kill a role and descend into rote imitation rather than creative participation. As Vsevolod Meyerhold, the revolutionary Russian director said, “The good actor is distinguished from the bad by the fact

that on Thursday he doesn't play the same way he did on Tuesday. An actor's joy isn't repeating what was successful, but in variations and improvisations within the limits of the composition as a whole" (Gladkov, 1997, p. 108). Indeed, this overarching characteristic of contingency and adaptation demonstrates a fundamental component of *currere*. According to Pinar et al. (1995), "[c]urrere... is grounded in context. The method of *currere* offers the opportunity to study both the individual's lived experience and the impact of the social milieu upon that experience" (p. 416). The rehearsal process, too, is firmly grounded in context. Context drives not only how the actors understand and enact the play, but also how the approaches to rehearsal and to the play are constructed altogether. The system is structured or reconstituted based on the space, time, and community in which it is occurring; the learning of the play and the approach that is taken to achieve it are fundamentally adapted based on the situation and on the actors, just as for *currere*, the curriculum is changed, shaped, and molded by those living it.

Lastly, an essential part of the rehearsal processes in most systems is ensemble building and the creation of community. For Adler, the studio was "a refuge in which students would be allowed, even encouraged, to fail, so that they need not be pressured, or their work crippled, by a requirement to succeed" (Rotté, 2000, p. 16). As Efros (1975/2006) shared, "[n]o other institution, it seems to me, is so much like a large family" (p. 19). In the rehearsal process, individuals come together to build a world that is mutually dependent on one another. On stage the actors and the materials that surround them form the entire world, and in order for this to be effective actors must shift their focus outward and direct it toward one another (Merlin, 2003). Additionally, as an actor's job is to remove the walls between themselves and other people, they often become both vulnerable and close-knit in the shared process of developing awareness, exploring sensory experiences, and engaging in emotional context through the work of the play.

The rehearsal process demonstrates precisely the idea that “communities are built upon a contingent being together that creates unity out of singularity” (Callejo Pérez et al., 2014, p. xii), and it provides a natural antidote to Lasch’s (1979) culture of narcissism in which Americans no longer find meaning in the public world and in turn retreat into themselves. This retreat causes people to become lost in themselves (Pinar, 2004) and to recoil “from meaningful engagement in the world” (Pinar, 2004, p. 3). Rehearsal combats this retreat by providing an expansion, not a contraction, of the world and joins together the private life of the actor and individual with the public life of the cast, of the world of the play, and the larger world that has been observed and breathed into the creation of the play. As Callejo Pérez et al. (2014) argue, “a re-emergence of community in pedagogy and curriculum holds the potential to overcome the essentialist and reductive pedagogies of contemporary schooling” (p. xiv). Rehearsal is inherently a communal process in which the creation of the community is core to the creation of learning. Through community and ensemble, rehearsal opens the world to multiple voices and subjectivities; it requires accountability and implication.

Imagining Curriculum as Rehearsal

In these ways, the rehearsal process brings to life and provides a powerful and tangible image of Pinar’s (1995, 2004, 2011) concept of *currere*. This image offers exercises and approaches that cultivate the tenets of *currere*—complicated conversation through textual analysis, self-understanding through physical exercises, and subjective reconstruction through improvisation—and of a reconceptualized curriculum that more broadly fosters “the cultivation of self-reflexive, interdisciplinary erudition and intellectuality” (Pinar, 2004, pp. 2-3). It is an image of dialogue, movement, and co-creation. It is an image in which learning is

simultaneously individual and collective, and it is an image in which mental, physical, and emotional faculties are engaged. Indeed, in the end, it is a rich and dynamic image of curriculum.

However, what does this mean for how curriculum is or could be enacted in schools? Rehearsal is not a practical model or how-to for implementing new curricular theories. While there are tangible elements of rehearsal practice that could be adapted for classroom or teacher education, the rehearsal process and primary and secondary classrooms are not identical structures, and we cannot directly transfer some of these practices from one to the other. As such, we must elevate the relationship between the rehearsal process and curriculum to the level of metaphor where, in addition to creating an image of rehearsal as curriculum, we can also imagine curriculum *as rehearsal*. This reversal of the image acknowledges the practical possibilities for rehearsal to impact the development and delivery of curricula, but it also inspires our academic imaginations and provides a hopefully accessible and understandable image that facilitates the exploration of new understandings of what curriculum might mean. To imagine curriculum as rehearsal is to imagine curriculum as communal education that honors multiple voices, is designed for the body, the mind, and the heart, and that focuses on the process as much as the product. This image expands the possibilities of curriculum while simultaneously providing signposts in the form of tangible practices to help us get there, and as a metaphor, it emancipates the possibility of collectively “considering the qualitative immediacy of the classroom and nurturing the kinds of relationships needed to promote authentic growth” (Callejo Pérez et al., 2014, p. 1) rather than narrowing our reforms and “focus to trajectories that will lead to gains on standardized measures” (Callejo Pérez et al., 2014, p. 1). If we can imagine curriculum as rehearsal, and not just the other way around, we take the first step toward creating spaces for

change in which the familiar form of curriculum-as-plan is made strange and new opportunities for engaging in dialogue around what curriculum could be are forged.

Section Two: Rehearsal, An Integrated Curriculum

If we take up the idea of *currere*, an active verb that encompasses the lived experience of the curriculum, we also open up spaces to encounter and explore how multiple theoretical and pedagogical approaches can and do shape the interactions of teaching, learning, and curriculum, and what's more, we create spaces to introduce specific approaches that intentionally shape the learning experience. Today, there are several theories and approaches that have permeated education discourse, advocating for changes to the banking-model of education—environmental education, place-based education, critical race theory, socio-materiality, embodiment theory, feminism, critical pedagogy, constructivism, and many more. Each of these approaches expands the aims of education to focus in some way on the context of the learning; these frameworks seek to disrupt the model of rote learning in which ‘facts’ are memorized and knowledge is acquired with an alternative model which is concerned with individual growth, challenging students to participate in the creation of knowledge, and acknowledging subjectivity and experience within the world. These perspectives demand that we think in drastically different ways about education and our students, however, when we try to infuse or implement these approaches within our current curricular landscape, we encounter several pitfalls that must be addressed in order for these approaches to comprehensively change how we think about and enact education.

The first pitfall is that when curriculum is understood, as it predominantly is, as a static plan that outlines content to be taught, spaces for thinking more broadly about the learning are closed down and the theoretical and pedagogical approaches that shape the curriculum-as-plan approach are obscured because they are not made explicit within the curriculum. A standards-based, curriculum-as-plan approach brings with it a transactional and banking-model concept of education in which students are empty receptacles that must be filled by the teacher (Freire,

1970/1996). This paradigm is fundamentally teacher-centered and sets the teacher up as the primary agent in the classroom context. The teacher is the authority, who is in charge of disseminating knowledge, which the students must passively receive. It is a mechanical approach, concerned with efficiency and standards. However, because *how* the content is taught is considered outside of the scope of the curriculum in this model, the curriculum itself does not and does not have to acknowledge the conceptions of teaching and education that underlie its paradigm. What can occur then is the misunderstanding and misconception that because the approach to teaching is not made explicit in the curriculum that the curriculum does not influence or dictate a specific approach to teaching. This obfuscation of the kinds of teaching and learning that such a curriculum promotes has deleterious effects by making the curriculum seem neutral, objective, and like a blank canvas upon which different teaching methods and approaches could be applied. While this is not entirely untrue (as I will discuss shortly), what this understanding misses or obscures is that the banking-model of education, and its manifestation as curriculum-as-plan, is predicated upon the idea of discrete facts, passive receptacles, and fixed knowledge with “correct” answers. These foundations are in direct contradiction to many of the more emancipatory, participatory, and contingent approaches mentioned above, creating a fundamental tension and disconnect between those approaches and the curriculum which falsely seems able to accommodate diverse approaches to teaching while actually purporting a very specific approach to teaching within its structure.

The second pitfall proceeds directly from this contradiction; because of the tension between the banking-model of education and other participatory and critical frameworks, the additional frameworks become something that must always be layered on top of rather than integrated into the curriculum. Because the curriculum-as-plan model is falsely seen as not being

predicated upon certain conceptions of teaching, pedagogical approaches are seen as outside of the curriculum. However, these approaches, if truly taken up, would fundamentally change what is to be taught, or at least how we think about what is to be taught, which would all be elements of a curriculum that would be adjusted or represented differently. Yet, because the curriculum is seen as fixed and outside of the scope of change based on individual interpretation or teaching philosophies, educators have no choice but to layer approaches to teaching on top of the curriculum; they are able to adjust how they teach the content, but they are unable to change the curricular approach itself. This sets up a model in which teachers may be trying to add approaches that upset the very paradigm in which they have to work, creating tension between what they are required to teach (e.g. facts) and how they teach (e.g. through a critical pedagogy approach that undermines and contests the existence of facts as such and instead opens up spaces for encountering and questioning).

This leads into the third pitfall which is two-fold: reductionism and burnout. First, reductionism can occur when, as outlined above, teachers are forced to add additional approaches on top of the fixed curriculum. Because of the tension between the additional approach and the approach structured by the curriculum, working to layer an additional approach on top of the curricular approach can often result in a reduction of the additional approach in order to make it fit within or conform to the curriculum. For example, within a fully place-based approach, the curriculum would change based on the geography, culture, and community in which the education was taking place. The curriculum could potentially be co-constructed with a diverse group of stakeholders and learning would occur through multiple channels, not just through dissemination from the teacher. However, layering a place-based approach onto a standard curriculum would look much different: engaging with the community may be used to

illustrate or complicate an element that is already dictated by the curriculum. Teachers may invite students to help structure the learning based on their own sense of place, but ultimately, they are accountable for teaching the concepts in the curriculum. I share this example not to make it sound like it is a bad thing for teachers to be layering additional approaches on top of the curriculum-as-plan model. On the contrary, these are terrific efforts to engage students in learning and diversify the content and experience as much as possible. Rather, I share these examples to point to the fact that by virtue of the very construct of our current curricular landscape, teachers are forced to layer additional approaches on top of the dominant, often contradictory approach, rather than holistically take up a new approach. This can cause the reduction of the nuanced or transformative theoretical approach that is being adopted, and additionally, can make it difficult to incorporate more than one additional framework because the base framework is not malleable or easily able to integrate different approaches.

Indeed, this is where the pitfall of burnout comes in. The banking model is a very specific, rigid framework. It is a framework of straight forwardness and easy answers; it is not inherently a dynamic, web-like curriculum. As such, when an educator wants to bring something like an embodied approach or a place-based approach into the curriculum it takes substantial energy to integrate that single approach into the traditional curriculum, and the onus too often lies on the individual teacher to create dynamic lessons, seek out community opportunities and school buy-in, develop examples and exercise, understand and apply the approach, and more in addition to the significant requirements and time commitments already on his or her plate. It is a daunting task, that requires significant teacher investment, energy, ingenuity, and the ability to constantly navigate and mitigate the tensions between what he or she is trying to accomplish and

the constraints in which he or she is working. To then find a way to layer multiple innovative approaches, not just one, can become further exhausting, disheartening, and hopeless.

Lastly, one additional pitfall which is not as predominant but is rather a potential caution for the future as we try to imagine what a curriculum of integration might look like is the temptation for replacement. In seeking to transform the traditional approach to developing and understanding curriculum, we seek different approaches to upset this dominant and transactional approach that understands learning from a singular world view that does not easily adapt to inclusiveness of progressive ideas of teaching, learning, and education. However, by taking any one new approach and setting it up as the dominant one, we have only reversed and not broken the problem of confining the curriculum too strongly within one paradigm. I argue that what we need instead as we imagine a reconceptualized curriculum is a model that inherently integrates and makes space for multiple theoretical and pedagogical approaches.

With these pitfalls in mind, it becomes clear that in order for any theoretical approach to take root in larger scale ways, they must be built into the curriculum, not layered on top of it; they must inform the overarching framework in which the experience is held, not change an isolated incident or activity within an incompatible framework. For if any one of these ideas—from embodiment to constructivism—is taken seriously, it changes how we structure the curriculum (the experience of learning) perhaps even more than it changes what is included in the curriculum (the content of the learning). As such, in order to truly incorporate the approaches and pedagogies mentioned above in radical and thorough ways, a new model is required—a model which is fundamentally integrated and dynamic and takes these as its main characteristics; a model in which the approach to curriculum is more experiential than static, more participatory than rote.

In this section, I take a closer look at how, when put into practice, the rehearsal process provides concrete ways of engaging with and enacting different theoretical frameworks in a holistic and integrated way and provides a model for exactly this kind of curriculum¹. I also suggest that rehearsal differs from the dominant standards-based curriculum-as-plan approach in that, within rehearsal, educators and theorists alike don't need to layer different theories of learning on top of the curriculum or adjust the curriculum to accommodate seemingly disparate approaches. Rather, rehearsal, as an approach that is concerned with the heart, the mind, the body, and the environment, builds a number of different theoretical approaches to teaching and learning directly into the lived landscape of the rehearsal process, and by extension the curricular space.

Indeed, as actors enter a rehearsal process, they enter both a physical and theoretical space that has many parts that structure, inform, influence, and create the learning—the texture of the floor, the textual script, the other bodies in the space, the rehearsal clothes, the character's shoes, the heat from the stage lights, and the sounds of the actors' voices. Each of these elements is acknowledged as playing a role in the creation of the play and therefore in the actor's learning. In this section, I will show how rehearsal functions as, and is a model for, a curriculum of integration by focusing on three theoretical and pedagogical approaches that are significant in contemporary education discourse—embodiment theory, socio-materiality, and critical pedagogy. I will explore each of these approaches and demonstrate how they are woven into the

¹ It is important to note that rehearsal is not the first model to be offered that radically takes up different foundational approaches to education that is inherently integrative of multiple approaches. For example, the approaches of Dewey, Steiner, and Montessori all provide examples of models in which alternative foundations to education have been taken up seriously and have drastically changed the shape of the curriculum within these schools of thought and practice. What is important here is that each of these cases does provide a new model, not just an approach to be layered on an existing model, underscoring the idea that in order for these approaches to be as powerful and as impactful as they can be, it is not enough to simply change what is taught but how it is conceived.

very fabric of the curriculum of rehearsal and how they interact with one another within the lived experience of rehearsal to create a holistic and transformative learning experience. This fundamental integration shows another way in which rehearsal offers a powerful and fitting image for the possibilities of curriculum that has vast potential for transforming how we think and teach.

Embodiment and Rehearsal: A Curriculum of Awareness

“Thus, the first great discovery of mindfulness meditation tends not to be some encompassing insight into the nature of mind but the piercing realization of just how disconnected humans normally are from their very experience.”

–Varela, Thompson, and Rosch as cited in Francesconi & Tarozi, 2012, p. 281

“In the theatre, knowing means feeling.”

–Stanislavski, 2008/1938, p. xxiv

“Energy, encouraged by feeling, launched by the will, guided by the mind, moves confidently and proudly like an ambassador on an important mission. This kind of energy emerges in creative, sensitive, fertile, productive action which can’t be done just anyhow, mechanically, but in accord with the impulses of the heart.”

–Stanislavski, 2008/1955, p. 365

Conceptions of embodiment.

In the west, we live in a world in which Cartesian body-mind dualism has dominated our thinking and conception of being for centuries. For Descartes (1641/1993), the body and the mind were two radically different and distinct kinds of substances. In his canonical meditations, he aims to show the existence of God and a soul through philosophical means, and in order to do so, performs what we might today call a thought experiment in which he “supposes the nonexistence of all those things about whose existence it can have even the least doubt” (p. 12) including the body. Through this exercise, he arrives at the premise that “thought exists; it alone cannot be separated from me... I am therefore precisely nothing but a thinking thing; that is, a mind, or intellect, or understanding, or reason” (p. 19) and furthermore, that “I am not that concatenation of members we call the human body” (p. 19). Descartes asserts that truth can be known through the mind alone and not through the combination of mind and body, for even the body is known through the mind rather than through the senses: “For since I now know that even bodies are not, properly speaking, perceived by the senses or by the faculty of imagination, but by the intellect alone, and that they are not perceived through their being touched or seen, but

only through their being understood, I manifestly know that nothing can be perceived more easily and more evidently than my own mind” (p. 23). In the Sixth Meditation, Descartes cites the fact that a body is divisible in both concept (that one can imagine dividing the body into different parts) and in life (if an arm is amputated it does not impact the self or the mind on an ontological level) but that the mind is indivisible and we cannot conceive of its different parts or breaking or dividing it to show that “the mind is wholly diverse from the body” (p. 56).

This idea that the body and mind are not only separate, but that the thinking mind is superior to the physical body has shaped our culture in foundational ways. As the philosopher Mark Johnson (2007) points out, “Mind/body dualism is so deeply embedded in our philosophical and religious traditions, in our shared conceptual systems, and in our language that it can seem to be an inescapable fact about human nature” (p. 2). According to Johnson (2007), even the idea of a free will, which is separate from our bodies and, more importantly, able to *control* them, is based on the idea of a “higher” rational self and a “lower” emotional, desiring, bodily self—an equation that goes back Descartes, who cited “mirth, sadness, anger, and other such affects” (p. 49) as bodily tendencies. Indeed, this perceived dualism has shaped our political, religious, philosophical, and educational systems (Barnacle, 2009) in ways of which we are often unaware, and of which we routinely see manifestations in the way we talk and think about our life and our work. For instance, we distinguish between, often lower-class, blue-collar work that is done with the hands and often esteemed or upper-class white-collar work that is done with the mind. We distinguish between the arts and the sciences, and we see this distinction manifest in how the two disciplines are structured and funded within schools; science, often equated with the mind and rationality, is given a central place in the curriculum and is often well funded, while the arts, often equated with emotion and self-expression, are frequently under (or

de-) funded and seen as frivolous or peripheral and outside of the core curriculum. More generally, as a society we celebrate lofty pursuits and see the body as something to be either controlled or eroticized through sexuality or sports. This distinction is so deeply ingrained in our society that even those who realize that thinking cannot occur without a brain still subscribe to the autonomy of the mind (Johnson, 2007) or the container view of the body in which it is just seen as something that holds or houses the mind and brain (Barnacle, 2009).

It has been only recently, within the last century, that theorists have begun to challenge this traditional body-mind dualism and offer drastically differing conceptions of the body that recognize and explore our inherent embodiment. Much of this work can be traced back to the writings and thinking of Merleau-Ponty in the mid-20th century (Barbour, 2004; Francesconi & Tarozzi, 2012; Johnson, 2007). Merleau-Ponty was a pioneer in breaking down Cartesian dualism and positioning the lived body at center of experience. Contrary to Descartes' thinking, for Merleau-Ponty (1945/2005) it was clear that "the body is not an object" (p. 231) and that one's awareness of the body was not a thought or something known through pure intellect. Rather, the body provided an ambiguous and complex mode of existing, in which functions, feelings, and the external world were related to each other not in a straight-forward or causal way, but rather they were "obscurely drawn together and mutually implied in a unique drama" (p. 231). As a phenomenologist, Merleau-Ponty argued that there was no means of knowing a body other than living in it and therefore experiencing it. In his revolutionary work, *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945/2005), he writes, "[t]hus, experience of one's own body runs counter to the reflective procedure which detaches subject and object from each other, and which gives us only the thought about the body, or the body as an idea, and not the experience of the body or the body in reality" (p. 231). He points to the fact that "objective thought is unaware

of the subject of perception” (p. 240), or in other words that perception exists and occurs in a state of pre-objective or pre-conscious thought and that this perception is not done by a conscious-“I” but occurs through the interaction of the bodily schema and the conatural world in a way that is always both limited and unified in that the sensible “thinks itself within me” (p. 249).

Merleau-Ponty’s work and conception of embodiment spurred changes to thinking and development in both philosophy and cognitive science, as well as in many other fields. In cognitive science, the work of Merleau-Ponty and other phenomenological philosophers contributed to the shaping of a new paradigm—the embodied paradigm—which shifted the focus from cybernetics, informatics, and computational thinking to understanding the role subjective and lived experience plays in cognition and knowledge creation (Francesconi & Tarozi, 2012). From this perspective, following Merleau-Ponty, cognition is not a series of cerebral functions that interface with the body, but rather it is the result of constant interaction and interplay between the body and environment or the “result of sensorimotor information that creates the background from which the mind can emerge and the horizon to which the mind can attend” (Francesconi & Tarozi, 2012, p. 268-269). The embodied view of cognition reveals that pure cognition (the idea of a disembodied mind or view from above) does not exist and that “space-time dimensions literally shape the mind” (Francesconi & Tarozi, 2012, p. 269). Such an understanding of cognition draws cognitive science and phenomenological philosophy closer together as the idea of mind, body, and environment interacting to create lived experiences moves away from a neuroscientific focus on cognitive functions that are clearly physiological events and towards the larger, or “harder” question of consciousness (Francesconi & Tarozi, 2012). According to Francesconi and Tarozi, “the “hard problem” emerges instead when we

switch our interest from the analysis of operational functions of a physiological nature to the analysis of the phenomenological experience of these functions” (2012, p. 270).

When speaking about consciousness, especially as it relates to the body and phenomenology, it is important to understand the difference between what Gallagher and Zahavi (2008/2012) termed pre-reflective self-consciousness and reflective self-consciousness. For Gallagher and Zahavi, pre-reflective self-consciousness is the immediate apprehension of an experience that is not thought about but is known as one’s own experience by the subject of that experience. This kind of consciousness occurs without any “additional second-order mental state that is in some way directed in an explicit manner towards the experience in question” (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008/2012, p. 52). Reflective self-consciousness occurs when intentional thought is then directed toward the experience. Gallagher and Zahavi (2008/2012) illustrate the difference:

“The [pre-reflective] self-consciousness must be understood as an intrinsic feature of the primary experience. [...] I can, of course, reflect on and attend to my experience, I can make it the theme or object of my attention, but prior to focusing on it, I wasn’t “mind- or self-blind”. The experience was already present to me, it was already something *for me*, and in that sense it counts as being pre-reflectively conscious.” (p. 52)

This distinction points to the fact that even before we are able to conceptualize or think about an experience, we have had and are aware of this experience in a way that it is known as ours. As individuals, we do not have a body—we are a body, and as such we create a kinesthetic consciousness that provides us with a pre-linguistic ability to understand reality (Francesconi & Tarozzi, 2012). As has been shown in modern cognitive science, our bodies are pre-disposed to

recognize what other people are doing through the mirror-neuron system (Francesconi & Tarozi, 2012), which means that body plays a role in making sense of the external world and understanding it as a *lived* world.

Related to these ideas, philosopher Mark Johnson (2007) explores the role of the body in creating meaning and seeks to further break down our accepted body/mind and cognitive/emotional dichotomies through a jointly philosophical and cognitive science approach. Johnson (2007) argues that the primary meaning that is derived from a world view that sees mind and body as two separate substances is a meaning that is conceptual and propositional; from this world view our ability to make meaning is based on our ability to form concepts in our mind that relate to things outside of the mind and then combine these concepts into propositions about the way the world is. Within this paradigm, if and when another kind of meaning is posited, it is often posited as an emotional or non-cognitive meaning that is set up as a fundamentally different and inferior kind of meaning that is juxtaposed against descriptive or cognitive meaning (Johnson, 2007). Refuting this perspective, Johnson argues that emotion is central to our ability to make meaning and that, as evidence from cognitive science supports, meaning is shaped by our bodies—by our sensorimotor capacities and our ability to experience feelings. He offers what he calls an embodied theory of meaning that “situates meaning within a flow of experience that cannot exist without a biological organism engaging its environment” (p. 10) and emphasizes the “deep-seated bodily sources of human meaning that go beyond the merely conceptual and propositional” (p. 11).

When taken seriously, these conceptions of embodiment, broadly defined as the understanding that mental activity and meaning making is impacted by the body in addition to the brain (Francesconi & Tarozi, 2012; Johnson, 2007), must raise serious questions about

education and pedagogy. If the body and the environment play an essential role in developing consciousness, knowledge, and meaning, then it would seem that the body has a very important role to play in education, in so far as education is the intentional cultivation and development of these human pursuits. However, as we have an education system grounded in the Cartesian ideas of body and mind dualism, which manifests in the privileging of rationalism and objectivism in the classroom and curriculum design, our current education system not only loses the opportunity to develop our bodies' essential and powerful abilities, but it actively denies and represses them. Performance-based funding and a focus on efficiency drives in turn rationalistic approaches to teaching that focus on content and quantification, and ultimately results in "learning then becom[ing] increasingly understood in terms of metrics: a process, in other words, of accumulation and acquisition of discrete knowledge objects, skills and competencies" (Barnacle, 2009, p. 23). The image of Paulo Freire's banking model of education in which the teacher, as narrator or depositor, leads the students to mechanically memorize the delivered content, is a terrific illustration of this phenomenon. The scenario in which "the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat" (p. 53) epitomizes what Johnson (2007) refers to the conceptual-propositional form of meaning. The knowledge that students are taught in this model is purely abstracted and becomes a series of concepts that are valid either due to the authority that is uttering them or due to logical argument. The learning is utterly divorced from lived experience and embodied meaning. Rather, it is, as Freire (1970/1995) writes, that "Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue *in the world, with the world, and with each other*" [emphasis added] (p. 53). While conceptual knowledge is

important, unless it is accompanied by relational, embodied, emotional knowledge, something pivotal to human experience has been lost.

It is important to note here, that in the conceptions of embodiment explored above, the focus is not on simply reversing the established hierarchy and privileging the body over the mind, but rather finding “a way of re-thinking mind-body relations that complicates rather than erases demarcation between the two” (Barnacle, 2009, p. 28). The body and mind are not separate, but rather interface in multiple, complex ways to create lived experience; if we seek to merely invert the historical hierarchy, we are committing the same mistake we would seek to resist and ignoring part of our human and lived experience. The focus on embodiment is necessary now to rehabilitate the body and its ways of knowing and experiencing from centuries of exclusion or subordination. However, we must not forget that our lived experience and engagement with the world “seems to occur between the biological and symbolic, in that it is reducible to neither but is related to both” (Barnacle, 2009, p. 29).

Indeed, in this spirit of rehabilitation of the body, over the last twenty years, theorists and educators have begun examining and advocating for ways that an embodied understanding can and should impact education (Barbour, 2004; Barnacle, 2009; Bresler, 2004a, 2004b; Francesconi & Tarozzi, 2012; Nguyen & Larson, 2015; Osmond, 2007; Powell, 2004, 2007; Powell & Lajevic, 2011; Rhoades & Daillo, 2016; Springgay, 2008). For Karen Barbour (2004), movement experiences or education could contribute to better self-understanding, better understanding of self in relation to the world, sensitivity and respect for others’ ways of moving and being, and more. She argues that “recognizing embodied ways of knowing and fostering them in relevant curriculum areas may leader to greater transference of learning and knowledge, not just from movement activity to movement activity but throughout a learner’s life” (p. 235-

236). Robyn Barnacle (2009), who also studies embodiment and knowing, advocates for challenging the intellect-centered conception of learning in favor of an integrated approach to education that accounts for “knowing, acting, and being” (p. 26) and that privileges the ontological over the epistemological. Barnacle writes, “If education is to address, engage, and transform the whole person, of relevance is the question of how the subject is constituted: whether vertically, through the dominance of the brain, central nervous system and intellect, or in a more distributed fashion” (p. 28). Stephanie Springgay (2008) studies and advocates for the role of the body in knowledge creation and also in shaping relationships with one’s self and with others. Springgay focuses on arts-based pedagogies and visual culture, using these entry points to approach and understand the body from multiple perspectives through active and integrated inquiry; for Springgay (2008), her “pedagogical philosophy embraced the possibilities of *thinking through the body*” (p. 16, emphasis in original). Francesconi and Tarozzi (2012), writing from a phenomenological pedagogical perspective raise pedagogical questions such as “can we educate consciousness?” and “can we improve people’s ability to be aware, refining object perception and description?” (p. 270). They argue that the answer is yes in both cases and that the “mineness”—“the subjective dimension of phenomenological experience” (p. 272) that encapsulates both the ability to have embodied, subjective experience and then to articulate and linguistically refer to this is experience—should be at the heart of education. For them, education should be aimed at cultivating “the ability to stay in contact with reality, to perceive the world and make it meaningful” (p. 271), which involves learning to see and perceive differently, become more intentional, become more aware and fully present, and in doing so move from experience to lived experience.

Such theories then beg the question, what does this kind of embodied education look like? We are so steeped in a society that privileges rationalism, including in our pedagogies, that, for a broad audience, it can be difficult to imagine how this might manifest in practice. Similar to the challenge of expanding new conceptions of curriculum and *currere* articulated in the first section of this thesis, the idea of embodiment in education perhaps struggles from the fact that there is not a strong image, metaphor, or model for what this could or does actually look like; many of the strong arguments and examples of embodiment education either remain heavily theoretical and abstract or they provide examples of individual practices and contexts in which or through which embodied education was adopted. Barbour, while advocating for greater focus on movement in education stops short of offering in any comprehensive way, beyond brief mention of physical curriculum areas and suggestion of a movement, reflection, adaptation lifecycle, an image or example of how this might be practiced in our schools or built into our curricula. Barnacle takes it a step further to broadly advocate for teaching and learning approaches that focus on sense-making as a way to improve learning. According to Barnacle, “[t]his would mean promoting learning situations in which a sense of what is being learnt, or more accurately, a sensibility for what is being learnt, is actively cultivated along with the development of more formal or intellectual understanding” (p. 235). While this is, in theory, a great practice, Barnacle stops short of showing what this might look like or how it could be enacted in schools. On the other end of the spectrum, Springgay (2008) provides very specific examples of how she interpreted and enacted a bodied curriculum in a senior art class (grades 11 and 12) at an alternative secondary school in Vancouver, Canada. Bresler (2004) and Osmond (2007) also investigate and provide examples of embodiment in dance and drama education, however, they focus specifically on those educational contexts and not at how these principles could be applied

more broadly in other educational scenarios. Indeed, while each of these types of work are very important to understanding and enacting embodied education, they stop short of offering a pedagogical image that helps a wide variety of stakeholders—teachers, parents, and administrators—understand what embodied education is and begin to imagine its possibilities.

Francesconi and Tarozi (2012) and Powell (2004) go the furthest in providing an example of embodied education that, I argue, also rise to the level of a larger image of embodied education. Francesconi and Tarozi (2012) offer meditation as an example of a practice that is able to “deepen the ability of being self-aware and to develop the intentionality of our consciousness” (p. 273). They suggest that meditation is an embodied educational practice as it cultivates awareness and through awareness enables us to become more present in the world, developing what Francesconi and Tarozi describe as “a cognitive-bodily posture that had to be educated, a new perspective on the world grounded in lived experience in the body” (p. 280-281). Through meditation, one becomes aware of different states of attention in the natural attitude and the phenomenological attitude (Francesconi and Tarozi, 2012) and of how the mind is often disconnected from the present moment. By developing this awareness and one’s ability to stay connected with the present moment through a perceptive, embodied way of being, an individual is better able to “create a sustainable and meaningful presence in the world, a better life-of-the-mind” (p. 284). Powell (2004), explores *taiko*, a Japanese form of ensemble drumming that emphasizes choreographed movement, as an educational setting in which “knowledge is embodied through participation in socially and culturally prescribed systems of meaning, and how such participation serves to organize sensory experience into knowledge of art, self, and self in relation to learning” (p. 183). Drawing from key concepts within *taiko*, she offers *ki* (the spirit that creates a sense of individual and collective unity within the practice),

kata (a visual form of movement that is a core part of the art of *taiko* and that creates the relationship between the body and the drum), and technique as general educational concepts and that together create a paradigm for embodied educational practices.

Following Francesconi and Tarozzi's (2012) example of meditation and Powell's (2004) example of *taiko*, I offer theater rehearsal as another powerful image of embodied educational practice, showing how the awareness building and consciousness cultivation that are characteristic of embodied education are inherently built into the rehearsal process. I argue that what is unique about rehearsal is the way that embodied educational practice is integrated into the larger curriculum of rehearsal, in a way that it provides a foundation for other activities and is structurally integrated with what we might consider more rational or traditional content and practices. As touched upon briefly in the first section of this thesis, rehearsal acknowledges the important role of the body in creation and in learning, while maintaining the focus on the whole self through a variety of practices that build on, work off of, and dance around one another. In the following pages, I will dive deeper into how embodied educational practice manifests in the rehearsal process, and how, when understood this way, rehearsal can indeed be considered a curriculum of awareness.

Embodiment in rehearsal.

Embodied work is a core component of theater training and rehearsal in many different schools and systems that range on a continuum from psycho-physical to primarily physical approaches. As discussed in the previous section, Stanislavski's psycho-physical approach falls on one end of this spectrum and comprises two main parts "in which the student first learns the process by which the inner life of a character is created and then how this is expressed in physical and technical terms" (Benedetti, 2008, pp. xv-xvi). It is important to note, when talking

about Stanislavski's system, that for a large part of the 20th century—and still not uncommonly today—Stanislavski's system is mistakenly taken to be purely a psychological approach, in which the inner life of the character is created. This misunderstanding was caused in large part by the separation of his pioneering work, *An Actor's Work*, work into two separate publications that were initially published twelve years apart: Part One, *An Actor Prepares* published in 1938 and Part Two, *Building a Character* published in 1953. The perceived distance between the two works was further complicated by Stanislavski's death prior to completion of Part Two, challenges with the translation from Russian, and Stanislavski's own writing style that was characterized by constant revising and rewriting (Benedetti, 2008). Combined, these factors created the incorrect impression—which Stanislavski himself feared—that Part One, in which the psychological approach was chronicled, defined the entire 'system.' This misunderstanding took deep root in the Western, especially American, theater tradition (as Ann Bogart and Tina Landau wrote in 2005, "Our misunderstanding, misappropriation, and miniaturization of the Stanislavski system remains the bible for most practitioners" (p. 17)), and when Part Two was published over a decade later it was thought to be a revision to Part One, not its complement that Stanislavski had begun drafting in parallel with the initial volume. This perceived separation between the psychological and physical work served as the basis for Lee Strasberg's Method, which was made famous in the 1950's and which drew from an understanding of the 'system' as purely psychological. The Method, unlike Stanislavski's system, primarily focuses on emotional memory in which actors draw explicitly on their own experiences and the affective or emotional states that are associated with them in order to recreate the emotion. However, in reality, Stanislavski had always conceived of the two parts of the system—work that focused on inner life and work that focused on embodiment—as inseparable parts of an actor's work. Indeed, for

Stanislavski (2008/1935/1950), the role of the body is to “make the invisible creative life of the actor visible,” and he felt that “physical embodiment is important in so far as it conveys the ‘life of the human spirit’” (p. 352).

In describing the role that embodiment plays in Stanislavski’s system, it is also important to note that *An Actor’s Work* is written in the form of a diary in which a young student named Nazvanov (in part representing a young Stanislavski) moves through acting classes and training given by instructors Tortsov (representing a combination of an older Stanislavski and his mentor, Fyodor Komissarzhevski) and Rakhmanov (Benedetti, 2008). In the diary, Nazvanov recounts Tortsov’s and Rakhmanov’s actions and directions, and he chronicles his own observations and experiences, as well as those of his classmates, as they move through the training. In the diary, the day in which they begin to focus on the physical work is marked as “something special” (Stanislavski, 1938/1953/2008, p. 351) by Nazvanov. As the students enter the theatre on this day there is a new row of chairs laid out for guest tutors each with a little flag naming an activity—“singing, placing the voice, diction, the laws of speech, tempo-rhythm, expressive movement, dance, gymnastics, fencing, acrobatics” (p. 351). Each of these becomes an important part of the actor’s training to understand the “exceptional importance” of the body and learning about “intuition and the unconscious” (p. 352). Stanislavski, through the character Tortsov, explains to his students, that the body must be engaged and trained to be able to bring to life the emotional states of the character, to allow the actors to access deep emotions and intuitions, and to be able to respond to the needs of the scene in ways that transcend crude demonstration. As Tortsov says, “The techniques we use to embody unconscious experiences do not respond to cold calculation either. They, too, must often embody our minds unconsciously and intuitively” (p. 352).

However, to embody our minds unconsciously is not a trivial act; it is an act that requires great attention and cultivation—a freeing of the body from the usual control or subjugation of the mind and instead conceiving them as fluid partners, an interrelated whole. Such a posture reframes the relationship of mind over body and instead focuses on how they work together, elevating the senses and bodily ways of knowing. When trained and cultivated, the body becomes a way of understanding and expressing even before the conscious mind has processed or articulated a given thought or emotion. In order to reach the state where body and mind are working together to sense, understand, and respond, “we must develop and prepare our physical apparatus with which we embody in such a way that all its parts respond to whatever nature asks of it” (Stanislavski, 1938/1953/2008, p. 352). Indeed, Stanislavski (1938/1953/2008) stresses that developing our body and our voice “requires a great deal of long, systematic work... if you do not do it, then your physical apparatus will prove too crude for the work nature assigns it” (p. 352). For the actor, this work is to bring to life human action and emotion, and as the body is both a core part of the human experience and the medium which the audience will perceive, the body is crucial in the role of the actor. There are many physical and motor centers that we become accustomed to not using in ordinary life and as such, they are dulled or atrophied from lack of use. However, for Stanislavski (1938/1953/2008), an actor’s physical training is important because it focuses on all physical centers, including refined ones that we are not used to using. The outcome of this training is that “once you have activated [these centers] you will become aware of new sensations, new movements, new means of expression, greater chances to be subtle than you have known up till now” (p. 356). The physical work of the actor “makes your body more mobile, supple, expressive, responsive, and sensitive in its functions” (357). This increased awareness deepens an individual’s knowledge and sense perception and also refines

responsiveness to situations, emotions, and other people, that in turn this creates deeper, kinesthetic and intuitive understandings and abilities to act. Much of Part Two of Stanislavski's system is focused on this cultivation. Ranging from broad practices, such as gymnastics and acrobatics, to specific exercises, such as one in which the actors roll an imaginary drop of Mercury from the top of their head down to their toes without letting it run off their bodies, Nazvanov's diary illustrates practical examples of how physical work is integrated into an actor's training and the rehearsal process. These physical practices are not seen as something complementary to or outside of the actor's work, but as a core part of the curriculum. This is perhaps well illustrated when Tortsov says emphatically, "*I need acrobatics to develop decisiveness in you*" (Stanislavski, 1938/1953/2008, p. 358, emphasis in original). For Stanislavski, it is understood that physical work is part of cultivating skills that we too often think of as only intellectual pursuits.

Building on the work of Stanislavski, Vsevolod Meyerhold developed a system of actor training called Biomechanics. Meyerhold's approach is sometimes viewed in contradiction to Stanislavski's (Normington, 2005), however, this misunderstanding perhaps comes more from the misunderstanding of Stanislavski's approach as purely emotional or psychological, than it does from a misunderstanding of their relationship. It is telling that, upon his death, Stanislavski referred to Meyerhold as "his sole heir in the theater," and Meyerhold continued directing at the Stanislavski Opera Theater after Stanislavski's death (Gladkov, 1997). While most known for his physical work, Meyerhold also recognized the importance of psychological capability, stating, "if it's the kind of training which exercises only the body and not the mind, then No, thank you! I have no use for actors who know how to move but cannot think" (Gladkov, 1997, p. 104).

Meyerhold, called “the greatest director in the history of the theater” by Lee Strasberg (Gladkov, 1997, p. 49), was famous for his innovative approaches to working with physical development, symbolism, and breaking down the barrier between actor and audience (literally removing the proscenium or lighting the entire theater, including the audience). His system of Biomechanics was “a program of actor training intended to teach all of the basic skills necessary to move properly on the stage” (Gladkov, 1997, p. 13). For Meyerhold, the principle of Biomechanics was very simple: “the whole body takes part in each of our movements” (Gladkov, 1997, p. 96). As such, the body needed to be trained to powerfully and attentively employ each part of the body in intentional movement in order to perform a role and tell a story. According to Meyerhold, “the ability to position one’s body in space is a fundamental law of acting” (Gladkov, 1997, p. 108) and the use of Biomechanics was what Mikhail Korenev called “the working out by experimental means of a scheme of training exercises and acting devices based on exact calculation and regulation of actor behaviour on the stage” (as cited in Law & Gordon, 1996, p. 133.). The Biomechanics approach takes the shape of several systematic and sequential physical exercises or etudes, including most famously Throwing the Stone or Shooting the Bow, that focus on four main principles: the *otkas* or preparation, the *posyl* or execution, and the *stoika* or the stance, and the *tormos* or the resistance. While seemingly simple, these exercises require significant focus and control (without tension) and build physical capacities including strength, agility, and coordination while also developing awareness of the space, the ensemble, and the inner self. These powerful and precise movements refine and build the actor’s ability to quite literally bring to life a role and help to create a character’s emotions and inner life through resonant physical postures and movements.

Within Meyerhold's approach, rhythm, nuance, and improvisation are reoccurring and important themes. Music greatly informed Meyerhold's work, and he stressed the role of music in teaching actors about time and their movement within it (Gladkov, 1997). For Meyerhold, "An actor must know the composition of the entire production, must understand and feel it with his whole body. Only then does he make himself a component of it and begin to sound in harmony with it" (Gladkov, 1997, p. 105). Within the approach the body is an important center of understanding and participation that allows for both rhythm and harmony to be developed. Indeed, Meyerhold took so seriously the work of the body, that he "would most strictly forbid actors to drink wine, or coffee, or take valerian drops" saying that "They all shatter the nervous system. An actor's nervous system must be the very healthiest" (Gladkov, 1997, p. 109). However, for Meyerhold, it was not only the actor's body that was important; it was also the recognition and participation of the audience that helped shape the lived experience of the play. Meyerhold instructed his actors, "let [the audience], along with you, catch their breath. And then a new segment begins. You must feel the breathing of the audience and sense where it needs to catch its breath. When you act well, the audience breathes along with you" (Gladkov, 1997, p. 106). The physical act of breathing connected the audience with the actor and directly impacted the playing of the play.

Continuing along the spectrum from psycho-physical to primarily physical approaches, is the work and approach of Jacques LeCoq. LeCoq came to his own physical approach to theater through a love of and participation in sports, specifically gymnastics. It was through engaging in the physical movements of gymnastics, that he "discovered extraordinary sensations which could be carried over into everyday life" (Lecoq, 1997/2000, p. 3). While attending a college of physical education, LeCoq was introduced to Jean-Marie Conty, who in turn introduced him to

French theater artists Antonin Artaud and Jean-Louis Barrault. It was through these connections that LeCoq discovered theater and became a part of a group who used movement, performance, gymnastics, mime, and other forms to express opposition during the German occupation in France. He went on to participate in a theater troupe with many of the same members and spent time working and learning in Italy, before opening his own school in Paris in 1956 (LeCoq, 1997/2000). What LeCoq offered in his school was “preparation—of the body, of the voice, of the art of collaboration (of which theatre is the most extreme artistic representation) and of the imagination” (McBurney, 2000, p. ix). Working primarily from a physical approach that was informed by many traditions and experiences, including masked performance and Japanese Noh theater, LeCoq’s approach focused simultaneously on two primary elements: improvisation and movement technique and analysis. The training at his school was broken into two years—the first focused largely on observation of the world and environment and understanding through physical embodiment or miming, as well as on technical exercises, including classes in acrobatics, juggling, and stage combat, to develop “the receptive and expressive potential of the human body” (LeCoq, 1997/2000, p. 14). The second year focused on different languages of gesture and on five principal territories of theater and how technique is applied within each: melodrama, *Commedia dell’arte*, ‘Bouffons,’ tragedy, and clowns (LeCoq, 1997/2000). Both years and all areas of study fell under the philosophy that, “movement, as manifested in the human body, is our permanent guide in this journey from life to theater” (LeCoq, 1997/2000, p. 15), underscoring the role of embodiment in learning, understanding, and making meaning.

The LeCoq style is famously associated with mime work, however, he is very careful to distinguish what he means by mime. Counter to the stereotypical image of a mime with a white face and black-and-white striped shirt, LeCoq (1997/2000) believed that mime died when it was

separated from theater; the life and meaning were removed from it. Rather, to mime “is literally to embody and therefore to understand better” (p. 22), and it provides a way of “rediscovering a thing with renewed freshness” (p. 22). For LeCoq, it is the very action of embodying that allows understanding to occur. As he succinctly says, “The action of miming becomes a form of knowledge” (LeCoq, 1997/2000, p. 22). For LeCoq, too, embodiment is a way of building awareness. For him, “It is more important to observe how beings and objects move, and how they find a reflection in us” (LeCoq, 1997/2000, p. 19) rather than focusing on developing emotional memory and the psychological inner life of the character. In the improvisation work that in-part characterizes the first year of study, actors improvise through silent psychological replay, which involves reviving (or embodying) a lived experience in the simplest way. The silence allows the actors to “rediscover those moments when words do not yet exist” (LeCoq, 1997/2000, p. 29) and develop awareness of the imaginary scene in which they are physically, and silently, exploring and rediscovering. Simultaneously, actors engage in movement analysis that focuses on observing and understanding characteristics of movement, including rhythm, space, and force. According to LeCoq (1997/2000), understanding movement is a foundation of theater, for even though the themes of plays may change, “the structures of acting remain linked to movement and to its immutable laws” (p. 21).

Lastly, in looking at how embodiment manifests in theater rehearsal, it is important to consider the Viewpoints approach developed by choreographer Mary Overlie in the late 1970s and expanded into a method for theater by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau in the late 1980s. Bogart and Landau’s expanded approach to Viewpoints, which was mentioned briefly in section one of this thesis, includes both Vocal Viewpoints and nine Physical Viewpoints—Spatial Relationship, Kinesthetic Response, Shape, Gesture, Repetition, Architecture, Tempo, Duration,

and Topography (Bogart & Landau, 2005). Viewpoints is “a philosophy translated to a technique for (1) training performers; (2) building ensemble; and (3) creating movement for the stage” (p. 7). The Viewpoints help structure improvisations, cultivate sensory perception, and develop awareness that helps generate action. Rather than trying to remember or recreate abstract emotion, Viewpoints “allows untamed feeling to arise from the actual physical, verbal, and imaginative situation in which actors find themselves together” (Bogart & Landau, 2005, p. 16). The approach provides a specific set of exercises that heighten awareness of the senses; the exercises “are meant to teach the importance of an intense awareness of what other people are doing, where they are, and when they are doing it” (Bogart & Landau, 2005, p. 33). Focusing on the embodied and physical aspects of time and space, Viewpoints cultivates awareness, understanding and action through the use of all of the senses. Actors are encouraged to explore their physical instincts to move through space and to react to their environment; they develop openness to the complete environment and reduce the impediment of intellect for motivation (Herrington, 2000, p. 156). As Bogart and Landau (2005) put it,

Viewpoints awakens all our senses, making it clear how much and how often we live only in our heads and see only through our eyes. Through Viewpoints we learn to listen with our entire bodies and see with a sixth sense. We receive information from levels we were not even aware existed, and begin to communicate back with equal depth (p. 20).

The approach to Viewpoints begins with physical group exercises that are a preparation for engaging with the individual Viewpoints. These preparation exercises ground the actors, bring them into the space, and develop awareness of the ensemble so that they can begin to move and work together. Many of the introduction or preparation exercises include the use of soft focus, a “physical state in which we allow the eyes to soften and relax so that, rather than looking

at one or two things in sharp focus they can now take in many” (Bogart & Landau, 2005, p. 31). The reason for using soft focus is that it takes the pressure off of our eyes, which are usually the primary source of sensory information, and lets “the whole body start to listen and gather information in new and more sensitized ways” (Bogart & Landau, 2005, p. 31). The approach also includes exercises for engaging with each of the individual Viewpoints; for example, for Tempo, one exercise involves first choosing an action with a clear beginning and end, repeating it several times, and then performing the action with first a medium tempo, then a fast tempo, and finally a slow tempo. In doing this exercise, actors become aware of the how changing the tempo changes the meaning and feeling of the physical action. Each Viewpoint can be practiced to increase awareness or understanding of a specific element, or it can be used to directly change meaning or add action to a scene. It is important to note when speaking of the Viewpoints exercises that while Bogart and Landau (2005) lay out exercises that point to the meaning and implementation of Viewpoints, they are careful to stress that “Viewpoints is an open process, not a rigid technique” (p. xi). Throughout the rehearsal process, actors and directors alike must deeply engage with the exercises to understand their meaning—which will change and morph through time and context—and can, and even should, make adjustments as they go to find what works best for them and their ensemble.

Composition is also an important part of the Viewpoints approach, which extends and applies Viewpoints to the creation of scenes or plays, what Bogart and Landau (2005) call “writing as a group, in time and space, using the language of theater” (p. 137). Actors come together to create short pieces in which they create solutions to definitive tasks, using raw material and the awareness cultivated through the Viewpoints to create action through movement. Compositions are created quickly and, importantly, they do “not come from analysis

or ideas” (Bogart & Landau, 2005, p. 138) but from *doing*. It is in part for this reason that inclusion of Viewpoints in rehearsal often means “the physical definition of a scene prior to the introduction of dialogue” (Herrington, p. 156), because the actors are finding the movement of the scene in time and space before they are worrying about the specific dialogue; their cultivated instincts, intuitions, and bodily knowledge shape the human movement of the scene, rather than recreating or mirroring the words of the script.

A curriculum of awareness.

Across each of these four approaches, the body is essential to knowing, understanding, creating, and participating through the rehearsal process. As the work of the actor is to live out a story on stage, the body becomes the lived medium, and each of these approaches stresses the importance of cultivating the body so that it can sense and understand, and so that its movement can be precise, intentional, and instinctive, even before they become rational or cognitive. However, in each of these approaches, the body does not function in a vacuum; rather the body is a source that contributes to creating a robust inner—mental and emotional—life. The cultivation of the body occurs in partnership with the more rational exploration of the text and a character’s objectives; these activities are not pursued separately, but they are intertwined—implicating and impacting one another. What is learned through the body, influences what is known about the character. What is read in the script creates new possibilities for the movement of the body. Physical work provides a foundation for other activities and is structurally integrated with the entire rehearsal process; it is not seen as something outside of it or ancillary to it. Indeed, what the body brings to the rehearsal process is not the replacement of the mind, but new possibilities for its engagement through heightened senses of awareness that open access to capacities not often cultivated. As Francesconi and Tarozi (2012) point out, “Phenomenology makes a

distinction between two different attitudes, the natural and the phenomenological” (p. 281).

Indeed, this phenomenological attitude is exactly what theater rehearsal cultivates—a greater attention to, awareness of, and understanding through lived, physical experience.

This is why, when understood in this way, rehearsal becomes a clear image of embodied educational practice in which awareness building and consciousness cultivation are integrated into a dynamic and participatory learning space that focuses on the whole self, the whole space, and the whole ensemble. Indeed, because of this inherent integration rehearsal can be understood more broadly not just as an example of embodied educational practice but a curriculum of awareness: each exercise, each sequence, each experience deepens actors’ awareness of their bodies, their minds, their characters, their space, and how this awareness provides transformational possibilities for engaging with one another and their audiences. This awareness is not a rational one, but an embodied one. As Francesconi and Tarozi (2012) point out, “Metacognition cannot substitute for awareness, but awareness must be considered as its necessary support... We mean that it is necessary to be aware, present, and mindful in everything one is doing, saying, and thinking, or reflecting: being there, where we are” (p. 273). This is no easy task. As we have seen in these theater approaches, cultivating this ability to be aware and present is a hallmark of the actor’s craft that requires significant training, attention, and discipline and that fundamentally requires learning to access different capacities for sense-making and learning. As Francesconi and Tarozi (2012) write, “To take control of our body and to be aware of it requires learning how our body shapes not only the mind, but also our social interaction and life. Being aware of the bodily dimensions of our identity and of the bodily dimension of our interaction with the world means to be able to recognize, appreciate, and control, when necessary, the emotions, sensations, and meanings that emerge from them” (p.

275). From Stansilavski's psycho-physical approach to Bogart and Landau's Viewpoints, actors cultivate their ability to do just that. Rehearsal not only offers us a robust image of curriculum, but it also offers an image of an embodied curriculum of awareness for, as Stanislavski writes, *"Only through inner awareness of movement can we begin to learn to understand and feel it"* (p 365, emphasis in original) and from that awareness new possibilities for being present, active, and understood are born.

Socio-Materiality and Rehearsal: A Curriculum of Relationality

“Participation is the concept that allows us to ask how materials and other participants participate in practice. It is a concept that guides us to observe and account for what happens, what is done in practice.”

—Estrid Sørensen, 2009, p. 28

Conceptions of socio-materiality.

Socio-materiality is another framework that has begun to permeate and influence educational discourse over the last two decades. Concerned with how materials and relationships shape human actions, behavior, and knowing, socio-materiality in education seeks to understand the roles materials play in creating learning. Estrid Sørensen (2009), a leading voice in the field of socio-materiality in education, argues that too often materials are simply seen as tools that humans can employ to achieve learning and that we are generally blind to how materials actually play an active role in shaping learning. Instead, Sørensen (2009) challenges educators to consider “what practices take place when a particular arrangement of social and material components is established” and “what practice is constituted through this social-material arrangement, what knowledge comes about, what kinds of pupils and teachers are created, and what learning is achieved” (p. 2). In order to illustrate how these kinds of questions, considerations, and even basic awareness are often absent, to the detriment of educational praxis, Sørensen (2009) uses the example of introducing laptops into schools to show how unexamined the impact of materials often are in our learning spaces. She points out that even as of 2006 (the number is undoubtedly higher today), the United States had on average one computer per 4.2 pupils and the investment in computers within schools totaled \$30 billion, which worked out to be roughly \$240 per American household. However, despite this investment and increase in access, a report by the Department of Education in 2007 showed that no there had been no difference in academic

achievement between students who used software programs for learning and those who had not. Similarly, the *New York Times* reported that some districts dropped laptop programs altogether because of a number of factors, including teacher resistance, little if any measurable impact on learning or achievement (as measured by grades and test scores), abuse by students, logistical and technical challenges, and high maintenance costs (Sørensen, 2009). Clearly, the introduction of computers and laptops into classrooms did not have the intended effect of increases in learning and performance; however, Sørensen goes one step further to ask the question that is, troublingly, often absent: if they didn't deliver the expected results, what did they deliver? She illuminates how by not paying attention to lived consequences that don't align with the anticipated or desired ones, we severely limit our understanding of our educational environments, contexts, and learning behaviors:

What has all of this money been invested into? We know that it has been invested into materials, and according to the *New York Times*, these materials failed to deliver the expected result. But what, then, did they deliver? What can we say about the educational practices that have been invested into? Which educational practices have come about? Not the ones imagined, obviously, but what then? After having invested so much money and so much effort into technology in schools, it is upsetting that the question of what practices these bring about is widely neglected. Such questions—and their answers—could teach us a lot, not only about the ways in which materials contribute to educational practice, but also about what was wrong with our initial expectations (Sørensen, 2009, p. 1).

What Sørensen does not specifically call out, but that I would argue is also true, is that by not asking these questions, we ignore significant elements of the lived reality of learning and of the

lived curriculum, and by ignoring these elements, we cannot create, imagine, or implement effective changes or interventions because we do not have an accurate or full picture of the current state of educational practice.

While socio-materiality is a relatively new framework (coming into prominence over the last several decades) for examining and understanding educational practice, Dewey could be considered as a pre-cursor to socio-material thought (Fenwick, Edwards, & Sawchuck, 2011). Dewey understood education as emerging through interactions and transactions between learners and their material and non-material environment. As Powell and Lajevic (2011) point out, Dewey “argued that an attunement to the ‘qualities of things,’ as afforded through working within a medium, is what potentially moves someone beyond mere habit and routine to a more conscious awareness of new possibilities and imaginings” (p. 38). However, as Fenwick et al. (2011) point out, approaches such as Dewey’s, Piaget’s, and Vygotsky’s still tend to privilege the intentional human agent who is separate from the materials and who engages with them either as tools to achieve an end or as an object to be examined. For those working within a socio-material framework, materials are also agents that critically shape activity and knowing (Fenwick et al., 2011; Sørensen, 2009). What’s more, these material agents do not exist or act as distinct and fixed objects, but rather what matters is the “effects of dynamic materializing processes that cause [materials] to emerge through gatherings and to act in indeterminate entanglements of local everyday practices” (Fenwick et al., p. 1). This relationality is a key component of socio-materiality; meanings and materials are not fixed, but rather they are co-created, determined, and shaped by their context, other materials, and interactions. They are not static but rather they evolve over time, requiring ongoing investigation, encountering, attention, and understanding.

There are many different approaches (or “arenas” as they are called by Fenwick et al.) that take up, explore, and conceptualize socio-materiality and in which socio-materiality is deeply situated. While these arenas are different, they also share certain similar characteristics that are core to socio-material thought: 1) they take whole systems, rather than isolated elements, into account, 2) they focus on tracing the interactions and formation of human and non-human elements in relationship to one another, rather than looking at discrete or static elements, and 3) they understand human learning and knowing as being situated within material and human action, rather than as something that is determined or exists outside of material considerations (Fenwick, et al., 2011). Fenwick, et al. (2011), outline four different arenas—complexity theory, cultural historical activity theory, actor-network theory, and spatiality theory—that are situated within a socio-material framework. First, complexity theory, which has its origins in evolutionary biology, mathematics, systems theory, and cybernetics, takes emergence as its central theme. This group of theories understands “phenomena, events, and actors” as “mutually dependent, mutually constitutive, and actually emerg[ing] together in dynamic structures” (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. 7). Second, cultural historical activity theory, also known as CHAT, also focuses on relationships between different elements of a system, however, it takes as its primary focus the historical evolution of a system, including its historical artifacts, values, social norms, and more. Within this theoretical approach, material artifacts are considered to be the primary mode of transmitting knowledge over time, and attention is paid to how tensions and contradictions within a system are created and resolved, often through the creation or emergence of new objects, motives, or norms (Fenwick et al., 2011). Third, actor-network theory (ANT), focuses on *how* systems come together (or not) and stabilize (or not) (DeVincentis, 2011; Fenwick et al, 2011). Networks are created through both human and non-human influence and

they are the constant source of negotiations in which the relationships are not predetermined, but are evolving. Lastly, spatial theory understands space not as a container or an object of study, but as a theoretical tool for analysis and as an element in shaping how learning (or action) happens and how it is enabled or limited. According to Fenwick et al. (2011), “Spatial theories raise questions about what knowledge counts, where, how it emerges in different time—spaces, how subjectivities are negotiated through movements and locations, and how learning is enmeshed as, and in, the making of spaces” (p. 11). Indeed, while different, it is clear how each of these four arenas are fundamentally relational and recognize elements of a system as mutually constitutive and dynamic; each arena seeks to complicate our understanding of ourselves, the objects and environment that surround us, and our learning and knowing, by showing how they are contingent and interrelated.

Indeed, transitioning from thinking about embodiment theory in the previous section to thinking about socio-materiality here is perhaps a fitting transition, for if embodiment is understanding through sense perception of and interaction with the world by the body, then what is perceived and engaged with are the materials and relationships in which the body is actively participating, which is the focus of socio-materiality. In discussions of embodiment, Francesconi and Tarozzi (2012) point to how the body, not just the brain, has evolved to recognize both other bodies and its material surroundings:

The recent discovery of the so-called mirror-neuron system has clarified how the body fully contributes to the understanding of actions executed by others, and even of their meanings; the mirror system works both when a person acts and when he/she sees someone else acting. The most important result here seems to be the fact that we are—evolutionarily—predisposed to recognize what another person is doing. The same can be

said about objects: seeing an object means to evoke automatically what we will or may do with that object, it means to be already ready for a potential action, already tuned in with the surroundings, both material and social (p. 275).

Socio-material theorists might take issue with the fact that the focus above is on what humans “will or may do” with an object, as it seems to perpetuate the utilitarian or instrumental relationship to materials that they seek to re-define. However, I think that here Francesconi and Tarozzi point more to our body’s pre-reflective consciousness that is already attuned to, reacting to, and therefore impacted and shaped by, its material and social surroundings. Even if this pre-reflective understanding and perception of the surroundings never enters into reflective self-consciousness in which the relationships become an object of reflection and conscious awareness, they are shaping both lived experience and consciousness. Additionally, embodiment, similar to socio-material thought, “tends to emphasize knowing as enactment rather than as ‘seeing’ or as representation” (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. 2); knowledge is not static or distant, but rather it is determined through the body and environment. Both embodiment and socio-materiality are concerned with the relational, the contingent, and the lived, which provides a sense of continuity between the two frameworks and indeed, through embodiment, offers another way of perceiving and understanding the nexus of relationships with which socio-materiality is concerned.

As with embodiment above, I offer theater rehearsal as an image of educational practice that fundamentally takes up socio-materiality as a way of knowing and understanding by showing how relational thinking and the acknowledgement of the role materials play within both the physical staging of the show and the imagined-world of the play are inherently built into the rehearsal process. Unlike other curricular and educational practices that Sørensen (2009) argues

are blind to the impact of materials and the larger socio-materiality of learning, rehearsal provides a model and an image of educational practice in which an awareness of and engagement with materials is both explicit and examined. Materials and the relationships of materials, environment, bodies, and more in the rehearsal space are acknowledged as playing an active role in the creation of the play and, by extension, the actor's learning. As with embodiment, rehearsal acknowledges the important role of social-material relationships in creation and in learning, while maintaining the focus on the whole self through a variety of practices that build on, work off of, and dance around one another. Socio-materiality is one framework that is integrated within the curriculum; it is not the only approach through which all other approaches are filtered. In the following pages, I will explore how socio-material approaches manifest in the rehearsal process, and how, through this integration, rehearsal can be understood and imagined as a curriculum of relationality.

Socio-materiality in rehearsal.

In this section, I focus on how socio-materiality is enacted and examined in the rehearsal process in two main ways: first through creation of the imaginary world of the play and second through the physical staging of the play in space and time. As discussed in the first section of this thesis, textual analysis is an important part of the rehearsal process, in which actors engage deeply with the text to interpret its meaning. It is a process that requires a great deal of attention—noticing details and relationships, making connections between statements, descriptions, and themes, offering ways of understanding a word or a scene, identifying actions and objectives, and connecting the script with the actors' own subjective experiences as a way of understanding, knowing, and ultimately embodying. When rehearsing a play, the script is the jumping off point from which the actors, directors, and designers create an entire world. This

world relies heavily on details; details make it concrete and help the actors shift from vague, general gestures that are mere demonstration, to robust, focused, intentional actions that are specific and that allow the actors and audience alike to connect with the reality of the character. An important part of understanding and creating these details is engaging with the materials, spaces, and relationships that are set up within the script and that multiply based on additional interpretation by the actor, director, or designer. Even before the first set piece has been designed or the first prop brought on stage, the actors are challenged to think through these materials and to explore the impact that they have on the feelings, actions, behaviors, and relationships of the characters and how the actors' relationships and behaviors in turn impact and shape the meaning of the materials for both those within the scene and also for the audience. As Stella Adler advocated, "when reading, immediately see through your imagination" (Rotté, 2000, p. 181). For instance, if you are doing a play set in 1929 before the Great Depression, you must think through and imagine what the world looked like at that time—what were the social norms, what did a middle-class house look like, what technologies were available, what wasn't available, how did you transport from one place to another, how long did it take? Adler makes clear that "the actor needs to understand the norms and standards, or the rules of the society depicted in a play" for "everyone exists within a society and is influenced by its life" (Rotté, 2010, p. 172). Socio-material questions are explicit and examined from the onset; it is understood how the materials shape the world of the play, the interactions, the characters, and the *learning* that is happening through the rehearsal process.

In order to illustrate this, I turn to a one act play that I workshopped with a small group of high school students as a part of a unit exploring silence in theater. Written in 1889, August Strindberg's one-act play, *The Stronger*, is set in a ladies' café on Christmas Eve, presumably

somewhere in France. It comprises only two characters: Mrs. X and Miss Y. Miss Y does not speak for the duration of the play, though there is significant and powerful interaction between the two characters. I chose this play intentionally because, as one of the characters does not speak, it not only gave the students an opportunity to think about silence in the play, but to think even more closely than usual about what we learn from what is absent in addition to what is present and to focus on other aspects—rather than dialogue—for creating a character. Often times, when working on creating a character, students focus most on what their character says, rather than what he or she does not say, what they do, or what they have. While dialogue is of course an important part of understanding a character, it is only part of that exploration, and this exercise gave them a chance to really focus on other elements of a script or a play that allow us to develop a character, specifically in this play, the materials.

The Stronger as a play not only invites, but requires, the kind of interaction that Eisner (2002) described as cultivating the “ability to perceive things, not merely to recognize them” (p. 5) due to its lack of explicit meaning. If we were to only *look* at the play, rather than *perceive* it, according to Eisner’s distinction, the text would seem to only be a monologue that jumps quickly from one subject, emotion, or thought to another. However, with the script, as with the arts in general, “we are given permission to slow down perception, to look hard, to savor the qualities that we try, under normal conditions, to treat so efficiently that we hardly notice they are there” (Eisner, 2002, p. 5). In this instance, that means investigating details, such as the fact that Miss Y has in front of her a “partly emptied bottle of beer” (Strindberg, 1889/1913, p. 171) but that Mrs. X orders hot chocolate, things that “under normal conditions” we would “hardly notice.” With a script, especially one so short, each word and stage direction is included purposefully and

requires attention, and actors/students must co-create the script's meaning through deeply analyzing, *perceiving*, the language of the play.

When the play opens, Miss Y is reading “an illustrated weekly” that she periodically exchanges for another. One of the first things that Mrs. X does upon entering is comments on the fact that she is reading these papers and uses them to tell a story of a sad wedding in which the bride read comics while the husband played billiards. She used the material that Miss Y was reading to comment on her status as a “poor bachelor” in an insulting way. She looks down on the reading of the papers as a sad and lonely existence on Christmas Eve, especially in contrast to the pretty baskets of gifts that she is carrying. She reveals the gifts to Miss Y—first a toy doll for her daughter and then a toy cork gun for her son that she pops in the direction of Miss Y. Such a display of the gifts could have multiple intentions and impacts—the gifts could be meant to make Miss Y feel painfully and jealously aware of her own lack of family. The popping of the gun in her direction is certainly meant to threaten under the veils of an innocuous game, to set Miss Y ill at ease, or perhaps just to jar and surprise. Mrs. X then pulls out a pair of slippers that are embroidered with tulips—a gift for her husband—out of the basket. She inserts her hands into the slippers and pretends to be her husband, causing Miss Y to start laughing. The laughing seems to simultaneously encourage and puzzle Mrs. X; she continues to use the slippers to mime which leads into seemingly slightly more comfort on her part, which leads into more honest and vulnerable topics of conversation. However, the same playful use of the slippers that seemed to make Mrs. X more comfortable also awakens disturbing ideas that ultimately deeply change the meaning of the slippers and of the hot chocolate; Mrs. X works to reclaim them as her own despite the troubling realization regarding Miss Y and her husband that the slippers both exposed, confirmed, and perhaps partially assuaged. Indeed, it is a terrific example of not only

how the materials shape the interactions and the world of the play, but also how the world and situation can shape the materials and how materials and their meaning can change over time.

This analysis and exploration makes explicit the complex ways that the materials and relationships within the world of the play impact and are impacted by one another. The actors understand how their characters are part of a system, made up of other humans as well as non-human elements, that is situated, contingent, and relational. Even the term “world of the play” demonstrates rehearsal’s orientation toward the holistic and the socio-material; actors do not create their character within a vacuum—the character is essentially shaped by and contributes to shaping the entire world in which they interact.

The second main way that socio-materiality is brought to the forefront in the rehearsal process is through the physical staging of the play, including costumes, sets, and props. After attention has been paid to the details of the materials through the analysis of the script, that understanding moves from conceptual understanding to physical, lived understanding by bringing the characters, the scenes, and the sets to life. This part of rehearsal always provides deeper learning as the actor’s objectives become actions, not thoughts. The actor learns through the body, through play, through improvisation, through touch, and direction, and throughout all of these modes, the socio-material is present. Like each word in the script, each material, each action, and each set piece present is (or at least should be) intentional. Because it is a constructed and heightened world, everything is there to further the storyline and contribute in some meaningful way to the world of the play. As such, the way that the actor encounters the materials around him/her—just like the way that he or she moves, uses language, and breathes—is automatically elevated to the point of having greater attention and *intention* in a way that we do

not often have in normal, everyday life. The rehearsal room is like a laboratory for cultivating noticing and being, for becoming more attuned with one's body and surroundings.

While some of the socio-material elements and implications may have been examined in table work and textual analysis section of rehearsal, they take on new meaning when they are enacted, for, to return to Fenwick et al. (2011), socio-materiality “tends to emphasize knowing as enactment rather than as ‘seeing’ or as representation” (p. 2). We see this play out in the rehearsal process. To demonstrate, we can come up with an imaginary scene: let's pretend that I am a factory worker's wife and the foreman's wife has dropped in to my apartment unexpectedly. In the script, it mentions that a rusty teapot is on the stove. As actors, we have paid attention to this detail as we did our textual analysis; it was included in the script, and it must have been included for some reason. In creating my character, I thought about how this teapot shows that I, as my character, do not have much money. I cannot afford to replace the teapot, otherwise I most certainly would have. Or, perhaps, I don't drink tea. I thought about how I feel with the rusty teapot sitting on the stove. Do I mind that it is there? Is it a constant reminder of my inability to afford a new one?

Indeed, by the time we are beginning to stage the play, we have thought through many of the implications of the materials in the world of the play, but then to live them, to feel them brings on a different level of knowing. Behaviors change and evolve as the relationships become real and not only conceptual. Let's say that the set is before us, and the rusty tea pot is on the stove. The foreman's wife comes in. Standing there, physically across from her, I feel immediately uncomfortable and ill at ease. Why is she here, I wonder? I am conscious of my surroundings and how out of place her cleanly pressed white dress looks against the backdrop of the run-down upholstery of our tired couch. I look around for something to ease the tension, to

show my manners—an act of courtesy. I see the teapot. It is rusty, and the rust makes me not want to drink out of it; the rust could end up in the tea. It makes me embarrassed of it. I don't offer my visitor tea because of it. Now I worry that I am rude, and that she thinks I have no manners. But I don't want to apologize, in case it draws attention to my rusty teapot, when perhaps, just maybe she will not have noticed it sitting on the stove. All of this goes through my head in a moment, but it is long enough to keep me silent and bring an uncomfortable silence to the room. I shift in front of the stove to block her view of the teapot; better her think I don't have a teapot than her think we are too poor to replace the rusty one we have.

Indeed, all of this mental, emotional, and social interaction has been caused by the teapot and my relationship to the teapot and to my visitor. This nexus of socio-material relationships shapes the entire scene—everything including the pace of our dialogue (the uncomfortable silence as I search for a way to make her welcome and fail), our position on the stage (my intentional shifting to hide the teapot), and the dynamic of our relationship (my discomfort, self-consciousness, sense of inferiority, and apprehension for being thought rude). When the scene is over we might talk about it. The director asks us how that felt and what actions were driving us in the scene. I mention the interaction with the teapot. The actor playing the foreman's wife, depending on the character, might discuss her disgust at the dirty upholstery at the couch that caused her to not sit down, which in turn reinforced the power relationship of the situation because of her physical level (standing), or she might remark how, in trying to be polite, she sat on the tired couch only to become more self-conscious of the contrast it made between her own fine clothes and the fabric on which she was sitting, which reinforced her own embarrassment and resulted in more prolonged silence.

This attentiveness to the materials and physical relationships of the play manifests in many ways across systems of rehearsal. Costumes often provide a terrific example of how materials both shape behavior and contribute to the creation of a character. It is no coincidence that one of the first costume elements introduced into rehearsals are often the characters' shoes; the shoes are the material that connect the individual to the ground and shape how they walk, their posture, and how their bodies move through space. A character in delicate high-heels moves very differently than a character in heavy work boots, and this is not a trivial difference. The shoes literally help shape the movement that literally helps shape the character. They are all influencing and shaping one another as the actor, shoes, stage floor, and the script interact together to create the living, breathing, moving character on stage. Costumes are not just decoration; they shape behavior and emotion; they limit how you can or should or do act on a stage. For example, Meyerhold remarked how "In a tail coat one must keep to half movements. Elbows have to be held closer to the body. Gestural thrusts must be short, movements light. When Dalmatov made his entrance in a tail coat, it was already a whole production number. It was worth paying money to see" (Gladkov, 1997, p. 103). However, it is not just the costume who shapes the character, it is also the character who can shape the costume. Again, for Meyerhold, "The costume is also a part of the body. Look at the mountain dweller. It would seem that the *burka* [felt cloak worn in the Caucasus] must conceal his body, but usually it's sewn in such a way that when worn by a real Caucasian, it's all alive, all pulsating, and through the *burka* you can see the rhythmic waves of the body" (Gladkov, 1997, p. 111). The clothing changes depending on who wears it. For someone who is at home in the costume, they can breathe new life and movement into the very fabric. What's more, the costume can play a creative role in the development of the character itself—it can provide inspiration or it can even

seem to bring a character or idea into being, as if the idea were born out of or housed within the fabric itself. In Stanislavski's *An Actor's Work*, Tortsov looks for "a costume that would suggest a character to interest me" (p. 520). When his eyes settle on the garment that will eventually become his costume for the scene work, it is apparent what an impact it has:

My attention lighted on a simple morning coat. It was remarkable for the unusual material from which it was made, a sandy grey-green coat I'd never seen before. It was faded and covered in mildew and dust and ash. I felt anyone in that coat would look like a ghost. As I examined this old jacket I felt something vaguely rotten and repulsive, and at the same time fearful and lethal stirring (Stanislavski, 1938/1953/2008, p. 520).

In addition to costumes, the staging itself is an interplay of many parts that impacts the characters, the actors, and the story itself. As Meyerhold states, "An actor's movements on a round platform are not the same as on a square one. They're different at the proscenium than at the back of the stage" (Gladkov, 1997, p. 107). The actor's movements, the meanings of those movements, and the audience's perceptions of those movements depend on where the actor is within space; his or her physical actions are shaped by the space and the surroundings, just as the physical actions, in turn also contribute to the shape of the space. An actor's movements can by turn make a space feel bigger or smaller, warmer or colder, more welcoming or fearsome. It is a constant interaction and web of dynamics. Neither the space nor the actor are fixed; they constitute and evolve with one another through the life of rehearsal and through the life of the play. Space and distance can become agents within the play, for as Meyerhold cries, "Get closer to the door before you exit!...The closer you are to the door, the more effective your exit. In moments of climax, the seconds of stage time and centimeters on the floor decide everything" (Gladkov, 1997, p. 103).

This concept of time, space, and surroundings shaping the world of the play, individual behavior, and the audience understanding of the story is also a key element in the Viewpoints approach. Architecture is specifically called out as one of the Viewpoints of Space and it deals specifically with awareness of the physical environment in which an actor is working and how awareness of that space impacts and shapes movement. The Viewpoint is broken down into five qualities: solid mass, texture, light, color, and sound, and the goal of this Viewpoint is to help actors “learn to dance with the space, to be in dialogue with a room, to let movement (especially Shape and Gesture) evolve out of our surroundings” (Bogart and Landau, 2005, p. 10). Directors, scenic designers, lighting designers, and sound designers come together to create a material and dynamic space that shapes and creates meaning both for and with the actors and for and with the audience. The play is never the acting by itself, the set by itself, the lighting by itself, or the costumes by itself; rather, each of these elements comes together in a complex, interrelated, inexorable, evolving whole that cannot be understood by its parts alone.

A curriculum of relationality.

In these ways, rehearsal can be understood as an image of socio-materiality in education as it involves closely examining and understanding—both conceptually and phenomenologically—the impact and interplay of materials, people, environments, characters, and contexts, both within the world of the play and within the rehearsal room itself. The social and physical materials of the play are recognized and acknowledged as playing a role in shaping the world, the actor’s behaviors, and the outcome of the story. They are respected and observed, and through the process of textual analysis and character development, actors take up questions very similar to the ones Sørensen (2009) asked at the beginning of this section regarding what practices are constituted in certain material contexts, what knowledge comes about, and what

kinds of people and characters are created. From the beginning, it is understood that the characters in the play do not exist separately from their context; they are situated within a cultural and physical set of circumstances (the “given circumstances”). What follows is that creating a character means that the actors must first, understand, flesh out, and create those circumstances, because without understanding the circumstances, they are unable to fully understand the character. However, the circumstances might evolve throughout the course of the play as the character grows or changes. The circumstances and the character are mutually determined; they shape one another. What is key here though is that neither the circumstances nor the character are ever considered in isolation, and in this way, the actor’s work is fundamentally socio-material. Through the rehearsal process, whole networks of relationships are examined, honored, explored, experienced, and recognized as interconnected.

It is for these reasons that rehearsal becomes a vibrant image of socio-materiality in practice, and, what’s more an image of a comprehensive curriculum of relationality. The overarching posture, as well as the individual practices, of the rehearsal process focus on how being and acting alike are relational practices that are implicated in dynamic systems of people, places, things, norms, and environments. Learning never happens in isolation; it is the product of a disciplined, intentional, creative, and sometimes messy interplay of ideas, possibilities, and decisions. Actors learn to ask questions about things and places and connections, they improvise with peers and sets, they play and experiment, always attuned to how their behavior and choices are changing the context and how the context is shaping their own behavior. Indeed, rehearsal provides an image of curriculum that echoes Aoki’s (1993, 2003) and Pinar’s (2004, 2011) ideas of curriculum as a fundamentally relational, reflective practice. The understanding of rehearsal and socio-materiality is made possible by the curriculum of awareness that is likewise integrated

into the overarching curriculum of rehearsal. By having a heightened sense of awareness that is cultivated through embodied approaches, actors become more attuned to the socio-material within their work, as well as to the relationality of all they do on stage. However, the relationality that underscores the rehearsal process and the actor's work, can have implications that stretch far beyond the rehearsal room; by understanding the socio-material and relational nature of the world of the play, actors learn to bring this same awareness to their own lives, raising questions about how materials, places, norms, space, and cultures may be shaping their own lives, in ways that before went unquestioned.

Critical Pedagogy and Rehearsal: A Curriculum of Questioning

“Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed—even in part—the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world.”
—Freire, 1970/1996, p. 68.

“Because dialogue is an encounter among women and men who name the world, it must not be a situation where some name on behalf of others. It is an act of creation; it must not serve as a crafty instrument for the domination of one person by another...Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absences of a profound love for the world and for people. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself.”
—Freire, 1970/1996, p. 68.

“Those, like myself, who are teachers – and students – of theatre, in reality we are students and teachers of human beings...When we study Shakespeare we must be conscious that we are not studying the history of the theatre, but learning about the history of humanity. We are discovering ourselves. Above all: we are discovering that we can change ourselves, and change the world.”
—Boal, 1974/2008, p. ix

Conceptions of critical pedagogy.

Lastly, in order to show how the theater rehearsal process is an image and model of a fundamentally integrated—and integrative—curriculum, we examine how rehearsal embodies philosophies of critical pedagogy, both through specific practices and also through the larger attitude of and approach to rehearsal itself. Critical pedagogy is more a philosophical framework than a set of practices, and within critical pedagogy, there are many different understandings and approaches (McLaren, 1994; Rhem, 2013). Paulo Freire’s 1970 book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, is widely considered the foundational text of critical pedagogy and as central to its development in the decades since. For Freire (1970/1996), dialogue is an essential tenant of education; it creates and re-creates the world as individuals name the world in interaction with one another. They bring it into being together, each with their own agency and the ability to contribute to its making. This kind of dialogue is not a superficial or argumentative dialogue; it is

a dialogue whose foundations are love, humility, faith in humankind, and critical thinking. For Freire (1970/1996), critical thinking is “thinking which perceives reality as a process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity—thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved” (p. 73). Such an understanding of critical thinking is aimed at continuing transformation in the service of continuing the humanization of individuals. Freire (1970/1996) goes on to say that without dialogue there can be no communication, and without communication there is no education. He argues that it is exactly this kind of true, love-based dialogue that is missing from the banking model of education that continues to dominate our education system today. In the banking model of education, the focus of education is to indoctrinate students and to adjust them to a static reality which they have no power in shaping, creating, or changing. In this model, reality is something to which they must conform; it is not something in which they participate. However, with dialogue (and education that takes dialogue as its foundation) the aim becomes to create and transform reality together, and the starting point of such educational program content “must be the present, existential, concrete situation reflecting the aspirations of the people” (Freire, 1970/1996, p. 76).

Dialogue is a foundational tenant of critical pedagogy as it empowers individuals to exercise their own humanity and recognize the humanity of others by encountering the world and transforming reality by naming it through their own experience. With its focus on transformation, agency, and mutual constitution and creation of the world, critical pedagogy understands education as a fundamentally political act (Rhem, 2013) with one of its goals being to “raise awareness of the situation, which is a prelude to making changes to reduce the inequities” (Sandars, 2017). While critical pedagogy is fundamentally political, it is not so in a

dogmatic sense. Rather, it is political in the sense that it pushes against the dominant banking model of education (which, is not, itself, a-political), and it is not value-free. It explicitly values human agency and liberation and resists inequalities, injustices, and oppression. As Laura Rendón states in Rhem (2013), what cannot get lost is that “ultimately the pedagogy should be about liberation, about humility and healing” (p. 4). It is a pedagogy of compassion, humility, exchange, and action, and it requires self-reflection and participation by the teacher as much as the student. In this pedagogical approach, the teacher is not a definitive authority but a rather a participant that also learns and changes through the process of education, what Freire (1970/1996) calls a “dialogical, problem-posing teacher-student” (p. 74). In critical pedagogy, education is not *for* or *about*, but *with*.

Another central idea of critical pedagogy, and another way in which it is inherently political, is its focus on understanding, unpacking, and disrupting the relationship between education and power. McLaren (1994) defines critical pedagogy as “fundamentally concerned with the centrality of politics and power in our understanding of how schools work” (p. 167). Frierian principles of recognizing student’s agency and fostering dialogue in which all voices contribute to the making of the world, not just the voices of those in power are certainly elements of this. However, for many critical theorists and pedagogues alike, critical pedagogy is also concerned with creating new forms of knowing, posing questions about the relationship between the margins and the center of power in schools and society, reading history through a political-pedagogical lens that examines issues of power and identity, upsetting the distinction between “high” and “low” culture, connecting curriculum to lived experience, and more (Mayo, 2015). Through critical pedagogy power structures are exposed and critiqued with the ultimate goal of subverting them. The power structures that shape schools and schooling are made explicit, and

questions are raised about who is benefiting from these structures, how they are shaping learning, and, as Freire (1970/1996) asks, on whose side are we when we are educating. Henry Giroux (2011) states that “education is fundamental to democracy and that no democratic society can survive without a formative culture shaped by pedagogical practices capable of creating the conditions for producing citizens who are critical, self-reflective, knowledgeable, and willing to make moral judgements and act in a socially responsible way” (p. 3), and critical pedagogy is key to resisting the educational norms and pushing us toward an educational model that meets these goals. For Giroux (2011), critical pedagogy is essential to countering the dominant corporate public pedagogy “whose aim is to produce competitive, self-interested individuals vying for their own material and ideological gain” (p. 134) that is set up by neoliberalism.

As we think about critical pedagogy and rehearsal, it is important to acknowledge that links between critical pedagogy and theater are not unique, and the most well know connection between the two is the work of Augusto Boal and the Theater of the Oppressed. Theater of the Oppressed (TO) is a system or school of theater practice established by Boal in the 1970s in Brazil, with his landmark book of the same name, *Theater of the Oppressed*, being published in 1974. Boal was greatly influenced by Freire’s work, and much of his work was based on *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and applying this thinking within the theater. At the core of TO is the belief that the audience member “must be a subject, an actor on an equal plane with those generally accepted as actors” (Boal, 1974/2008, p. 138). The system builds a participatory theater that creates spaces for collective discussion and action by bringing stories of oppression to life, involving the oppressed in the creation of their stories, and helping them recognize their own agency to intervene in those stories. Boal, and Theater of the Oppressed more broadly, seeks to have people offer solutions to their situations and explore these solutions through

improvisations and enacting different possibilities. Seeing these possible solutions play out through theater leads to dialogue and discussion around these potential actions and ultimately, hopefully, to the spectactors (a Boalian term that refers to the shifting role that occurs when an audience member becomes a participant, literally an *actor*, in the story) taking action based on these solutions in their real lives. Today, TO is practiced around the world, including by Jana Sanskriti, one of the most impactful TO groups which was formed in 1985 in West Bengal, India and reaches thousands of people each year across India and the world (Ganguly, 2017).

However, instead of focusing on TO and its relationship to critical pedagogy in the section below, I will focus on how theater rehearsal practices more generally offer an image of a curricular practice that embodies critical pedagogy. While not always explicitly political, rehearsal is a process that is mutually constituted and created; voices and subjectivities come together to shape the world of the play through questions and dialogue. As within critical pedagogy, the director-teacher is never purely a teacher, but rather a co-participant whose learning evolves with that of the actor-students. Relationships and power structures are examined and questioned, and characters, as well as the other actors, are approached with compassion and a desire for understanding. Indeed, when looking at the rehearsal process and its relationship to critical pedagogy, rehearsal can be understood as not only an image of a re-conceptualized curriculum, but also as a curriculum of questioning. Questions are an essential pedagogical mode within rehearsal that shape the content and the learning and that invite new perspectives and new knowledge. Combined with the approaches discussed in the previous sections, these questions are born from and seek to include various sites and kinds of knowledge; they form another layer of the dynamic and integrated curriculum that is the rehearsal process.

Critical pedagogy in rehearsal.

The way in which critical pedagogy is enacted in rehearsal is evident from the onset of the process in the way the actors approach the text, which is participatory, creative, subjective, and simultaneously compassionate and critical. Some performance scholars such as Carlson (2004) classify theater as a “presentation of a literary text,” however, to say that theater is a “presentation” is to miss one of the art form’s most important and powerful characteristics: participation. When creating a character and when performing a play, the actor does not merely “present” it as one would when unveiling a painting to present it to an audience or lifting the cover off a dish to present it to a customer at a restaurant. Presentation means to give what is already there; participation means to help create what will be. The work an actor does with the text is undeniably and incontrovertibly the later. For while the text often serves as a basis, it is by no means the end. The performance comes from the constant play between the text and the actor; the actors participate in the creation of the play. Their choices are not limitless—the actors’ work is *grounded* in the text—but neither is the text’s meaning fixed or stable, as Carlson claims. It is ever-changing, open to investigation, play, presence, and possibility, and it is made and re-made by the voices that contribute to it; just as in critical pedagogy, reality is not fixed or static, but rather the creation of those who speak and name the world, and in doing so participate in its making and re-making. In the rehearsal process, the actor’s participation in the creation of the play is explicit, intentional, and acknowledged. Just as critical pedagogy emphasizes creating the world together through naming the it from multiple perspectives and experiences, rehearsal focuses on creating the world of the play together by both examining the perspectives of the characters, speaking through these perspectives, and bringing actors’ own perspectives to bear in the development of their roles.

This participatory approach to both the text and the world of the play have been touched on briefly in the first section of this thesis within the discussion of textual analysis and more recently in the discussion of socio-materiality and the focus on examining context, relationships, and materials within a play's script to help understand and create the characters and the entire arc, story, and meaning of the play. However, focusing on critical pedagogy allows us to take both of these elements a step further to think more specifically about both *how* textual analysis occurs and also about the broader nexus of relationships, power dynamics, and subjectivities that comprise the play and are the focus of both textual analysis and overall character work. First, to build on the discussion of examining the script of *The Stronger* in the previous section, textual analysis at the very beginning of the process, usually called table work, involves reading the play with very close attention and discussing it together with the director and other actors. This calls the actors to read the text at a higher level of awareness, noticing the details, and more importantly, asking what they might mean for the play or the character. Together the cast asks questions about why a specific action has been taken, they discuss why a stage direction reads the way it does, and how language is used by characters in different contexts (e.g. in Shakespeare's plays when the characters speak in prose or in verse). Each of these elements becomes a jumping off point for creation and imagination. The actors and directors together offer their perspectives on how these elements come together and how they create meaning, asking questions, offering answers, and discussing multiple perspectives. The process is like trying to piece together a jigsaw puzzle that has no right answer; the answer is shaped by the group of people creating it. It is the kind of dialogue that critical pedagogy calls for—full of critical thinking and care as actors and the director alike communally work toward creating something new.

As a part of this process, the actors discuss character's feelings, histories, and the power relations that often structure these elements. They discuss the characters' behaviors and the needs that drive them. To return to the example of the imaginary play in which the foreman's wife enters the apartment of one of the factory workers, the actors must unpack the power relations at work here through asking questions and examining the situation from multiple viewpoints. First, the foreman's wife is in a clear position of power in many ways; she has more money and her husband oversees the other character's spouse. However, the scene takes place in the worker's apartment, which raises the question, does this provide the worker's wife with more power as she is in her own space? Perhaps it depends—has the foreman's wife been invited or has she dropped by unexpectedly? If it is the latter, this might show that the foreman's wife has the power to enter the worker's apartment uninvited, reinscribing the sense of inferiority of the worker's wife by showing that even her apartment is not truly her domain and that even in her home she is not beyond the reach of the power of the foreman. However, we must also ask, how does the foreman's wife speak? Is she terse? If so, does this come from rudeness and the desire to preserve class distinctions? Or does it come from her own embarrassment that shows her awareness of and discomfort with the power dynamics that shape the interaction? Each of these questions would be informed by the rest of the play and how these characters act or change throughout, but the answers to these questions also depend on the decisions and imaginations of the actors and directors participating in the play. Together, they must explore and ultimately create out of these possibilities an active, dynamic story in which each complex element plays out. For this reason, the play might be drastically different from one staging to another for even though the words will be the same, the actors may have interpreted or created their characters' motivations differently.

The complexity of the situations within plays and the multiple possibilities and motivations that exist often help actors become more aware of the complexities of their own lives and the greater world. Asking such questions of the characters allows actors to begin to ask such questions of themselves and of those around them to better understand both conscious and unconscious motivations and also gives actors a deeper appreciation for the complexity of life, power, and emotions. It becomes clear that there is no one perspective—one reality—but a number of questions, subjectivities, and possibilities that are moving in and around one another at all times. The need for multiple voices and the understanding of multiple perspectives is brought to the forefront, and compassion often increases as even seemingly evil or misguided characters are often understood to have motivations that come from the misguided intention to do good or from deep sources of pain or their own oppression. Theater is always simultaneously about theater and about life. As Lecoq (2000) wrote, “one part of my interest is focused on theater, the other on life. I have always tried to educate people to be at ease in both. My hope, perhaps utopian, is for my students to be consummate lovers of life and complete artists on stage” (p. 18).

In these ways, we see how rehearsal embodies many of the tenants of critical pedagogy—dialogue, questions, a mutually created world, and examination of power; however, as we look to the next stage of textual analysis and exploration in which actors begin working on individual characters and scenes, we see some of these characteristics develop even more strongly. While a text can be approached in many ways, I turn again to Stanislavski as his approach to textual analysis serves as the basis for most Western approaches. For Stanislavski, in order to understand the play and the characters’ role within the play, it must be broken up into “bits” and “tasks,” which are often translated and referred to in Western practice as units and

objectives (Merlin, 2003; Stanislavski, 1938/1953/2008). Units are used to break the play up into bigger chunks to make rehearsal more manageable and help the actors identify the core of the play and the elements without which it could not exist. This draws the actor's attention to the most important elements that drive the play and the story forward. Then, within the units, actors work to identify their characters' objectives, or the things that their characters are pursuing consciously or unconsciously. Objectives are the wants and needs that drive actions and keep the play moving forward (all objectives must be active and begin with an active verb) and that create the dramatic tension of the play when one character's objectives are opposed to another character's.

For Stanislavski, there are three different kinds of objectives: mechanical objectives, rudimentary psychological objectives, and psychological objectives (Merlin, 2003). Mechanical objectives are ones that are part of ritualistic or customary behavior, such as shaking hands when you greet someone or looking both ways before crossing the street. There is an objective in each ("to greet a person" and "to ensure safety before crossing the street") but not a lot of thought is given to either, making it more of a mechanical than psychological objective. Rudimentary psychological objectives are ones to which some thought is added and it is more conscious than a mechanical objective, but that is still fairly routine and not exceedingly individual or unique to the context. For example, when a parent crosses a road with a child he stops, reminds the child that we need to look both ways for safety, and then pauses to complete the action in a more pronounced sense than he or she would have done usually. The objective here is to "teach the child safety when crossing the street" but it is not more complex than that. A psychological objective is one that is very context specific and psychologically driven; for example, you are about to cross the street when you see a person on the other side with whom you are not on

speaking terms. You avert your eyes, and double back, and try to cross the street at the previous intersection. Your objective “is to avoid an uncomfortable situation with X by pretending not to have noticed her and inventing a reason to go back a block.” Objectives are often determined by asking, as the character, what do I want? The actor’s work is to ensure that the answer to this question is not vague or general “I want to be happy” or “I want power” but something that is active, specific, and that is directed toward the partner on stage. By ensuring that the objective involves the other character, actors turn their focus toward one another and give weight to their actions and drive the dramatic tension forward. For example, in the scene with the foreman’s wife and the worker’s wife, the foreman’s wife’s objective may be to “convince the worker’s wife to give her the name of a doctor who will perform an abortion” and the factory worker’s wife’s objective might be to “leave the house as soon as possible en route to a help another woman who is receiving an abortion without letting the foreman’s wife know why she must go.” The stakes are high in both objectives, and they are opposed. One character needs something from the other. The other needs her to leave. There is urgency and specificity behind each objective, that motivates their words and actions. This process helps the actors to become more reflective about their actions and intentions. Doing this work and talking through the objectives together also helps the actors come to greater understanding of the other character’s perspectives. What’s more, this process puts each actor in the shoes of his or her character and truly helps them to understand their motivations. It is extremely important in the rehearsal process that actors do not judge their characters from the outside, but that they seek to understand their characters from the inside. Very few people or characters intentionally do terrible things and perhaps even fewer people think that they are terrible, even when they do terrible things. There is some kind of motivation within that justifies their actions or there is a reason that they don’t

perceive the action as one that is bad. This justification or reason may be totally misguided, but it is real and shapes the character's or individual's actions, usually out of ignorance, fear, or pain. It is the actor's job to understand the character's motivation and perspectives, no matter how terrible the action might seem so that he or she can portray it truthfully on stage. However, this process of identifying objectives also creates more space for empathy and deeper understanding. By seeking to understand, rather than judge, and by exposing hidden causes that may be pitiable or empathetic, the process of textual analysis and objective identification helps create the sense of faith in humanity, the love, the compassion, the humility, and the openness that critical pedagogy requires and advocates. It seeks to bring elements of life and oppression to light so that new possibilities might be imagined, and in doing so it requires understanding and seeing from multiple points of view, which is what actors seek to do through this empathetic and rigorous character work. As Freire wrote, "If I do not love the world—if I do not love life—if I do not love people—I cannot enter into dialogue" (p. 71). The actor's work enables greater love for people and for life by cultivating the abilities to see beyond the surface and encounter the complex, messy, often painful, often beautiful, sometimes tragic web that is each person and our shared world.

Lastly, another way that the rehearsal process serves as a critical pedagogy is through the way that these exercises are all approached within an overarching framework of trust, community, and ensemble. As shown above, empathy is an important part of the rehearsal process as you encounter and understand different characters. However, empathy does not only exist within the world of the play; it exists within the rehearsal room as well. As touched on in the first section of this thesis, ensemble is often a key element of the rehearsal process. Actors and the director come together to co-create something new and dynamic; each person's success

is dependent on that of the other. Through physical exercises, actors learn to feel, sense, and trust one another. Through mutual purpose, they come together to support one another. Through tackling difficult topics and scenes in their work, they become vulnerable with one another. While it is not always the case, rehearsal is more often than not a space of love, safety, dialogue and trust. The director in rehearsal also plays the role of the “dialogical, problem-posing teacher-student” (Freire, 1970/1996, p. 74). In most cases, directors rarely give specific instructions; rather they pose questions. They challenge the actors to think in new ways, raise potential possibilities or considerations, and open thinking by offering queries. As Simon McBurney (2000) wrote of Lecoq, “Contrary to what people often think, he had no style to propose. He offered no solutions. He only posed questions” (p. ix). The same is true of many great directors. The director, like the teacher in critical pedagogy, does not have all the answers and does not shut down learning or creativity by posing fixed solutions. He or she learns along with the actors as they explore, imagine, trust, hope, and move from dialogue to action. As Freire (1970/1996) wrote, “It would be a contradiction in terms if dialogue—loving, humble, and full of faith—did not produce this climate of mutual trust, which leads the dialoguers into ever closer partnership in the naming of the world.” (p. 72). Quite similarly, it would be a contradiction in terms if rehearsal—concerned with understanding, humanity, empathy, dialogue, and co-creation—did not produce a climate of trust that opened up new possibilities for the play and beyond.

A curriculum of questioning.

Rehearsal is a practice into which the foundations of critical pedagogy are woven. Dialogue, co-creation, the awareness of power structures, and acknowledgement of lived experience all shape how a cast approaches a play and how individual actors approach a script through all of the ways detailed above. It is in this way that rehearsal offers an image of critical

pedagogy in action. In rehearsal, a critical pedagogical approach is not layered on top of a traditional curriculum-as-plan approach, but rather it shapes how knowledge is conceptualized and created throughout the entire process. Questions are key to the process—the director asks questions of the actors, the actors ask questions of their characters, themselves, and each other, and they all ask questions of the play and the world. Questions are the entry point into new possibilities and into critical, honest dialogue about everything from the life of a character to the history of a context. They create a space of encouraged and invited exploration and participation, and they challenge the actors to think differently and see with fresh eyes.

In this way, rehearsal can also be understood as an image of a curriculum of questioning, in which questions are the pathway to knowledge, to agency, and to finding and sharing one's voice. Questions allow individuals—both real and imaginary—to be understood. They create openings for empathy and compassion, rather than shutting down spaces of vulnerability and mistakes. They seek to preserve the complexity of the stories theater tries to tell, and they help us avoid flattening the complexity of life through assumptions or generalities. As one lives through the curriculum of rehearsal, questions shape their learning and their experience. They are asked to unite deep noticing and self-reflection to be able to ask tough and sometimes not apparent questions of themselves and their worlds. Such a practice is fundamentally critical and compassionate, and it recollects Pinar's (2004) ideas of complicated conversation and how complicated conversation acts as a site for learning. Such complication is made possible by looking more closely and, with humility and hope, opening one's self to the possibilities of being changed by and in turn changing the world.

Rehearsal as an Integrated Curriculum

As this section has attempted to show, rehearsal is a lived experience that integrates and intertwines practices that cultivate multiple ways of knowing, create community, and develop awareness and self-reflexiveness. Its parts are interrelated, and they cannot be separated from their enactment. Rehearsal is concerned with the heart, the mind, the body, and the environment, and as such, it builds a number of different theoretical approaches to teaching and learning—from embodiment to socio-materiality to critical pedagogy—directly into the lived landscape of the rehearsal process, and by extension the curricular space. Rehearsal acknowledges that none of these components—the mind, the heart, the body, and the environment—can exist without one another and that they are all integrated into a web of being and meaning that shapes and constitutes one another. This understanding of life, meaning, and experience as integrated, complex, and dynamic is reflected in how rehearsal is structured to be fundamentally integrative—making room for multiple co-existing (and co-creative) approaches and theories to come together in a cohesive, playful, emergent, and contingent process. Each of the approaches interact with and build off of one another. Embodiment cultivates deeper awareness and other ways of knowing and meaning-making that help individuals become more aware of the socio-material and how they are influenced by and influence the world around them. Likewise socio-materiality cultivates a greater understanding of the relationality of our world, our lives, our environments, and our learning, which can then leads to greater awareness that spurs questions and dialogue that embody critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy creates spaces for questions about the nature of our bodies and socio-materiality alike, and draws on our different ways of knowing to foster true, compassionate dialogue. These understandings and approaches inform and further each other in countless ways that are constantly evolving.

However, rehearsal is not a practice that incorporates these three theoretical frameworks alone; its defining characteristic is not that it integrates these approaches, but that it is fundamentally integrative so that any number of approaches could be incorporated into the very fabric of rehearsal without having to break a framework or reduce its impact. Understood in this way, rehearsal provides a sharp contrast to the dominant, curriculum-as-plan model. Within rehearsal, educators and theorists alike don't need to layer different theories of learning on top of the curriculum or adjust the curriculum to accommodate seemingly disparate approaches. Rather, rehearsal gives us a vibrant image of not only a reconceptualized curriculum, but one that is fluid, holistic, and dynamic. Indeed, I argue, that its fundamental integration shows another way in which rehearsal offers a powerful and fitting image for the possibilities of curriculum that has vast potential for transforming how we think and teach. As an image, rehearsal embraces rather than reduces the complexity of our lives and our world; it celebrates our humanity, and offers an image of learning in which education is not defined by seeking the right answer, but by asking the attentive question.

Section 3: Experiencing Rehearsal

“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 exercises 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.”

– Ann Bogart and Tina Landau, introducing their Viewpoints exercises (2005, p. 22)

Following a theoretical examination of many elements of rehearsal, I turn to a more experiential discussion and exploration of how these elements are constructed and interwoven to create the rehearsal experience. How does the experience of rehearsal happen? What is it exactly? How do you build these elements together to shape a lesson or curriculum? What does it feel like to undergo these elements? In this section I will engage in narrative, phenomenological inquiry about my experience participating in the Arts Oasis International Residency for Performers offered through the International University for Global Theater Experience (IUGTE) to explore these questions and more clearly show how the layered theoretical elements unite and overlap in action.

Arts Oasis is an international lab for performing arts practitioners who all work in different styles, techniques, and genres to come together and engage in practical research of contemporary performance practice under the leadership of Artistic Director, Sergei Ostrenko, a theater director, choreographer, and teacher. During the program participants work with a variety of different techniques, including the Ostrenko method of performer’s physical training and rehearsal which draws together and combines the physicality methods of Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, and Michael Chekhov, the principles of Meyerhold's Biomechanics, Tai Chi for performers, training by methods of improvisation, and scene composition from exercises to performance. The program is recommended for performers interested in learning about ensemble

building, structuring the rehearsal process, clarifying and honing what they already know, getting exposed to new techniques and methodologies, and ultimately, networking with practitioners from different countries and establishing future creative partnerships with like-minded people.

The week-long intensive is broken up into four programs of study each day. First there is a morning physical warm-up and breathing exercises that focus on centering the body and mind, heightening attention and concentration, and activating the muscles. This is followed by the morning practical session which is based on sequential exercises that involve improvisation, spatial exploration, and partner work that “explore how the systematized psycho-physical approach develops connection and cohesion among participants, fosters atmosphere of trust and group dynamics essential for collective creation” (IUGTE website, 2016). The afternoon session is focused on moving from exercises to etudes and mini-performances, connecting physical action, voice, gesture, movement, dance, and word, exploring the performer's physicality as the key to form, style, atmosphere and emotional development, and learning to build the composition of a physical form and scene. The workshops, and the short discussions that follow each section, help participants develop practical tools and valuable tips for creating contemporary physical theatre performances that move beyond the limits of a purely text-based approach while working in the confines of a limited rehearsal time. After the afternoon workshop, there is a short creative period in which actors work in small groups to compose and rehearse a scene or do other collaborative work informed by the theatrical practices and projects of the participating performers.

Throughout the residency, I collected field notes in two primary ways: taking notes during the workshop and writings in a reflective journal each night about the day's activities. The former, written in one journal, was a detailed description of the exercises and the sequences, with

notes from the post session discussions with the group. The second, written in a separate journal, focused on the emotional, felt, lived experience of the former. Each night I reflected on qualities of the day and how I felt looking back on it. I identified things that were being brought up in my mind and heart through the work, and I focused not so much on *what* we did, but on *how* it was experienced. I originally planned to take video and photos as well; however, the program coordinator asked that participants did not take video or photos during the workshop so that they remained present and engaged in the exercises and did not distract from the focus of the collective space. Taking these collective field notes, I work from a narrative approach (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) in which I develop the story of the rehearsal experience, focusing on a chronological showing of how it was structured and designed, the order of the exercises, and flow of content and practice, and the lived-experience and reaction through this process. However, I also approach this work through a heavily phenomenological framework. Phenomenology is an instinctive and logical partner for inquiry in theater; both phenomenology and theater are concerned with understanding lived experience, the recognition of the *being-in-the-world* of all things (Thompson, 2014), reflective awareness (Thompson, 2014; Van Manen, 1990, 1995), and intersubjectivity. Both theater and phenomenology, seek to bring heightened awareness and understanding to our “normal ways of getting by, being and doing, in the thralls of everydayness” (Thompson, 2014, p. 82). Throughout my narrative in the coming pages, I will focus on the qualities of the experience, my thoughts, attitudes, and actions, and emergent themes as they arise. I will work with representative anecdotes (Thompson, 2013) that draw together my experiences with the theories that I have discussed in the previous sections. I combine all of this information to create a more vivid picture of what it means to undergo a

rehearsal experience, how knowledge and meaning are created through the rehearsal process, and the feeling and lived-ness of rehearsal.

It is important to note that in this section I diverge from how I have addressed and encountered rehearsal thus far in this thesis. In the previous sections, I made claims and supported them with evidence. I made rational connections between arguments, reinforced my points through the thinking of other scholars, and created links between described practices and abstract concepts and theories. However, what I have done thus far is talk of lived experience in distant, almost clinical words that a dancer, a swimmer, a gymnast, a basketball player, an equestrian, an acrobat, a massage therapist, a yogi or countless others would undoubtedly recoil from. Why, they might ask, do you make it so intellectual? You speak of the body but you speak only with the mind. You speak of a holistic experience but then you break it down into parts to make it make sense. You approach an experience in a way that is antithetical to the experience itself. I admit, I am (at least partially) guilty as charged.

One afternoon during the residency, while we were sitting in a circle after an afternoon workshop one of the attendees, who was participating in this kind of workshop for the first time, asked a question about how to talk about what we were doing and experiencing. How do we put this into words, she asked? How do we describe this experience or what this does or why it is important without it just sounding like we feel things and have a sixth sense and are engaging in esoteric bullshit? Sergi, who speaks Russian with some English, didn't understand the question at first, but we laughed knowingly when she asked it. This resonated deeply with me as something that I, that physical theater artists, that theater artists, and artists more broadly have long struggled to convey. How do we translate what we do and what we experience to those who have not experienced it? How do we help others understand and want to know more, when we

know that whatever descriptive, theoretical words we use will invariably fall short? However, simultaneously, we know that if we don't attempt to speak and share what we do with those who are unfamiliar, we keep the art form locked in its own world rather than opening it up to having a deep, lasting, and life-changing impact on individuals in a variety of professions and contexts. While it is hard, if not impossible to write about these things in ways that resonate with how people are used to hearing things, we must not fall back into the trap of "well, you just have to experience it," however true that may be; if we do not give a taste of why someone would want to experience it or hint at what that experience is, we can rest assured that they will *not* experience it. This is why phenomenology and narrative and storytelling are such crucial methods for *understanding* this work—both its importance and its impact—because while I cannot give a single theme of the workshop or tell how elements of rehearsal happen in isolation (because the whole point is that they don't), I can offer a simple story that is so much more poignant than an abstract concept. The elements of rehearsal are intimately interwoven and layered and relational, but they are not magic. Rehearsal is intentional and methodical even if not in the vein of the rational, removed, scientific method that is too often is equated with the only kind of valid, systematic approach. As Herrington (2000) wrote of first trying to understand Viewpoints, "It became clear to me that despite their mystification, the Viewpoints produce effects that are quite specific" (p. 156). Rehearsal is not arbitrary or coincidental; it is cultivated and rigorous and deliberate. However, because it recognizes and cultivates centers and ways of knowing in addition to the dominant Western intellectual mode, it is often not recognized as such.

In doing research for this project, it has been interesting to discover that most theatrical texts, including the most foundational and canonical, are rarely if ever written as a treatise or a

theory or an instruction manual; they are almost always written as a story. However, it is a mistake to think that just because they are a story they are not instructional or theoretical. Their theory—their knowledge—is grounded in a different kind of knowing, and therefore it requires a different kind of representation and a different kind of dialectic. *An Actor's Work* is perhaps the best example of this. Stanislavski chose the format of a diary for his major work, specifically to avoid the abstract theorizing of his work and the codification of the system (Benedetti, 2008). For Stanislavski, the book's purpose is "for the reader to experience the student's learning process" (Benedetti, 2008, p. xviii). Similarly, the one book Meisner wrote (Meisner & Longwell, 1987) took the form of a story, chronicling his experiences and the experiences of his students in rehearsal. Efros' (2006) book is a collection of literary images sprinkled with self-reflective anecdotes. Each of these works is a performative text that does not confuse its content and its form. Each author-actor talks about lived experience and knows that it cannot be spoken about in objective, rational terms dominated by the mind. Rather, they know that the experience must be lived—it must be shown. So, they tell stories. They do not tell stories because this is an inferior method or because they are not capable of analytical thinking. They tell stories because they know the impossibility of it being otherwise. They value the consistency of trying to bring their readers and students along, not on a mental journey, but on a lived one. They invite you to experience, not to dissect. Yet, too often this kind of representation is left out of the conversation of serious discourse when really, the ignorance of the reader is that they have not recognized the form for what it is—an accurate, honest, critical, complex and intentional accounting of a mode of being, thinking, and knowing whose robustness—not deficit—requires a different form of description.

Here, in this section, I attempt to do the same. In the earlier sections, I have spoken of the theory and the application and the reasons for understanding rehearsal as curriculum and how and why rehearsal functions as an image of curriculum, but now I offer perhaps the strongest argument of all—I offer a story of lived experience. I invite you to participate in the experience. I invite you to imagine and to see. Without the lived experience of rehearsal, these concepts become nothing. In my life and in my experience, the doing came first. I did not read these articles and think, I should try that (though arguably some may); I had a lived experience, and then read these articles, and knew that they were true because they matched with the phenomenological, lived, transformative experience that I had felt and have shared with so many. In the following section, I offer up a story of rehearsal that far from being the least critical part of this thesis, is the part that brings it all together.

The Beginning: Entering the Space

We arrive the day before, straggling in from our various corners of the world, to be greeted by Veronika, one of the program coordinators, warm weather, and views of the calm sea and the marble mountains beyond. The monastery that is to be our home and our studio for the next week is strong, built of stone on a mountain whose edge runs straight into the water. The winding road leading up to it is nothing compared to the steep, zig-zagged trails on the grounds that take you past olive trees and alcoves that house the stations of the cross, to a beautiful, old stone veranda that touches the Mediterranean, where we can go for a quick swim in between workshops if we have the energy. Our rooms are simple on the newer side of the monastery, mostly likely built sometime in the 70's—the oldest part dates back to the 1200's. Two twin beds, a table beside each, a desk with a bible, and a bathroom.

In the morning, we wake up and go up to the roof for our 7:00 a.m. warm up. The sun is already risen, casting its young, brightest light across the mountains and reflecting off the water. It is quiet except for the sounds of nature—wind, and birds, and trees—and occasionally the sound of the sea below; as I walk onto the roof terrace the just-slightly-cool air is a nectar, and I immediately feel my breath deepen. Sergi, our director, and Jaki, his brother who is also a performer and Biomechanics teacher, greet us there. We don't speak much, each stretching, or looking out across the water, or meditating. Jaki comes to the front, and we all form lines behind him with an arm's-width space between us so we don't hit each other as we move. "Follow me as a shadow," said Jaki. It is the only instruction we are given. We begin slowly, waking up the different muscles in our body, but quickly the movements became more rigorous and more precise. We progress through many Biomechanic exercises, without a sound or instruction being spoken the whole time. We learn by watching, trying our best to follow the movements—to not

think too much and trust our bodies to perceive and act. The movements are not simple. Jaki breaks each down so that each etude begins with just partial movements, completed on both the left and right, and builds through the full and fast-paced etude. One action, at first obtuse, becomes the act of shooting an arrow, in which we are to deftly draw one arm back as if nocking a bow, bringing the weight onto our back foot, release the arrow, follow through with specific footwork to pivot, leaping and gracefully to the other side, as our arms raised to draw the arrow again. I feel clumsy at first. It is supposed to be all one movement, unbroken and seamless. My focus is torn in three, one part trying to watch Jaki, one part trying to think through and understand the movements, and the other part trying to quietly be present and let my body try. On that first day, I am far from perfect, but by the end I am moving much more supplely and confidently; I notice my mind is becoming quieter. My muscles scream, as we jump and turn and bear our bodies' weight and use it to strengthen our muscles. We go from squatting to jumping, and then from squatting to extending our legs behind us and rotating our torso, with one arm as our pivot on the ground so that our chest and other arm reach toward the morning sky, moving quickly from one side to another. Adrenaline and freshness carry me through the first morning, stubbornness and strength the second and third days, but on the fifth, I decide it is much more important to take care of my body and save the energy for the afternoon exercises than to push it any further. I am not in bad shape, but this kind of movement, these exercises are meant to awaken and strengthen muscles you didn't know you had. The force of your body moving through air and time, in effortless control is both meditative and challenging; I go back and forth between having a clear and empty mind and thinking of nothing else but the pain of the muscles as they twisted, expanded, and turned. At the end of the hour, the movements become slower

again. We gather our energy to our core, moving the air up and around our heads and back to our centers. We end with our hands rested on our stomach; Jaki turns to thank us, and we thank him.

Invigorated, awake, and hungry, we head down to the dining room for breakfast. My body feels a little weak from travel and allergies, but I feel strong from this morning and from entering this way of being. I already am becoming more attuned to myself and taking better care of myself—focusing on myself in a way that is easy to neglect in day-to-day life full of distractions, routines, and duties. The great dining hall is beautiful, made of lighter stone than the dark brick in our rooms. It has big windows that look out over the Mediterranean, and we all sit together at one large table; Sergi, Jaki, and the coordinators sit at a head table nearby. We help ourselves to coffee and water with lemon, juice and tarts and bread; it feels so wonderful and refreshing to have an awakened body now feasting on warm drinks and food.

After breakfast, we have a break to prepare for the morning session. I use this time to shower or to go for a walk or to write or, on the first day, still jet lagged, to steal an extra bit of sleep. Just before nine we head down to the basement. The basement space looks almost like a little theater. There is a stage at the far end that we do not use for the duration of the workshop and a balcony around the other 3 sides. The middle is a wide-open space on which yards and yards of dance flooring have been laid. During the year, when we are not making art here, the monks used this as a kind of holy place, most likely for ceremonies or prayer of a certain sort. Under our use, it becomes a different kind of holy place. Honoring the space and our hosts, no food, no drinks, and no shoes come near the floor. When we enter the space, we are to enter as focused, prepared to work. We trickle in, some arriving early to stretch or to play—trying different physical lifts or showing one another practices that we do at home with our theater groups. Each session begins and ends with us sitting on the floor in a circle. Sergi asks if we

have any questions. However, he never explains what we are going to do before we do it; this is essential. We are to learn by doing. We are to feel the sequences. We can always ask questions afterward, but he never outright explains, even after the fact.

Sergi is tall and strong but slight. He moves like a mix between a willow tree and a mountain lion. He is bald with dark eyebrows, beard, and mustache. His eyes are disconcerting at first, they seem unfocused, but in reality they miss nothing. He has a quiet voice with conviction. He doubts his own ability in English, and we all tell him that it is much better than he thinks. Occasionally, when he does not feel equal to the words, he will speak in Russian and Inga or Veronika will translate. He has a twinkle in his eye that belies a great sense of humor, despite his great seriousness which is rooted in a deep respect and passion for the work and for those of us there with him. He is committed to the work; he has humor, but he does not have patience for disrespecting one another, the space, or our training. When he speaks, he does not speak loudly, but we, most of us, listen with rapt attention.

This first morning, we come together and sit down. Sergi gives a short intro. “Attention, physical attention,” he says, “is the root of acting. You want to release the inner animal and the fastest way to do that is physical, with your eyes closed.” We spend most of the morning entering the space, encountering one another, coming together. First, we rise and walk around in silence—always in silence. We focus on our breath and our bodies and the other bodies in the space and the qualities of the space itself that separates us. We notice how our feet feel on the floor. We notice how our arms swing and how our pelvis is aligned. We explore the space with our fingers, toes, elbows, knees, shoulders, and hips—waking up each joint and feeling what happens when we allow our bodies to be led by these different centers. Walking progresses to interaction—we walk and as we meet another person, we give them an impulse, using one or two

hands to push them gently yet firmly—using our energy, not our strength—to change and guide their trajectory in the space. This is an important lesson for us. On stage, we are almost always with our partner. We must give them our energy; we must give them direction through our actions and our words. If we do not give them anything to respond to, they are lost and they have no action of their own. If we give them something weak to respond to, the energy is gone and the story is unclear. If we give them something too strong, we dominate the scene and we make it unbelievable and uninteresting; we leave no room for their response. We do not talk about any of this, but we learn it through our touches and responses. Finding the right way to give and the honest way to receive, listening to the impulse to drive our direction, not overreacting to find it ourselves. It is subtle and silent; we sink into the learning as we respond and interact more fluently and effortlessly, yet never less in control. We become more focused on one another; you can almost feel the thinking that was present at the beginning of the exercise (thinking about what we are supposed to do or if we are doing it correctly) lessen. We sink in. We relax. If our movements were breath, you would feel it and see it slow and deepen.

We continue in a few variations of giving impulses before we transition into working with our eyes closed. We each take a partner. One closes his or her eyes, and the other, with her eyes open, positions her body just slightly behind and to the side of her partner, placing her hand on the other's shoulder. The job of the partner with her eyes open is to ensure the safety of the partner with eyes closed. The weight of the hand on the shoulder is again gentle, but firm. The seeing partner is not to steer their blind peer, but rather to guide them. The seeing partner walks and, from gentle impulses through the hand, guides the blind partner. They do not push or pull; rather the hand rests on the shoulder, and the bodies need to listen to one another. Sergi does not explain this. He demonstrates—he *does* it—at the beginning with a partner. He gives

exaggerated examples of what we are not supposed to do, but we do not fully understand until we begin. We learn as we do; we begin to understand the strength of a gentle touch and that this is what we are working for. We understand in part, because the other ways don't feel right. They feel too forceful, they feel unequal, or they feel unsafe. Sergi always gives us time to learn as we move. Then sometimes he will stop us and demonstrate again, again imitating ways he has seen what we are not supposed to do. He does not tell us why, but we begin to understand.

As we get better at sensing our partner, the movements become more complicated; instead of listening only to their hand, we listen to their whole bodies. One partner begins to run with their hand on my shoulder, and blind, I follow. My partner jumps, crawls, does rond de jambes, and I feel it and follow suite. However, this first day we begin more slowly. We are teaching our body to listen. When our eyes close the other senses become more alive—the senses that so often lay dormant due to the dominance of vision. When this first exercise is over, we continue leading in partners with our eyes closed, next leading with the palm of hand to the partner's elbow rather than with a hand on the shoulder. This change makes the blind partner even more attentive to the leader. The leader keeps the palm of their hand open, not grabbing or holding the elbow, so that if the follower takes more than the impulse sent, they get ahead of the hand and become disconnected from their partner. This is more difficult. As the blind partner, my job is to keep my elbow pushed into their palm, meaning that gravity isn't our support this time. My partner moves in front of me, and I try to keep up. I am a little scared, because I must move with must more conviction this time—a slightly frightening prospect without any sight. If I don't move fast enough, I become detached from my partner because their hand will get away from my elbow. Sometimes I feel as if I am charging through space with my elbow as a magnetic beak that pulls me forward relentlessly. When my partner moves me backwards, the force of

their palm against my elbow is almost too strong. The force pushes my elbow up as I struggle to move back quickly enough. We slow down and my partner moves her hand in circles and back and forth and we move forward more slowly, reestablishing the connection, and giving ourselves time to learn to feel one another. It is a trick to keep just the right amount of pressure between the two of us; the amount of pressure becomes our guidepost, and we learn to feel and adjust as we move together. Maintaining that balance, that pressure, is not the responsibility of one of us; it is both of our jobs. We cannot do it alone.

In the morning session, we spend several hours evolving these exercises, building to guide our partner with different parts of the body and to move into rotations around and over one another. In the afternoon, we come together in a circle, and Sergi introduces a ball into the group which we throw back and forth. We connect our voice and our breath to throwing the ball: the ball is our voice and we need to keep it going the entire time ball is in the air. This deepens our breaths and forces us to connect our breath and our sound to our partner across space and time. The ball is the manifestation of our intention, as our energy and our voice travel together into the waiting hands of another. As we progress, we add balls and sounds, increasing the exercise in complexity, so that we simultaneously need to be aware of all the balls moving around us, ready to catch one at any moment, aware of who you could throw it to, naming the person who threw it, and naming the person you were throwing it to, keeping your breath and voice moving across the space. Though again Sergi doesn't say anything, and we don't speak it out-loud, we are learning focus and attention. I feel my senses sharpen, almost if my eye sight is becoming clearer. Usually only able to attend to a few variables at once, by focusing on so much, I push my senses beyond what they normally do, training them to take on more, take in more, and be both alert and relaxed—ready to move and respond to any number of possibilities. I am training my

body to become more aware and responsive, emptying my mind and simultaneously making it sharper.

We end the first afternoon with an image sequence. We are broken up into small groups, and Sergi first gives us the instruction, “make an image for an imaginary camera.” He shows us where the imaginary camera is and tells us that we are to change the pose on his clap. We, as well conditioned humans, seem to forget all we know about acting and strike cliché picture poses—hands on hips, winking, blowing kisses, crossing arms, furtive looks and so forth—changing each time Sergi claps his hands. After a few minutes of this, Sergi adds an instruction: “Give images to the camera again, but this time there is a light shining in front of you so that you are also creating a shadow on the back wall so that the photo is both your body but also the shadow.” The change in the room and in our bodies is palpable. We start focusing much less on the camera and much more on each other. We no longer imitate cliché poses; we focus on making interesting patterns and shapes with our bodies that will cast a vivid imaginary shadow on the back wall. The shadow does not know where one body ends and another begins, so we must become one body—one shape—with points and curves and angles. Again, we shift each time there is a clap, but our focus is heightened and our creativity unleashed. We move more naturally with, around, and on one another. After a few more minutes, Sergi pauses again. This time he tells us, “you now are making a movie so not only are you taking a photo, but also capturing the movement from one image to the other. Without speaking try to start and stop together as you transition between images.” This time there is no clap. Instead, we move to our own rhythm, attentive to not just the shapes and physical images we create, but to the fluid progression from one to another and to the movements, impulses, and energies of our partners in the image. Next, Sergi adds that we can come in and out of the image—detaching from and then

returning to our partners. Lastly, after several more images, we do one final exercise in the sequence—a performance of a moving image for the other groups. Before each group goes however, Sergi gives us a set of given circumstances—a secret task or condition—that the audience doesn't know but that will motivate and change our inner monologues and perhaps even subtle movements through the progression. For the sake of the exercise, Sergi gives a *physical* given circumstance—ours is that we were naked outside in a strange land where the grass is hair and a pink, thick, bubblegum rain is falling from the sky. We create our images again, yet this time, each movement is imbued with new meaning internally. I imagine the sticky rain over my body, and I can feel the coarse hair beneath my feet as I move. It alters the way I move and the way I respond, while still being intimately attentive to both my partners, our shared shape, and our movement between images. Without realizing it, we have taken the principles of the throwing balls and made them more complex, subtle, interesting, and beautiful. Our attention is on multiple variables; our bodies are simultaneously alert and relaxed, strong and flexible. We are attuned in a way that we sense ourselves, our environment, and one another, and each element contributes to the collective making and remaking of our bodily image.

After we have seen each group perform their images, we gather in a circle to discuss. Sergi comments how just like with the throwing of the balls or the transition between images, we must, as actors, always seek to keep the connection going. He talks about why he does not provide instructions prior to the exercises, saying, “I try to give the task without explaining the task, but try to explain the task through the exercises... in my mind it will be much more precious and useful if you arrive at, understand, discover the answer yourself. For example, in the exercise when you have the camera, you became even more expressive when you feel each other.” We learn through doing and through experience. We learn through our bodies and

through one another. We are co-creators of our own learning, and the lessons are deeply resonant because they come out of our own being with Sergi as our wise guide in the process. At the moment he is not satisfied with our movements inside as we create the movements outside in the images. “I could say,” he says, “do the movements wider.” From his experience, it is scarier to do broad movements, which is why he gave us the prompt about the shadow on the wall. With this, he says, “I shift your focus from inward to outward on the wall. As soon as I did this your movements became more expressive and brave.” For Sergi, building the études is a critical part of the work. Each exercise is required to develop our expressiveness and our abilities. “We could give all the exercises at once, but then we are limiting, robbing ourselves from the process.” The learning through doing is essential—if we are just told, we will not see. We must see the parts as they build so that we understand all the elements of what is happening; so that we have participated in the journey to get there. If we are not brought along step by step and are instead just thrown into the final image, we will not have deepened our attention sufficiently. We will not feel the difference from where we started. We will not understand all of the forces that are at work in our movements.

By the end of the first day, I find myself feeling and thinking many things. I feel so at home here, in part because I think it is so like where I trained in the United States, at the National Theater Institute (NTI). There too, we were a group of about 30 and we worked together, ate together, and shared each part of the day together. We were all committed to our craft and to the work and to pushing ourselves. Entering this space this time—a new space, at a different time in my life, half way around the world—I thought I would be more nervous, uncomfortable, and anxious than I have been. I think back to NTI and how uncomfortable it was at first—how much I was pushed beyond my comfort zone. I realize how much I have grown—as an artist, an actor,

and a person—in the ten years since then. I am so much more grounded in my skin and comfortable with my body. I am amazed, but not surprised, by how quickly some of the interactions and friendships have formed. I feel as if I have known some of the individuals for years not hours; I feel comfortable around everyone. And yet, I still feel myself holding my breath in moments, not fully relaxed. Before we started the first workshop this morning, I took note of my anxiety. It has been many years since I entered a rehearsal or training space to focus on me and my development; in the past several years, I have mostly entered these spaces as a director or a teacher to help guide and coach and develop others. It is a completely different experience. In those cases, I am slightly removed from the happenings—always simultaneously a participant and outside of it. My role is different than that of the actors; it comes with more of a sense of control than I felt this morning. I was nervous since I have not done this—for me—for so long. I wondered what we would do, and I felt anxiety, as I so often do, wondering whether I would be good enough. Will I be equal to working with so many who act professionally, I wondered? I was also anxious because I knew that the ensuing days meant walls coming down, and I wasn't sure I was ready. I don't go to those places, the places of deep tension and fear and pain and hope, on a normal basis. I realize I have not gone there in a while. It is beautiful and necessary, but it can also be painful. As I prepared to go into the first session this morning, I wondered what it would be like to revisit, in a new way, this kind of experience—would I learn as much this time or do I have a better sense of what I will find than 10 years ago? I was nervous because I was entering the unknown, not only in terms of the program itself, but with the awareness that mostly likely, through the course of the week, I would find a different unknown inside myself.

By the end of the day, I am remembering, as if forgotten, how much I like to move with my body in these ways. It is as if I am reawakening, rediscovering something that has gone dormant deep within me, always waiting for just the smallest spark—the smallest nod of permission—to come roaring back to life. I find myself thinking about how these sequences can be incorporated into both my directing and into future workshops I will do with teachers. I wonder how much of this work you need to do to “get it,” to have the lesson resonate and sink in. How immersive does the experience need to be? And how do I teach this physical work and the more traditional theater and text work without overloading my students and the teachers? It is like Sergi said about finding a bridge between the contemporary and the traditional. I also reflect on how funny it is that even within the rehearsal group there are those who you are drawn to immediately and strongly—for me it is Martina, Lapo, and Bethany. Rehearsal does create a very special community, but it is important for me to remember that even within that, there are always different dynamics and relationships between individuals. I feel really good as we end the day—strong and flexible and supple. I know I will be sore tomorrow.

The Middle: Doing the Work

We are now a couple of days in to the experience, I find myself not feeling as emotionally raw as I expected. Nothing has been earth shattering the way it was the first time I was exposed to this kind of work, but I suspect that some of the lessons I’ve learned over these days and the days to come will not even manifest or become clear to me until after I’ve left. Sometimes these things take a while to sink in—I am absorbing them without knowing, until one moment they crystalize or become a critical mass or perhaps I am just finally ready to recognize it, and then I am confronted with a realization, an awakening, a change. I continue to feel much more at home in my body than I did years ago. This kind of physical work is so liberating—you

sweat together and move together and touch together all day. I don't care what I look like; my hair is a mess, I haven't worn makeup for days, and I have only worn my movement clothes non-stop. It's just about the work. It's messy and it gives me permission to be messy, a permission I so rarely give myself in day-to-day life. I find myself taking better care of my body in little ways that might not at first seem connected—I wash my face twice per day, not just once. I floss every day. I make sure to drink a cup of hot water with lemon every morning. It's as if I've also given myself permission to take care of myself. It becomes clear how this work does not have borders; it is also about a way of living and being. It creates holistic change and attention. My body is my instrument and my source; it is natural that I should attend to it and care for it.

The group feels closer, too. At breakfast on the second day, the whole atmosphere felt more comfortable—more like friends all around. Before and after sessions, we sit and talk in small groups, getting to know one another and learn about our art practices and our countries. I sit up late one night with Lucca and Magda, talking about Switzerland and Brazil and the economics of both. Tildé mentions a friend who is doing community-based projects in Zurich that she thinks I might be interested in. David and I sit in a little stone alcove on the grounds one morning talking about dance in the academy. We come with respect and curiosity, and fairly quickly a community is formed.

I feel like I am a world away from work, from my job, but not from my home or my husband; in some ways, I am relieved to find this. At NTI, I felt separated from everything; totally consumed by this new world in which I found myself. Now, it is a very different feeling. I feel far away from my job—from the self I so often show to the world, that I professionally perform with cheer and patience each day. I feel it as if it is a character, a mask I wear—it feels separate from the me who is here. But I do not feel the same way about my home or Aaron; there

is no similar schism here. It feels like a different life, but not one that is disconnected with my core. I am happy to find that my core is the same in that world and in this world; I smile because I think it means that I am further down the road of becoming. When I first began this work, almost all of me was open for questions and disruption. I opened parts of me that I didn't even fully know were there, explored places that needed deep healing and liberation. Now there is a part of me who is me—grounded, strong. Not that it wasn't there before, but perhaps it needed to be disrupted to be made stronger. I still learn, and change, and grow, but it is not as disruptive as it was before. I have found core parts of who I am, and they are sure. They have been tested now, and they are firm. I don't know what to make of the fact that the other parts of me—my work life and my art life—feel so separate. I don't know if it's good or bad, but it is something I sit with, sure that the wrestling will come in time.

There are challenges too. We are a very mixed group in terms of experience—there are professional actors, dancers, and performers who have been doing this work for decades, there are younger semi-professionals or aspiring professionals who have been trained in this kind of theater (I would most likely put myself in this category), there are people who come from different artistic backgrounds that are eager to learn and that bring their own performance styles to the group and there are some who have never done this kind of work before; it is their first foray into physical theater and in some cases into theater all together. It is hard sometimes to have such a mixed group when it comes to dedication, focus, experience, and purpose in being there. Many of us are dedicated to the work, respect the work, are avid and hungry learners who want to totally immerse ourselves, to learn, and to improve. However, there are a handful that are not as serious about the work—across all levels of experience. They will show up a little late for the sessions. They will step out in the middle of an exercise to sit down. They talk or laugh after

an exercise. One is particularly loud and doesn't honor the silence of the practice and sometimes allows her body to become out of control, something that destroys the trust and the safety of the space. Because this work is so communal—we come together as many bodies to make one body—these behaviors impact the entire space. They disrupt the collective energy we have built that is focused in one direction, and sometimes they make those of us who are so eager to learn and listen quite frustrated. However, there are many who also take the work seriously and it is a gift to be among them.

Insecurities and anxieties also bubble to the top for me as we do this work. I become more aware of them since our work is aimed at cultivating awareness and opening spaces in the self. I struggle with unreasonable, excessive fear when I say something slightly negative about a cohort member that they will hear me. I mentioned to Bethany one afternoon as we sat on a bench overlooking the olive trees how frustrated I was with one of the disruptive members of our group and for the remainder of the evening I was petrified that she somehow heard me say that, even though no one was even in sight of us. I felt overwhelming guilt and fear that I broke this person's trust, that she will know, and she will no longer like me. I realize how much I have relied on Aaron as my partner in the battle of quieting some of these fears of unworthiness and care about the opinion of others. He helps me in these moments as we talk through my fears; he reassures me and helps orient me, and I do the same for him in his areas of pain and doubt. It is a beautiful thing; to support and help one another with abiding love is what we have committed in our marriage. But here, as these fears, often irrationally, rear their heads out of a sea of openness and vulnerability, I realize how due to his strength and help, I have not given enough of my own attention to managing and addressing these anxieties within myself. I know the fears are irrational. As I journal at night, they fade away for as I put them in writing, I come back to my

senses and see them for what they are, but they are powerful while they last. I struggle with fears of missing out, when I go to bed tired a night and wonder what others are doing. I struggle with fears of doing something wrong and of not being good enough. These are triggers for anxiety. They are senseless, and sometimes they feel uncontrollable. I try to let them pass and see them for what they are.

We continue to build on the exercises of the first day, adding layers and complexity. To chronicle, and describe, and tell the story of each exercise could be the work of an entire thesis, so I will not attempt that here; rather I try to show representative anecdotes—sequences and builds—that illustrate some of the main components of the work. However, I know that even in doing this kind of sampling, something is lost; even when trying to tell a narrative that leads more towards an experiential wholeness, I must break it and separate it out for considerations of time and space in this writing in a way that betrays that cohesiveness of experience. Sergi is very intentional about how each sequence and each build works. He adjusts it based on the group and the energy of the space at that time. Sometimes the builds are subtle, sometimes they seem quite disparate, but each time they unfold through a process of bringing us along so that sometimes we have not even realized what has happened until it is over and then we reflect on the fluid movement from where we were to where we are, being able to see in retrospect, the important and artfulness of how we got here. To skip or gloss over any part of the builds is to take away from the process itself that so deftly weaves and dances from one moment to another. However, I will have to take that risk, and having acknowledged here that I know something is lost in what is to come, I hope that I give some idea of the coursing river that was the rehearsal process, and that what follows is not the river itself, but moments into which I dip my toe or immerse my head respectively into its running waters. As Sergi said, “An individual exercise doesn’t have

meaning. The sequences have meaning.” In its way, the entire workshop was one continued sequence with its own contained meaning.

Each morning we begin with variations of walking in the space—always coming in and collecting our energy and raising our awareness together—and doing parts of the blind exercises in pairs, each day our movements becoming more sure and more risky. One morning I am paired with David, a dancer. I have my eyes closed, and he leads me through forward rolls on the floor, hand and shoulder never breaking contact. On the second day, we begin weight-bearing exercises. We start small, helping our partner locate our center of gravity and our center of strength. We learn to feel how and when our body is positioned to be strong because the center of weight is balanced and reinforced. We pair up. In the first exercise, I am with Lapo. He holds firm, while I push on him. His task when firm is to not move—in order to do this, he must be aligned and grounded. If he bends over at the waist, he loses his center of gravity and of strength, and he can be moved easily. However, if he shifts his weight to meet my push, keeping his center, his core, strong, he becomes immovable. As always, I, the partner who pushes, am in control of my push; my goal is to move him, not to hurt him. It is done with strength, but not with aggression. We switch partners. Now we rotate around the fixed partner’s body, giving them our weight and always keeping a point of contact. They adjust and move so that their center of gravity is positioned and aligned to support our weight. It is an act of trust, support, and exploration. To give your weight to another is vulnerable—you are dependent on their strength to ensure you do not fall. To receive their weight is full of responsibility—you must move and ensure you do not let them down. You become hyper sensitive to their body and to yours, you instinctively begin to sense where they will move next and how you must respond; you begin to feel your center and to be guided by it. We switch partners again. This time there is no fixed

person and no rotating partner. We both rotate and move around one another, giving our weight to each other and moving while maintaining balance. We must feel the impulses of the other; without speaking we give and take and adjust. We continue to build in the sequence and give weight in new ways, each making us more aware of our center and our partner. We lie on the ground and hold one another's weight. We roll over one another, moving as a rolling ball across the room, we stand and sit while giving weight through our shoulders or our back. We learn the importance of supporting your partner, and how in order to give good support, you must be aware of yourself.

In the afternoon of the second day, we introduce the first words into an exercise. With partners, we stand in two lines. One partner says, "Come with me," the other, "Go away," with no emotion in the voice or behind the words, as we pull a ball from the other or push the ball towards the other respectively. We don't just use our arm strength to push or pull the ball; we use our center to drive the force behind the transition. The words do not have meaning in this context, but they are attached to the action of pushing and pulling the ball. The next exercise seems initially unconnected. In small groups, we do choreography improvisations. We strike an initial group pose and build the choreography five seconds at a time until we reach one minute. We improvise for five seconds, then we return to the initial pose. We repeat what we had just improvised, extending it for five more seconds of improvisation. We then return to the beginning, replicating the first ten seconds of improvised choreography and then adding another five seconds on to that. It is incredibly difficult—everything moves so fast. When improvising, so often the primary mode you are engaging is not memory, but here we have to improvise and remember and repeat all in such quick and unrelenting succession. The first fifteen to twenty seconds, we recreate fairly accurately each time, but the last thirty or so seconds are much looser,

never quite remember exactly what we were had done before; it changes and evolves a little every time. I feel myself be overwhelmed, my mind busy and engaged. I try to remember and memorize the actions and then be present to recreate them. After we have completed our minute of improvisation, we then begin the builds. Now, Sergi instructs us, speak what you are doing in full voice using action verbs. We repeat the choreography, each improvising speech, disconnected from one another in full voice, describing what we are doing. The room becomes alive with sound. I find it makes the choreography easier in some ways to remember, by speaking it out loud. I simultaneously feel my focus increase as I name what I do with conviction and my focus challenged as I have now added another variable, sense, and action, to an already complicated and difficult sequence. From speaking the verbs, we add adverbs, naming characteristics of the actions as we take them, and finally, we cease speaking and complete the improvisation again, this time speaking the words only in our minds at 200x the intensity of when we spoke out loud. I feel my actions stronger at moments, while at moments, I still lose focus and am unable to keep all elements moving forward at once. This is why it is called training; these are difficult tasks. We must build the ability to hold multitudes in us at once as we move and think with relaxed intensity.

We continue to build on walking exercises and weight bearing exercises, adding voice occasionally into the sequences. Between almost all exercises we switch partners or small groups. This keeps our ensemble strong; you work with everyone, you learn to work with everyone. We are one; the parts can move among themselves. As we reflect after the workshop one day, Sergi dwells on the meeting between individuals in our space. When we meet—when walking around the floor, touching, giving impulses, sharing weight—it is a very big event, says Sergi. When we meet one another we are meeting another world, and if we are paying attention,

we can feel the other, feel the meeting. How do you meet, he asks? How do you depart? He states that you must always start from yourself. You must first pay attention to you. Next, you must pay attention to the space and the rhythm. Then you must pay attention to the meeting and the touch. That is how you create a piece of art. You pay attention fully to each world. “Attention is our special consciousness,” he says. Attention in itself is action. Meyerhold said that every bad performance is very similar and every good performance is very individual. It is attention that makes the difference; when we are truly paying attention it will, it must impact how we act. We will notice more deeply, we will respond more acutely, and we will feel in our minds, hearts, and bodies the changes within the world.

We create a number of different kinds of physical images, each with their own lessons and purposes. Throughout the week, we revisit the idea of sculpture in different ways. One afternoon, we create physical sculptures around three things: 1) they push each other, 2) they pull each other, 3) they embrace each other. On Sergi’s clap we form an initial sculpture around one of these actions together. On the next clap, we separate and transition into a sculpture on our own, taking up space with our bodies and extending the space of our image. On the next clap we come back together to form a new image around the same action. We repeat this many times, each time paying attention to the movement out and back into the images with one another, ensuring that each image is connected through our transition. We learn that the image never stops, it is always connected—as we go out and come back in, we are still present to the story and to one another. Eventually, Sergi stops the claps. We can now choose which action to image, and we do not wait for claps, but rather we try to feel with our partner when to begin and end each image, when to go and when to return. No words are spoken; we rely on our senses and our breath to feel one another. We focus on breathing life into shape.

During another session, we create group images with three people. The first person is the base position; they focus their attention down into the center of the earth, right to its fiery, molten core. The second person then comes in around the first, filling a window with his or her body. The second person focuses their attention on the horizon, all the way out past the limits of sight. The third person comes in and finds a wind and fills it and focuses their attention toward the sky, past the stars and into the universe. After a moment in this image, the base gives an unspoken and untouched impulse and the group goes out and comes back in to the space, forming a new image without touching. Each time, we pay attention to filling the space and focusing our energy. I feel the difference the attention gives to my entire body. I am no longer just a shape in space, I have direction that connects me to a world so much bigger. We learn the power of attention and how focusing attention beyond ourselves creates interesting and powerful images that tell a story. Suddenly we do not just fill the space with our bodies; the space we inhabit is extended as far as our attention. We create the space around us through our focus. By giving it attention, we make it something to be seen for others. This exercise becomes one of my favorites; it is focused and intense. I feel powerful; I feel our collective attention create worlds that the audience cannot see but can feel.

Sergi has worked with so many of the great performers and directors of the last century. He has worked with Tadashi Suzuki and Eugenio Barba, with Jerzy Grotowski and Rudolf Laban, with Michael Chekhov and Andrei Droznin. He has formed his own approach through the work and influence of each of these teachers, directors, and actors. He has cultivated practices from both the east and west; he is as fluid in Tai Chi as he is in Biomechanics. When he speaks to us one day, he shares how he pulls mainly from the work of three individuals who build on one another: Stanislavski, Chekhov, and Meyerhold. From Stanislavski he asks, what do I feel,

what do I want, what am I doing, the last of which is the physical question. It is in the text that we can find the action. From Chekhov, he shares the idea of the psychological gesture, from Meyerhold, he shares the system of movement that explored the actor as a machine or a marionette. However, none of these existed in a vacuum he is sure to say. Meyerhold pulled from Commedia dell'arte and Jacque Lecoq. Laban and Michael Chekhov were friends. It is all one great exploration and assemblage. Sergi talks about the seriousness of the work and the best ways to create boundaries of inside and outside the rehearsal space. He focuses on ritual to mark and make these boundaries. When you enter the space, you bow and you acknowledge that you are now in sacred work space. If you want to chat or do something unfocused, you need to go back outside. As you exit, you bow again and thank the floor for supporting you. While you are within the boundaries of rehearsal, your gift of presence is given to the space and one another. To respect this space is to respect the work and yourself.

On Tuesday afternoon, we do a culminating exercise. Breaking into small groups we each select ten images from a stack that Sergi has spread on the floor. Each image is a black and white classical or Renaissance painting. In the groups, we replicate the paintings, each taking the role of one of the humans, attending to form and depth and relationships. We place them in an order, one through ten. As we finish making one image, we devise the transition to the next image, paying attention to our movements in between the images as much as we pay attention to the still but active forms we take in the poses themselves. The goal of the transitional movement is to move in the shortest time and space to the next image without rushing. There is no cue to start moving or to stop; we pay attention to one another's bodies and breath, silently adjusting our movements to one another and trying to start and stop fluidly together. When we are done progressing through all ten images, we take time practicing the transitions by ourselves three

times. The early images are the easiest to remember; the further we get into the ten, the harder it becomes to know the progression. When we have rehearsed the entire grouping several times through, all the small groups performed their images for each other. The movements are a beautiful dance—alternative moments of stillness and activity, flowing together into one. We look much more like an ensemble that has worked together for months, not a group that only came together a couple of days ago.

The End: Culmination and Reflection

On the final morning, we begin in the exercises in partners after our normal warmups. One partner closes their eyes and dances; the other acts as a force field around them, ensuring they come to no harm. We, the guiding partners, move with our blind dancers, not touching them unless we need to give them a gentle redirection or impulse to avoid contact and harm. We reflect on the work we have done with our eyes closed. Sergi reiterates that the more and more we work with our eyes closed the more we open up and deepening our feeling. We get to know each other better without words. We are the living evidence of this. Closer than we have any right to be, we have gotten to know each other in a way that seems to cut more directly to the core. As we talk, Sergi says “constantly listen to yourself through the ears of your partner.” If we do this, the more simple and clear we will be. I feel the truth in this. One member of the group comments on how, in the most recent exercise, he could see his partner with his eyes closed as they moved together. Our senses are open and heightened after the week of training.

During the last afternoon session, we share the small performance pieces we have worked on during the evening creative hour through the week, and then we sit in a circle on the floor to do a final debrief from the afternoon exercises before taking a short break in preparation for our closing circle. As we get up from the floor to head into the break, I linger for a few moments on

the black floor, look around the room, and I breathe in deeply—not wanting to forget this time and this place, wanting to inhale the moment and exhale gratitude. Unbidden, I feel tears coming on strongly. I get up, take a short video of the room to remember it by, and rush outside and down the path to the stone bench I have visited a few times this week, eager to get away before I cannot control the tears. I sit there and sob; they are racking sobs, heavy sobs. I have not cried like this in a while, and I am also taken by surprise. I didn't feel myself so attached, I didn't feel so vulnerable, I didn't feel this coming on. I sit there for several minutes. It feels good to cry like this. I try to dry my tears before returning to the group, but my eyes are still puffy.

We make a circle with chairs and we all go around to offer a thought or a comment on the week. Everyone shares beautiful, often personal, powerful sentiments. A few people in, I start crying—silent singular tears pouring down my face. It is pointless to try to stop it. It is now my turn to share. “I am not a crier,” I say, though I don't even know exactly what that means or if it is true. I find myself talking to the group about how often I have spent my time doing theater either directing, teaching, or writing about it through scholarly work. It has been many years since I have acted and many more since I have fed my soul through training and growth in my art. I have realized in a rush of overwhelming emotion how starved I have been and how little I knew it, how expertly and how rationally I had denied the need within myself due to circumstance and practicality. It is not that I do not love those other aspects of what I do; it is that I realized through a week of rich immersion and participation that it is not enough. What I don't say, but what I think is how this is a microcosm of so much else about my life. I am very good at self-denial. Putting my work, my loved ones, my house, my friends, my job, my school, my students all before myself. I am very good at finding the good in things and at reconciling myself to not ideal situations—sometimes too good at these things. Because I can be happy in

many ways, I often let that happiness go unexamined, suppressing the deeper desires or wants, because I justify them as not being needs. Sometime I am too good at burying and hiding, even from myself, when it comes to things I want or dream. Through this week, I have reawakened my love for the work. I have woken up to find that I am strong—that I am good at this. Quite good at this. I need not fear wanting it or loving it or not being good enough. It is a reminder that I, that we, my husband and I, can create the life we want. That I have given in a little too much to taking the practicalities of life too seriously, of being trapped by them, forgetting that in many cases they are only as real as I let them be.

Early in the week, I had been feeling a sense of failure because I didn't think I had been impacted by the experience and I wasn't as altered or made more emotionally and mentally available as I had expected. However, I realized shortly that this was such a silly fear. Perhaps it did not manifest as rawly as it had done in the past, but I needed only look at my journal throughout the week to see how unnecessary such a concern was. Being able to access and write and think about my own personal growth, my groundedness, the fears and anxieties that still plague and sometimes threaten to strangle me—these are not un-connected to the work. These things surface because of the work. I am aware of them because of the work. They are part of the work—as I quite literally work through my own hopes and fears and loves and pains. In order to give freely of myself, I must know myself, and I must heal places of fear and hurt. It is the work of becoming whole, to give wholly. Naturally, the work made me more attuned to myself, just not necessarily in the way I expected or the way it happened last time. At NTI, it was bigger and more visceral; these new entry points into understanding the world and myself were opened for the first time. This time I am more emotionally mature; the entry points continue to play out in my life and serve as a basis for how I live and know and act, even if I do not cultivate them or

make time to be immersed in them enough, as I have realized throughout this week. This week, by the end, I felt like I was home. I realized how much I need to nourish myself and my own artistic practice.

This is what this work is, I think to myself. We as an ensemble are more aware of both the world and ourselves—all our senses are attuned and heightened. We feel more deeply. I am more aware of the relationships between our ensemble, this place, and my own life. I have considered things from new perspectives, I have raised questions, but I have also felt whole and present and alive. We have awakened our bodies to find that they are wise and powerful; I have listened deeply, sat in silence, and opened other channels by closing my eyes. It is a lived experience that is both simultaneously personal and collective, both free and structured, both planned and spontaneous. We have all come together to create something so much bigger than a scene or two. We have come together in communion of mutual offering—giving ourselves, creating learning together, and dwelling in our shared humanity, trying to figure out just what that is. We have lived a curriculum of being and becoming that honors where we've been and creates new possibilities for where we are going. Its impact is not always immediately apparent, but it is lasting. What we have cultivated this week is how to be open, how to see, how to attend—each a way of being that will serve us long after today, not by giving simple answers, but by giving us the ability to join complexity with empathy throughout our lives and worlds.

Conclusion: The Impact of a New Metaphor

The words of this last section have not done the experience justice; I still struggle, futilely, with trying to express in words the embodied, relational, transformative, and awakening experience of this rehearsal process and so many like it that I have experienced in the past. There is a gulf that we can never quite meet between word and experience, but in that space we might move toward understanding. What I have attempted to offer through these sections is an image of rehearsal, taken from multiple angles, that is both vibrant and complex, theoretical and practical, psychological and physical, individual and communal. Most importantly, I hope to have offered an image that invites and inspires the imaginations of many to take it up, and in doing so, see—in the truest sense—new possibilities for understanding and enacting curriculum. For me, when I imagine our classrooms as rehearsal spaces, when I imagine curriculum as rehearsal, I feel liberated, as if a large weight has been lifted off my chest. Learning no longer becomes an antiseptic *product* of standards and accountability and authority, but a *process* of learning, joy, sharing, community, play, investigation, contingency, empathy, trust, revision, becoming, and fulfillment. In my imagination, curriculum is now remembered for laughter and discovery, and children come home at night from school speaking of how their voice was heard, alive with the excitement of creating something and being a part of making something new. I see an education system that helps students find meaning and that acknowledges different kinds of knowing and knowledge, and I see communities come together in dialogue and where students don't need to be told that there is no such thing as a stupid question because, finally, the curriculum is structured in such a way that this popular truism is made true.

In his 2012 Jefferson Lecture, Wendell Berry said, “The sense of the verb ‘to imagine’ contains the full richness of the verb ‘to see.’ To imagine is to see most clearly, familiarly, and

understandingly with the eyes, but also to see inwardly, with ‘the mind’s eye.’ It is to see, not passively, but with a force of vision and even with visionary force. To take it seriously we must give up at once any notion that imagination is disconnected from reality or truth or knowledge.” When understood this way, imagination is not just fanciful but essential to creating new realities and driving reform. If we cannot imagine what could be, there is certainly no way we can achieve it. Indeed, as Callejo Pérez et al. (2014) argue, we must “create within the minds of educators, parents, and the general public a new image of curriculum that pushes the boundaries of the current simplistic calls for achievement” (p. 5) in order to drive meaningful change. For them, the use of metaphor and images is important because it allows us to engage with an explore the complex nature of concepts and phenomena and to move beyond our common understanding to create new possibilities and dwell in multiple meanings. What I hope to have offered here is both a concrete image that explores and illuminates the complex nature of rehearsal and a jumping off point for the imagination to envision what curriculum could be.

Rehearsal spaces—rich spaces of play and participation—provide a stark contrast to the disengaged and disempowered classrooms that the dominant curriculum-as-plan (Aoki, 1993) mentality creates and offer a tangible example of spaces that live out the tenants of a reconceptualized curriculum (Aoki, 1993, 2003; Pinar, 1995, 2004, 2011). As such, while aiming to re-image and help re-imagine the possibilities of curriculum, I hope that the image presented here also helps educators and learners alike imagine what rehearsal might look like as a classroom possibility. Undoubtedly the rehearsal room is different from a classroom, and in many ways the practices of rehearsal cannot transfer directly into classroom practice, however, there are many elements—the way dialogue is structured, the way the text is approached, the way different content areas and pedagogical frameworks are integrated through storytelling and lived

experience, the way physical exercises are used to focus and center learners—that could be taken up in classroom context with relatively little disruption and hopefully to relatively large impact. The image of rehearsal is not so distant from the image of the classroom that it can only function as a metaphor. Rather, rehearsal is related enough, analogous enough, to the classroom that there are elements that can function more as a model than a metaphor, and that not only can it help us imagine a future of curriculum, but it can hopefully provide ideas for how to get us there. Indeed, this is the work that is now to be done.

This thesis is not the ending point; rather it is only the beginning. There is much left to be done. It remains to be seen through discussion, conversation, and sharing whether or not this image resonates as I hope it might in the minds and hearts of teachers, parents, administrators and others involved in our processes of education. The long-term goal of this project would be to share this image with others and to use it as a catalyst for change by helping inspire alternatives to our current system and ultimately resulting in significant action for policy and procedural change. By sharing this image more broadly, by providing access to the kinds of experiences described in this thesis, I would hope to sparks the desire for change and drive students, educators, and community members alike to re-encounter their entrenched ideas of curriculum and school. The reforms coming out of such an image would not only make adjustments within the given framework of accountability; rather it would offer a new framework with participation and the whole child at its center. Such an outcome would certainly take many years, many conversations, much work, and more than a little luck, but I believe that it is essential that we take seriously new ways of understanding and enacting curriculum, and in order to achieve that, we must begin somewhere, and there is perhaps no place better to start than with an image, that inspires the imagination to envision what before we didn't think possible.

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