Creating and inhabiting Heightened Theatrical Landscapes

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Abstract

This essay charts the theoretical background to my approach as a director with regards to creating and inhabiting Heightened Theatrical Landscapes. Primarily it deals with the role of the director as the actor's guide into to an extended space where the actor is the audience's envoy into the unlived human experience. It is a supporting document to my final production of The Possibilities by Howard Barker and it forms a partial fulfillment of an MA degree in Theatre & Performance as undertaken from the position of a director. The essay focuses particularly on the director's role whilst creating with the actors in rehearsals for a production.

Firstly, I identify the term "Heightened Theatrical Landscape" and associate it with the works of other theatre practitioners, drawing particularly from the writings and productions of Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski and Howard Barker, and specifically inspired by the latter's Theatre of Catastrophe. I will stipulate the major characteristics of a Heightened Theatrical Landscape with respect to the requirements for the space, actor, audience, and theme.

Secondly, I explain how I as the director prepare the foundation for the Heightened Theatrical Landscape, where I will place myself alongside director Peter Brook, and his theories on the director's role.

In order for the actor to inhabit the Heightened Theatrical Landscape, I put forward David Rotenberg's acting system as my main director's tool for the process. After a short analysis of the actor's requirements towards inhabiting the Heightened Theatrical Landscape, I will discuss some of the main concepts of the system and give examples of its proposed application to my production of The Possibilities. My analysis will focus on why I believe this system is successful and how it shifts the role of the director into serving as a guide for the actor in placing himself in the Heightened Landscape.

As my work is primarily with young actors, I will then articulate a need for methods of working with actors which address vocal and physical training in order to develop a form for the Heightened Theatrical Landscape. I firstly put forward a vocal method, as developed by Cicely Berry, to guide the actor towards the work on the text of this landscape. Consequently, I will introduce my understanding of Anne Bogart's Viewpoints as a complement to Rotenberg's system which addresses the actor's use of the body. I will clarify the principles that are shared between Viewpoints and Rotenberg's acting system before describing the application of Viewpoints within The Possibilities.

Lastly, I reiterate my understanding of the combined theories of Rotenberg and Bogart, and how they form the main component of my directing toolbox which will become evident in my production of The Possibilities.

Introduction

My interest in theatre is vested in what the theatre can offer as a unique medium. I see the function of theatre as something quite different from the function of film & television which have become prevalent in society today. I see theatre as an experience in which the imagination should be extended by the artist beyond the confines of the tv monitor or film screen. Essentially, this extension takes place in front of people who are living and breathing in the same space. Through the act of extension, the theatre actor is doing something an audience member does not do in his everyday life, he[1] is living a certain unlived experience. Such a theatre performance asks the spectator to question himself in relation to this unlived experience.

As a director, my aim is to stage stories, stories that ask the audience to witness the actor releasing his imagination into uncharted territory. In my aim I will draw from the theories of one of most influential theatre thinkers of the 20th century, Antonin Artaud, and his Theatre of Cruelty. Artaud had also become disillusioned with other forms of theatre and sought something that "wakes up heart and nerves" (Huxely & Wits, 2000: 25). He wanted theatre that "arouses deep echoes within us and predominates over our unsettled period…serious theatre which upsets all our preconceptions, inspiring us with fiery, magnetic imagery and finally reacting on us after the manner of unforgettable soul therapy" (Huxely & Wits 2000: 25). Similarly the content of my theatre uses texts that aim to shift preconceptions and uses rich imagery. The 'soul therapy' I seek is the result of the audience witnessing actors go through an unlived experience in front of them.

I have dubbed the kind of theatre I direct as belonging to a Heightened Theatrical Landscape. The landscape most aligns itself with the wide-reaching style of postmodernism. Postmodernism is seen as a response, or what comes after, the condition known as modernism. While acknowledging that modernism is the condition of the modern world, or more precisely, "the pattern of social and cultural response to life in the modern world, to modernity" (Fortier, 2002: 174), postmodernism can be seen as a response to living in the postmodern

[1] I mean no disrespect but, as a male, I find it more convenient to use "he" to infer to both he and she, and actor to infer to both actor and actresses.

world. Though it is not within the confines of this essay to define the entire scope of the movement, I want to place the Heightened Theatrical Landscape with reference to two particular aspects. Firstly, postmodernism "entails the failure of all master narratives, such as the myth of progress and the idea of one true religion, which might allow for a total and unified understanding of the world" (Fortier, 2002: 176). As I will articulate, the Heightened Theatrical Landscape's aim is to individualize the theatrical experience, so that there is no single message that is being transmitted to the audience, but rather forcing each individual spectator to find their own meaning, their own truth. Secondly, the style of the postmodern is "an artistic style, recognizable by its self-reflexivity – its self-awareness – and irony, especially in its relations to the practices and objects of the surrounding culture and the cultural past" (Fortier, 2002: 176). In terms of the Heightened Theatrical Landscape, this demonstrates that such a landscape does not disguise that it is theatre, but rather embraces its theatricality. The self-awareness is also present in the choice of text, in other words, the text of the plays that serve as the source for the Heightened Theatrical Landscape, consciously belong to a theatre culture. As described by Robert Barton, other postmodernist / postmodern manifestos are also included within such a landscape and "embrace splicing and blurring of forms, stances, moods, and cultural levels…politicize the theatrical…Respect all uncertainties…Aspire to ambiguity…" (Barton, 1993: 309).

My key interest within the Heightened Theatrical Landscape is the role of the actor, who I see as the most important component of the landscape. He is the living and breathing organism in the world, and how I, as the director, guide him in the journey towards it, is the process which I am questioning. In order for the Heightened Theatrical Landscape to exist, and to achieve its aims, I believe that the actor needs to inhabit this landscape. Barton insists that the actor's skills within a postmodern style are diverse and sometimes contradictory, as it "calls on the actor to express enthusiasm for any phenomenon while simultaneously mocking it…find political implications in every possible source; to balance the raucous and disrespectful with the bland and the meek; and to develop vocal technique to convey a feeling and its alternatives" (Barton, 1993: 310). As a director I am searching for a method that will allow the actor to address all these

contradictions and inhabit the landscape within the theatrical space. The end result is similar to that of Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty, "In a word, we believe there are living powers in what is called poetry, and that the picture of a crime presented in the right stage conditions is something infinitely more dangerous to the mind than if the same crime were committed in life" (Huxely & Witts, 2000: 26). How do I place the actor at the scene of the crime?

This paper focuses on the work of the director towards placing the actor in the Heightened Theatrical Landscape. The full scope of the role of the director extends beyond his work with the actor, as any production goes through many stages and involves many people from its conception through to closing night. An aspect of the director's work is his relationship with the designer, and how this creates the visual physical characteristics of the Heightened Theatrical Landscape. However, the scope of this paper deals specifically with the middle stages of the rehearsal process, during which the actor and the director are engaged in a creative exchange that builds the organic landscape of the play. During this stage, the actor is placed at the centre of the creative process. This thesis highlights the research at this particular stage and specifically with the methods I use as the director to guide the actor towards inhabiting the Heightened Theatrical Landscape and consequently the creation of such a landscape.

Heightened Theatrical Landscape

Before dealing with the director's work with the actor, it is necessary to clarify all the characteristics of what I call the Heightened Theatrical Landscape. Garrett A. Sullivan Jr. defines a landscape as "built out of inclusions and exclusions; it is a structuring of knowledge and a valorizing of some things at the expense of others" (Fuchs & Chaudhuri, 21: 2005). The word landscape implies that productions of this landscape share particular characteristics, which have been filtered to include certain aspects that serve to separate it from other styles and productions. The Heightened Theatrical Landscape includes specific choices in terms of its content, relationship with the theatre space, the function of the actor, and the aim of the audience.

By using the word "heightened" in Heightened Theatrical Landscape, my aim is to articulate the intensity of such a theatrical experience that is shared by all productions. This asks of the theatre to intensify everything on stage compared to what is found in the world outside of the theatre. In the words of Artaud, "Theatre must rebuild itself on a concept of this drastic action pushed to the limit" (Huxely & Witts, 2000:26). A Heightened Theatrical Landscape strives to intensify every component of the theatrical experience in terms of the content of the text, degree of acting, and use of space. The important distinction is that by using the word "heightened", the landscape is not necessarily calling for a maximization or grandiosity, but rather a focused approach on each component. As will be articulated, the heightened implies a more intense choice of content of story as opposed to the more domestic and everyday, and a desire for the actor to completely inhabit the world of the character in this intense landscape. This landscape is a tangible manifestation of a mental image which presents humanity in an unknown territory, uncharted and unlived.

The text of a Heightened Theatrical Landscape is composed of poetry which "contains a fierceness and a reality perhaps at a different temperature than that of naturalistic writing" (Berry, 1992: 32). Cicely Berry, British voice practitioner, is quick to point out the differences between heightened text and naturalistic text:

> I am taking heightened text to mean writing which is built on a rhythmic structure, where there is compression of imagery, and where we understand as much through the logic of the imagery as through the factual reasoning. And I am taking naturalistic writing to be prose, where the structure of the story is built on a logical progression of ideas, where the dialogue is rooted in everyday speech patterns, and where imagery is more incidental than essential (Berry 1992: 34).

The Heightened Theatrical Landscape however, does not imply that the text of the play is required to be, as described by Berry, only heightened text. I extend the Heightened Theatrical Landscape to contain texts in which naturalistic text is used in heightened situations. Berry does go on to explain that due to the content of some plays with naturalistic text, the speech patterns might have a poetry to them: "The content of the language may be strange or violent, and the events of the play may impel the characters into heightened language which will shock, but it is still recognizable in everyday terms" (Berry, 1992: 40). In the Heightened Theatrical Landscape, it is possible that what happens in the play compels the character to express himself in poetry, which Berry argues, and I concur, still "gets at truth in a different way" (1992: 33).

Theme

The principal content that the Heightened Theatrical Landscape deals with is the exploration of the individual's struggle to un-displace himself; to find his place in the world. This landscape is not always the social world from which the character has been displaced, but rather the arena in which the individual asserts himself. Alexander Leggatt, when talking about the conditions of a Shakespearean tragedy identifies it as "a fragmented world in which values are uncertain and the individual has to construct artificially a sense of his own identity" (Barker, 1997: 225). A Shakespearean tragedy thus becomes a primary example of a Heightened Theatrical Landscape. Hamlet finds himself in such a fragmented world after the marriage of his mother to his uncle, and even Macbeth struggles to construct his identity after he kills King Duncan. Howard Barker's Theatre of Catastrophe also places itself within a Heightened Theatrical Landscape, as it "centres on rupture, both external and internal, and the licensing of thought and feeling, instinctive expressions of human potential amidst its ubiquitous, often self-willed restrictions" (Barker, 1997: 224). Most of Barker's plays are set

after some sort of catastrophic event has occurred, and consequently the characters in his plays are dislocated from their social reality. In Barker's The Castle, Stucley comes home from the crusades to find that his village has become a feminist colony and the play charts his struggle to impose himself as the rightful patriarchal head of the village. This landscape then opens itself up to intense situations. As suggested by Artaud in his Theatre of Cruelty, "If theatre wants to find itself needed once more, it must present everything in love, crime, war and madness" (Huxely & Witts, 2000: 26).

The theme of Barker's The Possibilities, which I will be directing as my thesis production, is a prime example of a struggle, as Barker explains, "In *The Possibilities* I recouped from a series of appalling situations a will to human dignity and complexity that came precisely from the absence of conventional politics" (Barker, 1997: 49). The play is full of scenes set in either catastrophic situations, or post-catastrophic situations where the normal rules of society are not applicable anymore. Consequently, in each of the ten scenes, individuals become engaged in a struggle to assert their identity and consequently their humanity: from the Woman who is deliberately displaying her ankle publicly in a society where men and women have ceased to see themselves as sexual beings (*She Sees the Argument But)* to the Bookseller who guards the knowledge in his books from a society intent on abolishing truth (*Only Some Can Take the Strain).* The physical or geographic setting only provides the background to each scene, but the Heightened Theatrical Landscape is a manifestation of the character's dislocation from the social norm and his intense struggle to redefine himself.

There are no inconsequential actions in the Heightened Theatrical Landscape. Each action from the character holds major ramifications to the other characters and indeed the entire society implied around them. In *She Sees the Argument But*, the Woman's action of cutting her costume short to reveal her ankles causes major consequences to the society at large in which this piece is set.

Space

A Heightened Theatrical Landscape does not wish to hide from its theatre, but it acknowledges itself as an art separate from the other more popular forms of television and film. By embracing its theatricality and not disguising it, the Heightened Theatrical Landscape desires to seduce its audience into the theatrical world of the play. As Artaud argues in Theatre of Cruelty, "…the audience will believe in the illusion of theatre on condition they really take it for a dream, not for a servile imitation of reality" (Huxely & Witts, 2000: 26).

To contribute to the seduction into this dream, the Heightened Theatrical Landscape seeks to bring the spectator and the actor closer together and acknowledge that the two bodies share the same space and breathe the same air. Once again, similar to Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty: "in order to affect every facet of the spectator's sensibility, we advocate a … show, which instead of making stage and auditorium into two closed worlds without any possible communication between them, will extend its visual and oral outbursts over the whole mass of spectators" (Huxely & Witts, 2000: 26). The proximity between the two will contribute to the seduction of the audience and seek to intensify the audience reaction to the production.

As well as shortening the distance between the spectator and the actor in the production, each spatial arrangement will be generated by the particularities of the text and production concept. The shared characteristic will be that within the theatre space, such a landscape contains only those elements essential to its production, which does not necessarily imply a minimalist approach but a theatrical one. The space in the theatre always acknowledges its theatricality, its belonging to a theatre culture. What the audience sees in the theatre space becomes multifunctional and used presentationally. Such use of set and properties suggests that this postmodern style borrows from surrealism in its plasticity and musicality. This implies that objects on the stage are given the freedom to change appearances. The application of surrealism also opens up "a high

level of distortion, optical illusion, objects in sizes, and unexpected juxtapositions" (Barton, 1993: 300). Consequently, this takes the domestic and realistic out of the Heightened Theatrical Landscape.

The articulation of the concept is very present in the Heightened Theatrical Landscape, so that a particular "look" of the production is tied directly to the intent behind its staging. The concept is alive and present in the set design and use of props throughout the play. For The Possibilities, the concept is articulated through the notion of the individual finding himself in "Ground Zero". This is manifested in the de-construction of the theatre space such as, among other aspects, the use of stage doors, the application of the raked audience seating unit as part of the set, the types of actual audience seating, and the opening of the curtains which allow the outside light to penetrate into the theatre. Within the Heightened Theatrical Landscape, the concept penetrates into the audience, so that on entry into the venue for The Possibilities the audience will be aware of a deconstructed theatre space, their entry into a theatrical "Ground Zero."

Actor

I will argue that the most essential component of the Heightened Theatrical Landscape is the actor and all his facilities. As stated by Adolphe Appia: "the return to the human body as an expressive element of the first rank is an idea that captures the mind, stimulates the imagination, and opens the way for experiments which may be diverse…" (Huxley & Witts, 2000: 22). An actor is the experimenter, an envoy from the audience into this landscape of the unknown and the unlived. An actor stimulates the imagination more than any other theatrical component because he is organic, alive, and acknowledged by the audience as similar to them but possessing unique qualities. As a result, the actor is the one who holds the biggest key to the seduction and believability in the Landscape. As Artaud articulates, it is his desire "to make theatre a believable reality inflicting this kind of tangible laceration, contained in all true feeling, on the heart and senses…" (Huxely & Witts, 2000: 26). The believability lies in the actor's own connection to his heart and senses.

These experiments ask the character to rebuild himself, and Barker argues that such a landscape "exposes the entire range of human emotions and attempts to extend it, and it entails an obligation to explore, describe and speculate on all areas of human experience" (Barker, 1997: 29). The speculation and exploration of the human experience must be taken seriously by the actor. Grotowski argues that: "The actor must not **illustrate** but **accomplish** an 'act of the soul' by means of his own organism" (Huxley & Witts, 2000: 189). Grotowski's method of actor training is essentially about stripping the actor of his social limitations in order to approach the 'act of the soul.' Similarly Barker argues that an actor is "not entirely human…but gifted in special ways" (Barker, 1997: 77). The actor invites the spectator by: "discarding half measures, revealing, opening up, emerging from himself as opposed to closing up…only…through an encounter with the spectator – intimately, visibly, not hiding…in direct confrontation with him, and somehow 'instead of' him" (Huxely & Watts, 2000: 188). Grotowski compares this to an act of love between two human beings. The actor must be prepared to give up all of himself to accomplish such an act. In our real lives we do not have the bravery to stay present in the extra-ordinary situations of a Heightened Theatrical Landscape. I believe that this is part of the reason why an audience is found at the theatre: to witness actors/characters staying present through these situations on our behalf. This is what is meant by the unlived experience.

The actor's principal tool to articulate and 'accomplish an act of the soul' is his use of language, particularly as language in the Heightened Theatrical Landscape is poetic. Barker argues that, "If language is restored to the actor he ruptures the imaginative blockade of the culture" (Barker, 1997: 18). Thus, a characteristic of a Heightened Theatrical Landscape is the character's and consequently the actor's relation to language. The words that the playwright endows him with are his main tools in the struggle to affirm himself in the 'fragmented world.' They give the character the articulation beyond the everyday to rebuild his identity. Barker argues that "words are irreplaceable for the reason that they are charged with a combined fear and longing" (Barker, 1997: 30). Through giving the character words, the actor is also empowered. The words are magical: "speech, that is the lost secret, and poetic speech is nearly religious in its power: not the humdrum repetition of

naturalist drama, but the rhythmic, undulating, journey of the articulated form known as 'the speech' (Barker, 1997: 77). This 'speech' connects to the universal truth of the character, and the actor must make it his own. The importance of the language is not only crucial to the actor, but also to the spectator who lives in a society where language has lost its power. Just as in Barker's Theatre of Catastrophe, in a Heightened Theatre Landscape it is important that there is a creation of a:

> …new language, whose rhythms and syntax are not those of common speech. It is a speech as contrived as poetry, dislocated, sometimes lyrical, often coarse, whose density and internal contradictions both evoke and confuse. In a culture in which language has lost its public status in favour of image and selling, this flood of verbal sound overwhelms the listener… (Barker, 1997: 81).

In The Possibilities, the actor is faced with text which is characteristic of Barker's Theatre of Catastrophe with its 'density,' being 'dislocated', and 'contrived as poetry.' The importance of language forces the actor to focus work on his delivery of both naturalistic and heightened text as described by Berry. In each case, it is how the actor makes it his truth that will serve in the further seduction of the audience into the Heightened Theatrical Landscape. The importance of speech also results in the actor being aware of the consequences of everything that he says. There are no inconsequential lines in this landscape, everything is a speech act and it holds major significance in his struggle with society. His struggle to un-displace himself is fought through and by the text, and this consequently alters the society. Consider in *Not Him*, when in the middle of seduction, the Woman says to the Man: "If we rush through our feelings it will be all over in a second and I shall have no memory to cherish in my widowhood" (Barker, 1987: 69). This speech act, though seeming rather inconsequential at first glance, takes particular significance when at the end of the scene, it is revealed that during the exploration of their "feelings" the Woman has killed the Man. But the actress must be aware of the consequences while she is engaged in this speech act.

Combined with a heightened awareness of the text, the Heightened Theatrical Landscape also demands from the actor a heightened awareness of his body. First of all, it is the entire body that is present in front of the audience, so that whatever "task of the soul" that the actor is accomplishing, it must be transmitted to the

audience from head to toe. Even if the audience perceives an intensity of expression or experience revealed in an actor's facial expression, the audience still has the full body in front of it, and I would agree with American theatre practitioner Robyn Hunt: "If..it..doesn't register in the body, then you just have a talking head and the audience is not going to buy it" (Krasner 2000: 249-250). The Heightened Theatrical Landscape asks for the body to be fully alive in front of the audience.

As the landscape seeks to intensify and push the boundaries of human experience, the landscape implies that the actor expands his movement from the everyday and ordinary. His imagination must expand and express itself through his body as the characters he plays will be unlike those in a daily existence: emperors, people under bombardment, national heroes, to name a few that occur in The Possibilities. The necessity for imagination is argued by another American theatre practitioner, Pearson, when talking about Shakespeare, "The technical demands of doing Shakespeare are too vast to use one's own personal everyday experience, either of your history or your physical experience. Most people do not have the lexicon, the physical grammar, to play a queen" (Krasner, 2000: 257). The awareness of the body results in movement that is more focused, extended and precise than realistic movement, but always with respect to the character portrayed. The nature and style of the movement depends on the particular production, and how I as the director desire it to relate to the text. The awareness of the body completes the actor's tools for the seduction of the audience into the Heightened Theatrical Landscape.

Audience

The Heightened Theatrical Landscape does not have a specific single message that it wishes to transmit to the audience. Julian Hilton argues that drama "must permit the possibility of moral and political meaning, but not depend on, or be circumscribed by, any single ideology" (Barker, 1997: 225). However it is within the 'witnessing' relationship between the spectator and the actor that the importance of this landscape establishes itself. As the actor releases himself as far as he can go in front of his audience, they are in turn "offered the

chance to participate in and extend the discoveries depicted" (Barker, 1997: 226). This offering is, according to Grotowski, why we as a people are concerned with art.

> To cross out frontiers, exceed our limitations, fill our emptiness – fulfil ourselves. This is not a condition but a process in which what is dark in us slowly becomes transparent. In this struggle with one's own truth, this effort to peel off the life mask … challenging itself and its audience by violating accepted stereotypes of vision, feeling, and judgment – more jarring because it is imaged in the human organism's breath, body, and inner impulses. This defiance of taboo, this transgression, provides the shock which rips off the mask, enabling us to give ourselves nakedly to something which is impossible to define but which contains Eros and Caritas (Schechner and Wolford, 2001: 34).

The nature of this transmission, as Grotowski states, is more jarring because it is 'imaged in the human organism's breath, body and inner impulses.' The 'human organism' going through such an event might only have a few meters separating itself from its audience, and both breathe the same air. However, the organism is in a landscape where the possibilities and range of human expression are heightened or extended, the characters they play are given more freedom than the audience, so the audience is witnessing the 'doing of the un-doable'.

> …dramatic characters undergo or submit to changes which defy our expectations or imaginings of what might be possible or conceivable for them to incorporate - and yet witnessing that incorporation occur, not only convincingly but compulsively; and secondly…actors undergo or submit to changes, in the course of representing these characters, which defy our expectations or imaginations of what might be possible for them or any actor to incorporate - and yet witnessing that incorporation occur, not only convincingly but compulsively (Barker 1997: 228).

As stated previously, the Heightened Theatrical Landscape asks of the actor to inhabit the role, to accomplish the task of the soul. The personal truth that the actor lives in front of the audience, together with the freedom established by the landscape, will result in such unexpected changes. How the audience reacts to these changes will differ from spectator to spectator, as the "plays invoke moral crises which deprive the audience of its usual judgemental opinion" (Barker, 1997: 228). Grotowski argues that in present society, compared to a more religious past, "spectators are more and more individuated in their relation to the myth as corporate truth or group model" (Schechner & Wolford, 2000: 35). In the same way that the Landscape presents characters

which are dislocated from society, the witness of such a struggle will dislocate the spectator's reaction from other spectators and the social norm. The witnessing act asks of the spectator to identify himself within the particular situation, discovering the discrepancy between his reaction and those sitting next to him. As in Barker's drama, he stays:

> committed to the right of each audience member to work through and take away something different from the event, working through a method that is 'essentially heuristic', raising questions in the minds of its audience members that 'encourage them to reach for a change in their understanding', emphasizing 'redefinition rather than celebration' (Barker, 1997: 226).

The Heightened Theatrical Landscape strives for a similar postmodern transmission with the audience. It is not a matter of a sending out one message, where there will be a solidarity within the response, but just like the character within this landscape who is dislocated within the social norm, the drama dislocates the spectator's reactions from the 'corporate truth'. It prompts the spectator to question himself in relation to society: "Theatre becomes a site of individual discovery, demonstrating the self's capacities for surprising moments of both intransigence and realignment" (Barker, 1997: 224). The Possibilities ask the spectator to re-evaluate his own humanity in respect to the catastrophic situations the characters are faced with and the choices they make. The intention is that not everyone agrees with the woman who decides to open the door after her previous generosity is the cause of her husband's death (*Kiss My Hands*) and that people's sympathy is split between the young woman and old woman in the generational battle (*The Necessity for Prostitution in Advanced Societies*). The production's intent is to question the audience's own possibilities of behaviour.

Both Barker and Grotowski had similar theories and desires in their approach to theatre, which I bring together under my articulation of Heightened Theatrical Landscapes. Barker sees theatre as: "This dark, enclosed space, detached from the world, is a laboratory of human possibility. It has religious connotations, but whereas religion affirms disciplines, restrictions, theatre explodes them." (Barker, 1997: 221) Grotowski (whose working group was called "The Laboratory Theatre"), understood theatre's role in religion, and how it differs today, by distinguishing it as "the integration, the discarding of masks, the revealing of the real

substance: a totality of physical and mental reactions" (Huxley & Witts, 2000: 188). Within their theories and the Heightened Theatrical Landscape I intended to create, the biggest responsibility rests with the actor and how he accomplishes the 'task of the soul'. As the director, my role is to guide him into this landscape, and my research and work as a director is focused on finding the tools to get him to inhabit this landscape and consequently complete its creation.

Preparing the Landscape

A long time before my work with the actor begins, I find myself reading the play I want to direct. I know almost instantly if this is a play I see myself directing because the text seduces me instantly. I know it seduces me because I can picture the stage in my mind, and the action unfolding. Perhaps there are certain images that strike me and refuse to leave my mind. However, the main component of the seduction, is my imagining of actors living in the landscape suggested by the play, like an alternate reality. The combination of the images and the seduction by this alternate reality results in a desire to stage it, direct it. This desire is not something which I can immediately articulate. Similarly to Peter Brook, "When I begin work on a play, I start with a deep, formless hunch which is like a smell, a colour, a shadow" (Brook, 1988:3). For me, this hunch is a shadow and it slowly begins to take some form in elements of the landscape.

The nature of the elements of the landscape is developed from an interaction with a flood of information. The first phase of my work with the play is about acquiring as much information from many different kinds of media in order to see the shape of the shadow. This information might be books, newspaper articles, artwork, photographs, movies, music, documentaries; anything which I find deals with the theme of the play. This theme is part of the initial seduction but becomes clearer through the interaction with information. This interaction does not stop throughout the rehearsal process, and it becomes even more important during the first week or so with the actors. I try to transfer as much knowledge and images obtained from the information I researched to the actors and also point and encourage them to find more on their own and contribute it to rehearsals. I find that there is no such thing as useless information, as all of it is filtered through the brain and may articulate itself practically as a vision throughout rehearsals. Brook argues that such a process is very subjective and results in a directorial signature,

> It is always about something and this is what pinpoints the director's responsibility. This leads him to choose one sort of material rather than another – not just for what it is, but because of its potential. It's the sense of the potential that then guides him to finding the space, the actors, the forms of expression, a potential that is there and

> yet unknown, latent, only capable of being discovered, rediscovered and deepened by the active work on the team (Brook, 1988: 6).

Thus my vision of the landscape is by no means complete when rehearsal starts. There is a structure, but I allow the details of the vision to be shaped by what happens during rehearsal. I believe it has something to do with the unconscious filtering of the images through time. In the case of The Possibilities, I was driven by a need from the very start to link the scenes with a particular element that would be present in every scene, but would take a different function. It was evident from the start that the best element to start with would be the rug the weavers' are making while they are being shelled in *The Weaver's Ecstasy at the Discovery of a New Colour*. I saw it as this grotesque image of dead people's clothing being woven together, thus elevating itself to a metaphoric image suited to the Heightened Theatrical Landscape. However, what the rug could be in all the other scenes only became clear to me while watching the actors rehearse, so that for example, in *Reasons for the Fall of Emperors* it would be the blanket Alexander uses to cover himself as he lies in bed. This germination is a common feature of my process as a director, there is a need or an image that is not completely formed or articulate, and only becomes something concrete as a response to what the actors generate on the floor.

When the actor comes to the floor of the rehearsal venue, there is a particular atmosphere I desire to create within the rehearsal process. I agree with Brook and his desire that "The rehearsal work should create a climate in which the actors feel free to produce everything they can bring to the play" (Brook 1988: 6). With all the information that has been and is being exchanged between myself and the actors, I believe there is enough form or structure to give freedom to the actors to explore within it. My role then becomes that of a guide to lead the actors towards exploring the text and allowing for the freedom to express their interaction with it. I work together with the actors in developing the landscape, and I argue that this approach does not lessen my position as the creative leader of the process. Brook articulates the dual role of directing:

> Half of directing is, of course, being a director, which means taking charge, making decisions, saying "yes" and saying "no," having the final say. The other half of

> directing is maintaining the right direction. Here the director becomes a guide, he's at the helm, he has to have studied the maps and he has to know whether he's heading north or south. He searches all the time, but not haphazardly…The director can list to the others, yield to their suggestions, learn from them, radically modify and transform his own ideas, he can constantly change course, he can unexpectedly veer one way and another, yet the collective energies still serve a single aim (Brook 1998: 6).

While the creative process is now shared, my role as director is to hold responsibility "at the helm," so that in the methods of guiding, I am allowing the actor to emerge from the shadow of my initial "hunch." Even if every director had the same belief in the sharing of the creative process, the end result would always be different, as informed by the subjective choices of the director. These choices are primarily the tools a director uses during rehearsals, how he structures them, and what kind of information he feeds the actor. My argument is that, even though the creative process becomes shared and I as the director require input from the actor, I am still responsible for the final result. I initiated the "hunch", I nurtured it, and I will finalize it.

The "hunch" has to translate itself beyond a page of text. As Brook argues:

> A 'directorial conception' is an image which precedes the first day's work, while 'sense of direction' crystallizes into an image at the very end of the process. The director needs only one conception – which he must find in life, not in art - which comes from asking himself what an act of theatre is doing in the world, why it is there (Brook, 1988: 6).

Within that initial seduction, I believe there is an instinctual truth that provokes the desire to stage a particular piece of text, create and inhabit the landscape. This truth is something which is not only mine, but connects me to the rest of the human population. In the case of the Heightened Theatrical Landscape, it is that struggle of the individual to assert his identity.

Inhabiting – The Rotenberg System

If the actor does not inhabit his role, then as Grotowski implies, he is merely 'illustrating' and not 'accomplishing the task of the soul.' If the role is not real to him, then the end result lacks something important. If the actor does not explore his possibilities in The Possibilities, then the audience will never be able to question their own.

I align myself with the founder of the prevalent Western method of acting, Konstantin Stanislavski, who stated: 'All external production is formal, cold, and pointless if it is not motivated from within' (Stanislavski, 1967: 164). Through the careful and searching interpretation of the text, the actor's vision must contain something unique to the actor. Jacques Copeau calls this "the blood." Lee Strasberg explains:

> He [Copeau] describes the difficulties the actor has with his "blood"…the actor tells his arm, 'Come on now, arm, go out and make the gesture,' but the arm remains wooden. The 'blood' doesn't flow; the muscles don't move; the body fights within itself…'the battle with the blood of the actor' (Rudlin & Paul, 1990: 71).

I understand this "blood" as the conduit from the actor's self to the life of character**.** If, as a director, I command the actor to realise the character in a certain way, "blood" will not flow, but if the actor brings himself to this realisation, then the "battle for the blood" will go in his favour. If there is no imaginative and personal journey from the actor, then there is no "high life" in the Heightened Theatrical Landscape.

I define "high life" as the magical state of having created a 'genuine reality on a stage' (Morris, 2002: 1). It is not the recreation of everyday reality, but rather the belief in the created reality as defined by the performance text. It is the ideal state of a production: the characters and action are engrossing, the actors are compelling, and there is a transparency between the two. The life of the character is inhabited by the onstage actor, with the actor's "blood" flowing. It requires that the actors, in Copeau's words, 'feel the make believe' (Rudlin & Paul, 1990: 72). The first step is in differentiating the on-stage reality and the everyday reality and David Rotenberg articulates those within his system, labelling them Realism and Naturalism. Rotenberg defines

Realism as our behaviour in the reality of our daily lives, while Naturalism is how we need to behave on stage – "high life". The fundamental difference between the two, he argues, is that while in Realism "your system turns off to protect you…in Naturalism you stay present" (Rotenberg in Hyland, 1999). In Naturalism, everything matters. Rotenberg illustrates the difference through the story of receiving a dozen roses. In Realism, the roses smell wonderful for the first half an hour, but after that, one gets used to the smell and does not register it in anymore. In Naturalism, one never stops smelling those roses, "If you had to live your life in Naturalism, if you had to live your life in present tense, then you wouldn't make it down the street. Either you'd fall so hopelessly in love with something along the way or you'd be so violently offended by something that you'd start a ruckus" (Rotenberg in Hyland, 1999).

The challenge for the actor is to stay present in these kinds of moments. For example, in case of a confrontation with someone, it is very often that only after the incident that one realizes "I should have said this, I should have done that…" For on-stage life, the actor has to discard Realism, and embrace Naturalism which is "…actually the dream of staying present, it's the dream of sensuality, the dream of power, the dream of violence, the dream of loving…" (Rotenberg in Hyland, 1999). In The Possibilities, an actor playing the Officer would have to dream of power as he hears pleas to save a village (*The Philosophical Lieutenant and the Three Village Women*), or dream of violence while playing Judith who cuts the hand of another Woman (*The Unforeseen Consequences of a Patriotic Act)*.

If "blood" is going to start to flow, I argue that the actor must bring all of himself to the role. As the director I can not dream for him, or demonstrate how to stay present, because that would be my dream and not his. It would be removed from his truth and as Copeau states "There is something about an actor which is dependent on what he is in himself, that certifies his authenticity…" (Rudlin & Paul 1990: 73). I found that Eric Morris, an acting teacher in America, has developed a system of exercises to bring the actor to his authenticity. He

insists that an actor must put himself in a state of "being" where he does 'no more or less than [he] feels' (Morris 2002: 4). Morris clarifies:

> Being is a state of experience and behaviour wherein one is affected by internal and external stimuli, and responds by expressing one's feelings on an organic moment-to-moment basis. BEING is a state of life where the greatest number of personality facets are available to one as a creative artist (Morris 1992: 5).

Thus "Being" is incredibly important to the actor, as it is "the only place from which you can create organic reality" (Morris 2002: 5). I would associate the "BEING" state with an actor's 'blood' flowing. Morris urges the actor to 'find out what you feel and express it totally' (2002: 4). I would argue that these two components, 'finding out' and 'expressing', are key in the actor's imaginative journey, the foundation of high life on stage and the inhabiting of the Heightened Theatrical Landscape.

I agree with Morris that the principal question an actor must ask with regards to the text is "What is the reality and how can I make it real to *me*?" (Morris, 2002: 1). To rephrase for the actor: "How do the stimuli that affect my character affect me?" When inhabiting the Heightened Theatrical Landscape, an actor might be required to express something of which he has no previous experience. Which actor has waited seven years for their husband to return, survived a bombardment, or had to plead for a life of a loved one without being able to speak? To borrow an analogy from David Rotenberg, whose acting system I will use as my tool for guiding the inner life of actors: the actor is like a musical keyboard and in this case the number of notes on his keyboard is limited. These notes are the actor's different emotions, life experiences and dreams, and the width of the keyboard indicates the possible range he can play. An actor must first "extend the number of keys…[they] are able to go to and then…play those keys" (Rotenberg in Hyland 1999).

I believe the foundation for the actor, before approaching any role, is to work on expanding this keyboard, which I would label as the actor's personal keyboard of humanity. The keyboard needs to grow continuously to be able to encompass the variety of human emotions and experience. Therefore instead of "pretending," the actor can select from a range of notes those he feels are right for the character. With a wider selection of

notes, the actor has the potential for a deeper understanding of the character. This process of selection, rather than pretence, swings the "battle for the blood" in the actor's favour and allows him to 'speculate on all areas of human experience' (Barker, 1997:29).

The second foundation of high life states that once an actor finds out what he feels, he expresses it. In the analogy borrowed from Rotenberg, the actor locates the note on his keyboard and plays it. Though it appears simple, sounding this note requires more than courage.

In our ordinary lives, when faced with extra-ordinary events, our system will switch us "off" for our own protection. Whether it's winning the World Cup or watching your house burn, the protagonists of these events usually can't immediately describe what they feel to the reporters who thrust microphones in their direction. "It hasn't sunk in yet…I don't believe it…I feel nothing," they are in a state of shock. This state grants us no eloquence. On the other hand, in theatre's high life, the characters in similar and even larger, extra-ordinary situations are present and articulate. Consider the Husband in *Kiss My Hands* who, knowing that as soon as he steps outside he will be shot by terrorists who have just burst into his house, has to forgive his wife who opened the door. He tells his wife, "To survive, we must learn everything we had forgotten, and unlearn everything we were taught, and being inhuman, overcome inhumanity" (Barker, 1987: 16). Expressing what he feels in this state involves the actor 'staying present', 'being', and 'letting the blood flow'.

Thus, the question which haunts me as a director is how not to command, but rather how to guide the actor towards evoking high life by a selection from who they essentially are; "Always and forever, when you are on stage, you must play yourself" (Stanislavski, 1967: 167). How then should I guide the actor to bring all of himself to the role in the play? How do I expand the actor's "personal keyboard of humanity" and then let him play it? How can I assist him in letting the blood flow within the Heightened Theatrical Landscape? How will I

lead him to the possibilities of human behaviour as articulated by Howard Barker in The Possibilities?

Linking to the System

The search for my answer to this question has led me through various acting systems which are geared towards what Stanislavski described as 'living the role,' and which I find synonymous with the actor bringing himself to the role. The founder of the first articulated system was Stanislavski himself, and he has inspired and been adapted by various other acting teachers and directors. The most well known North American practitioners include Lee Strasberg (who coined his adaptation of Stanislavski's system as the Method and focused on emotion memory), Stella Adler (who expanded on Stanislavski's Method of Physical Actions), and Sanford Meisner (who concentrated on the interaction between actors). However the system that I have found as most useful is David Rotenberg's acting system. It was developed by David Rotenberg during the 80's and 90's, who presently is a director and acting teacher at York University in Toronto, Canada. The system combines components of previous practitioners which re-articulate the terminology for the actor of this era. More importantly, I believe the system is organized to promote the individuality and creativity of the actor within the role. It is the system that I will use as my starting point when directing The Possibilities.

My intentions as a director align themselves with Rotenberg's philosophies on theatre and acting. When he returned to Canada in the late 70s after receiving his MFA from Yale in America, he found actors in theatres working in what he termed 'director's theatre' (Rotenberg in Hyland, 1999). He found director's theatre was focused on the director's telling of the story through the manipulation of actors. He blamed this on the Method teachings that "in terms of beats and tactics…had a tendency to create an actor who told accurate stories but didn't access enough of the life sources behind what the stories are" (Rotenberg in Hyland, 1999). Rotenberg sought to find a way to put the creative control back into the hands of the actor, so that he would inhabit the life of the character rather than simply fulfill the character's purpose within the story as told by the director. The actor becomes an artist. Rotenberg wanted to shift this more into "actor's theatre" so that the production is as

much about the actor as the director. Similarly, I want my production of The Possibilities to be as much about myself as the director, as it is about Graeme Watkins playing Alexander, or Lauren Steyn playing Judith. The audience is watching the characters become these specific actors, and therefore any other production of The Possibilities would be totally different.

This is where the strongest point of unity between Rotenberg and myself exists - the intention that the character becomes the actor. Rotenberg argues in the case of the actor who plays Hamlet: "His [Hamlet's] thoughts are ultimately no denser than the janitor's; his expression of those thoughts is" (Rotenberg in Hyland, 1999). The actor needs to be aware of his own complexity and uniqueness as opposed to the finite quality of the character that, even though he might be the famous brooding Dane, is limited by the number of lines in the script. As Hamlet becomes the actor, the actor is the one who fills in the intentions and supplies life behind the lines by accessing his own responses in relation to Hamlet's circumstances. The same is true for any of the actors playing characters in The Possibilities; it is the Bookseller who becomes Charlie Keegan, as Charlie articulates his own responses to the Bookseller's world.

I will now investigate my understanding of Rotenberg's system, and how it links the actor's work on the self ("expanding the keyboard") to the work on the role ("playing the keyboard). I will also explore how my application of the system will guide the actor towards inhabiting the Heightened Theatrical Landscape.

Expanding the Keyboard

> *For the actor, the whole art is the gift of himself. In order to give himself, he must first posses himself* (Copeau in Rudlin and Paul 1990: 77).

The first question that must be addressed is the source of the actor's life, and this has been debated in all acting systems since Stanislavski. Lee Strasberg's Method placed emphasis on past experience as the main source of the actor's inspiration (as accessed by emotion memory), while Adler's emphasis was on 'the actor's

imagination and the social world that inspires' (Krasner, 2000: 23). In order to understand a character, Adler insists that actors must 'read, observe paintings, study architecture, and listen to music' (Krasner, 2000: 23). Stanislavski argued for the combination of both the actor's past experience and imagination:

> At the same time we must not overlook the question of the quantity of your reserves in this respect. You should remember that you must constantly be adding to your store. For this purpose you draw, of course, principally upon your own impressions, feelings, and experiences. You also acquire material from life around you, real and imaginary, from reminiscences, books, art, science, knowledge of all kinds, from journeys, museums and above all from communication with other human beings.
> Do you realize, now that you know what is required of an actor, why a real artist must lead a full, interesting, beautiful, varied, exacting and inspiring life? He should know, not only what is going on in the big cities, but in the provincial towns, far-away villages, factories, and the big cultural centers of the world as well. He should study the life and psychology of the people who surround him, of various other parts of the population, both at home and abroad (1967: 191-192).

What attracted me towards Rotenberg's system is how his source is similar to what Stanislavski was looking for, a combination of personal experience and "material from life around". Rotenberg realized that while nobody in real life does some of the things characters in plays do, "we dream of it![2]" (Rotenberg in Hyland, 1999). Consequently he encourages the actor, "So, if you include everything you've done, every piece of music you've listened to, every dream you've ever had, every book you've ever read, … then all of a sudden our sense of self is quite wide" (Rotenberg in Hyland, 1999). As human beings we interpret what we see, read, smell, touch, hear and feel individually and this interpretation is stored inside us**,** the body has memory. The interpretations of our personal, imaginative, and learned experiences also get stored in our unconscious mind. We are not directly aware of these. Stanislavski argued that in the unconscious our interpretations change their nature: "Time is a spending filter for our remembered feelings – besides it is a great artist. It not only purifies, it also transmutes even painfully realist emotions into poetry" (1967: 191-192). I believe that Rotenberg sees this poetry as the dream, 'the subjective experience of remembered and imaginary images, sounds/voices, words, thoughts or sensations…' (Wikipedia[online]). Rotenberg is urging the actor to access and incorporate his dreams into his repertoire, to translate the wide sense of his unconscious onto the actor's

[2] The use of the word dream implies both what we could consider the sleeping and waking dream, as well as reverie and flights of imagination, moments of meditation, etc.

personal keyboard. This opens up the 'well' for the actor in order to inhabit the Heightened Theatrical Landscape. For example, Andrew Laubscher who plays the Torturer, has probably never tortured anyone. But everyone has been through experiences in their life, such as bullying, which might have led them to have a dream of torturing their tormentor. I would then guide Andrew to find, within his wide sense of self, the dream of torturing someone. I would guide him to become aware of the particular characteristics and the sensations of such a dream, because those will be the ones that bring the character closer to him as the actor.

I believe Rotenberg's foray into the dream is inspired by the work of one of the Western world's most known psychologists, Carl Jung (1875-1961). He devoted most of his career exploring and decoding the dream world, believing that in this manifestation of the unconscious was a wealth of knowledge about the human being. Jung argued that while sleeping, the dream state encourages the individual to further develop itself, to seek a: "wholeness, the complete realization of the blueprint for human existence within the context of the life of the individual" (Stevens, 2004: 82). Jung's saw dreams as the fusion between "progressive integration of the unconscious, timeless Self with the time-bound personality of the contemporary man or woman" (Stevens 2004: 82). The timeless Self is referred to by Jung as the 'two million-year-old man that is in all of us' (Stevens, 2004: 82), who possesses instincts and age-old wisdom. Jung argued that in our dreams, who we are now is continually being fused with who we are destined to be, and this process is greatly aided by recording, reflecting and working on our dreams. For Jung this process, labelled as individuation, is the goal of the Self, the conscious and unconscious part of an individual. The process of expanding the keyboard is similar to Jung's process of individuation, because Rotenberg is also seeking a development of the actor, and arguing that the actor can tap into dreams (waking or sleeping) as a wealth of knowledge to realize himself as an actor.

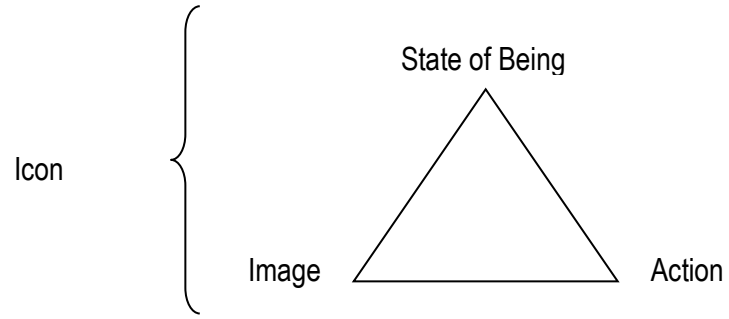
Rotenberg's ideas also have resonances with Surrealism, an entire movement based on the unconscious and oriented towards its liberation. Though drawing a parallel between Rotenberg's Naturalism and the Surrealist goal for a 'state truer than everyday reality' is a bit of stretch, the words of the founder of the movement, Andre

Breton, are very similar to the thinking behind Rotenberg's importance in dreams: "The mind of the man who dreams is fully satisfied by what happens to him. The agonizing question of possibility is no longer pertinent. Kill, fly faster, love to your heart's content" (2005: 13). This is the intention for the actor in the Heightened Theatrical Landscape. Consequently, instead of pretending to know something he doesn't, the actor only has to search within his dreams. Rotenberg believes, and I agree, that in dreams, the actor will find it easier to access "that vitality that is alive, that is chaotic, that is life is much more complicated than people give it credit for" (Rotenberg in Hyland, 1999).

The simplest method for this process of actor 'individuation' is by recording and reflecting in a journal, where the focus is on recording the free flow of thoughts. Recording one's dreams after waking up, daydreams, feelings related to pieces of music, novels, and interactions with different senses in this diary will aid the actor in the discovery of his self and provide material for the notes on the keyboard. Eric Morris, an acting teacher in America, is in support of this approach. He has focused his work on developing other techniques that are helpful in the actor's 'individuation.' Just as Jung and Rotenberg, Morris justifies his approach by stating that "his entire exploration of the unconscious is designed to create a connection between the conscious and the unconscious parts of ourselves" (Morris & Hotchkiss, 1988: 40) where he believes that most of our talent lies. Morris**,** as Rotenberg, has developed many exercises around establishing such a connection, maintaining that the most important thing an actor can do is "daily involvement with the approaches and techniques that promote the connection" (Morris & Hotchkiss, 1988: 40).

The actor must be working continually on himself and expanding his keyboard. However, when approaching a role, he must be ready to put his keyboard to use and play the music of the character.

Playing the Keyboard



*"Within the **Icon** of the scene, you sit in a **State of Being**, you impose a **Role** on your partner, and from the **Driver** comes the **Action**."*

The above sentence is Rotenberg's starting point for the actor when working on the role[3]. I will first explore the notions of Icon, State of Being and Role, justifying how Rotenberg's organization of each of these elements provides a bridge for the actor between the work on the self and work on the role, and leads him into high life, especially with respect to the production of The Possibilities.

"You sit in a State of Being"

Rotenberg clarifies the State of Being as the emotion the character is experiencing as the scene begins, and which can or may change during it. Rotenberg also distinguishes between two kinds of states, Secondary and Primary. The Secondary ones are those we sit in during most of our daily existence. Primary States of Being, are insatiate (they are never satisfied); they are the essence, the highest and lowest emotional points of human feeling. In real life, they are limited to short spans of time, because our system tends to do as much as it can to talk us out of them. They can be stressful, tiring and can lead to a loss of control or irrational behaviour, all of which our bodies and minds tend to reject. Additionally, many of these State of Being are seen as anti-social and not to be expressed publicly. Much of our upbringing is peppered with statements from

[3] One of the assumptions that Rotenberg bases the working of his system on is that the actor needs to be present before applying the system towards a role. Rotenberg's system also assumes that the actor has already developed or is developing a sophisticated level of vocal and physical technique and that the system will not necessarily help the actor in the process of vocal and physical characterization.

our parents, “Don’t shout!”, “Don’t cry!”, “Don’t sulk”, “Don’t laugh so loud!” to name a few. Much actor training, especially as taught by Rotenberg, Morris, and more importantly Grotowski, goes into unlearning these social niceties. These states are further classified as being ‘on the left’ (the negative or dark emotions) and ‘on the right’ (positive or light emotions). Some examples of Primary States of Being are:

Left-handed	**Right-handed**
I am falling	I am flying
I am betrayed	I see – I love
I am lost	I am alive
I have lost my faith	I am powerful

The best way to explain a State of Being is to focus on one of them, *I see – I love*. Romeo’s love for Juliet is such an example. No matter how much time he spends with Juliet, or how close he might physically be to her, his state of love is never satisfied, it is never enough, and the feeling never stops. Of course in our lives the feeling might eventually die down, its nature may shift or shift to another person, but there are moments of feeling so much love that one does not know what to do with oneself. Romeo’s love for Juliet is all consuming in such a way.

It should be evident that for the stage Rotenberg requires the actor to actuate the Primary States of Being. If we are looking for high life, then secondary states of being such as ‘I understand’ or ‘I like’ are of no use.

In <u>The Possibilities</u>, one of my essential tasks is guiding the actors towards the most compelling States of Being. Consider Alexander (*Reasons for the Fall of Emperors)* in his tent at night on the eve of another battle. It is immediately apparent that the emperor Alexander cannot stand the sound of his troop’s throats’ being cut by their enemy. In the conversation with his officer he says: “I heard them, shouting and dying **I cannot stand that sound** can’t we send out patrols/…/It is a terrible sound/…/It is the worst sound in the world.” (Barker, 1987: 25). He later refuses the ear wax the officer offers him which would stop him from hearing the cries. In this case most actors would agree that the Primary State of Being for this monologue is on the left-hand side and they could select *I am falling*, *I am alone, I am lost* or even *I am a betrayer* amongst others. Each one of

those means something different for the actor, and will result in a different State of Being on stage. It is crucial to note that the actor is not to focus on playing a generalised State of Being, but rather to focus on his own experience of that state. The first step, the selection of the State of Being, involves careful interrogation of the text, character and particular production foci. The next step involves the actor writing (bringing into conscious) all he knows about the selected State of Being. Geoffrey Hyland, director and a student of Rotenberg's explains:

> This involves both actual experience and the dream of that experience. Particular value is placed on recalling touch, taste and smell connected to said experience as these aid in generating the state in performance. The actor then transfers and embraces his own, lived understanding into the playing of Hamlet. He is selecting from his own life experience and not pretending to depict something so that it sounds, looks and feels right (Hyland, 2005).

In the beginning phase of rehearsing for The Possibilities much discussion with the actors will be about the choice of the State of Being. Instead of telling them explicitly how to move, act, or say a line, I will enquire about the State of Being and try to suggest other ones which might unlock their performance and be more compelling in the scene.

Rotenberg also introduces the concept of combining a left and right-handed State of Being, which he called the Swing. With the development of the Swing, an element unique to the system, Rotenberg eliminates the actor from playing a secondary State of Being such as confusion, which is of no value to high life on stage. Rotenberg argues that confusion is simply a combination of a right and left handed State of Being. In his teaching he stressed the importance of the 'duality of seeing,' (Rotenberg in Hyland, 1999) which he explains through a piece of chocolate cake. The cake exists on the right ("Delicious!") and left ("The calories!") at the same time. In *Kiss My Hands,* the Man who is being led out to be shot, has to face the wife who mistakenly let the terrorists into their house. He admits that in the last few moments of his life, he is angry with her. For the actor this becomes a case of combining two different States of Being. His right-handed State of Being could be *I see-I love* ("She is my wife, love of my life"), but his left-handed State of Being is *I am betrayed* ("She is

the reason I am going to die"). The actor is constantly "swinging" between a left-handed and a right-handed State of Being, keeping him in "high life" on stage.

"You impose a role on your partner"

The following container is the Relationship, which deals with how the actor sees and interacts with his scene partner. Rotenberg argues that an actor must impose a role or relationship on his partner, especially if that character is in volition (guiding the action of the scene). This is something we do almost unconsciously in our everyday life and needs to be consciously applied to the role. Rotenberg develops on from Jung and other psychologists by declaring that all our relationships can be categorized into the interaction between these archetypal roles: Mother/Father, Daughter/Son, Sister/Brother [either older or younger], Lover/Lover, and Husband/Wife.[4]

From the articulation of the particular relationship, the actor connects his own personal experience and dream of the relationship, and the scene starts exhibiting qualities of high life. The high life of the scene can also become more interesting when actors try to impose different relationships on each other. For example, in *She Sees the Argument But,* the female Official has called in the Woman who is pushing the laws of this society by showing her ankles in public. The Official relates to the Woman in a *Mother-Daughter relationship,* while the Woman is attempting to enforce an *Older Sister – Younger Sister* relationship. This highlights the fact that the nature of the relationship is not necessarily the same for both actors and 'adds density and dynamic in terms of status transactions' (Hyland, 2005).

[4] Rotenberg argues that Friend-Friend has no dynamic tension on stage, and such a relationship is more usefully structured as a sibling relationship between brother(s) and/or sister(s). Relationships tend to differ in who is playing the older sibling. One friend could be in a younger sibling relationship with you, while another is in an older. Some friends might make you feel that you are in a parent-child relationship or even lover-lover

"**Within the Icon of the Scene"**

With the Icon of the Scene. Rotenberg asks the actor to identify, from his character's point of view, each scene with an icon. This is a set story that is archetypal and varies with the given circumstances of the play. The icon is an image, linked to an event, which sums up what the scene is essentially about. Examples of some icons are: *The Betrayal, The Confession, The Goodbye, The Morning After, The First Kiss.* By asking the actor to "condense" the scene into an archetypal event, Rotenberg wants him to articulate the essence of the scene to himself and his character. As the actor gets to the core he transfers the scene onto a common plane of understanding so that he can access and then feed from his own notion and experiences of such an event.

Returning to the Man swinging between a left and right handed State of Being in *Kiss My Hands,* the actor is now asked to identify the Icon of the Scene. From many choices he may select *Stop The World, I Want to Get Of* or *The Goodbye*. Both of these options are possible, and other options are only limited by the deductions from a careful scrutiny and questioning of text and production. Once again, each of these scenes will mean something different to the actor, as his personal experience and dream feed particular elements. The playing of the scene will also shift depending on the selection. The Icon of the Scene may also be different for each actor within the same scene. In this particular scene, the Terrorists' Icon of the Scene is different to that of the Man, whom they have finally captured and they might see it as *It's Almost Over*. Such a difference further contributes to the dynamics of "high life".

Theories behind Rotenberg's System and its Application

As shown, each one of the three components of the system is organized into archetypal containers which are accessible to the actor and translate the character's experience into his own source. The actor needs to fill the containers with, what Jung would call, the Self - the unconscious and conscious part of himself. I believe that the system works because, through Rotenberg's articulation of the containers, the actor taps into what Jung called the collective unconscious. Within the collective unconscious reside inherited archetypes which are

"identical psychic structures common to all which together constitute archaic heritage of humanity" (Stevens, 2001: 47). Jung argued that they have the:

> …capacity to initiate, control, and mediate the common behavioural characteristics and typical experiences of all human beings…on appropriate occasions…give rise to similar thoughts, images, mythologems, feelings, and ideas in people, irrespective of their class, creed, race, geographical location or historical epoch (Stevens 2001: 48).

Thus Rotenberg's classification of his system opens any actor to the common source that all members of humanity share. A *Mother-Daughter* relationship holds common forms of intuition in every constituent of the human population, as will *The Goodbye* as the Icon of the Scene, or *I see-I love* as the State of Being. Very importantly for us, Jung maintains that archetypes are not abstract principles, but are "numinous, electrically charged with a sense of the sacred" (Hyde, 2004: 61). Because humanity shares this collective unconscious, these archetypes can help the actor immediately figure out the Icon of the Scene, the State of Being to sit in, or Relationship to impose. The actor can focus on what his personal knowledge of that container is. But if these archetypes remain in our unconscious, which is not known to us, even though they are part of a collective that spans our humanity, how can the actor use them? Jung clarified that, though the archetype is always in our unconscious, it is the archetypal image which intrudes in our conscious. Even if Rotenberg's containers are not the same as those of Jung's, the principle is similar, that the container is an archetypal image that is shared and capable of being instantly filled by every individual. So if the actor has done the work on himself, investigated his dreams, he has already begun to connect to the collective unconscious and is ready to fill the container.

The transfer between the actor and the character can be summed up as follows: The actor interprets the circumstances of the character, which inform the choice of Rotenberg's archetypal container, where the actor combines his conscious and unconscious knowledge of that container and applies it back into the character, making the character become him.

For the transfer to be accomplished and Rotenberg's system to work, the actor's dedication towards work on the self cannot be stressed enough. The aim is to have as many notes as possible so that in rehearsal and performance an actor can simply select the notes appropriate to the given scene, in the function of either the Icon of the Scene, State of Being, or Relationship. The actor also needs to have as many notes as possible so as to have a choice within the note, its sharp or its flat. The width of the keyboard is proportional to the width of the heart of the actor, which Stanislavski also demanded of his actors. "We need a broad point of view to act the plays of our times and of many peoples. We are asked to interpret the life of human souls from all over the world" (1967: 191-192). The width of the actor's keyboard deepens the portrayal of the character:

> …even in the violence, even in the hatred, there is a wideness of the human heart…which is an accepting of your own violence, of the nature of other people's violence, that human beings are not good or bad, they do what they need to do to make themselves happy (Rotenberg in Hyland, 1999).

So the actor playing the Torturer has to open himself up the possibility of killing someone and the actress playing The Woman in *Not Him* has to be open to the possibility of killing her husband. All actors are forced to accept, what Rotenberg calls, 'the fucked up wiring of the human heart' (Rotenberg in Hyland 1999) in order to inhabit Heightened Theatrical Landscapes high life.

However, when the actor brings his wide personal keyboard of humanity and the means to express it to the rehearsal space, what is the director's job? Rotenberg explains that the job of the director in relation to actors is to 'move them forward…into high life, that then you [director] can harness enough to tell a story within high life' (Rotenberg in Hyland, 1999). I see the director's job as inspiring the actor to search deeper within his containers and also guiding the actors towards making the most appropriate and compelling choice of containers.

With The Possibilities, I can now begin rehearsals by presenting an overview of the system and its terminology to the actors so that the same jargon will be used throughout the rehearsal. More importantly, my actors and I now draw from the same pool of the collective unconscious to fill the containers suggested by the script. If I

want to shift the story in the script, I can now tell the actor playing Alexander in *Reasons for the Fall of Emperors* to try sitting in the *I am a betrayer* State of Being instead of *I am lost*. With this method, I am not commanding the actor as to how to perform the scene, but pointing him towards a different but still personal source to select from when performing. The actor is free to fill in "*I am a betrayer"* with his own life.

I, as a director, am no longer manipulating, but guiding live actors with "flowing blood" towards a story. And the potential of this story has now been expanded, because instead of the interpretation only being my own, it is shared between the actor and me. The actor is providing me with all of his life and because it is connected to his "blood," it has the power in its richness to shift the shape of the story. Going back to the actor playing Alexander, if he comes to the rehearsal playing *I have lost my faith* as his State of Being, I might find that his note is richer and better suited than *I am lost* or *I am a betrayer.* This note would be something that I as a director could never so perfectly envisage, much less be able to command the actor with the details of playing it. Even if I did command him with the technicalities, that note could never be as rich as this one he found within himself. It fits within the play because the actor has picked an appropriate container and filled it with his own life. Now, the actor has brought the note to the production by himself, connecting the performance text of the character with his own "blood".

As argued, I believe that this organization of chaos is what makes the Rotenberg's system incredibly appealing. While his system is constantly pushing the actor towards high life and chaos, the articulation organizes the chaos within a container that is identifiable to both the actor and the director. These containers can be discussed, moved around, shifted without disconnecting the actor from the life inside him and without taking away from the actor's creativity. The director only has to guide the actor to engage in containers which suit the director's vision of the play, meanwhile each container that the actor plays is connected directly to the actor's "blood". Therefore, during rehearsal, I as the conductor of the jazz band, only have to provide my musicians with the musical key in which to improvise in, and suggest the notes. The musicians fill the scale

and play the notes with themselves as instruments. The story that I want to tell as a director is enriched with the full variation of life in the actor.

Completing the Triangle – Action and Image

The two other angles of Rotenberg's triangle, Action and Image, are equally important to working with the actor as the State of Being, Icon of the Scene or Relationship. Their nature is slightly different to the previous components, and I will thus discuss them separately and articulate their application in the rehearsal process.

Rotenberg's definition of Action is not very different from a Stanislavskian approach. Within the acting system which articulates the system it asks of the actor, "If you could dictate the end of the scene, what would your acting partner/s DO?" (Rotenberg in Hyland, 1999) where the Driver is "Why [and how much] do I need this from this person?" (Rotenberg in Hyland, 1999). The more the actor needs this, the higher the stakes of the scene become for the actor. Due to the intense nature of the Heightened Theatrical Landscape, it is important that an actor finds an action over a scene which has high stakes, or the scene becomes domestic and loses the far-reaching implications of the act. How the actor goes about achieving his Action is the tactic, and the actor might constantly shift it as the scene progresses. The actor cannot plan the tactic in advance, it is something which can only be found through being 'present' on the rehearsal floor in the interaction with his partner.

Within The Possibilities, the characters seldom disguise their actions; the terrorists in *Kiss My Hands* want to get the Woman to open the door because they want to easily capture the Man and kill him as he is putting their existence in question. The Man who comes home after the seven year war in *Not Him*, wants to have sex with his wife and he wants it so much that he is willing to cater to her every wish, from taking a bath to clearing up the heads and even having sex outside the confines of the house. However, while the Action is clear, the tactic of how they achieve what they want may change; the terrorists pretend they are friendly and have a

dying comrade to get the woman to open the door and then burst in mercilessly, while the Man first asserts his masculinity before doing anything his wife desires him to do.

Before getting on the floor, the actor must spend time articulating the Action as precisely as possible. I find it extremely important that the actor articulates his action as something he envisages his partner doing. It must be active. To clarify let's consider Alexander and the Groom in *Reasons for the Fall of Emperors*. An actor playing Alexander may voice his Action as "If I could dictate the end of the scene, the Groom would feel pity for me." It might very well be the case that Alexander wants pity from the Groom, and that is suggested by the text, but obtaining "pity" from the Groom is not a 'do-able' action. If on the other hand, the Action for Alexander was "If I could dictate the end of the scene, the Groom would put a knife through my chest", then we have an action that is physical achievable. The Groom's pity for Alexander would manifest itself in his murder. There may be equally compelling Actions to play, and the most appropriate Action comes as a result of experimenting on the floor. What remains important is that it is precise, focuses on the scene partner, and is a 'do-able' action by the partner.

Where other derivatives of the Stanislavski system ask of the actor to break the scene into beats, and find the action for each character, Rotenberg argues that each actor is not always in volition. Rotenberg breaks beats within Action into three types: those which are Volitional, those which are Interlocked, where an actor is just responding to his partner, and the Reactive, where the actor can only react to his partner. To aid in the distinction among the three, Rotenberg uses the metaphor of a tennis match: a Volitional beat is when an actor is serving, putting the ball in play; an Interlocked beat is when an actor is simply returning the ball, trying to keep it in play; and a Reactive beat is when the ball hits him in the face. Rotenberg's categories prevent the actors from taking out a ball each, and focus instead on one ball, bouncing between them in the scene. They acknowledge that a scene is shared between actors, and each actor must be open to the stimulus coming from his partner. To illustrate Rotenberg's Reactive beat, I return to *Kiss My Hands* at the point where the

Terrorists have just burst through the door the Woman has reluctantly opened. She says: “Oh, Christ make me deaf and you speechless ever more, you have murdered every decent impulse, you have killed all language, you are the terrorists!” (Barker, 1987: 15). The ‘Oh’ is an exhalation of emotional sound and is our clue that she is not in Volition, and she is obviously not in charge of the scene anymore as Terrorists storm through her house. With the Reactive beat, the actress has no Action of her own, the tennis ball has hit her face. Her lines are simply the expression of her reaction, and as we are in a Heightened Theatrical Landscape, the characters are extremely eloquent.

This brings us to the third and final corner, Image, which deals with how the character expresses himself; the “value of the word” (Rotenberg in Hyland, 1999). The actor might be dealing with what Rotenberg defines as either Concrete images or Metaphoric images and each has to be approached differently.

The Metaphoric image is greater than the sum of its words so in order for the actor to transmit it, he needs to key it down to something specific that he resonates with personally. The key is usually a touch, taste or smell related to the experience suggested by the image. In *The Necessity for Prostitution in Advanced Societies*, the expression of the main Metaphoric image is shared between the Old and Young women:

> THE OLD WOMAN. History advances, not as I believed at your age, in straight lines, but in-
> THE YOUNG WOMAN. **Zigzags like the seam of a falling stocking**. (Barker 1987: 20)

The image of how history advances is greater than the sum of the words “Zigzags like the seam of a falling stocking.” Investigation of the seam of a falling stocking will not help the actor key the image, but rather each actor must find, from their own experience, a key that unlocks their understanding and meaning behind the image. I would guide the actor towards finding his own personal interpretation of such an image.

On the other hand, the Concrete image deals with something that is frequently part of our everyday existence, and thus requires the actor to reinvestigate it in order to “elaborate up” the image. Such images are

commonplace and require actor to heighten his awareness of them. The actor playing the Bookseller in *Only Some Can Take the Strain* must reinvigorate his understanding of books, as they are a part of our everyday reality. He must re-examine books concretely: How do the pages feel as he flips through the books? How heavy are the books? How do they smell? etc. Even though books take on a more metaphoric meaning within the scene, the actor must still deepen his understanding of the actual image.

Having articulated the three components of Rotenberg's triangle, I will conclude my analysis of the system by addressing how an actor navigates through it. Based on his understanding of the text and the rehearsal on the floor, the actor makes a choice concerning which corner of the triangle he is dealing with, be it State of Being, Action, or Image. During the scene, he is free to use any combination of the three corners, as long as the total adds up to 100%. It is also possible for an actor to work with only one corner at a time. However, it is more common to find the actor working with all three corners, but one being more dominant. In *Kiss My Hands*, the Woman is mainly working with a swinging State of Being, but she can combine elements of Action as well. As her Husband, The Man, is brought out she might be swinging between *I see – I love* and *I am a betrayer* (70% State of Being) as well as the Action of "I want him to hug me" (30% Action). At other times, an actor will find himself switching completely from one corner to another. Throughout *The Weaver's Ecstasy at the Discovery of a New Colour*, the Man is working with the Action of "I want my family to finish the rug," (80% Action, 20% State of Being) but when the new skein of wool is brought to him covered with dead men's blood, he loses his Action and goes into a State of Being, "*I'm in the presence of something great*" (100% State of Being). Therefore, as well as guiding the actor towards the most compelling container, my task also becomes to guide the actor in finding the precise moments when such switches occur. Finding these moments contributes to the actor inhabiting the Heightened Theatrical Landscape.

Towards Finding Form

Rotenberg's system focuses on inner life. External life, vocal and physical form, are not part of its articulation as Rotenberg assumes his system is working alongside some form of physical and vocal training. However, characteristics of the Heightened Theatrical Landscape require an extended style of voice, movement, and kinetic interaction. Having awakened inner life I, as guiding hand, must assist the actor to find form.

Vocal Demands

The common link among texts that serve the Heightened Theatrical Landscape is the value placed on the spoken word. While Rotenberg has assisted us to realize the importance of Image as inner impulse, he doesn't address the physical application of the actor's voice in relation to it. In the case of poetic text, practitioners such as Cicely Berry and Kristin Linklater have developed specific exercises that aid the actor in the delivery of text and the exploration of meaning; with the power of the spoken word: "Every play has a very specific world, and it conveys that world through the language: by this I mean not only through the meaning of the words but also in their sound, in the shaping and rhythm of the speeches, the images, and the spaces in that language" (Berry, 2001: 3).

Berry focuses on text rooted in the body and breath, "We are curiously unaware of their physical nature [words] and think of them mainly in terns of expressing reasons and ideas and of colouring them with feelings, and not in terms of our physical self being expressed through them and involved in them" (Berry, 1992: 19). Physical activity can open up the meaning and increase the sound power/energy of the text for the actor. For example, while the actor speaks text, the other actors hold him while he tries to get to the other side of the room. This liberates the actor from thinking too much about what he is saying as he focuses on the physicality of the action. Breath roots in the body and, not only might the actor find another emotion while speaking, but the words find a new meaning and new energy as he struggles to free himself. When dealing with scenes,

Berry also suggests giving random business to the actor for the duration of the scene. So for example, one actor is stacking the chairs in the room, or arranging books, while they run the lines of the scene. In addition to the text being more rooted within the actor's body, the exercise may also serve to highlight relationships within the scene. If we apply the exercises to *Reasons for the Fall of Emperors*, and have the Groom stack chairs around the room, while Alexander talks to him and follows him around, we quickly discover that for all his status it may not be Alexander who drives the scene, but the Groom in response to the emperor's questions.

I am fortunate that in working with the second years as my cast for The Possibilities, most of their vocal work has been addressed in their university voice classes. Consequently, I do not have to approach the vocal demands from the very beginning of the training process, but rather focus on voice work that relates specifically to the scenes the actors play. As such, it is not within the scope of this essay to present a detailed account of how to achieve the heightened voice.

Physical Demands

The Heightened Theatrical Landscape is not only composed of images articulated verbally by the actors. The text also suggests physical images, a performance text, which implies the use of the actor's body. These physical images are an essential component in inhabiting and creating the world of the play. In *The Dumb Woman's Ecstasy*, the deaf and dumb woman has to plead for her son's life as he is being strangled by the Torturer. She cannot talk, and Barker describes in the stage directs that she "falls on her knees…dumbly she implores him…acts her agony" (1987: 45). As well as such specific physical language, the actor must address how his movement would evoke a landscape which is different to everyday life. The actor has to rely on his imagination to feed the expressive possibilities of his body. However, as Pearson points out

> Stanislavski explained that if you get the inner thing going, the body will naturally reflect it…that's not necessarily true because the actual expressive possibilities of the body are decreasing. Our history and palette are decreasing. As a result, our

ability to imagine is decreasing (Pearson in Krasner, 2000: 249).

It is crucial that in generating the performance text, the combination of movement and physical images into a physical language also comes from the creative source of the actor. How do I awaken and extend this imagination to create an expressive physical landscape?

Bogart's Viewpoints

The principles behind Bogart's theories share the same principle as the Rotenberg System: that of articulating archetypal containers which can be filled with personal choices and create a very rich, complex and vital performance. Where Rotenberg's starting point is the inner being of the actor, Bogart addresses the actor's use of the body.

Bogart was influenced by post-modern dance pioneers who took a unique approach to dance by incorporating into their movements "internal decisions, structures, rules or problems" (Bogart, 2005: 4). Choreographer Mary Overlie structured the approach to dance improvisations into components, which led Bogart to the epiphany that this same approach was "applicable to creating viscerally dynamic moments of theatre with actors…" (2005: 5). This approach was named Viewpoints, and though articulated in a particular grammar by Bogart, the components of the system are "timeless and belong to the natural principles of movement, time and space" (2005: 7). What Viewpoints strives to achieve includes "training performers; building ensemble; [and] creating movement on stage" (2005: 7-8). Additionally, Viewpoints creates a language shared between the actor and director related specifically to movement on stage.

Behind the application of Viewpoints is the philosophy that any movement can be broken down into "points of awareness" (Bogart, 2005: 8) or categories (Tempo, Duration, Kinaesthetic Response, Repetition, Spatial Relationship, Topography, Shape, Gesture and Architecture) which can be understood and accessed by all

actors. Each category addresses a specific container of expression: How fast do I do this movement? How long do I do it for? Am I moving in lines, curves or a combination of the two? How does the texture of the floor affect how I move? Because these aspects are identified, the actor can address each with his body, one at a time, and experiment with many possibilities until a choice is made for the performance text: "Viewpoints is a tool for discovering action, not from psychology or back-story, but from immediate physical stimuli" (Bogart, 2005: 125). Through the training and heightened awareness of each Viewpoint, the actor gives himself that much more freedom and liberates his imagination:

> …the actor exercises his awareness, the ability to listen with the entire body, and a sense of spontaneity and extremity. The actor trains to take in and use everything that occurs around her, and to not exclude anything because she thinks she knows what is good or bad, useful or not. The viewpoints enable performers to find possibility larger than what they first imagine - whether it is in creating a shape they didn't know their body was capable of or in discovering a range of unexpected gestures for a character…By using Viewpoints fully, we give ourselves surprise, contradiction and unpredictability (Dixon,1995: 24).

The combination of surprise, contradiction and unpredictability goes a long way towards generating "high life" and initiating the actor's physicality not simply the cerebral and emotional life. It gives the actors a method of exploring their physical possibilities in response to the text and their characters. This is extremely helpful in dealing with Heightened Theatrical Landscapes where possibilities go beyond the ordinary.

In addition to sharing similar categorization into archetypal containers, Rotenberg and Bogart exhibit other noteworthy parallels. Rotenberg argues that actors need to "embrace the fucked up wiring of the human heart" towards being compelling. Similarly, in Bogart's Viewpoints "there is no good or bad, right or wrong - there is only possibility, and later in the process, choice" (2005: 19). Rotenberg's system acknowledges that for an actor to be successful, he must "work on expanding their keyboard so that he can select the most compelling notes for performance" (Rotenberg in Hyland, 1999). Once again, Bogart argues that her system opens up much the same:

> Viewpoints leads to greater *awareness*, which leads to greater *choice*, which leads to greater *freedom*. Once you are aware of a full spectrum, you do not need to choose all of it all the time, but you are free to, and you are no longer bound by

> unconsciousness. Range increases. You can begin to paint with greater variety and mastery (Bogart & Landau, 2005: 19).

Within the Heightened Theatrical Landscape of The Possibilities, there are two ways I will be using Bogart's Viewpoints. The first movement language addresses the physicality of the actual characters within the scenes. In this case, by having the actors become aware and experiment with the different containers of Viewpoints, they come up with intuitive physical responses. Approaching character improvisations, they physically answer questions such as: "Do I move fast or slow?" (Tempo), "Where do I place myself in relation to other people?" (Spatial Relationship), "In what shapes do I move across the space?" (Topography). There is no right or wrong in the choices the actor's make, but the actor's become aware of the different possibilities. The actress playing Judith in *The Unforeseen Consequences of a Patriotic Act* may find herself mostly positioned in the middle of the space (Architecture), while the actor playing Alexander in *Reasons for the Fall of Emperors* may find that he moves fast through the space in constantly and randomly changing patterns. All of these are physical responses that bring the character closer to the actor, who now begins to find a freedom from everyday movement.

Besides work on the actual scenes, I want to create a second movement language for The Possibilities which focuses on the links *between* the scenes. Viewpoints may be used to explore the particularities of the world of the play. A production of Chekov might for instance improvise different physical responses to a "Chekovian" world. The end result is an organic collection of movement characteristics that belong to that piece alone. My aim with the links is to create a grammar which unites the entire piece. It is something the whole cast would participate in, develop, and then use in movement pieces that link one scene to the next. Together they would generate physical responses and characteristics of what I call, "the clean-up crew", with respect to the production concept of "Ground Zero". The grammar would consist of particular gestures, a choice in relation to space and other individuals, a specific tempo…and so on. "The clean-up crew" creates the movement linguistics of the landscape which encompasses all of the scenes.

Just as Rotenberg's system creates a language between the actor and the director, Bogart's Viewpoints does the same in terms of the physical vocabulary. As Tina Landau describes: "They become a shorthand for communication. Anne [Bogart] can look at the stage, notice that the spacing is cluttered, say to the actors "Spatial Relationship," and they will adjust accordingly to create a more "readable" stage picture" (Dixon, 1995: 25). With respect to movement, it is possible for me to ask the actor to become aware of one particular component, experiment and adjust it. If I ask the Young Woman in *The Necessity for Prostitution in Advanced Societies* to be aware of her Topography, she might shift it from spirals to zigzag lines. Instead of telling her how to move, I am guiding her to initiate a more compelling sequence of movement.

Using Viewpoints also establishes and fosters a sense of ensemble. Bogart articulates a need for the actor's to be aware of the whole group, to move and function as one. This goes together with Rotenberg's metaphor of playing with one tennis ball. The sense of ensemble improves the dynamic of the cast, and especially in the case of The Possibilities, where actors play different characters in different scenes and need to get a sense of the whole company.

Additionally, other aspects of Rotenberg's system provide focus when creating a movement through Viewpoints, because the actors can use their Relationship or Icon of the Scene as a basis for their exploration. Actors can physically experiment with how a Mother-Son relationship is revealed physically, or how a Lover-Lover, Sister-Sister and so on might be expressed. They can use the Icons of the Scene as a starting point, so that movement is generated based on the corresponding Icon from the scene in the play, so that *The Goodbye* and *The Epiphany* are explored through Viewpoints of Time and Space. In The Possibilities, where the actors have many States of Being to access, it would be useful to explore them physically. Starting an improvisation with *I am falling* and then focusing on the physical response in relation to the different Viewpoint containers could lead to interesting discoveries that the actors could use in sitting in the State of Being.

Using Viewpoints, I can now open up the physical imaginative possibilities of the actor in response to the scenes of the play. The method has allowed the inner life of the actor to manifest itself through the body, so that the full body inhabits the Heightened Theatrical Landscape.

Conclusion

Creating and inhabiting the Heightened Theatrical Landscape demands much skill and artistry from the actor. As the director, my role is to facilitate the actor's entry into and creation of this landscape. I have argued that Rotenberg's system constructs a bridge between the actor and the character. It awakens the inner life. Practical experience in implementing the Rotenberg system led me to the conclusion that on its own, it was inadequate in assisting the actor to generate "high life" as it did not address the expressive form (voice and body) of the inner life. For the vocal form, I discovered that Cicely Berry's work provides the toolbox to address the vocal demands of the landscape. Concerning the physical from, I believe that through Anne Bogart's Viewpoints I have found a methodology which holds the same principles and objectives as Rotenberg. Both Rotenberg and Bogart seek to create complex life by breaking down the components of their system into containers to which each actor can add his interpretation but the grammar is shared by all. While aiding the actor to inhabit the Heightened Theatrical Landscape, the fusion of the two methods consequently also fosters the creation of the landscape. The two methods allow a more creative and communal approach to the rehearsal process. The actors can contribute to the creation of the world of the play and the characters that people it. I, as the director, become the conductor in the play's creation:

> Directing is about feeling, about being in the room with other people - with actors, with designers, with an audience - about having a feel for time and space, about breathing and responding fully to the situation at hand, being able to plunge and encourage a plunge into the unknown at the right moment (Dixon, 1995: 9).

The practical exploration of the fusion of the Rotenberg and Bogart systems into the creation of the Heightened Theatrical Landscape will be applied to my thesis production of Howard Barker's The Possibilities. The production will serve as the culmination of my research and an example of the Heightened Theatrical Landscape.

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