

Action with Camera: Making the Future Audience Present

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The authors first presented material for this article during a research colloquium in April 2017. The early material focused some thinking and playing by and around bodies and cameras. The presentation had both live and mediated components. The live component, spoken in two parts—one by each author—played against a short film developed during the research. The mediated part sometimes screened as background, sometimes as foreground in relation to the live elements. As each author presented, the non-speaking author operated a camera. This camera was framed not simply as a documenting device capturing the live and mediated elements, but also as another player present in the space energizing the performance. During the making of the short film, the authors tested acting and devising practices proper to both cinema and theatre, which were applied in varying forms to a brief devised narrative, to a series of exercises and theatre games, and to the oral delivery of the paper itself with the camera. At times the projected film was intended to sync up with the live presentation for the colloquium participants as the authors gave the talk. The intention was for the visuals on the screen and the accompanying audio to provide a counterpoint to, and at times complement, the spoken text and the present bodies as they read, improvised, and played some simple theatre games as case studies of the work. The filming and the presenting/performing were made for both live audience and camera. Audience members later fed back on a kind of *presencing*¹ work that they had experienced happening within this assemblage of bodies, images, spoken word and the live camera operator. The feedback around the energy of the camera suggested for the authors a relation to the camera as a stand-in—not quite present but presencing—a “future audience.”

The focus of this article is the attempt to language this idea of presencing in terms that are useful for the actor and to consider the differences between presencing in acting on the stage and in film, in an effort to find what is useful for film actors in theatrical training practices. To do this, we will continually repeat the *linguaging* of what seems to be an idea, so that what we think it means can *exhaust* itself and we may be able to continue working with it as a critical term that takes other forms or energizes other bodies. This is an actor training practice that we are also bringing to the practice of critical writing. We work with *repetition*, both in acting and in writing, as a movement from one form to another—linguaging to gesture and gesture to linguaging—until habitual forms of meaning-making become exhausted. The thought, as a movement at work on the body and between bodies, becomes strange and acquires an anamorphic distortion. Repetition of this kind, the kind that is useful to the actor and the critic, fragments what seems, under analysis, to be a single idea. Repetition is also an actor training practice—fragmentation of what appears to be unitary—for character.

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Presencing is not, for the two authors, about an intention, for example, to become present with the camera, or to expand one's "theatrical presence" for an audience of a lone, myopic capture device. It is about what the authors, since their days of conservatory training, call by the phrase *releasing on intention*. Releasing on intention is to notice the emergence of an intention and paradoxically do nothing about it. The phrase is a bit of jargon in particular actor training circles from the Stanislavski² lineage; if it has an originator, that name has long been forgotten and exists in no published texts that the authors could find. The "release" in question is not a denial that one intends an outcome. That would be to assume the audience didn't sense the intention or the work by the actor to (pretend to) erase it. Rather the actor takes no action on the intention, releasing expectation for a particular outcome, and is open to what becomes emergent in the release. Release maintains the intention within the process but exhausts the "intent." Such intention is thusly presenced by the actor through practices of releasing.

One practice is called by Viola Spolin³ "no motion." Spolin's word for "intention" that is presencing but not acted on is *focus*. Spolin would coach players to "put the intention (or the focus) in no-motion." Focus is paradoxical in Spolin. It is the point of concentration for the player, something that the player enters or "goes into" the way one enters a space of play and the flow of playing. Focus is also an operation that decentres and depersonalizes the actor and the intention.⁴ A similar tool for the actor in the Stanislavski tradition is called *physical action*. A physical action is an improvisation that engages the body in ways that require the construction of a new apparatus. It is a kind of self-attending that is measuring the imperceptible movements as they happen—like Spolin's focus. Spolin's games and various Stanislavski exercises that were used in the presentation were chosen for presencing a future audience.

Theatre actors often discover the life of a story only when the audience bodily enters the process. The live feedback from bodies in-person in the audience potentially pulls the players into a liminal space between the theatrical material and the audience. Lack of response is sometimes the most palpable response for any actor who knows the difference between the painful silence following an event that has been set up but failed to "happen" on the stage and the enlivening silence of an attentive audience for whom the actor's work is indeed working, or *playing*. After a "setup," the failed happening in much Western narrative theatre must rely on what modern Stanislavski actors often call "indication." The event didn't happen, but actors *fake it*, they indicate that it did happen, striking a tacit deal with the audience.⁵ Once the deal has been struck, the audience and the players are no longer in a participatory relation potentializing a happening.

In the theatre, events happen when the audience and the players make contact as they participate in the process of materializing something. For media and film actors, this kind of participation is less available, and the camera, taken solely as a recording device, tends to push any potential contact with an audience into an abstract future. The actor trained for the medium of the stage but not for the camera cannot find a way to be both within the cinematic material and with the audience—inside and outside of the character, narrative, and happening. The camera, uncanny in its near-human accompaniment, tends to see the flow of energy proper to theatre events as outsized, too "big." And still, many film actors seem to be able to ride on something like that audience energy flow with the camera. Is it a useful framing for a cinema actor to think of the audience as being made present by the actor themselves through a special kind of play with the camera? Can an actor form the injunction "make the future audience present" into a focus? We maintain that such a focus is what the cinema actor needs to sustain. We also maintain that the functioning of the kinds of play proper

to theatre games (and the functioning of focus and physical action) within our creative processes throughout our careers, both on the stage and with the camera, come from play with such a focus. *Make the future audience present* was the focus of the live and mediated work done for this presentation, though it was not articulated this way until the writing up of this article. But here our task is to consider how to articulate this in a useful way for a group of critics/scholars who may not have trained or played in ways that afford them the language, the body and attentive practices, and the sense memory necessary to think through Stanislavski's physical action or Spolin's no-motion and/or focus.

What appears in this essay has been framed for players, framed as a focus, and as an interrogation into practices of acting for stage and for camera, so that these practices can be used in training performers working in various contexts involving film and potentially other time-based media such as virtual reality (VR). Challenging the metaphor "acting *for* camera" with the alternative "action *with* camera," we primarily engage strategies both for dislocation and decentring of the sovereign seat of the film director—a centred point of focus toward which bodies are trained and become entrained, and also for the notion of the camera as a kind of neutral recording device. The intended effect of this manoeuvre is to do on the page what the actor does when using a Spolin focus or a Stanislavski physical action: to explode the imagined static point of perception variously embodied by the figures of director, camera, and future audience through practical approaches for "playing with" and rendering of a decentred sensorium, one that includes the audience, that can be anywhere, everywhere and potentially nowhere.

The games played in researching this article have been developed by the authors based on work they have done with exercises first created by Stanislavski and the theatre games of Spolin (improvisation), two practitioners who approach the work of the actor-as-player from different angles but continually overlap. For Spolin, the job of the player is to "transform the space" (Spolin 1999, 251). This transformation is not "done" by the player but happens between players when they are at play, when they are participating in the game, and when they engage with the special focus that a particular game requires. For Stanislavski, the job, as defined above, is to find a physical action that is analog to the action given to the characters in the script (Stanislavski 2008, 74). Stanislavski's work involves sustained improvisation with the physical action connected to and within the limits of a rigorous and embodied critical analysis of a narrative (from within and without simultaneously) or a character caught up in the given circumstances of a narrative. This neither means that the player leaps—as many young practitioners of the Stanislavski System attempt to do—for a representation in the form of the most obvious stereotype, nor that the player imagines an effect and develops the physical action (or its earlier incarnation of the sequence of "inner images" attached to the notion of "sense memory") as a cause that will produce it—such as recalling from an archive of personal trauma a memory that causes anxiety or sorrow so that the player's voice cracks and eyes tear up in a sad scene. One does not prepare and then present an effect in Stanislavski, nor does one simply refresh last night's effect. The work on the physical action is done every time for the first time forming an experimental approach directed at learning what may happen when the character or narrative is encountered moment to moment via a practice derived from and coloured by the text, the body of the player, and the space of play uniting the player and audience.

At the same time, our critical articulation of the research into theatre games draws not only on Stanislavski's work around the physical action but also on its inflection in various Western theatrical training traditions, including those of some of Stanislavski's followers (and revisers): Grotowski, Brecht, and Strasberg, as well as the works of the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze. From these

writers, we have generated critical perspectives for actors and a framework for thinking about what and how bodies perceive while in the space of play. The critical practice also asks how this theatre framework differs from how and what cameras make perceptible because of the conditions of various framing devices: for example, devices that render an illusion of depth on flat screens, and in digital environments where those flat screens are used to imitate the openness of space by adding in a moving perceiver as is done in virtual reality environments. Given the ubiquity of cameras, and images of action that they introduce, these practices and frameworks are useful beyond the training of actors and help foreground the ways that cameras (both bodied and disembodied) structure or produce what actors traditionally call behaviour, which we will be unpacking in terms of “montage.”

Much of our research draws from workshops where we used theatrical devising techniques and games with filmmakers and actors. We also draw from years of training and practice in the theatre, and filmmaking and film-acting practice. We take as a given that most actors-in-training in the West already have a relationship to camera that brings with it habits, ways of seeing, and entanglements that require examination.⁶ We pull the camera into the making process, not as a capture device or as a stand-in for a future audience, but as one of the elements of the *mise-en-scène*. Actors become filmmakers and vice versa. The processes we found emerging unsettled the habitual end-directed narrativizations of the actor-filmmaker-editor continuum. Our essay reflects on our rigorous attempts at disrupting tendencies to take the camera, or the cinema apparatus in general, in terms of perspective, and instead play or be active *for* nothing by being *with* camera (Deleuze 2009).

When we refocus, via our analysis, the phrase “acting for camera” as “active *with* camera,” we do not mean to create a new metaphor for actors interested in technology (which also takes action—actualizing as players do something virtual—on the bodies it performs with and in the space between). Rather we turn the figure toward practices of acting that it both emerges from and continues to fold back into. We draw on specific trainings traditionally associated with stage acting and try to understand how those trainings might be different when acting with camera.⁷

The move from “acting” *for* (or toward) a camera to “playing” (literally *with* nothing or no specific effect intended) is not the innovation of the authors of this piece; we contend that it has been part of Western actor training practices at least since Stanislavski began systematizing and circulating thought and reflection on the craft of the actor in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Stanislavski 2008, 2009; Benedetti 2008; Zibell, forthcoming). To approach a demonstration and an explication of making the future audience present, the authors wanted to test how a handful of theatre games and exercises encourage playing with the camera—pulling it into process rather than letting it be a (subjective) receiver of intention. One should not imagine that the authors understand these practices as producing something like an (objective) reality in which the future audience actually becomes present. Rather we are trying to develop an approach to “play” with camera whereby a kind of energy between camera and body is not removed from the process, nor is it interpreted as the “gaze” of a sovereign individual. This energy—a version of which is theorized as a “genetic power” by Deleuze (Deleuze 2015, 20, 99, 102, 105) and, by scholars following Deleuze (and Deleuze and Guattari), as the “virtual body” (Guillaume and Hughes 2013, 117–43), “machinic enslavement,” “subjectivity’s entry into the machine” (Genosko 1996, 95–96),⁸ and “subjectivity (that) exists for the machine” (Lazzarato 2014, 39)—is also wrapped into the figure of the cyborg.

In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari write of “a state of affairs, thing or body that actualizes the virtual on a plane of reference and in a system of coordinates; the concept in philosophy expresses an event that gives consistency to the virtual on a plane of immanence and in an ordered

form” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994b, 133). This actualizing and ordering of the virtual body constitutes a *problem* for Deleuze that is never solved by the philosopher but is pulled into continual variation, into process with the very conditions of its emergence. It is a generative practice; it is also a problem elaborated in Deleuze’s work on subject formation in *Logic of Sense*. It is a problem of immanence and Deleuze’s innovation around “an impersonal and pre-individual transcendental field, which does not resemble the corresponding empirical fields” from which sense, the self, and subject become actualized (Deleuze 2015, 102). The camera presents such a problem for the player and must likewise be pulled into continual variation. Focus and physical action are tools for thinking/playing this pull.

Near the birth of cinema in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Stanislavski himself, widely thought of as a trainer of theatre actors, conceived of the actor’s body and mind as a cinematic assemblage.⁹ Stanislavski is often relegated to the stage by practitioners, leaving the training of actors for film to the Actors Studio in New York, which was set up and run by practitioners such as Elia Kazan, Uta Hagen, Stella Adler, and Lee Strasberg who variously—and sometimes at odds with each other and Stanislavski—creatively re-invented the Stanislavski “System” calling it “The Method.” It should be noted here that the authors—and many others—take Stanislavski’s work as suited to both stage and screen as well as other media. More importantly, it should be noted that his work is not restricted to Western narrative realism. Stanislavski conceptualized and published a poetic vision of the actor as a kind of cinematographic cyborg playing a virtual film on the projection screen of the “mind” and in the space. Stanislavski did not use “virtual,” “cybernetic,” or “cyborg”; these were later attached to his work by the authors and their mentors. In a flourish that Stanislavski would later reincarnate, the authors contend, as the physical action, he tells young actors to conceptualize and practise being both inside and outside the work—between the material of the theatre and the audience. “The film [of inner images] itself is running inside me, but I see it projected outside me” (Stanislavski 2008, 74). It is worth quoting Stanislavski at length, and this can be found in the appendix, but a brief citation is needed here.

We need an unbroken line not of plain, simple Given Circumstances but ones that we have coloured in full. . . . Every moment in the outer and inner progress of the play, the actor must see what is going on around him. . . . A continuous line of fleeting images is formed, both inside and outside us, like a film. . . . Constantly watching the film of your mental images will, on the one hand, make sure you stay within the play, and, on the other, unfailingly and faithfully guide your creative work. (Stanislavski 2008, 74)

Stanislavski begins with the play’s “given circumstances” and immediately asks the actor to render them as a film, as “inner images” that both tune and are tuned by the actor who plays them without ever losing the context within which the play happens.¹⁰ This projection involving mind, body and the space of play is what we contend produces the encounter between audience and actor.

There are many differences between acting for the theatre and for film that are easily named but which must be unsettled: with a camera, the audience is potentially brought in much closer, so movements and expression must be made “smaller”; the camera has a limited view, so awareness of the actor’s location and embodied practices are necessary; scenes are generally broken up into smaller bits that must be repeated several times. Much actor training for film rests on the idea that actors do what they would for theatre acting—play Stanislavski’s inner film sequences or find a Spolin focus to play with—but do it “smaller.” Rather than work to be less expressive or smaller, we

would like to offer practices that, through playing with camera, allow actors to “become imperceptible” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994a, 3, 11, 115, 171, 187, 197). The “becoming imperceptible” of the film actor requires practices borrowed from the theatre, but they also all draw on the attention that one might give to a physical action in the sense that Stanislavsky develops in his later writing that we outline below. Perhaps one question Deleuze can help answer is: Can the practices that an actor uses to address the issues of working with camera be pulled into the practices of Stanislavski’s physical action, and if so, how?

In his first book on cinema, *The Movement Image*, Deleuze gives what could be taken by an actor as grounds for developing a new take on physical action: “Cinema works with two complementary givens: instantaneous sections which are called images; and a movement or a time which is impersonal, uniform, abstract, invisible, or imperceptible” (Deleuze 1986, 1–2). This articulates an approach that we contend Spolin and Stanislavski share. They want the actor to stop cogitating and circulating representations in the forms of prepared pictures or still images projected onto the body and get into a flow—paradoxically (following Zeno) dependent on the “instantaneous sections” of “divisible” space and “indivisible” movement by which an actor covers it (Deleuze 1986, 1–3).

Actor Training Practices with Theatre

Bodies are mediated. Training/tuning of bodies in early Stanislavski addresses the mediation through the “system” for which he is usually remembered. The system is about acting “as if” (Stanislavski 2008, 37–59). What shows up with bodies training toward the “as if” practices are habits, patterns, and entanglements. The actor must be able to make choices about when to put such habituations to use. The actor becomes attuned to mediation (habit, training for daily life) for the purpose of engaging in a different kind of mediation (the stage, the theatre). So, the early training of the system gets (incorrectly) called in places “un-training” as though the entanglements can be undone by an actor who chooses when and if to use them. This posits the mediated body that shows up on the first day of rehearsal as a kind of material to be mastered, to be overcome. These habituated spaces of our lives, where change becomes imperceptible without the technology of the “system,” are where the actor trains. The actor in training learns how to tune the body to develop an apparatus for measuring changes at the micro level—the terms “awareness” and “attention” are used quite often in acting programs to talk about embodied practices directed toward such measuring. When we are doing this building of the apparatus—on the fly, in the moment—we are doing what Stanislavski called the physical action. The physical action itself cannot be replicated but leans on repetition.

Stanislavski, who, like everyone who has followed him in the attempt, failed at defining the physical action, wanted the idea to focus his entire body of work. He journaled about his own practice for more than sixty years (Benedetti 2008, 14)—it may well be the longest practice as research project on record. He developed what he called the System of Physical Action through this research, which included his writing practices and his work as actor, as director, as artistic director, and as trainer of actors. Toward the end of his life, he told a group of actors that they could not learn his system and must develop their own (Moore 1984, xvi). Just before his death, Stanislavski wrote that he had come to realize he no longer needed a system—he only needed the physical action (Richards 2003, 4; Toporkov 2014; Benedetti 2004, 71–72, 101). This was long after he had rejected his early idea of the “psycho-physical” action—which is the central idea of what gets called The Method. Psycho-physical action directs expression internally, whereas physical action directs expression into an inward-outward movement into the space and with the things in its environment.

A physical action is not a physical gesture or a piece of stage business.¹¹ It cannot be defined as a specific action because it is incipient; there is no end-directed intentionality. At the same time, it does not want just anything to happen, and so it sets up a particular ecology in which something happening will occur—an intentional release. An example of a physical action: in New York in 1994, John Zibell, directing a production of Romulus Linney's *Holy Ghosts*, cast a highly trained, erudite actor to play the role of a man with severe developmental and cognitive challenges and no formal education—not unlike Lenny in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. For weeks, the actor felt he was doing a cliché characterization, that it was inappropriate, hurtful. The character was described by the playwright using the euphemism “slow.” And the actor seemed hung up on that term. We came up with the following for a physical action: every time the actor heard another character speak, he was to translate that character's line (word for word) into French—the actor's second language—and then back again into English before responding. Further, whenever he spoke, he translated his own text—without pausing to have the thought—into French while speaking the line in English. This didn't slow his rate of delivery. He became much more active. He looked like someone working very hard, very methodically. Like someone struggling to translate language. His focus was both internal and external—it exhausted him. The first time he did it he had powerful emotional responses at times which seemed, on the surface, to be wildly inappropriate for the script, for the narrative. Interestingly, they came at different times every night. And of course, they worked every time. You cannot predict the effects of a physical action. You set it to work and attend to where and how your flow of attention moves, and all bodies in the space get caught up in that flow.

Polish theatre director Jerzy Grotowski picks this up and locates Stanislavsky's “journey” as a personal “hero's journey” for the actor (Grotowski 2012; Richards 2003, 115–35). By practising with any physical action, the actor should experience a kind of burning away of the mediated body, the habitual body, the inattentive, unaware body that flies much of the time on auto-pilot—or so Grotowski believed. Grotowski called the effect of the physical action—in “secular spiritual” terms—a “burning away” of habit, of what he called at the end of his life “the daily body,” leaving the “life body” visible for an instant.¹² Grotowski's practices are designed around a messianic (and metaphoric) approach to physicalizing what happens in training. This *beyond* space is for him where the actor trains to work, in the spaces where movement becomes imperceptible . . . without the technology of acting intervening.

Grotowski is helpful in thinking about the imperceptible work of the actor that is made perceptible through in-person theatre work. Actors develop, and train and practice with, technologies of the body dialled into multiplicities of movement—movement of word, language, thought, affect, concept, story, light, proteins, shadow, air, pheromones, blood, neurochemicals, and on and on—and the technologies for measuring changes in them must be continually brought into focus, engaged with, interrogated, sustained and refreshed. Actors work to extend the reach of their own embodied measuring and focusing technologies into the spaces beyond the capacity of the habitual sensorium—in imperceptible ways.

Bertolt Brecht engages with physical action in his fight against a discursive instrumentalization by the cinema. He suggests that actors do not do what they are trained for. We train so we do not have to act. We train and train and the moment seldom comes when we act. We just show up and talk and listen. In both the theatre and theory of Brecht, the work is to create encounters rather than outcomes. Actors and audience may not be able to see how they are pulled into such an encounter, but they do it. It is an action without an end goal.

Those of us who act “like” someone died, those actors are not acting, are not playing, are not caught up in what Brecht called a *gestus*—the imperceptible and energizing swirl of past and present, of individual and context, of knowing and not-knowing that is his development of physical action (Brecht 2014, 82, 126). We have abbreviated this element in the process of physical action as “not-knowing” because it includes the known but exhausts its specificity. Brecht’s idea of *gestus* is, for us, most helpfully made practical for the actor in the contemporaneous work of improvising/devising of Spolin.

From Acting with Theatre into Acting with a Camera

As actors, we want to take various ideas of the imperceptible into work with camera, which, as we’re conceiving it here, intends practices attached to montage, even in its initial energizing of the actor. When we do so, we work with the mundane, with daily life, and energize it, not for the camera but as a camera does. We are like the unsighted cyclist who trained to echo-locate in traffic by making clicking noises. Body is camera. Body is the self-attending of daily life. We see this idea as a new critical formulation—and we are not yet satisfied with what it may mean. We would like to suggest that repetition and focus are not only body practices but also camera practices that occur in what we call “montage,” which includes the fragmentation of the frame into pixels and the timing of a second into twenty-four, thirty, or sixty frames. It also includes Deleuze’s homogeneous space and heterogeneous movement of cinema (Deleuze 1986, 1). Acting training happens where and when we need to develop an apparatus for measuring movement in the space of the imperceptible. Our two concluding case studies explore this idea in detail.

In critical terminology, one set of these apparatuses falls under what gets called *attention*—here, the inwardly directed camera of attention. Some theatre actors talk of *attending* as if it’s a skill that can be developed, while related work on what gets called awareness is often taken as a tool. Awareness speaks to an attention that is undirected, unfocused: the attention of where and how one’s attention is flowing, without direction but still under observation. When we are building a new apparatus for attending to the strange or strangely attending—building that apparatus on the fly, in the moment, with the other bodies that we encounter—then we are playing. We are doing something similar to Stanislavski’s physical action, to Spolin’s focus. For this inquiry into acting with a camera, the physical action is an improvisation or a game that engages the body in ways requiring the construction of a new apparatus.

One of the things most useful on the stage is how the physical action gives an actor somewhere to put her attention. On the stage, you are always becoming present, and if your attention wanders, you can take the audience with you into that diffusion. One part of your attention is, of course, always on the action of the play. But having a focus for attention seems to help create that elusive sense of “alive” for the audience. Heather Nolan once had a tiny part in an outdoor, poolside production of *Twelfth Night*. She was the High Priestess and spent a good deal of her time in the background of the action where she had been instructed to create a ritual of some sort. This ritual became so elaborate and precise, and she was so absorbed in it, that the feedback she got from audiences was that she was all they could watch. Even though she was moving quite slowly and not doing anything particularly interesting, the specificity of her engagement in the task was more “alive” than what the actors in the foreground, speaking text and jumping in and out of the pool, were doing. It was

perhaps not the best choice for the production, but it says something about the power of focused attention.

For the stage actor, the enemy of aliveness is replication, rote repetition, so we train in ways to fill those repetitions with the subtle changes to their immediate instant, to repeat some things—lines, blocking, even gestures—and to make new others. One actors' trick to appear fascinated or in love with an acting partner (for whom one may have a whole range of feeling) is to count the partner's eyebrow hairs or freckles. What's "real" is the focused absorption with minutiae, the actual looking, a focused attention that with luck, audiences read as "love."

The ways that film and stage acting each call upon the actor to repeat are, in some respects, different. The film actor may need to be incredibly precise in some repetition—for example, in hitting their marks, that is, stopping with their feet in an exact position on the floor or keeping their head in the frame—and not in others. Many times, the film actor is expected to do something different with every take, to try something new, so that when the time comes to edit the film, the director has different options to choose from. But what always repeats is the film itself, in subsequent viewings, for new or the same audiences. There is a sense in which film acting requires more or a different sense of aliveness. A kind of attention, a self-attending apparatus that focuses on the imperceptible, that can persist in spite of the exactitude and precision of "doing it again," and indeed through the action of the repetition itself. An attention that takes in the potential future audience, that includes them, through the camera, in the focus. One that presences the future human bodies through the camera, that sees the camera as the technology that brings them into the room. This way of attending when acting with a camera returns us to physical action as a simultaneous inward/outward process, which, when acting with the camera, we call "montage."

Acting with a Camera

So what does an actor have to do to retain the energy of physical action on screen, especially in the face of an industry that usually wants an actor to replicate habitual action without understanding the importance of that energy? Stanislavski writes of memory and image work in terms of film, which is a good place to begin to think about physical action in the body's move from theatre to cinema, from the apparatus of theatrical attention to that of the moving image. When Stanislavski talks about the self, there often enters a tension between conscious and unconscious. This conscious/unconscious binary is deftly unsettled by the notion of "not-knowing" articulated through the devising work for the theatre of Spolin and Sills on which our methodology draws. Their work implies a complex relation of the known to the not-known being performed on the body: even more importantly, the performativity of the "not" within the known. "Not-knowing" also implies a present "knowing of the *not*," for in theatre, one cannot re-circulate the un-known or the un-named that exists in the subtle change of a repetition that involves both the in-person actor and their particular audience. The devising methods of Spolin and Sills insist on a physical action that is generating an ecology in which the actor attends to the imperceptible and is surprised. It is not a binary conscious/unconscious but a trained skill in becoming a medium for what happens that they call "space work," which is another key element in our development of montage strategies for film acting as we developed them from Spolin and Stanislavski. Spolin's space work is tied to another game mentioned above, called "no-motion." No-motion is also a principle and a practice that happens alongside space work and, for us, other practices. We read it, here, against Deleuze's cinematics.¹³

If an actor in theatre becomes the medium as we've contended, it is significant that cameras make circulatable or commodifiable material effects from bodies at play that are unnameable but filmable. Players with the camera need to live in that filmable but not nameable world. The work of a theatre actor and that of a film actor may begin with approaches that are similar, but in theatre, the camera is not there and the actor is, so the energy is entirely different. Cameras produce commodifiable materials from what cannot be named, that resist commodification to the extent that the energy of the unnamed can persist through the repetitions of the film—one can hold what isn't named in no-motion. We cannot dismiss the commercial forces of various kinds of camera production. We cannot deny that industrial practices produce a majoritarian discourse. We could try to counter with a minoritarian molecular set of practices, and this would be one focus of our devising workshops if they could have a single focus. But they do not. They cannot. To deal with the ubiquity of the camera and of images, what working with a camera also allows is the physical action of montage. This physical action is similar to that of the theatre actor in some respects but quite different in others.

However, Stanislavski's physical action and Spolin's no-motion or focus can activate the body for cinema. Stanislavski is caught up in a notion of the "self," but his work is most useful when that autonomous self cracks open to show the subjectivizing narratives that keep it from being a material self and anchor it in some other non-material fashioning of "character." Character is the coin of the realm of "realist" training for actors. However, that "coin" makes the individual a saleable object, a thing that can be circulated. Once an individual is exchangeable, it is a subjectivity. The subject becomes capital—in many forms. But, as with everyday life, a self, and a character the self makes, must to some extent be assembled daily as it daily disappears, and in ways that do not allow you to see it coming and going. This is both the good and the bad news. The self is what gets made somewhere between and among all the material elements you perform with in your life. You don't produce it. You do not control it. It's like community: you encounter it. But the moment you simply submit to it, it becomes a stable character.

For example, the camera and the global industrial cinema apparatus turns most characters played by Tom Cruise into "versions" of him. In *Eyes Wide Shut*, this served him and the film. He was a machine. He was a camera, seduced by every female form it gazed upon. He didn't even have to seduce them; there was no conquest in his *Traumnovelle*.¹⁴ He was made object and became more and more passive as the film progressed. His "acting" became more and more machinic. Not robotic and stilted, with held, glassed-over eyes and monotone, monorhythmic, monovocal utterances, but machinic: as in only reproducing versions of his earlier self—earlier in the film, earlier in other films. He becomes consumable, as do his emotions, gestures, even his tics and physical entanglements.

Deleuze asks us to stop seeing the camera as anything other than us. There is no separation between the person and the camera. For him, the worst question is "why?" because it implies a bounded teleology with intention and self-realization or at least self-transparency. He turns us instead to the camera itself and asks, "How does it do?" without answering, "What does it do?" We are anxious about this because, in the asking of how, a what may emerge. And then what do we do? How do we measure the appropriateness of the what? For example: to ask, "How does this happen?" is a useful question for an actor playing Ophelia. How does a young woman lose her mind to grief? But this is a kind of essentializing question and far too general. Perhaps: How does this young woman grieve? How does this young woman commit suicide? These questions can leave us within a narrative. Instead, our methodology, our point, is to keep away from a "ready-made" image that has a specific answer to a how and a what and a why already built into it. Hence, Deleuze's question of "how"

with a character generated by self, or a body, is in the area that sets us up for asking questions of “how with camera.” How does a camera call bodies into a “for” with specific answers? And, how does a camera call bodies into a “with” that is surprised by what happens?

Devising as Montage

These lines of questioning undercut hierarchies, origins, sequencing, and the organizing principles of commodifying cinema. Physical action does not need a result to be interrogated. It is a continual process, and anything that feels like a result is a material that is just another flow or set of flows, maybe another apparatus to pull into the process, to connect up with. It may become an image in the archive. The process of training for montage, or physical action with a camera, that we are developing through improvisation and devising is the embodying of these questions.

Our devising methodology draws on the thinking that these questions generate and puts it into practice through developments of Spolin’s space work. In our critical thinking in this essay, we began with the work of a theatre actor. For us, in the physical action of space work, you have a score that you develop in rehearsal (sense memory, for example), and you work on this and perhaps are able to put it in no-motion so that it creates responses (not just in your body, but in the director, the partner, the rest of the cast), and through repetition, you find that it can be sustained without it becoming named or known. At some point, it may, in the theatre, cease to be about the sense memory (internal film) and become deterritorialized and reterritorialized in this ecology. This ecology is the cast, the crew, the props, the costumes, the lines, the story, etc. With film, that kind of physical action is cut short because you may only work on this scene for a day.

We work under the claim that it currently takes years for an actor to have a sense of how to train for work with a camera—and concurrently with that camera work, they need to train in something like Stanislavski’s physical action. Physical action of space work focuses the actor’s apparatus inward as well as outward, and, through that focus, the actor works with the camera. What might it mean for an actor “to work with the camera”? Three things: the camera becomes another player in the company, the relation of the camera to body opens up practices to develop that self-attending apparatus that sees into the imperceptible, and the rules for engagement with both are emergent. Every time you deal with the camera, it’s the first time—which is also what makes it a devising practice.

What we aim to do is to take the notion of the physical action of space work, as we are developing it through the devising games of Viola Spolin and Paul Sills, and see what happens when we practise it with the camera. We want to train to attend to the changes, perceptible and imperceptible, that happen when the camera is trained on us. We have experimented with space work to see how the focus of our attention might shift, and we watched and discussed the footage we had created, even filming our own discussions, to learn what we could about our own instruments—our bodies—and their relations to the camera.

Case Study 1: John Zibell syncing up a live presentation with a filmed presentation of opening a drink bottle

As the body of Zibell, live in the space, screwed on the top of a space work drink bottle, the projected body of Zibell mediated on the screen did something similar. It would be reductionist to

say that the energy between the two types of play came from the labour of the body, but that would indeed be a start to thinking through how they worked together and separately.

1) The devising game: Spolin has a space work game called “add a part” (Spolin 1999, 85). When played solo, the actor stands and looks into the space. Generally, for a young actor, it is important to move from off-stage into the space so that the whole body is made to engage. Then the actor sticks their hand into the “where,” which is a segment of the space they have chosen. They sense something, and whatever they sense will immediately become a space object.

A young actor may well think, “What am I going to do?” and panic, then quickly write a scenario. They will often preconceive an object—perhaps a plastic drink bottle. As they get more familiar with the game, they will simply pick up something. They will not know why, but suddenly, there is a drink bottle, with weight, temperature, texture, etc. They will find they have a sense memory of a particular bottle, engage with it. They will make the bottle solid, discover other details about it, and will then probably go around the room and find two or three other things that are in the same space as that bottle. The focus is on finding the “where,” finding what is in this space by locating these objects and communicating it to oneself. It is not about spontaneity, but simplicity. It is almost effortless when you find an object. At times the process is frustrating, but when you find the object, it’s effortless. Over time, if you get out of your head and into the space, you are in full-body participation with this bottle.

2) When rehearsing to play the action of opening a drink bottle in this kind of space work, Zibell says: The first thing I do is “see” it. I’ll put it across the room, and I’ll see the details, the light and the shadow falling on it. Quite often, it doesn’t look like it would if it were actually in the room—the lighting might be different. It doesn’t quite fit in the space I am in, and I’ll notice that, and I’ll track through what that difference is doing to me in my body. If I can see it and can place it across the room, I’ll have a certain somatic response, and when the object (here the bottle) goes away, that somatic response often goes with it. So, if I get stuck performing and I can’t see the object in the space, I can remember the somatic response and that can help. Then I’ll reach over and grab it, and I’ll notice what that is doing to me. After thirty years, this all happens almost instantly—when it happens.

If I do this now, in this moment, I’ve just reached out, and I can feel my arm is a bit warmer because I’ve reached out, and I can feel the energy going down my hand. But I also have it in my head that this drink bottle in my hand is cold and wet, and I keep sensing that. What I’m trying now is trying not to look at it so that I can give it its weight. I might do that over and over, the unscrewing. I might repeat that over and over so that it becomes kind of like playing musical scales, where I don’t care what my somatic response is, I want to understand something about the pacing of the thing. So instead of being an object, it starts to become a whole moment or even a whole narrative. The reach is a phrase getting toward a *gestus*, like a musical phrase, and so the reach, when I pick the bottle up, has a certain rhythm, slow: I can feel the contents sloshing in the bottle.

What I’m starting to do is add details to this event of encountering. If I start to get bored with that, I’ll start to do another game called “beginning and end” where I’ll break the whole thing down: pick up the bottle, unscrew the lid, take a drink, put the bottle down, put the lid on top, screw it on. . . . I’ll do that till I feel like I know it. And then I’ll speak the words “begin”/“end” at every segment of the manoeuvre. So if I reach with one hand, and the other hand comes up, with each movement I say, “begin”/“end,” “begin”/“end” —so everything has its own frame. It is almost like making a

film of it, cutting it into little tiny chunks. I'll also try to heighten everything about it, so if I pick the bottle up and really feel it sloshing around, I'll heighten the sloshing of the water—"begin" *I slosh this way*, "end" it sloshes back. And as I do that, I am beginning to hear the sloshing of the water.

If I do this while training young actors, I might begin to coach them through the process, whereas if I do it myself, I'll just do it over and over.

3) When doing the space work in front of an audience, Zibell says: Quite often, if it's at the beginning of a show, I'd realize I was doing everything I'd been doing before, I was repeating, but I had no idea what to do. What it feels like is that I'm getting more "out" of it than when I'm doing it alone, but if there are enough details in there from the rehearsal, then one of the details will bring me back into the process. I might have put a hundred details into the feeling of the bottle, the work with my arm, the tension of this screwing motion. Sometimes I might feel it, and sometimes I would not, so I'd just make that gesture. I don't want to say I'm faking it, but I'm not encountering every detail each time. At the same time, those details are what can bring me back into the process if I start getting too far "out" of it. At this point in my acting career (over thirty years), I don't think anyone except maybe a director who knows me well could say that I was out of the process. But an audience who watches me every night would not know.

If I am "in" the process, there are still things happening that are surprising me. If I am "out" of it, I am not exactly anticipating the next thing, but I could sense where it is potentially going. When you are both in and out of the process at the same time, that's the critical moment for the actor. We call this process "montage." You are into the ecology of both in and out that you have trained for, that is needed for the present moment and the next physical action. At the same time, when you are in the process, there is no transition from one moment to the next. When you are out of the process, you are aware of the discrete moments for which you have prepared. When you are in and out, they flow. As a filmmaker, the metaphor that comes to mind is of stills in a film. You can fine-tune the stills, but they don't make cinematic sense until they flow—and then they have to be stills and flow at the same time. When I act, there is no transition from one bodily movement to another, but there is something about my attention that enables the flow. If you are "in" the process, you are available to the thing happening. If you are "out" of it, it is not likely that the thing will happen. You will still go through the moves, the gestures, but the gestus will not happen. The key to being a trained actor is the ability to know "I'm out of it right now, I don't know how to get back in—ah, there it is, now I'm back into it." For the highly trained actor, being "out" of "in and out" is the sense of keeping that flow happening.

When I acted this for the research colloquium, I found I had to open up. Usually, I literally close up parts of my body, and onstage I must continually remember to open them up. I often feel I can do this with the surfaces of my body that are facing the audience. These surfaces start to soften, and another, unseen, side starts to tighten—I find myself trying to loosen up. The act of picking up the bottle and unscrewing the bottle cap was not quite like the rehearsal. The sensations are not as heightened; the cold is not as cold. But the space around me starts to have a kind of substance, and the space in front of me, where the audience is, begins to warm up so it too softens and can do whatever it needs to do.

4) When doing the space work with the camera, Zibell says: When I acted picking up the drink bottle and unscrewing the cap for the video, it was not the whole body that was in focus. It is only what the camera can see, and good film actors know exactly what the camera can see. They will look

at the camera and see that it's a 14mm lens, and they know they are nine feet from the camera and understand precisely what the camera can see from that part of the room. They will know that it can only see this exact part of the body.

As an actor working with a camera, I tried first to set up the parameters for the physical space I could move in based on where the lens was, and then I let it go. The same way that once I'd repeated the action with the drink bottle many times in rehearsal, I could let it go. Then it is almost a narrowing process. I can fine-tune the space work of the "add a part" game and put the focus just on my fingers. The camera might just be on my face, but fingers are there with it, and the rest of my body is not. I'm not aware of the camera as an "audience"—I may be playing at a completely different angle from where the camera is looking. But I am still trying to find ways to presence the future audience in my work with the camera. With three cameras it can be easier because there's full-body acting like the stage. But if I try to play full body with one camera, or to act for it, everything goes, and I'm "out" of it. Film actors are often tied to their acting partners; you can always play with your partner. When you rehearse alone, you try to put yourself into the space, and dealing with space work objects helps you do that. Real objects can also help, but that is a completely different activity.

When you have an audience in front of you, they are helping. They bring a lot of energy onto that stage, and while I may not know which bit of the moment is telling the story or is landing the energy, the audience will tell me. I feel it in my skin, just like you know when someone is looking at you. And, as I pick up the bottle and feel the audience respond, I'll make that into a physical action where things flow together. With a film, you have to do it all by yourself. No one else is pulling it together for you. If I just make the gesture, it's kind of choppy. With space work, it comes alive. You have to find the flow that keeps the moments happening; otherwise, they are just discrete moments. When you rehearse a scene, you are breaking it up into discrete moments, and, at the end of the rehearsal process, you find they flow together—but that is only in theatre. In film, you rehearse in a different way, and you might not get any rehearsals of a scene at all. All you have is the moments, and you have to find the flow yourself. The space work preparation of "in and out" montage helps you create the flow of the moments and a space not only for your own work but also for an audience.

There is the added factor of the camera as an "attractor" that can make you feel as if it wants you to act "for" it. Often film actors are told to ignore the camera, but what is meant is exactly the opposite—that you know everything about the camera so that you can forget it and be playing with it. I do not want the camera to make me want to act to one single point. I have to play to everything all at one time, even if the focus is only on one part of my body. The camera can feel as if it wants to pull me to one side, and I don't want to go, I don't want to feel the energy of that pull. If someone is behind the camera, it can feel like a conversation because there is a partner there to play with. In that case, the camera starts to become part of the flow. But if I am working well with a camera, it is transforming or presencing a future audience into the space of the space work. The camera is in all of you somewhere, yet it surprises me. My playing flows through a sequence of moments over time, and although I know where they are going, they don't go there in the same way. Somehow it reveals something to me that I couldn't have anticipated. The flow does not go exactly where I thought it would go, it emerges moment to moment, and my own lived experience becomes much larger than I thought it could be.

During the feedback session, audiences at the event talked of how the screened images and recorded audio at times took focus, providing equal or even more energy than the "live" performance. This was not, they told us, because of a lack of interest in the speaking bodies in the room but rather

because of a kind of presencing work that appeared to have been done by the players when filming. We cannot help but observe that the work with the camera preceded and therefore informed—consciously or not—the work we did during the presentation.

Case Study 2: Heather Nolan repeating an action twice, once for and once with a camera

In the video that supported this research, we had created this activity: for Heather Nolan to fix a pair of glasses. They were really broken, and she had to create something real to do with them. She sits at a table, fiddling with the glasses, gets up and goes to the fridge, and then returns to sit and fiddle with them again. Audience feedback noted that the first time was “flat,” and they did not feel engaged, but the second time “drew us right in.” What made this difference?

1) The devising game: One game taught by Paul Sills in actor training is called “What’s Beyond?” (Spolin 1999, 99–100, 121–22). You have something offstage in mind, and you play a scene that has nothing to do with it. In the theatre, part of the way it works is that the audience has a sense of something going on that is not seen or heard, almost as if it is a secret. But for the player, it is about what is happening on your body. There is no language for it; it’s about having an idea, or memory, or sensation beyond what is happening on stage. Everyone should know something is there without you saying anything, but from how it plays on your body.

If an actor is training to use this game, they might first think about activities that connect them to what is “beyond”—how your body holds the idea or memory, what it looks or feels like when you think about it not in words, or indeed, where it is in you when you are not thinking about it. When I practise the game, I spend time by myself, thinking about it, imagining it, picturing it, feeling it. It could, for example, be a friend’s cancer diagnosis. My awareness of this “beyond” emerges through my body, and I spend time sensing it. I’m seeing what happens on the body, putting that sensation all around the body, asking myself where I feel it—what do I notice, what happens, what do I feel, what does the body want.

The improvisation of “beyond” is there to work on how to bring all of this on stage. In the scene, you look for moments when it’s in your body. It comes and goes, it is “in and out,” but it’s there, it’s present for you. And then things come out of you, your body, your mouth. The goal with theatre improvisation is a kind of interrelation, with your partner, yourself, in the moment. It creates moments that are fleeting and recognizes that the things you are creating are often funny or creative precisely because they are fleeting. There is no return. In dealing with the camera and the future audience, it is quite different. The moment may be fleeting, but it will need to keep that sense every time it is repeated.

2) Rehearsing “What’s Beyond?”: I’ll be thinking about what “works” when I rehearse for the theatre. Acting in the theatre is about partner work and audience. What “works” is what makes something happen in that space between, and I will be looking for moments when the “what’s beyond” emerges. Rehearsing for the camera is quite different, and I search for what feels “good” to me. In both cases, it might be to do with my body, face, or voice. It might be a breath—I might recognize that I’m holding my breath. Or it might be a physical movement—when we use physicality, there’s an easy, clear, simple place for something to emerge.

Practising often depends on what is needed by the character. The hardest acting is to make something easy look difficult. If it is already difficult, that is simpler. An improvisational game gives me focus. It is not so much a task as a focused consciousness that means that I am no longer pretending but rather becoming in front of the audience. In rehearsing, I use the game to help me create a score that can be repeated. The game helps me find new activities, a slightly different edge. It helps me to be curious and actively looking or seeking, so the repeated action is not just replicated.

3) Playing “What’s Beyond?” with the theatre: In theatre acting, I’ll have choices that I have made while rehearsing with the game, basically a score, but I’ll be waiting for what happens. This is the “in and out,” always an interplay between what is arising and what I think I have chosen. Neither is perfect, but something happens, an event happens. At times what happens simply makes you ready for the next thing you need to do. Often, the audience gives you an indication of what is working. In rehearsal, it is almost impossible to tell, but in performance, you can sense if they are “with” you—maybe it’s how quiet the space is, maybe it’s a sense of energy. The “what’s beyond” is something the audience can see, but they may not know it is there.

Something is happening in the space that does not actually have to do with me but with what is playing across my body. It is an acknowledgement that something is happening in the space between me and the audience that feels close, related to me but which is not me, because, in performance, it is also the audience’s bodies and what is playing across them. With theatre, there is a bigger sense of something that is being created between the stage and the audience. When I act on the stage, something happens between the audience and my sense of myself that is not randomly here or there, but quite precisely about three inches from the surface of my body. There’s a feeling of light and dark and warmth. Every actor has an experience of feeling uneasy just as they go on stage, but the moment you step into it, there is this other body. It is not solid. It’s almost like a virtual body that the audience watches, and it is felt differently in every repetition. It is multiple but particular in each scene. I feel it both as a consciousness that opens toward the audience, inviting them to engage, and something protective.

4) Playing “What’s Beyond?” with a camera: First, there will have been little rehearsal, and in the case of the video we made of me mending the glasses, there was hardly any. We decided that I would come in through the door, having had an argument with my son—this became the “what’s beyond” of the game I played in the scene. I go to the table and start trying to mend the glasses. I then get up, go to the fridge, return, and start mending them again. I was not consciously aware of the difference that the repeated action would have on the audience, and what I now suggest is simply what “could have” happened.

In film acting, the eye of the camera usually becomes the centre of that feeling that the body is being broken into bits, and the actor’s job is to keep the body whole, in some kind of integration, even though for me, everything becomes unnaturally tiny. Practising with the game can help the repetition of film acting reintegrate the body back into process. The games get you away from thinking too much. They not only ask you to do other kinds of actions, but they also get you into sensing the expansiveness, the boundary of that virtual body. The “in and out” of the “What’s Beyond” game can create an expansiveness that includes the camera so that it is not centralized but made part of a larger space.

The “virtual body” of the film actor is different from what I feel in the theatre. In front of the camera, there is a heightened awareness of micro-changes, and the actor is continually sensing for

the moment in which the bits of the body become a whole body, the virtual body. That virtual body is no longer three inches away because, at times, the camera itself invades that space. The virtual body is close to the skin, and it's warm. You are always aware of where the camera is focusing, but as long as that remains a "bit" of the body and not part of the whole virtual body, it does not feel "good." In this video, the camera is on the whole upper body, but most of what is happening is going on with the hands and the glasses. When we first shot the scene of the broken glasses, I slipped back into old habits. My physical actions didn't work; I was active not with the camera but for it, keeping my awareness of it just on the edge of my attention and ignoring my responses to it. In the second, repeated, action, I had a focused sense of the hands and glasses being watched, so all of my energy was going to that space. The game set up a whole system of processes, a montage of "in and out"—storytelling, sense memory, the preoccupation with having something outside of the camera's mechanical focus—that created for me an expansiveness so that the world of the filmed scene extended out of the frame.

Working with the camera, the sense of audience changes. For example, on stage, there are ruptures of the space when something unpredictable happens or "goes wrong," and it all becomes part of the action—everything in the room becomes part of the playing. On camera, everything is broken up into tiny bits, and all kinds of things are happening around you that are meant to be outside of the action. At the same time, as a film actor, you are trying to make everything part of what you are doing; you "accept all offers." In film acting, you usually have the choices: to focus on the camera or to feel what the camera is focusing on or to focus not on the camera and attempt the futile effort of ignoring it. A game such as "what's beyond" gives you a virtual body with a different focus that includes the camera. The games can be used to make different kinds of space with the camera so that it is not so much what the camera is doing but what the actor is trying to do. When you exclude the camera, it becomes the focal point, but if you include it, it becomes part of a larger world, and the actor can play. You can create a space that includes you and the camera, and perhaps that is the space the audience senses when the film acting feels "good" to the actor.

The games give the actor a way to sense themselves and others in the room differently, and the focus the game enables becomes the focus of the camera. It opens a connection with the camera. They train you to focus on one part of the body so that it is part of a whole virtual body, not just a "bit" that happens to be in the frame. This releases some kind of flow, and that becomes the opening for working with the camera rather than acting "at" or "to" or "for" the camera.

Commentary: Montage as a Way of Living

We are multiple. Not in the sense that we may "act" many roles, many distinct individualities that can appear when needed or—worse—when desired. We are multiple in that we may, if we practise properly, find ways to se(ns)e ourselves without the structure named "individual" intervening. Stanislavski talks to Toporkov about adding something extra to his performance, of becoming a human (+), of finding a tone and painting the whole performance with the single brush of that tone (Toporkov 2014). This is the central focus of US Strasberg-based Method work. To be continually revising one's brushes. To let the appropriate tones emerge and change during play. Through our critical work, we would suggest that today we have no consistent "human" on which to build. If we are to follow Baudrillard, we only have the (+), the supplement that emerges with repetition. The human exists only in a virtual dimension, as possible and as effecting the "actual" in its moment-to-moment enactment. In 1995 Baudrillard wrote, "There is always a camera hidden somewhere. It may

be a real one—we may be filmed without knowing it. We may also be invited to replay our own life in whatever television network. Anyway, the virtual camera is in our head, and our whole life has taken on a video dimension. We might believe that we exist in the original, but today this original has become an exceptional version for the happy few. Our own reality doesn't exist anymore. We are exposed to the instantaneous retransmission of all our facts and gestures on whatever channel” (Baudrillard 1995, 97).

Yet under these conditions, we are not multiple. We are identical to ourselves only insofar as the self remains outside of anything that can be actualized. If we are multiple, we aren't multiple “things” or multiple selves, multiple “its,” multiple “theys” that appear in series or sequences. If we are multiple, there is no final solution to the question “who.” There is no way to cut up the body and all of the flows moving through it and through which it moves into species, strata, class, set, race, gender, family, denomination. We cannot say where the whole of any single flow that we are caught up with begins or ends. We can cut the flow, but in cutting it, we find that it too becomes multiple. Multiple is not a diversity of models on which we may base our played self. It is the opening out of all models to locate the rhizomatic connections, the moments that montage may enable us to bring together in flow.

Notes

1. We intend to put a lot of pressure on the key terms italicized here, returning to them and repeating them, as actors do when critically interrogating text and context.
2. Russian theatre practitioner, trainer, writer, director Konstantin Stanislavski (1863–1938).
3. Actress, educator, director, author, creator of theatre games (1906–1994) (<http://Violaspolin.org>).
4. While the quotes from Viola Spolin appear in her published works on theatre games, the text attributed to Paul Sills herein is all remembered text. The authors trained and worked with him between 1990 and 1998. Because games training for Sills was largely about what the body produces—including the production of memory—the original spoken text is less critical to this work, done in 2017, than the remembered text, which is a rendition that plays on the author's bodies currently. The continual repetition of these terms by Sills and afterwards Zibell and Nolan in their own work leaves us the feeling that we have remembered them quite accurately.
5. Film and theatre director Mike Nichols—mentor to the authors—often called this collusion between audiences and actors “the deal.” Nichols articulated the deal repeatedly in his master classes for actors, saying: “I'll pretend this is happening if you pretend to believe it.”
6. On film sets, practitioners often speak of how a scene looks “to camera”—removing the customary article. One of the implications is that “camera” sounds like a name rather than an object—the camera. Wherever we employ this grammatical construction we do so to position camera as another body. It should also be noted we do not capitalize camera as it needs to be a body for the actualization of the virtual, not a subject of capital.
7. See Zibell *In Preparation* (forthcoming) for analysis of the instrumentalization of the body and the bodied camera inherent in the theatrical work of Stanislavski, Brecht, and Grotowski.
8. Guattari relates this “entry” to a kind of commitment—“as in the past, when one “entered” a religious order” (Genosko 1996, 96).
9. In the late twentieth century, acting teacher George Morrison, who was a student of Lee Strasberg, a colleague of Mike Nichols and Paul Sills with whom he established and ran The New Actors Workshop Conservatory—where the authors of this paper began their studies—would use the term “cybernetic” for the kinds of moment-to-moment adjustments made by the actor using the physical action.

10. This page alone in Stanislavski's work refutes the common critique that his practices were "self-indulgent," ethically suspect, and in the service of "identification" and not (as Brecht asks) social interrogation.

11. Early Stanislavski used the example of Lady Macbeth trying to wipe the blood off her hands as a "simple physical action." But later in his work, the term took on a much more difficult to define usage (Stanislavski 2008, 164). He told his actors to leave behind the "histrionics" and simply wash the blood until it was gone. That this was enough.

12. The terms "daily body" and "life body" do not appear in Grotowski's major writings. They entered into Grotowski's lexicon very late. Playwright Ayad Akhtar, who studied and worked with Grotowski at the Grotowski Work Center in Pontedera, Italy at the end of Grotowski's life, frequently used these terms during a two-year-long period of rigorous training in Grotowski's *Plastiques Exercises* in New York in 2004–2006. The authors participated in these workshops with Akhtar.

13. The topic of no-motion would require a monograph to elaborate. Briefly, it relates to the work earlier in this paper on "releasing on intention." One can hold one's intention in "no motion." Practising no-motion begins with motion through space. First, the player emulates slow-motion as the cinema represents it. Then the player begins to "contact" or "enter into" the immobile in the motion. One can "see" one's own movement—as one moves—in a series of still frames within the flow. This produces affect and sensation proper to this iteration of the game and this iteration only. A player can "hold" one of the frames—a key frame perhaps that depicts a critical point in the movement—in no-motion as the body carries on through the sequence.

14. *Traumnovelle* (trans. Dream Story) is the title of the novel by Arthur Schnitzler on which Kubrick based *Eyes Wide Shut*.

Appendix: Stanislavski Quoted at Length on the Instrumentalization of the Body

"First we need a continuous line of Given Circumstances through which the scene can proceed, and secondly, I repeat, we need an unbroken series of inner images linked to these Given Circumstances. Put briefly *we need an unbroken line not of plain, simple Given Circumstances but ones that we have coloured in full*. So remember this well, forever: every moment you are onstage, every moment in the outer and inner progress of the play, the actor must see what is going on around him (i.e. the external Given Circumstances, created by the director, the designer and the rest of the production team) or what is going on inside, in his own imagination, i.e. those images which depict the Given Circumstances in full colour. A continuous line of fleeting images is formed, both inside and outside us, like a film. It lasts as long as the creative process lasts, projecting the Given Circumstances which the actor has fully coloured, onto the screen of his mind's eye, so that he now lives his own life entirely.

"These images create a corresponding mood inside, which then acts upon your mind and evokes matching experiences. Constantly watching the film of your mental images will, on the one hand, make sure you stay within the play, and, on the other, unfailingly and faithfully guide your creative work.

"Now, concerning mental images, is it correct to say that we really see them within us? We have the capacity to visualize things which do not exist in actual fact, but which we merely picture to ourselves. It is not difficult to verify this capacity of ours. Take the chandelier. It is outside me. It is, it exists in the material world. I look at it and feel, as it were, that I am extending 'my ocular antennae' towards it. But now I take my eyes off the chandelier, close them, and want to see it again in my mind's eye, 'from memory.' To do that, I have to withdraw my 'ocular antennae,' so to speak, and then direct them from inside myself, not outward towards a real article, but at some sort of imaginary 'screen in our mind's eye' as we call it in our jargon.

“Where is this screen to be found, or, rather, where do I take it to be, inside or outside myself? My own feeling is that it is somewhere outside me, in the empty space before me. The film itself is running inside me, but I see it projected outside me.

“To make sure you understand me completely, I will talk about it in other terms.

“Mental images arise in our imagination, our memory, and, thereafter, our minds, as it were, project them outside ourselves, so we can see them. But we see these imaginary objects from the inside out, so to speak, not from the outside in, with our mind’s eye.

“The same thing happens with hearing. We hear imaginary sounds not with outer but with our inner ears, but we identify the source of these sounds, in most cases, as not inside but outside ourselves.

“I would say, turning this statement on its head, that imaginary objects and images take shape outside ourselves but nonetheless arise, in the first instance, inside ourselves, in our imagination and our memory” (Stanislavski 2008, 74–75).

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