

A MODEL OF THE ACTING EXPERIENCE: DUAL  
PROCESSES OF CONCIOUSNESS

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A THEORY OF THE ACTING EXPERIENCE: DUAL  
PROCESSES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	2-16
Art vs. Science .....	2-12
Purpose of Study.....	12-16
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	17-55
Introduction.....	17-18
Impacts of the Past .....	18-27
Current Trends in Research .....	27-55
III. THEORY .....	56-69
The Interplay of Memory and Conscious Awareness.....	56-62
The Function of a Dual Process of Awareness .....	62-66
Methodology .....	66-69
IV. FINDINGS.....	70-82
Statistical Significance.....	70-71
Professionalism vs. Craft and Awareness.....	71-75
Implications on Future Research .....	76-81
Conclusion .....	81-82
REFERENCES .....	83-84
APPENDICES & FIGURES.....	85-97

## CHAPTER I

### Art vs. Science

The line between art and science is becoming more and more permeable as both scientists and artists discover they both seek to analyze and understand the same medium: the human being. Psychology has become a general term used to identify many endeavors that seek to understand the human mind (Gazzinga 27). Psychology seeks to analyze the human mind scientifically while the performer seeks to analyze the human mind artistically. A theory of the two disciplines, intertwining concepts of both art and science, could yield valuable insight into how the artistic mind functions.

Any theory of subjectivity is built, ultimately, on metaphors, a foundation less substantial than shifting sands. To seek an ontology of being, to get to something essential, is to be faced with a vast and unending silence—a silence as complete as death, were it not for the intuition of something experienced. (Lutterbie 115)

While the model presented in this thesis seeks to get at something “essential” it is with a clear understanding of the subjective nature of the matter at hand; understanding the psyche of the performing actor. Unpacking how the artistic mind functions could affect both actor training and provide insight into what may work best for an actor

learning a role. This thesis seeks to present a theory that identifies the creativity of the performer from a scientific approach using cognitive psychological principles as a backdrop.

In the Spring of 2010 I attended the American College Theatre Festival in Amarillo, Texas. At the festival I took part in a workshop entitled, “Psychological Centers.” Being very interesting in the convergence of psychology and acting I was eager to hear psychological perspective on performance. Administered by a PhD in Theatre, the workshop focused on the psychological nature of physicality and character. It was the very beginning of the workshop that reinforced my belief that many artists are extremely resistant to the scientific study of performance. The professor, perhaps unintentionally, began his demonstration by positioning the science of psychology as subordinate to the world of theatre. I firmly believe science and art to exist in a duality, collaborative forces lending themselves more to dialogue than debate. The PhD referred to psychology as rookie guesswork explaining, “Theatre has been around for thousands of years, while psychology has been around a mere hundred.” He continued by smirking and cynically saying, in dialogue with himself, “Amateurs.”

Audiences are captivated by well-crafted performance. Comments such as, “That actor really has it” or “That actor has it figured out” seem to permeate critiques of good acting and performances that are done well. However, these types of generalizations begin to point towards subjectivity. Does an actor who has a successful performance actually have some understanding of the human mind that a more novice actor may fail to realize? The experience in Amarillo reaffirmed my desire to empirically study the world

of acting from a psycho-scientific vantage to better understand what “it” is actors create when they exist as another. It is the belief of this author that the more crafted actor, that is the more experienced and seasoned actor, possesses and utilizes a higher level of cognitive functioning in regard to performance than that of the novice. How have some actors found a way to develop “it”, or in this case, superior cognitive processes? Do the cognitive processes in fact differ from a more experienced actor to a novice? These questions inspired the development of a model to understanding the acting experience and are explored further through developed surveys and statistical analysis.

The gap between science and art seems to have been created out of fear. It is the experience of this author that when approached with a scientific approach to an artistic endeavor, most artists shun the thought. The scientific ability to define and analyze seems foreign and frightening to many performing artists. A scientific approach may also over step an unspoken boundary in consideration of the creativity brought to the art. Many actors, including myself, believe this creative aspect to be distinctive and novel to the craft. In fact, this author believes in the mantra of his first acting instructor, Kevin Otos, who said, “the theatre is magic and blessed are those who create that magic.” It is not the goal of this study to define the magic inherent in all artistic expression. Nor is it my intention of the to deny this magic exists. Actors are unequivocally unique human beings, possessing the ability to truthfully embody another character and appearing to authentically live out new experience even in the midst of tremendous repetition, called rehearsal. 18<sup>th</sup> century acting theorist Denis Diderot said, “To hit the right mark once [the actor] has practiced one thousand times” (19). This skill, to *truthfully and authentically exist as another*, is what inspires this research. This idea of automatic



action facilitated out of rehearsal also has parallels in psychology, as much of our everyday life appears to rely on some amount of psychological autopilot. My own curiosity has spurred me to question what exactly allows the actor to so vividly and convincingly portray another. It is important to note this author takes a very subjective view of the actor. This author believes the actor aims wholly and completely to live out the life of another as truthfully and honestly as possible from well-crafted research, rehearsal, and thought. The actor becomes the character he is portraying, he transcends himself and acts on the impulses and desires dictated by his role.

How does an actor's mind allow him to exist as another? Why do actors frequently have difficulty remembering the details of their performances? What is happening when an actor forgets his lines? Why is there difficulty letting go of a character once the performance is over? Why is it beneficial for directors to speak to actors as if they *are* their characters? How does this character reside and function in the mind? These questions were founded out of my own curiosity, as an actor and as one who studies psychology, to understand the novelty of the actor's craft. These questions have also been considered by minds like Constantine Stanislavski, perhaps the most influential acting teacher, director, theorist, and philosopher, who wrote, "However, is this really possible? (to induce the creative state). Are there altogether no means or methods of some kind, which would help us consciously and at will shift ourselves into a creative state..." (2).

Stanislavski explored how an actor goes about creating a character while I was intrigued to consider how one might *define and analyze the psyche of the character*, created by an actor, and scientifically evaluate what is at play in the mind of the actor as

he performs. I also wondered, what sets one actor apart from another; in terms of skill or experiences that identifies the actor as superior or inferior in artistry? In fact, the question arises, What makes an actor experienced? Through surveying and the application of a model of the acting experience, experience arises as a result of both craft and creativity. As part of this thesis I have developed such a model for understanding how the actor's mind functions, as a manifestation of character from a cognitive psychological perspective. This model identifies how the mind behaves in the creative state of performance. See figure 3.1-3.3 for illustrations of a dual process. To better understand these processes I have developed a model that may help identify what is really going on in the performer's mind. This model uses both the acting process and the processes involved in cognitive functioning to define the artistic mind. For example, the exploratory phase of rehearsal in the acting experience is most directly compared to the cognitive process of encoding. Encoding refers to the learning and processing of new information. The second, more repetitious phase of the rehearsal process as the production moves into technical and dress rehearsals, is comparable to the cognitive process of storage as the encoded information is stored in the long term memory. The final phase in the acting experience is that of performance. Performance would directly tie to the cognitive principle of retrieval as the encoded and stored information is retrieved for use by the conscious working memory of the actor. The performer uses these processes to develop a character or representation of character that resides in the long-term memory. As the actor performs he draws from this representation in long-term memory and brings it into his conscious awareness or working memory. The degree to which he can retrieve this character and the depth of the character developed will be

analyzed forthcoming. It is the stance of this author, that there exists some relationship between the working memory and the long term memory of the actor that is systematically and quantitatively different between the more experienced, or expert, actor when compared to the novice. The basis of this study is founded on my own experiences as an actor, scholar, and thinker, as well as numerous surveys submitted by other performers in cooperation with this research. The study bridges a gap psychologists have struggled with between working memory and long term memory while simultaneously investigating the mind of the actor through a cognitive psychological lense.

At this point in history we are closer than we have ever been to understanding and unlocking the secrets of the mind. In her article, *Interplay: The Method and Potential of a Cognitive Scientific Approach to Theatre*, Amy Cook, a prominent voice in the convergence of science and theatre, writes, “In a move likely to provide the kind of jolt to the field that Turner and Freud once did, scholars are now seeking and finding answers in the cognitive sciences” (Cook 579). Psychologists are uncovering, discovering, and analyzing the functions of the human mind extensively. Therefore, using my experience in Amarillo as a springboard, I question why there appears to be so much hostility between art and science in present day academia. Recently I overheard a conversation between a Liberal Arts major and a Chemistry major in which the Chemistry major, an obvious friend, asked why his Liberal Arts peer was wasting his money studying performance, “You don’t have to study to get up on stage and say some lines” he said. Luckily I stayed long enough to hear the Art majors’ rebuttal. He remarked, “I study the craft of creation, I don’t have to fill in numbers, letters, or formulas, for me there is no solution to x except the one I create”. This notion of creation is a driving point of this

research as the aim is to better understand how the creative mind may function. Though a formula does not exist to define the experience of a performer, perhaps a foundational knowledge of the creative inner workings of the human brain could help bring define what is going on between the actor self and the character. Using cognitive psychology as a backdrop, relationships may be identified between the individual's mind and that of the character living inside the actor.

Theatre scholars and artists alike should actively seek a better understanding, through scientific inquiry, of the human condition they work so tirelessly to recreate. The understanding of the actor's experience as a character could, perhaps, be found through application of the scientific method to the artistic medium of acting and performance. Rhonda Blair, a pioneering voice in psychological studies on acting, believes that science can lead to specific understanding of performance (Blair 18). I look to further develop such an understanding through a cognitive approach to acting, applying the scientific method to the art of creating and unraveling how the human mind deals with character. Amy Cook suggests language, in regard to performing, is less about communicating than it is about being and experiencing. The function of this "state of being" and "experience", as Cook has stated, is the area of interest for my study of the actor's mind. Since antiquity individuals have questioned and investigated what it means to experience, embody, and exist in an altered state of consciousness. It is time to begin understanding the implications performance studies can have on "feeling, fact and fiction, actor and character" (Cook 589). The convergence of psychology and performance can no doubt uncover some of these cross-discipline parallels.

Psychology has made great strides in understanding the cognitive function of the human psyche. This research can be utilized to elaborate on what the actor experiences during performance. Like a human being existing as the self, the actor who acts as character shares the same mind of the self and thus the same cognitive makeup of the actor playing the role. For example, one of the novelties of acting is the ability to present an action as a first occurrence even after hours and hours of rehearsal where the action is repeated. The actor acts on impulse guided by extensive *work* on facilitating the *right* impulses, impulses true to the character and in congruence with the story telling. Impulses have been studied extensively by scientists in ground breaking research aimed at uncovering the secrets of the mind.

Scientists have been able to identify the parts of the brain that are at play in human consciousness and thought impulse. For example, functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scanners have actually isolated the lobes of the brain activated by certain thoughts through their imaging abilities. These images document areas of the brain active during *conscious* thought. The scientists using these technologies have identified and documented *thought*; they have identified biologically what it means to be conscious, acting on impulse and thinking in a present tense. The potential to identify a character existing in the consciousness, of an actor acting on impulse, may actually be theoretically plausible. When the idea of consciousness is presented in this thesis it is in regard to what is going on in the psyche of the actor. It is meant to address the cognitive processes that occur in real time as the actor performs.

Psychology and the acting process already share similarities separated, in many instances, only by syntax. For example, the psychological model referred to as TOTE

(Test, Operate, Test, Exit) describes a model of planning human behavior in much the same way a director implores an actor to explore a character choice or blocking suggestion. Using TOTE, humans plan behavior in the conscious mind by setting out to formulate plans of action to accomplish a given task. Thus, a plan may consist of several attempts incorporating testing and exiting and eventually leading to an end result or accomplishing a task. In the same way the theatre uses these same psychological principles to understand, explore, experiment, and refine performance. For instance, Rhonda Blair used cognitive psychological principles to explore psychological approaches to acting in a production of *Hedda Gabbler*. In this production Blair utilized cognitive processes of perception to impact the movement and action of her actors. Using these thought processes Blair observed her actors' experience was strengthened as relationships became clearer through the body's movement (Blair 16). The body of the actor was connected to the cognitive processes being acted on by character. The actor was using what the body was doing to reinforce their representation of character and add to the character representation in long-term memory.

The Whelan Tape method of rehearsal is also a defining performance technique echoing success through the cognitive processes it fosters. In the Whelan Tape Method, rehearsals in the beginning of the process center on the use of a tape recorder. The actors select a scene, usually a beat in the script, and stand together and record the scene with their voices. A 'beat' is the basic building block of a narrative. It is the smallest unit of action you can break the script down into. Every shift in the play would thus be considered a 'beat shift'. Then the actors put down their scripts and move to the playing space where they act out the scene without speaking their lines only using movement and

their own energy. Then the actors return to the scripts and the tape recorder and tape the scene again using any discoveries they have made. This process is repeated approximately ten times. With each new recording comes a new task, with the only rule being actors cannot speak and you can never repeat the same action twice. Some of the tasks include, adding a prop, switching lines (i.e. Character A would now act to Character B's lines), superimposing a locale (i.e. beach, classroom, etc.), or superimposing a scenario. The final stage of the Whelan Tape Technique is making one final recording on book (reading the script), then dropping the scripts and actually performing the scene with spoken word. I was fortunate enough to witness a demonstration of the Whelan Tape technique at a conference. I was amazed at what depth the actors were able to obtain through their exploration of their characters. What was most amazing was the actors never had the script in their hand while they were acting and by the final scene when they were allowed to speak they did not need them. This technique illuminates the power of cognitive thought and body working together to build strong connections for the actor in terms of creating character. The technique requires you to act first and cognitively process as you go, making sense of your own actions and making these actions make sense to you. It is a clear acting exercise rooted in cognitive processes. In the final stage of the technique the actor was not thinking, he was doing. The novelty of the acting experience is in the ability of the actor to make conscious planned out behaviors, later manifesting, as behavior the actor does not have to consciously exert cognitive effort to recover. Consider the following dialogue:

A: I always find that I get upset when my mother talks to me like that.

B: You find it difficult?

- A: Oh yes. I don't know why – it's been going on a long time.
- B: Can you give me an example of such a time, when it was difficult for you?
- A: It's always the same thing. She rings me about something fairly harmless, and then I tell her something; then she starts to tell me what I should do.
- B: Can you describe such a time?
- A: It's often late at night, when I'm tired. I don't have the energy to fight back.
- B: Can you tell me about a particular time, perhaps something that happened recently?
- A: The sort of things she'll say is: 'Why don't you ask Charlie to help?' – things like that – she undermines me all the time.

(Williams 251)

The preceding dialogue is attributed to the conversation occurring between a psychiatrist and his patient. The B character seems to be imploring the A character to find answers and make discoveries about their own life circumstances. B seems to be counseling and investigating and actively searching out the answers to the character's plight. Note how this same dialogue could easily be attributed to a director coaching an actor. The B character (director) talks to A (actor) to really get the actor in tune with the character's given circumstance, or the history of the character. The director wants the actor to have a rich history for the character full of concentrated and calculated memories and experience.

It is of interest to note: when I randomly asked actors to read this excerpt and then asked psychology and social science majors to read it I received quite opposite



responses. As expected, the actors most easily identified the dialogue as an acting exercise or coaching session while the social science minds all identified the interaction as possessing a counseling or therapy interaction. The similarity between the interaction of a director/actor and psychiatrist/patient is all too similar and it appears that a conversation that investigates the human mind has both artistic and scientific functions. The two circumstances actually lend themselves to be solved or mediated in the same manner. This is not a surprise because the artistic and psychological goals are the same, understanding the human being. A director explores the psyche of the character with the actor much the same way a psychiatrist investigates the inner workings of their patient's thoughts and feelings.

Science and art have long been positioned as nemeses. An amalgam of the two disciplines can yield results setting the two as beneficiaries; improving one another through integration. Cognitive psychologists now have a foundational knowledge of the human mind and its function. Likewise, theatre artists have developed techniques for performance that have lasted generations. Applying the cognitive functions of the human mind with the artist's ability to create allows one to identify how the human mind might behave in this moment of inspiration. Understanding the creative mind of the actor could mutually benefit both psychology and performance. Psychologists could render better techniques through treatment like Drama Therapy, which seeks to treat patients with a variety of mental afflictions through theatrical and dramatic measures. Likewise, actors, directors, and dramatists could have a better understanding of how the human mind actually creates and develops techniques and exercises benefiting performers and their development of character. A psycho-scientific perspective on performance benefits

the art of performing by solidifying the actors' ability to create magic, not, as some skeptics claim, dismantle it.

### Purpose of Study

Surveys have been developed for this research to try and illuminate a relationship between the professionalism of acting and how that professionalism relates to the craft of acting and the awareness of the actor in performance. The purpose of this study is aimed at identifying and analyzing the duality that exists in an actor's mind as he or she performs and how this sense of awareness differs with expertise. Researchers Shallice and Norman have identified a "unique brain circuitry for the production of willed, reflective, or conscious behavior as compared to automatic, reflexive, or non-conscious behavior (Raichle 137). Shallice and Norman have described two separate systems functioning independently of one another. In my study I aim to combine these two systems. The actor works in rehearsal, making conscious decisions, with the anticipation of retrieving these choices in the future with no retrospection, simply existing in the role and allowing previous experience to permeate his psyche. According to Shallice and Norman, the actor has willed a conscious behavior *to become* "automatic and non-conscious." This thesis seeks to define how the actor's creative mind might facilitate these automatic and non-conscious cognitive processes by presenting a theory that details the relationship between the creative process of the actor and the cognitive process of the human mind.

This thesis aims to scientifically define what creativity looks like in the art form of acting by yielding quantitative measures of awareness and craft and how they relate to expertise. However, many might argue, "What is to gain by this study?" or "What

relevance or impact does this have on acting and psychology?” The further integration of psychology into acting could unquestionably lead to potential cognitive psychological treatment in the form of counseling practices and management of mental disturbances. For example, in the study outlined in this essay we expect for experts to have a more difficult time releasing their character than a novice. This is because the expert has created a schema or propositional network far richer than the novice and therefore has created more cues for retrieval of this long-term representation into their active consciousness. A schema or propositional network refers to the organization of consciousness or thoughts. A schema is organized in a hierarchy with a broad item containing smaller items. Perhaps a schema could best be described as the cognitive processes defining the self. The expert may have difficulty ridding his consciousness of this character more than the novice because of the rich schema he has created, it is harder for him to stop pulling from this detailed character representation. This may lead to a bleed over or inability to release to role. This may explain why many former actors say they turned away from performance because they were being too affected or they found themselves unable to “let go” of the role.

In psychology, the expert is most often compared to the novice to demonstrate the key or most strident differences between the two subject groups. By comparing the most experienced groups to the least experienced group, identifiers can be found that define what it means to be an expert or novice within a certain grouping. Identifiers such as creativity, craft, and awareness could define what characteristics are common to the expert and perhaps uncommon to the novice. This circumstance of being unable to let go of a character could benefit from further study and lead to treatment or exercises to aid

actors or patients in ridding these thoughts from consciousness. Treatments could potentially rely on the intense character investigation a director toils through with a cast. It could also provide more evidence to define and evaluate human cognitive capacity. Perhaps utilizing actors who play multiple roles in a production would allow one to better understand the limitations, or lack thereof, of the human mind's ability to cognitively process. The possibilities, like the human mind, appear to be vast and endless.

The benefit of a scientific approach to acting is the impact it could have on actor training. If it is possible to identify categories in which experts excel and novices are limited in, then perhaps it would be possible to identify just where the novice's ability is lacking and more accurately identify where the actor needs to improve his or her craft. Another reason this research route is worthwhile is personal. It reaffirms my experience as an actor. It reinforces my belief that if I put in the hard work on my character I can rely on my body, fostered by my mind, to live out the character in performance without self-reflection. It reaffirms my belief in the "magic" of theatre and the novel ability of the actor. It also has the potential to set a bar for what it means to be a successful actor, creating a character of truth and artistic integrity. The study could also investigate the anomaly of "going up" or forgetting a line during performance. I hypothesize this occurs more in novices as opposed to experts because the depth of schema development permeating the consciousness of the expert is far more defined than that of the novice. Therefore, the novice is more susceptible to both decay (reduction), or loss, of the information being encoded into long-term memory. This is because of a lack of craft to encode richly, or store information in an efficient manner. Interference, or something that causes the individual to be unable to recall, would be more prominent with the novice as

they do not have cues or schematic information to deal with these situations; they have not created them.

Cognitive capacity in novices may be less than the expert. Cognitive capacity refers to the attentional capacity an individual has in their working memory. Cognitive capacity is diminished when mental effort increases. If the novice actor is more aware of himself than the expert then he will have more interference present in his consciousness limiting his cognitive capacity. A human being cannot consciously think about every experience. As I type these words I do not consciously make the decision to “think about” typing the letter “R” in “letter.” Something is occurring beforehand allowing me to just type my thoughts without thinking about my fingers. The mind has a process where by it can efficiently allow me to type quickly without reflecting on every keystroke. Likewise, well rehearsed routines and character development lead to a type of “automatic processing”. In an by Chun Siong Soon, a researcher who currently studies automated responses, it was discovered decisions are not available to the consciousness until after up to 10 seconds. “This delay presumably reflects the operation of a network of high-level control areas that begin to prepare an upcoming decision long before it enters awareness” (Soon 543). It is plausible our minds can anticipate behavior without having to inwardly reflect to produce an action. Then is could presumably be plausible than an actor possesses the ability to create another level of awareness in the memory to function independently of the self. Through a better understanding of the actor’s mind and ability to create character, both the performing arts and scientific communities can collaborate to better understand how the creative mind works. I hope to engage both the scientific and artistic communities in delving into a deeper understanding of the human

brain's unique and perhaps limitless capabilities to function on different levels of conscious awareness.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Psychology and theatre have shared and borrowed from one another for centuries. Theatre minds have been inspired by the writing of psychological minds such as Sigmund Freud and dramatists such as Denis Diderot wrote in a very psychologically inspired manner. It makes sense to begin with the minds that shaped western acting practices and theology that also exhibit a strong impact from the psychology of the time. Both theorized in a very psychological manner. The work of Denis Diderot and Constantine Stanislavski both embody these qualities as they both contributed extensively to theorizing and created practical applications for the craft of acting. Diderot was a bright thinker, critic, and artist whose arguments begin to define, as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, what it means to be a successful actor. Likewise, no other single person may have impacted the modern actor more than Stanislavski. Stanislavski, with a strong influence from the development of a new science called psychology, took a very psychological approach to how an actor creates a character. In his texts Stanislavski explores how psychology, creativity, and performance affect one another and the human experience.

The second portion will focus primarily on the writings of Alan Baddeley. Baddeley is a renowned psychologist who pioneered the concept of working memory. In his text, *Working Memory*, Baddeley seeks to identify and explain how and why our mind processes stimuli from the environment in the manner in which it does. He suggests both theoretical and physical means for interpreting just how the human mind stores, encodes, and retrieves information. These concepts focus on the experiences of human beings' recollection and storing of memory. The function of the working memory is applicable to the study in that it directly relates to how an actor might retrieve information encoded for a character.

The literature review will conclude with in-depth discussion of current trends in both the cognitive sciences and the theatre world's recent fascination with the combination of both science and art in the form of cognitive studies. In this portion both theories and scientific studies will be discussed as they pertain to the matter of consciousness and acting.

### Impacts of the Past

In his essay, *The Paradox of Acting*, Denis Diderot makes a profound observation. Most simply Diderot's paradox, and main observation, makes the most sense halfway through the essay when he says, "A great actor is everything and nothing. Perhaps it is just because he is nothing that he is before all everything. His own special shape never interferes with the shape he assumes" (41). To be more specific, the paradox posits that if an actor is to be successful with an audience, make them feel, create an effect, and move them, and then he himself must remain unmoved. It is a paradox in that the performer is



actively seeking to provide the audience with an authentically visceral response while not allowing himself to actively try to create such an effect. So how does the actor get this response? Diderot argues it is through a developed artistic technique this response is earned. It is not, according to Diderot, through Nature. For example, naturalistically a person may not cry when something extreme occurs to him or her. However, on recounting the experience a tear might fall. Therefore, though an actor understands a given circumstance as extreme, bringing forth tears is not the goal because in that very moment it is not the experience of crying that leads to tears, but the circumstances experienced that may evoke them. Thus Diderot is correct in making the assumption “people come to [the theatre] not to see tears, but to hear speeches that draw tears; because this truth of nature is out of tune with the truth of conventions. You cannot imitate nature” (69). Here Diderot illuminates the speech as the device for evoking tears and not the act of actually working to bring oneself to cry. These moments of earned truth are won through artistic work added to the words provided by the playwright.

According to Diderot, words are simply words. It is all of the additional details and circumstances the actor brings to the table that make him or her a good actor. This is the novelty of the human being, because every actor, like every human being, is different. There are countless possibilities for creativity. Diderot states,

And how can a part be played in the same way by two different actors when, even with the clearest, most concise, the most forceful of writers, words are no more, and can never be more, than symbols, indicating a thought, an feeling, or an idea; symbols which need action, gesture, intonation, expression, and a whole context of circumstance, to give them their full significance? (14)

Here Diderot positions the actor as artist, responsible for making decisions to support the words given him. It is the detail the actor adds through voice and movement that makes the words *mean* something. Diderot classifies an actor as a

disciple of Nature, then the first time he comes on the stage as [a character] faithful copying of himself and the effects he has arrived at, and constantly observing human nature, will so prevail that his acting, far from losing in force, will gather strength with the new observations he will make from time to time. He will increase or moderate his effects, and you will be more and more pleased with him. If he is himself while he is playing, how is he to stop being himself?

(15)

This quotation paints a portrait of an actor as a sponge, habitually observing, listening, and reacting to his surroundings. Diderot would argue the artistry involved in listening to a fellow actor and reacting naturally far surpasses the actor who plays from emotion. Playing an emotion is a trap because there is no consistency. He juxtaposes this type of actor against what he fashions as the ideal actor. This actor “ plays from thoughts, from study of human nature, from constant imitation of some ideal type, from imagination, from memory, will be one and the same at all performances, will be always at his best mark,” this type of actor has thought about every aspect of his performance and “arranged the whole thing in his head” (15). A good actor has painstakingly considered every aspect of his performance so he can act without having to think. Diderot considers what, actors today might consider “being in the moment” when he considers what a more experienced actor might do to succeed. “Let a consummate actor leave off playing from his head, let him forget himself, let his heart be involved, let sensibility possess him, let

him give himself up to it . . . He will intoxicate us.” (67). Here Diderot comments on the naturalistic existence an experienced actor portrays. An experienced actor will not make commentary on his performance whilst he performs. Instead, he “forgets” himself and “gives himself up” to the work he has undergone creating a character.

Diderot finds no problem in classifying acting as good or bad. So what makes *good* acting? Diderot jokingly says a good actor is one who, using the words from the author, “fools you thoroughly” (33). However, he also asks a similar question when he considers,

What, then, is the true talent? That of knowing well the outward symptoms of the soul we borrow, of addressing ourselves to the sensations of those who hear and see us, of deceiving them by the imitation of these symptoms, by an imitation which aggrandizes everything in their imagination, and which becomes the measure of their judgment. (53)

Here Diderot references the experienced actor’s ability to embody the outward expression of the circumstance of another. The actor does this to the benefit of the audience’s pleasure. According to Diderot, good acting is truthful acting. Specifically he defines it as “the conforming of action, diction, face, voice, movement, and gesture, to an ideal type invented by the poet, and frequently enhanced by the player” (23). The actor that best creates and produces, after the best conceived circumstances, these outward signs, is the greatest actor (53). These choices are a matter of decision making and are based on the judgment of the actor. Diderot contrasts Judgment (artistry) against Sensibility (emotion). He claims that indeed artistry is better than natural sensibility. He uses the metaphor of beauty to describe the difference between artistry and natural sensibility.

For all intents and purposes a supermodel could be described as beautiful. A natural sensibility might point towards her thin figure or symmetrical face as the source of beauty. However, what Diderot is getting at is the beauty in artistry not necessarily physical beauty. He suggests considering the beauty of a painting. Though whatever is featured in the painting may or may not be beautiful in the natural sense of the word, the art that comprises the work can be intrinsically beautiful.

Diderot aimed to identify what it looked like to be a “good” actor. Constantine Stanislavski took it further. Stanislavski detailed what it meant to create another person. Through his three texts *An Actor Prepares*, *Building a Character*, and *Creating a Role*, Stanislavski gave actors a blueprint for creating a motivated real human being from their own creative process. In the 1920s the Encyclopedia Britannica approached Stanislavski for a written summation of his system of acting. Though Stanislavski did write an essay for the Britannica it never appeared in the periodical. However, the essay is still available, translated from Russian. In the essay, *Concerning the Art of Acting and Directing*, Stanislavski summarizes his understanding, teaching, and theory of acting.

The first part of the essay focuses on how the actor transforms into a character. The actor must first do the homework required to be able to find the character or as Stanislavski writes, “the creative work of the actor is begun with a deep absorption of the drama” (1). During this first stage the actor finds the through line of his character as he “strives for the most exact and profound understanding possible of the spirit and intention of the dramatist” (2). It is in the discovery of this intention the actor discovers how to live with and operates as another character. As the actor begins to understand the

character created by the playwright it then becomes the actor's responsibility to create a character.

Creating this character, or role, is based on the artistic ability of the actor. This ability to create became the foundational focus of Stanislavski's system. The idea an actor could create a state of consciousness in which he honestly reacts, speaks, and exists is what Stanislavski considers when he writes, "However, is this really possible? (to induce the creative state). Are there altogether no means or methods of some kind, which would help us consciously and at will shift ourselves into a creative state..." (2). This question is what spurred him to create a system of acting whereby an actor could craft a character with artistic skill or, as Stanislavski phrases, should it not be "possible to master a method" (2). The idea of a "method" to performance was somewhat novel at the time. However, it now shapes modern techniques, theories, and teaching of acting and performance.

The question Stanislavski appears to be asking is in regard to the consciousness of the actor and how it relates to the experiences of preparing a given role. He writes, "These questions launched me on my search for a means of inner technique, i.e. a way which would lead from the consciousness to the unconscious, into that realm from which flows nine-tenths of any genuine creative process" (2). We see a reference here to psychological terms of consciousness even in the midst of an artists' perspective of performance. At this point the idea of attention is also presented. Stanislavski writes there are many things they may draw an actor away from focusing on his character. A more experienced actor will have developed good habits that allow him to create his own circle of attention and only subconsciously focus on the happenings outside of this circle

(3). Maintaining a tight focus on character is in its very essence a psychological exercise. The actor must psychologically be able to give himself up to the conscious decisions he has made in rehearsal, allowing them to manifest during performance and concentrating on this psychological creation. He writes, “stage creativity during the presentation of a role, as during repeated performance of it, demands total concentration of the whole physical and spiritual nature of the actor, and the participation of all his physical and psychic faculties” (3) From this notion of creativity the essay moves into a brief discussion of imagination.

According to Stanislavski the way towards mastering the feelings of a role lies “through the activity of the imagination, which yields influence of our consciousness to a very great extent” (4). In regard to creativity and imagination, he argues we can rely on such psychological processes to stir our imagination and spur movement and action. He writes:

This is why creative fantasy is a fundamental, most necessary talent of the actor. Without a powerfully developed, lively fantasy it is impossible to be creative, or to rely on instinct or intuition, unsupported by internal technique. In this way a whole world which has slept in the soul of the artists is aroused; sometimes it has been deeply submerged in the realm of unconscious images and feelings. (4)

Here Stanislavski is clearly painting an artistic picture against a backdrop of psychological science. He begins to identify a process whereby art, in the form of acting, is created. He is creating a system in which the actor’s mind is viewed and used psychologically to create artistically.

In the last section of his essay, Stanislavski attempts to identify actual implications of this type of approach to performance. He begins by identifying a paradox similar to Denis Diderot's. He writes about the duality of an actor's attempt to "truthfully exists as another". He writes (as if he were thinking as an actor), "I know that everything about me on the stage is a crude counterfeit of actuality, it is false. But if all this were true, this is how I would regard such an appearance, this is how I would act..." (5). By asking these questions the actor is forced to live out the experience he or she was forced to question. He gives in to the fictitious other he has created and exists not on his own actions but the actions and will created out of the creation of a role. "However, in giving himself up to this, the actor may involuntarily change the truth both in his construction of its fiction, and in the connections he makes with experience. His fiction may seem illogical, improbable, and then it presents (our) believing him" (5). Stanislavski is providing an example of the ability to create art in the form of a character, a truthfully believable character. In reference to this notion of truth he writes, "...the actor should tirelessly develop in himself the feeling of truth (or sense of truth), which will control all of his psychic and corporal activity, during creative work and during the execution of a role" (5). Again, Stanislavski mentions the psychology of the actor in the same breath he mentions the truthfulness of the actor's performance. The relationship between the psychology of the character and artistry seem intensely interconnected.

The last part of the essay is spent digging deeper into the psychological needs of the character that need to be addressed by the actor. First, the actor must construct the role, thinking about it, researching it, and rehearsing it, then he embodies the role he has created (6). In these final paragraphs Stanislavski begins to give strategies for how an

actor might psychologically prepare a role. He suggests creating different tasks or goals to pursue “through action(s)”. He also believes every actor should have a “final goal” and “psychological analysis broken down in to still more tasks” (6). It is through these facets that Stanislavski refers to work. The actor goes through the work of the creative process so this creativity begins to possess and excite the actor and manifests, outwardly, as character (7). Through his system Stanislavski details a methodology for creating a role based firmly in psychological principles of memory, creativity, and imagination. The importance of psychology to acting and Stanislavski can, perhaps, be seen towards the end of the essay when he writes,

On the contrary, each performance demands from the actor a creative state, i.e., all of them participate with psychic energy, since only under these conditions can they occur in each of them, as in any living being; and infecting one another by their feelings, they transmit to the audience the invisible and inexpressible, what constitutes the spiritual content of the drama. In this is indeed the essence of scenic art. (8)

Here the creative state and the psychological state are mentioned in tandem. One cannot be present without the other and they participate in the consciousness of the actor as art. Here Stanislavski has presented a systematic approach to acting mutually inspired by psychology and the artistic process. The psychological aspects of the consciousness of the actor as a human being will be explored in this study to better understand the inner workings of the human psyche and how they might relate to performance.

## Current Trends



In his textbook titled *Cognition: Theories and Applications*, Stephen Reed breaks Cognition into three parts; Information-Processing Stages, Representation and Organization of Knowledge, and Complex Cognitive Skills. Of particular interest are the chapters on organization, expertise, and creativity as these most appertain to the research at hand. Reed approaches cognitive psychology from a general perspective. He believes that understanding cognitive psychology is valuable to every human being in its ability to explain and understand even the most ordinary of tasks. While his text covers a wide range of topics, the aforementioned areas will be the focus in this work.

Reed cites Eleanor Rosch as a researcher that explored the hierarchy believed to be involved in the organization of memory. She argued that there is a hierarchical organization of categories when it came to memory encoding and storage. The superordinate category is the largest and would contain an item such as musical instruments. Next, the basic-level category would contain an item such as a drum. Finally, the subordinate category could contain an item such as a bass drum (186). The organization of encoded items in the memory makes sense from a practical standpoint. For example, “because basic-level categories are the most differentiated from one another, they are therefore the first categories we learn and most important to language” (186). It is important for the human to be able to categorize these items to learn and develop. The presence of a hierarchy organization has been explored in studies where people were asked to list different characteristics of objects at different levels of the hierarchy. According to Reed, subjects listed attributes of all three different organizational levels. The results were noted as follows:

The experimenters analyzed the data by identifying the attributes that people seemed to agree were associated with a specified category. The number of shared attributes increases from the superordinate to the subordinate level. The member of a superordinate category has very few attributes compared with those at the basic level. (187)

These results point toward a hierarchy organization of items encoded into the human memory. The human has far more ways to describe an animal than they might have describing a tiger. In yet another example, it is easier for a human being to distinguish a sock from a shoe, than to differentiate a tennis shoe from a basketball shoe. The mind is organized in an efficiently complex manner that allows one to store massive amounts of data while simultaneously pulling out specific items. The ability to retrieve these specific items is based on a developing sense of expertise.

Reed notes that skills in processing are developed through learning. Knowledge of previously experienced stimuli directly affects human performance. According to Reed, prior knowledge affects performance on reasoning, evaluating, and classifying. He writes, "Prior knowledge also influences how people solve more complex transformation problems, which require constructing a sequence of steps to solve the problem" (335). Through experience one can learn to become more efficient with encoding items and retrieving them. Reed points to the ability to develop "general strategies" that allow one to use previous knowledge and experience to attempt to craft a solution. Though the strategy may fail, the generalized construction of it allows the individual to reconstruct with great success, developing a sense of expertise. Reed believes expertise and creativity are intricately connected. He writes:

Expertise implies that people are good problem solvers in their areas of expertise but doesn't necessarily imply that they are creative. We think of creative problem solvers as being better than simply good problem solvers. Creativity implies that the solutions are not only correct but also novel and useful. We might even hold a special reverence for creative solutions, believing that they are produced by a mysterious process that requires the ability of a genius to produce them. (341)

Even though creativity may be thought a revered trait, Reed points towards a rendering of creativity as a cognitive process of experience or expertise. He cites a book by Weisberg called *Creativity: Beyond the Myth of Genius*, in his efforts to position creativity as a cognitive process. Weisberg argues that although creativity can sometimes appear "extraordinary", that most often it is a result of a "lifetime of hard work" (Reed 341). Reed uses the text to make a point about expertise and creativity. He is pointing towards the notion that one may build creativity through life experience and cognitive development. As the thought process develops, so too may the creative process. He writes, "Ordinary thinking goes beyond past achievements, but it does so by slowly accumulating new pieces of information. There are not sudden leaps or unconscious illuminations" (342). Therefore, expertise and creativity are related by the way in which they function in tandem. With an increase in life experience and cognitive development, creativity can render itself as a byproduct of an increase in expertise. However important the interplay between these two concepts and the consideration of the organization of memory is, it is important to have a basis of how the human memory actually functions.

In *Essentials of Human Memory*, Alan Baddeley provides a wide angle view of the concept of memory. In this textbook Baddeley outlines the composition of memory,

its functions, development, downside, and even how one might improve memory. In general, Baddeley's framework of memory and the manner in which it functions is of the most important in regard to the research at hand. Baddeley first mentions the work Atkinson and Shiffrin did on developing a model of the human memory system. In this model they assumed three distinct types of memory; sensory memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory.

Sensory memory is concerned with the absolute immediate present and is comprised of the visual and iconic memory. This aspect of memory is short lived, and many times considered an unconscious aspect of memory. Baddeley considers the experience after a bright flash, the light still persists in the eye even after the stimulus has vacated which suggests some time of memory for the occurrence (12). The visual memory is concerned with what the eye perceives and the iconic, the more durable of the two, is concerned with auditory influences. Baddeley sees sensory memory as a matter of perception and chooses not to focus attention on further investigation. Instead he focuses on the relationship between the short-term, or working memory, and long term memory.

The working memory system will be discussed more thoroughly below in the discussion of Baddeley's text *Working Memory*. However, in the text at hand Baddeley goes to great length to describe the relationship between working memory and long term memory. According to Baddeley, working memory acts as a *temporary* storage while long term memory is memory stored for long period of time. This does not mean the long term memory is always accessible, only that items coded there do not have to be maintained like they do through working memory with processes such as rehearsal. Baddeley refers to long term memory as, "information that is stored sufficiently durably

to be accessible over a period of anything more than a few seconds” (16). Long term memory is then broken down further into two distinct types. Episodic long-term memory, is concerned with specific occurrences, and semantic long-term memory is concerned with knowledge about the world. It is through these two facets of long-term memory that one stores most of the protocol for everyday life. For example, as this paper is being typed I have some type of encoding in long term memory that allows me to type quite quickly without considering where each key is located on the board. As I type this, the representation of the keyboard is pulled into my working memory for use. This is what Baddeley refers to as retrieval and will be discussed more in depth as his concept of working memory is more thoroughly explored.

Alan Baddeley explores how the human mind functions in real time in his text, *Working Memory*. This text is important to the research at hand because of how deeply it explores the inner workings of the mind and its functions in a real time sense. Part II of the text focuses on the concept and general functions of working memory and is thus the most applicable to this research. Working memory is, what Baddeley refers to as “temporary storage involved in information processing” (34). Thus, working memory is the conscious process that occurs in present tense. During the 1970s and 1980s cognitive perspectives in psychology began to shift towards levels of processing. For example, Baddeley cites Craik and Lockhart’s research presenting a hypothesis of how our short term (working memory) may function. Craik and Lockhart suggested that the “durability of a memory trace was dependent on the manner in which the stimulus was coded” (35). This depth of coding is indicative of a level of processing approach in which the level in which the trace is encoded is paralleled in the retention of said trace. Therefore,

according to Craik and Lockhart, shallow encoding will lead to rapid forgetting while deeper coding leads to the most durable coding (35). The manner in which the human being goes about learning new information is tied in completely and wholly with the individuals' ability to retrieve and use such information. The more enriched the information traces are coded, the easier they are to utilize and recall.

Baddeley's book seeks to establish two main points about working memory. First, working memory is limited in capacity. Secondly, the system is affected by the addition or subtraction of more information. Baddeley writes,

I would wish to argue that the system should be limited in capacity, and should operate across a range of tasks involving different processing codes and different input modalities...First that the capacity of the system is limited, and secondly that absorbing a substantial amount of the available processing capacity should have broadly comparable effects across a range of different tasks. (35).

Here Baddeley positions working memory as a system of inputs and outputs. The system can deteriorate as information is added to working memory. This is how Baddeley chooses to evaluate working memory, from a standpoint of capacity and deterioration. He and his colleagues do many experiments using number sequences and primary and secondary tasks to test the deterioration rate of information processed within working memory. The aim of the research at hand is centered on the function of this working memory established by Baddeley. Therefore, the most important sections of Baddeley's work center around the functioning components he has supplied in regard to his Working Memory Concept. These components focus on the retrieval processing aspect of working

memory, or how it is human beings process information in real time. Baddeley's experiments "were consistent in suggesting that both learning and retrieval are attention demanding, with retrieval apparently demanding more attention than learning" (44). This resulting information provides insight into the occurrence that learning does not inherently mean one can retrieve the knowledge. As Baddeley further uncovers, the degree to which the information is encoded is directly related to the ease of retrieval. According to Baddeley, "retrieval probably involves two separate processes, one appears to involve automatic access to the relevant memory trace given the appropriate stimulus cues" (51). This aspect of memory retrieval will be important to the study as we delve into creating seemingly automatic responses.

At this point in the text Baddeley does two things. First, he positions the human memory in a hierarchy. The basis of this categorization of memory into hierarchy is based on evidence human beings arrange their own memory traces through hierarchical categorization. Baddeley cites the research of Collins and Quillian who use experiments aimed at identifying a hierarchical effect of memory.

It was suggested that features that apply to most examples of a category, for example that birds have wings, are stored with that category rather than with each individual instance. This was assumed to lead to economy in storage space, but to have cost in retrieval time. Verifying that canary has wings for example involves two steps, verifying that canary is a bird and then verifying that birds have wings. In contrast, a statement about canaries that is peculiar to canaries, for example *Canaries are yellow*, was said to involve fewer steps and hence, to lead to faster responding. (56)

Their research pointed towards a hierarchy organization of general concepts which allows the human memory to more strategically and economically store information (56). This type of organization allows humans to organize birds, fish, and trees into a category like 'living things' without having to store individual memory traces. This is both efficient and in support of the manner in which Baddeley positions the function of working memory.

The second aspect of Baddeley's research focuses on the construction of working memory. Baddeley breaks working memory down into three components; the articulatory loop, the visuo-spatial sketchpad, and the central executive. These three systems work in congruence with one another processing information in an actively working manner. According to his model the central executive acts a "supervisory controlling system" that is "aided by two slaves systems, one which was specialized for processing language material, the *Articulatory Loop* and the other concerned with visuo-spatial memory, the *Visuo-Spatial Scratch Pad or Sketch Pad*" (71). Baddeley does mention most of his attention is paid towards the slaves systems rather than the central executive. This is because the slave systems offer a better foundational for evaluation while the central executive "could be regarded as the residual areas of ignorance about working memory which we are consistently attempting to reduce" (71). Therefore, the articulatory loop and the visuo-spatial sketchpad will be the focus of further evaluation of Baddeley's text.

The articulatory loop is one of the slave systems, presented by Baddeley, as a means of delegating and storing memory in a way in which the human make economical sense of storage needs. This facet of working memory focuses on coding information



that is speech-based. Baddeley cites research by Conrad that provides evidence of the importance of phonological coding. Conrad studied recall by providing subjects with sequences to memorize:

He observed that when a given letter was misrecalled, the error tended to be phonologically similar to the correct item, for example *B* would be more likely to be recalled as *D* than as *R*. Since the letter sequences were presented visually, the phonological confusion has presumably occurred in immediate memory, not in perceiving the letter. (76)

Here Baddeley finds reason to establish the articulatory loop as the means by which one encodes a given memory trace through sound. Baddeley writes, “this general pattern of results, indicating the importance of phonological coding in immediate memory tasks appears to be very replicable and has been demonstrated in a wide range of situations” (76). Through further studies with the articulatory loop Baddeley discovered such occurrences as the word length effect, where subjects more easily recall sequences of words that are short in length as well as articulatory suppression, where encoding is hindered by a subsequent spoken secondary task.

In contrast to the articulatory loop is the visuo-spatial sketchpad which is concerned with the visual processing and storage of information or memory traces. Again Baddeley states, “there is considerable evidence for a separation of visual and verbal processes, stemming both from studies of normal memory and from neuropsychological research” (109). He cites research by De Renzi, Milner, and Paivio in much the same way as Conrad for justification of his second slave system. Baddeley describes this slave system as a “system especially well adapted to the temporary storage

of spatial information, much as a pad of paper might be used by someone trying for example to work out a geometric puzzle” (109). Baddeley experimented extensively testing subjects’ ability to store visual memory traces even in the mist of secondary distracting tasks. Baddeley found that visual information had a powerful effect on retention (121). He further delved into this effect by analyzing memory for patterns, visual memory for letters, and memory for visually presented words. While Baddeley admits further study is needed in his text he concludes, that there appears to be “strong evidence for the short term storage of both simple visual stimuli and relatively complex patterns. . . this work implies a system that seems to be specialized for the simultaneous maintenance of spatial or patterned stimuli” (143). The system Baddeley uses to explain this phenomenon is the visuo-spatial sketchpad.

The closing chapters of Baddeley’s text focus on the recency effect. The recency effect is the “tendency for the most recently presented items to be well recalled” (145). It is in this chapter where Baddeley most succinctly defines working memory as being “concerned with the role of temporary storage in a wide range of information processing skills” (169). He has presented working memory as a working model of evaluating how one processes information in real time. Baddeley closes his text by suggesting developmental applications of working memory. He states that there is “clear and consistent tendency for memory span to increase systematically throughout childhood” (192). Here he suggests there is merit in the study of working memory in regard to age and maturity. For example, Baddeley argues that there is an increased development in “control processes and strategies” (193). Therefore, as one ages these strategies and processes may be altered, enriched, or deteriorate. Baddeley’s research into working

memory yields valuable insight into how the human mind functions in real time.

Working memory is thus a present tense experience of consciousness. The following literature will more closely define consciousness and how psychology and the world of art are overlapping more and more.

Psychology is dead. This is the sentiment Michael Gazzaniga expresses in the opening to his book, *Mind's Past*. Over the past decade 'psychology' has meant anything from neuroscience, to cognitive studies, to social psychology, and even sports psychology. According to Gazzaniga, psychology has become a general term used to categorize a wide variety of endeavors aimed at understanding the human mind. Gazzaniga's perspective is based on the brain functioning as a result of evolution. In a chapter titled "The Fictional Self", Gazzaniga argues that as humans, we are prewired to function in a certain manner. According to Gazzaniga the brain is the first to know and the mind where the self resides is the last. He writes, "The mind is the last to know things. After the brain computes an event, the illusory 'we' (that is, the mind) becomes aware of it" (1). Gazzaniga continues to establish the brain as the device that lets one in on their own conscious awareness. What is of extreme interest here is Gazzaniga's perspective of the brain as a manufacturer of automatic response. He notes that the brain, using what he calls the *interpreter*, has the ability to create automatically responding actions or activities. (27). He continues on, in a chapter titled "The Brain Knows Before You Do," identifying more relationships between the brain and mind interaction.

Gazzaniga makes an interesting observation about the interplay between mind and brain when he writes, "By the time we think we know something--it is part of our conscious experience-- the brain has already done its work" (63). In this portrait, the

brain has somewhat pushed the mind into consciousness for the sake of learning instead of the mind using the brain to find a solution. Here, he is commenting on the automatic qualities of the human brain and how they manifest as unconscious action. The brain works automatically without a conscious exertion and most of the time outside of conscious awareness (63). There does appear a certain amount of daily activity that is automated. Activities carried out through built in automation and many times never consciously considered. This idea of consciousness is thoroughly explored by Gerald M. Edelman in his book, *A Universe of Consciousness*.

In his dissertation submitted to the School of Theatre at Florida State University, David Meaders Klein presents a paralleled relationship between acting and trance. His dissertation is entitled, *Trance and Acting: A Theoretical Comparative Study of Acting and Altered States of Consciousness and a Survey of the Implications in Current Actor Training and Craft*. Klein's major argument focuses on the apparent similarity in function in regard to being in a trance state and acting the role of another. He writes, "A comparative survey revealed that trance and acting share a similar historical evolution and common phenomenological characteristics as well" (x). Klein uses the term Altered State of Consciousness, or ASC's, to facilitate this psychological relationship to characteristics of acting. The purpose of his survey is to demonstrate a relationship between ASCs and acting exist. He is interested in how these altered states manifest through the composition of a character by an actor and writes about how certain ASCs can be "systematically compared to acting techniques, process, training, and theory" (x).

The scope of Klein's dissertation is set within the limits of psychology, performance, and theory. Klein focuses on the psychological aspects of consciousness

and the unconscious. He also delves into trance, meditation, and hypnosis. All of his subject matter centers on the human psyche and the human experience. Klein's scope expands to the world of acting as he ties his trance arguments into actor training using specific acting texts. He uses texts that focus on exercises and psychological viewpoints of acting training. The acting texts he chooses have a strong tie into his use of psychology, often featuring similar notions of trance and trance-like states.

The dissertation is divided into six chapters. Chapter one is entitled *Acting and Trance* and serves as an introduction to the survey. Here Klein defines trance and presents dialogue supporting the incorporation of such techniques into actor training. He defines trance as a, "consciously induced, mentally and physically controllable state" (2). Chapter Two is titled, *Acting and Shamanism: An Anthropological, Experimental Perspective*. Here Klein outlines the history and definition of Shamanism. Klein argues Shamanism is the "ability to enter an altered state of consciousness" (61). Since Klein's argument centers on the actor's ability to enter this state he spends this chapter outlining the process and history of Shamanism and the shared aspects of the two entities. As the chapter ends Klein uses Stanislavski to ground his Shaman argument into the world of acting. He has previously used examples of "possession" in regard to the Shamanic experience. He uses Stanislavski's method to parallel the Shaman conscious state by writing, "Stanislavski's writings reveal possession examples containing the same polarity of consciousness possibilities expressed in the previous examples of modern acting" (105). The shared experience is based in the psyche and a product of altered states of consciousness.

In Chapter 5, Klein attempts to tie everything together through the analysis of six different acting texts. The chapter is titled, *Trance and Actor Training and Texts: A Current Pedagogical Perspective*. Here Klein reverses his focus of previous chapters and focuses on acting and how psychological perspectives are incorporated into the performance world. Throughout this chapter the reader notices bits of other chapters coming back to revisit. The texts he has selected feature mediation, hypnosis, trance, and even Shamanic exercises. This chapter also features practical applications of Klein's argument through exercises. In each of the six texts Klein has provided examples of exercises that may be employed by the actor to experience the trance state that "is" Klein's argument. The chapter closes providing several acting teachers that employ the use of such trance like training. These include instructors such as Mark Olsen, David Young, Gil Lazier, and Anita Jo Lenhart.

Chapter 6 is Klein's conclusion. He restates his argument that trance and acting are tightly interwoven. "The ability to consciously alter one's reality suggests a parallel between the experiences of trance and acting..." (344). Klein walks the reader back through his logic beginning with historical perspectives and ending once more with actor training experiences. Klein closes his dissertation by sending a word of encouragement to actors, performers, and theorists. He seems to challenge performers to pursue these methods of trance in order to more fully succeed as performers. Klein writes:

The recognition of this trend [trance] challenges actors, acting teachers, and acting theorists to learn more about the nature and function of these ASCs. In doing so, actor may become more competent performers, revitalizing and

evolving their craft in a manner which integrates the depth of potential these trance states embrace. (359)

Klein challenges performers to pursue other means of entering this altered state of consciousness he feels is so pervasive in the acting experience. Perhaps drawing on the success of meditating rituals and religions can help better train the psyche of the actor and I believe this dissertation has a lot to offer considering the research at hand. Klein delves deeply into the interconnections between the art of performance and the way that performance manifests in the mind. In the same way, theatre scholars like Amy Cook explore the artistic world through interplay between the psyche and artistic expression.

In an article titled, *Interplay: The Method and Potential of a Cognitive Scientific Approach to Theatre*, Amy Cook explores the ongoing relationship between cognitive psychology and the theatre. She writes, “Theatre works on the body and mind of the spectator, changing minds and touching bodies at the deepest level” (579). Cook is really interested in how the theatre impacts the psychology of the audience, how it ‘works on the body and mind’. She is convinced theatre impacts both actor and audiences in a completely psychological manner that manifests through the physical body and the internal psyche and mind. Cook observes the impact of the cognitive sciences on theatre when she writes, “In a move likely to provide the kind of jolt to the field that Turner and Freud once did, scholars are now seeking-- and finding-- answers in the cognitive sciences” (579). Cook believes discoveries can be made between the two disciplines that mutually benefit one another and reveal unknown theories and antidotes. According to Cook, the concept of Cognitive Linguistics links together the language and the body in ways that are practical to a psychologically artistic approach to performance (580). In

her essay she further pursues the common similarities between the drama of the stage and the science of the laboratory using this notion of cognitive linguistics. However, concerning the research at hand, Cook's ideas presented about mirror neurons seem most closely related to the convergence of psychology and performance.

Mirror neurons are identified as neurons that fire both when an action is carried out and when an action is observed. For instance, it was discovered that the same neurons fire when a monkey reached for a banana as when a monkey witnessed another monkey grab a banana. According to Cook, "mirror neurons suggest that neurons in the motor cortex do not just code for action, but also a representation of the action; in other words, seeing and doing are not as different as one thinks" (588). The brain possesses an interesting manifestation of the same observance of neural activity whether an action literally is carried out or simply observed. In relation to theatre Cook cites theatre scholar Bruce Wilshire when she argues "our brain's mirror neuron system links the actions and intentions of others with our own perceptions and actions" (588). Here Cook is relating the manner in which human beings psychologically mimic one another. In the say way an actor may prepare s role using these types of links to create the actions and perceptions of the character they are portraying.

Cook observes that when we consider a sentence that involves an action, if we cannot imagine the action being carried out we cannot understand the action. This spurs her to the following claims; "Imagining and Understanding are the same thing" and "we do not translate words into perceptions, we perceive in order to understand" (589). Cook believes this approach to understanding the psyche in regard to performance leads to an understanding of one of the most important aspects of acting; action. She writes, "Action



understanding, intention, emotional attunement, and communication are clearly pivotal in theatre, since without them there is no fear, pity, conflict, dramatic irony, subtext, or even story” (590). Here Cook observes a correlation between the action created through imitation and the dependence of performance on such mimicry. This ability to mimic is directly related to learning to craft action, which Cook previously establishes as imperative to theatre. Being able to imitate is required to gain a skill because it limits the need for one to have to test the consistency or reliability of such an action and instead one can coordinate what one perceives and the manner in which that perception manifests through action (590). Cook closes her article by noting the brain relies on stories and past observances to utilize imitation. From an artistic perspective she notes that these stories can be augmented. Cook closes, “The brain’s reliance on stories-- connected with the evidence that these stories can be altered-- suggests powerful implications for an art form that uses live bodies to tell stories, that renders visible new worlds, and that animates the seemingly impossible (594). Although Cook’s research seems to focus on audience perception, the parallels she makes between psychology and performance make her essay valuable to the research at hand. She has made observations about the art required to mirror or mimic another. In the same way Cook explores how perception and action are similar on a neural level in terms of mirroring, Marco Iacoboni explores how these same mirroring neurons allow the human to empathize and relate to others.

In the introduction to *Mirroring People*, Marco Iacoboni makes a profound observation. He notes, “solid empirical evidence suggests that our brains are capable of mirroring the deepest aspects of the minds of others” (7). This differs from other psychologists as Iacoboni is arguing the actual mind of others can be mirrored, not

simply an observable behavior. Thus, the chapter entitled, “Simon Says” was the most useful in describing the process of mirroring the mind of another.

Jacoboni first set up an experiment where subjects watched three different video clips of a hand grasping a tea cup. The hand grasping the tea cup remained the same in each clip, only the context was changed. In one clip there were dishes on the table, in another there were discarded food items and crumbs, and in the third clip there was no context at all. Jacoboni was testing whether or not context had an effect on how the mind cognitively functioned. He was able to compare subjects who were supplied with context as opposed to those without. Jacoboni used these results to hypothesize that we activate the same mirror neurons mentioned by Amy Cook to simulate action. Using cognitive processes, the mind associates a given circumstance with a given action. He writes, “reaching for a cup, grasping it, bringing it to the mouth-- that is quite simply the simulation in our brain of the intention of the human we are watching” (77). Through this cognitive process (activating a chain of mirror neurons), “our brain is able to simulate the intentions of others” (77). Because we are able to actually simulate this actual circumstance we can actually inhabit that simulation and seemingly become another. Jacoboni quotes Gallese and Merleau-Ponty who wrote, “it is as if the other becomes another self” and “it is as if the other’s intention inhabited my body, and mine his” (78). A process has been presented using a neuroscientific approach that has major cognitive ties. If an individual possesses the biology to mirror another, then the cognitive processes at work here are of extreme importance in human communication. In an essay pursuing just such an approach towards acting, Phillip Zarilli writes cognitive aspects of acting.

In his essay, *An Enactive Approach to Understanding Acting*, Phillip Zarilli's cognitive approach sets acting as a product of the cognitive processes the mind subjects itself to. These processes all result from perception. How the human being perceives the world directly relates to the way in which he acts on it. Zarilli writes, "the content of our perceptual experience is acquired through bodily skills that we come to possess" (644). He goes on to reference that what we actually perceive is directly based on how we act on that perception. Like Cook, Zarilli notes the correlation between cognitive processes and the performance quality of action. Zarilli comments that it is "impossible to divorce perception, action and thought" (644). The cognitive processes occurring in the mind (perception in this case) are thoroughly interwoven into the fabric of action. This action, fostered by cognition, is what spurs the actor to action. He notes, "For the actor/doer as a sentient perceiver onstage, perception should not be reduced to merely having subjective feelings" (644). Here Zarilli calls attention to the fact that cognitive processes do not merely give rise to thought or feeling, but they give rise to action.

Zarilli more succinctly describes this process of perception leading to action through what he refers to as "constructing an acting score". This acting score is what Zarilli defines as "a form of embodied, sensorimotor knowledge for the actor" (645). This score acts as the foundation from which the actor draws or perceives the character he or she is playing. The score acts as his base storage of knowledge about everything regarding the character's circumstance. Zarilli describes the following scenario,

From my perspective as the actor my kinesthetic knowledge of the score consists of the 'feel' of my body in the chair as [the character], the 'feel' of the fingers of my left hand as they touch the pages of the old book before me, or the 'feel' of the

words in the mouth when reading the opening line...These forms of perceptual knowledge are not 'present' somewhere in my brain, but rather, the 'content' of this (past) perceptual experience is virtually present to me, the actor, 'as available'. (645)

Zarilli is describing a process of cognitive behavior that renders the actor's perceptions as experience. This experience is 'present' and thus can be used to *act* on. This does not require the actor to think, but to draw on a created perception. He writes, "Optimally, in the present moment of doing, one does not 'think about' the form or draw upon some mental 'representation' of it; rather, one enters a certain relationship with the form" (644). According to Zarilli this relationship allows the actor to "inhabit a form or structure of action" and ideally become "like an animal, ready to leap and act" (647). The actor has prepared in such a way that his mind is supple and ready. This readiness allows the actor to behave like an animal driven by instinct.

In his text *Acting That Matters*, Barry Pineo breaks down preconceptions of acting. He argues every person acts in every moment of their existence. "If you're psychologically within the range of normal-and that's a very wide range-you can act" (XII). One is always fulfilling a role. These roles can manifest through relationship, society, religion, and a host of other entities. His position centers on the ability of an actor to cast off these roles and exist in a state of being where a new "role" is presented. Thus, acting is simply being and existing within the confines of a given role. Pinco writes, "Theatre is about storytelling, but acting is about allowing others to see who you are, really, with the masks you wear each day cast aside. Acting is about allowing

something to simply be” (XIII). Clearly, there is a need for a definitive text that addresses the mechanism by which a processed role exists in the present tense.

Pineo offers a process he believes will guide this discovery. His text breaks down three key components including, Analysis, Presentation, and Activation. The Analysis component features both philosophy of self and actor tools such as beats, defining action, and scoring. Pineo argues that being a good actor means knowing oneself and acting “is work on oneself” (4). This inner focus points to a deeply psychological understanding of the psyche in regard to acting proficiency. In the Presentation portion technique becomes the focus. The chapters in this section feature actor presentation qualities such as tempo, volume, intensity, movement, and focus. In the Activation chapters Pineo focuses on the process of existing in a constructed reality. He actively opposes the view that “Acting is doing.” Instead, Pineo argues, acting is “doing with purpose” (130). Discovering this “purpose” may lead to truthfully honest impulses in an actor’s pursuit of intent. The components set forth by Pineo seem to point to a means of discovering a role. However, the interest of this author is in the actual, “real-time” process of existing in a role that may be elicited by these means.

The presently active existence involved in acting must be tied in with action. Action and live-ness is what carries the play and is thus the conduit of a character’s existence. This notion of live-ness in regard to action is addressed in Harold Rosenberg’s book, *Act and The Actor*. Rosenberg opens by noting, “An act, originating in the psychic and physiological condition of some individual, is certainly a series of very complex transformations of which we have as yet no idea, no model” (3). These “transformations” leading to an “act” are the topic of concern, as is the need for a “model” for which we as

of yet have no idea (3). Throughout his text Rosenberg addresses how action is the main operative in existence. Living a successful life, therefore, could mean succeeding with a role. The book breaks down the study of action using case studies of classic texts and the actions within such narratives. In Chapter 3, for example, Rosenberg uses the story of Oedipus to explain how action can be displayed through acceptance and avoidance by the actor in terms of how he deals with despair. Rosenberg writes, “In the modern consciousness the human act, if it exists at all, is suspended at the intersection of numerous impersonal processes, some still unlabeled” (6). The process whereby this “suspension” occurs seems to be locked in the conscious. An actor must be able to exist in a consciousness that is not his own.

*The Problem of Consciousness* is a collection of essays that addresses the complicated world of the psyche. In *Neurophenomenology and the Spontaneity of Consciousness*, Robert Hanna and Evan Thompson pursue this relationship between mind and body. They begin the essay by stating that our “current conception of the mind-body relationship are inadequate and some conceptual development is urgently needed” (133). In juxtaposition to Rosenberg’s concept of action as a key component to experience, Hanna and Thompson argue that a conscious process exists before this action can occur:

Lived experience always comprises pre-verbal, pre-reflective, and affectively valenced states (processes, events), which, while not immediately available or accessible to thought, introspection, and verbal report, are intransitively ‘lived through’ subjectively, and thus have an experiential or phenomenal character. (137).

Hanna and Thompson are searching for the key to the spontaneity of such processes. Perhaps the same processes an actor develops as he rehearses, researches, and analyzes a role. This spontaneity brings into consideration human capacity, limitations, and potential in regards to the psyche and brain. In *The Accidental Mind*, by David Linden, one is presented with a detailed explanation of the brain. The Learning, Memory, and Human Individuality chapter is of particular interest in considering the controlled state of consciousness engaged by actors. Memory, for instance, is not necessarily localized. Memories can be manifested through specific stimulus or sets of stimuli and manifest as a change of behavior or action (114). These types of memory utilize the unconscious. It appears then that an actor has the biological capacity to react “honestly” out of his or her own psyche. There is an important difference to be noted here as Linden notes, “Declarative memory is a different story. Such memories are consciously recalled” (114).

An actor aims to create the psyche of another, to create memories, and to exist truthfully under a set of given circumstances. How does an actor go about building this reality? In *Respect for Acting*, Uta Hagen gives a model for working towards this reality and an honest presentation of character. Again, it appears this process is intended to lead an actor toward a state of consciousness not his own. The text is broken into three sections called The Actor, The Object Exercises, and The Play and The Role. Each section is further subcategorized. In The Actor, Hagen theorizes about acting using her “wearing the pants of the character” approach. Hagen believes in hard work and the collaboration of actors. In The Object Exercises, Hagen presents several exercises aimed to lead an actor to discoveries of truth. In one example the goal is to recreate two minutes of your life by simply coming back in your front door after you have already come home.

In *The Play and The Role*, Hagen breaks down technical elements of analysis such as obstacles, objective, relationship, and given circumstances. All of these elements are imperative in developing a truthful portrayal. Hagen writes, “The imagination of the actor can’t really begin to work until he has found them (circumstance), filled them in, rounded them out, and extended them fully” (158). Hagen is establishing that there is a craft, a job, a technique to this acting thing after all. She does observe that imagination and creativity are important but without doing the homework, the actor cannot commit completely to the role.

Perhaps the most insightful section in regard to the actor’s state of mind is found in the Identity chapter. Here, Hagen presents ideas we have read previously about truthfulness. To know oneself allows one to act more truthfully and throughout our existence one plays many roles (25). Hagen presents the formation of character by pointing out that an individual already has all the tools they need. It is the craft of acting to be able to combine these experiences to present a new person. “Your own identity and self-knowledge are the main sources for any character you play. Most human emotions have been experienced by each of us by the time we are eighteen, just as they have by all human beings throughout the ages” (29). *Respect for Acting* combines the concepts of psychology and acting into a procedure for success on stage. This success and process are aimed at creating an individual through an actor that exists on stage as his own person. There is a need for research and study not of the process, but of the state of consciousness that exists when an actor is truthfully deceptive.

Psychology and performance share a similar interest in unraveling the intricacies of the human mind. Even as far back as the 18<sup>th</sup> Century minds like Diderot were



conjecturing about how the actor creatively prepares a role. Brought up during an era when psychology was just blossoming, Stanislaski developed an entire system for the actor to both psychologically and physically invest in creating a role. Even psychologists and theorists today are beginning to understand the creativity of the human mind is worthy of study. The line between a psychological approach to acting and a performance oriented approach to psychology are getting ever closer as the two disciplines discover the same aim to investigate the inner workings of the function on the mind. Minds like Rhonda Blair and Amy Cook, who have strong background in both psychology and theatre, are bringing new approaches to acting based on cognitive discoveries. The development of these scientific studies and their effects on acting are proving to be beneficial to both performers and scientists. It is interesting to note, investigations brining to together cognition and performance are creatively engaging the human mind to discover just what it means to creatively engage.



## CHAPTER III

### THEORY

#### The Interplay of Memory and Consciousness

An area of main interest is the intricate relationship between working memory and long-term memory. The interplay of these two systems and the dual awareness residing in working memory is the focus of this model. Therefore, it is important to define these components in regard to their application to both psychology and the theory presented within this text.

Working memory, as a concept, was pioneered by Alan Baddeley. Working Memory is many times considered a manifestation or utilization of short term memory. Baddeley defines working memory as “a system for the temporary holding and manipulation of information during the performance of a range of cognitive tasks such as comprehension, learning, and reasoning” (Baddeley 34). Thus, working memory is the mover and the shaker of consciousness. Thoughts are formulated, reflected on, and manifested as action through the processes taking place in this facet of memory. In the case of the model presented in this instance, the information “held” in working memory

is that of the characters being drawn from a long term representation. Working memory could also be thought of as, “the use of short term memory as a temporary store for information needed to accomplish a particular task” (Reed). In the model to be presented, the item being stored in the immediacy of working memory is the characters thoughts, feelings, movement, words while the “task to accomplish” is intricately interwoven into the craft of creating obstacles and actor motivation.

Information, in the form of character, is stored in long term memory through rehearsal and retrieved via cues into the consciousness of working memory. The information stored in long term memory is a result of both rehearsal and the depth of coding the actor has applied to the item. The depth to which the item is encoded is dependent on the manner in which a given subject works on creating character circumstance that is meaningful to the actor. Long-term memory can be defined as “memory that has no capacity limits and lasts from minutes to an entire lifetime” (Reed). The vastness of long-term memory is also subject to notions and studies of the unconscious. It is here, in long-term memory, where ideas, schemas, and knowledge are stored in a non-reflective state. That is to say, the individual possesses the knowledge without consciousness reflecting on it. The model of interest in this study positions the developed character into the confines of this long-term memory vehicle.

As far back as the 1970s psychologists, such as M. Materska, conjectured cognitive processes occur in tandem as a psychologically evolutionary predisposition for organizing massive amounts of information. Information processed on *two levels* of a cognitive system may lead to better cognitive functioning (Hoffman 73). I believe this duality, or levels, are necessary for the actor. This allows for distinction of *character*

from *self* and is psychologically more beneficial for the human being to be able to separate the two entities. Information processing taking place on two different levels, as I am presenting, yields better cognitive functioning than a single level of functioning might yield (Hoffman 75). I define the psychological relationship between *character* and *self*, existing simultaneously in the consciousness of working memory, as *dual processes of awareness or consciousness*. That is to say, the psyche of a *self* and the psyche of a *character* are present simultaneously.

In the early 1990s Joseph Roach proposed another dual concept in the acting experience focused on the process of a performer taking performance material into the body so a spontaneous regurgitation could occur at a later time. Roach describe this duality of “actor spontaneity: as the first being the habituation akin to a dancer’s taking the steps into her body and the musician having the notes in his hands, so that the second kind of spontaneity, that of living in the work and being open to the impulses of the moment, is possible” (Blair 20). The spontaneity and duality between these reflexive (performing) and reflective (learning) forces cannot be found more in dialogue than in the world of acting where the artist works so tirelessly to make conscious decisions to be relied on to return in a non-reflective state. Applying a psycho-scientific approach to acting using suverys to analyze the acting experience could produce insight as to how the actor’s mind cognitively functions in a creative way. It can be argued that understanding how the brain works using mechanisms that yield conscious behavior one can uncover the basis of creative actions (Edelman 99). A scientific approach to acting works in tandem with the artistic mind, reinforcing the actor’s ability to create a performance in a

causal type manner where reflection becomes reflex and conscious behavior can lead to creativity.

Actors possess the phenomenal ability to exist as another without being diagnosed as clinically insane. Through a developed technique, the *self* is pushed out of immediate consciousness allowing the *character* the actor has created to reside not in place of, but in spite of self. In performance an actor is not thinking about his lines, or his blocking, he is reacting and existing as another. This other does not have to reflect on the reasoning and existence of his or her actions just as I do not reflect on the actual functioning of my fingers on the keyboard as I form this sentence. This non-reflective state is what is novel about acting. Not having to think about something you are doing that was created out of rehearsed conscious effort. It is a controlled neurosis. It is like planned out, scripted sleep walking you do not think about but are *consciously doing*.

As I write my mind is not preoccupied with how my fingers form the letters; my attention is fixed simply on the thoughts the words express. But there was a time when the formation of the letters, as each one was written, would have occupied my whole attention.

Sir Charles Sherrington

(Raichle 137)

A parallel to Sherrington's comments are found in the process of rehearsal. In this process the actor is occupied with the skeleton of what will be the final product as he fleshes out his role. He concerns himself with memorization, blocking, and creating character needs, wants, motivations, and obstacles. However, as the actor becomes more familiar with the character and begins to bring his role to a performative capacity, his

mind is not occupied with the building blocks forming his present condition he simply allows his fingers to do what they will. The actor is not *thinking* about his lines, he is not *thinking* about his blocking, he is drawing this action from what he has previously stored in his memory. The ability to store this character information, retrieve it, and use it all point towards functioning of the human mind as a duality; *character* and *self*. The function of the actors' mind in this moment is a dual process simultaneously focusing the *character* into the immediacy of consciousness without ridding the consciousness of *self*, both reside simultaneously.

The cognitive awareness of the actor, in performance, is focused in working memory. The functioning of this component of memory will be discussed in the following chapter. A dual process fundamentally benefits the actor because similar items in working memory tend to cause interference. For example, if both me and my character are six feet tall, light haired, and have two beagles, all of which accurately describe myself, the mind will have difficulty distinguishing between the overlap when it comes to defining two separate schemas. When I retrieve those items my mind will have to consider *both* "self" and "character". Interference refers to those processes or circumstances acting to limit or hinder cognitive processes by taking up space in working memory and limiting cognitive capacity. In this dual process the *self* and *character* are operating at different levels in working memory. Both occupy space, but separately.

The *character* is encoded into long-term memory through rehearsal, is cued into working memory through the narrative, and eventually manifests as action in performance. Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968) proposed a relationship between working memory and long-term memory outlining the transfer of information from one to the

other. In this model information is stored through control processes that utilize acquisition strategies such as rehearsal, coding, and imagery (Reed, 100). Notably, the concepts of rehearsal and imagery are no stranger to the acting experience as actors use mental images and rehearsal routines to store, or code, information. Coding is of extreme interest in this study as the manner in which one codes (forms the character) into long-term memory directly affects the manner in which it is retrieved (performance) into working memory. An actor encodes every time he adds a developmental element to his character or makes a discovery affecting his ability or inability to pursue the characters objectives. He is encoding the building blocks of his character that will later be called on for action.

According to Raymond Gibbs in his text *Embodiment and Cognitive Science*, “consciousness is directly tied to action, both when the actions are physically performed and when they are just mentally entertained” (265). Therefore, if an actor can bring the character to his consciousness he can carry out the character’s “action” and “mentally” exists in his circumstance. The duality of awareness in the model presents itself in the form of both a *self*, that is inseparable from consciousness, and a *character* level of awareness in working memory that both draw on separate schema or, what is referred to as a propositional network, residing in long-term memory and resulting in the *action* described by Gibbs (See Figure 3.4). Proposition is defined as a meaningful idea or unit, which is arranged in a networking structure (Reed 288). In this model the actor’s awareness during performance is focused on the *character* not the *self*. The *self*, existing in a present tense in working memory, is reduced as the *character* permeates the consciousness. While the *self* can never be removed from the conscious state of



awareness, an experienced actor realizes his ability, perhaps unknowingly, to allow his characters' awareness to occupy his working memory during performance. This allows the actor to experience and act on the characters' thoughts, feelings, emotions, and impulses, pushing the *self* not out of consciousness, but out of focus. According to our model one might expect the visual image to resemble Figure 3.2. Notice, the *self* can never be completely removed from the consciousness, only pushed out as a subsidy to allow the characters psyche to reside in active working memory.

### Function of a Dual Process

How does working memory function in a duality of awareness? I hypothesize actors build rich propositional networks of characterization for their roles through craft and technique that reside in the limitless capacity of long-term memory. This network functions by governing cognition and memory through the media of perception, storage, and recovery. A propositional network is a schematic organized hierarchy of stored information items available for retrieval through conscious thought. For example, a schema or propositional network focused on fruit may have a superordinate grouping of fruit but as the propositional network is identified or used subordinate categories like plantains, melons, and grapes begin to narrow the focus. The human perceives fruit, searches out through long term storage, and finally arrives at retrieval; in our fruit example perhaps the individual arrives at Honeydew. This process is the mirror image of what the actor goes through in the rehearsal process as he analyses (perception), rehearses (storage), and performs (recovery). Psychology has long argued humans identify with their surroundings through enriching and retrieving information located in long-term

memory. “Concepts are stored mental representations that enable people to identify objects and events in the real world” (Gibbs 80). When in a performance the actor’s propositional network for the character is activated as he draws this long-term memory representation into manifestation in working memory for use. Working memory thus serves as an activated representation of the long-term memory through the cognitive thought process it evokes (Krause 290). This cognition is activated by a simple stimulus response condition instituted by the structure of a play as a line or action stimulates another line or action. The actor’s cognitive experience is grounded in his perception of the environment as the character (Gibbs 265). That is to say, as the play begins and the world of the character is brought to immediacy through both the play world and the actors’ own preparation, the actor enters into the psyche of the character and allows those encoded circumstances to pervade awareness. The work the actor has done in rehearsal in a very conscious manner now manifests through an unconscious means as the actor allows the *character* representation to permeate his psyche. Antonio Damasio, a scholar who studies how consciousness affects emotion and the body, describes the experience of an actor waiting to come onstage in the wings:

I realized some years ago that the moving quality of this moment, whichever point of view one takes, comes from its embodiment of an instance of birth, of passage through a threshold that separates a protected but limiting shelter from the possibility and risk of a world beyond and ahead . . . stepping into the light [of the stage] is also a powerful metaphor for consciousness, for the birth of the knowing mind, for the simple and yet momentous coming of the sense of self into the world of the mental. (3)

The moment described here is the embodiment of another. The performer has given 'birth' to the psyche of another and prepares to step onto the stage operating out of the consciousness of the character he or she has created.

The question then arises, how are these propositional networks, schemas, and representations of character created? What is their structure? Propositional networks are created and enriched through actor craft and experience. Then, in performance, these networks or representations are activated, eliciting a conscious functioning of the character's psyche. Antonio Damasio describes the process of entering a state of consciousness when he writes:

Core consciousness occurs when the brain's representation devices generate an imaged, nonverbal account of how the organism's own state is affected by the organism's processing of an object, and when this process enhances the image of the causative object, thus placing it saliently in a spatial and temporal context.

(169)

The conscious awareness for the actor is based on the representation of character. According to Damasio, this representation is nonverbal and details exactly how the actor is affected by his surroundings. The conscious state of mind that arouses, spurred by a character representation, can function within the confines of a stage that has both 'spatial and temporal context' to the actor.

Experience is key. There is a reason most well known actors are middle aged adults and good young actors are often heralded as prodigies; experience is a monumental determining factor in success as an actor compared to any raw talent a novice might possess. As discussed previously, a memory code is a representation used to store an item

in long-term memory. How these items are encoded depends on the level the item is processed on. Items are encoded more deeply depending on how much meaning an individual or actor puts into them. An expert actor, for example, will encode at a deeper level because of the ability to create stronger character details based on life experience, training, or research. According to this *level of processing* model, the more an actor works to find underlying meaning, the more successfully his coding will lead to recall (Reed 131). Experts possess the skill to encode items with deeper meaning and sustainability. Encoding items into long-term memory occurs through structural, phonemic, and semantic coding. As the actor develops craft this cognitive capacity can grow because cognitive functioning is a developed and developing trait in the human being that is a result of other brain functions. Cognitive capacities do not come from computation or logistical thinking, capacity is affected most by experience of the brain's perceptions, memories, emotions, and even conscious thought (Edelman, 77). These experienced functions like memories and emotions are items the actor seeks to structure. Continued use of these functions leads to further development of these cognitive qualities causing an increase in cognitive capacity. Structural coding emphasizes physical structure, phonemic coding refers to pronunciation, and semantic coding is coding in relation to meaning. Perhaps, the actor's novel ability to create this second level of awareness is found in his ability to utilize and incorporate multiple levels of coding including physical, phonemic, and semantic coding strategies simultaneously.

The structure of memory dictates a hierarchical organization of information. Thus, I have developed a propositional network, relying on a hierarchical structure, of character development. I propose this network may be how actors store character

representation in long-term memory. Figure 3.4 illustrates how an actor may organize their character representation in long-term memory. This model features four main nodes; Mind, Body, Climate, and Given Circumstance, under which all other character attributes may fall. I hypothesize the manner in which all of these nodes are connected through links is by *technique* and *craft*. The depth of this network and the connections between nodes would directly correlate with differing measurements in expertise. I anticipate an expert would possess the craft to elaborate or add information to their propositional network creating an extantiated, or “filled in” representation of the character. In psychology, extantiated schemas are rich, detailed, and thorough models of thought representation. A novice may be hindered by lack of experience, training, or limited cognitive capacity.

### Methodology

Using a survey a numerical rating system for professionalism will be created that could then be compared to a separate rating of both Awareness and Craft. The focus of the survey is on the actors’ experience and retrospective reporting. These questions will aim at capturing what it means to exist as a character and the ability to create a character. The surveys also will allow the investigator to provide free response reporting about acting anomalies such as forgetting a line or not remembering what happened after a performance ends. The types of questions asked will hone in on the actor’s experience during rehearsal, performance, and directly after performance. These surveys will be analyzed for empirical value in setting the expert and novice at two extremes. This will support the notion that some entity is at work that the expert utilizes to a far greater

extent in developing a character, it is the claim of this author that this entity is a dual level of awareness within the actor and that there is a far more developed awareness of character in the expert.

This study seeks to support the claim that there are different levels of awareness differentiating the expert from the novice. These levels of awareness are based on a presence of self and a presence of character: a dual awareness. Thus, the first objective will be to define what will distinguish an expert from a novice. This would position the “expert” as a more experienced, seasoned, or well-trained actor against a novice who has limited experience in these faculties having not been cast or paid for the craft to which he or she trains. It is important to juxtapose extremes to secure the most accurate data possible to justify further pursuits in this regard so the analysis will only seek to compare the most expert with the least expert or novice. Experts acquire such a title through their ability to take information available to both novice and expert alike, infuse it with talent, experience, and craft, and create characters that think on their own. Phillip Zarilli believes our perceptual experience is actually acquired through skills we eventually come to learn or attain (644). Therefore, the expert has a developed skill set allowing for the creation of a uniquely refined character schema based on his skills that manifest through what Zarilli refers to as ‘perceptual experience’ and what this author will refer to as conscious awareness.

The survey establishes two groups, experts and novices, through identifying and rating traits of professionalism in regard to acting. These variables report the actor’s experience acting professionally, teaching, training, and even making money (See Appendix 1). There were eight questions in all rating the surveyor’s expertise. For each

question a point was awarded for an answer describing the surveyor as an expert and no point was assigned if the answer described a novice. Following this standard a ‘Yes’ describes a professional and thus is awarded one point. On this scale the highest score, or an actor with the most expertise, receives an eight. The lowest score, or a completely novice actor, receives a zero. This will create a type of index scoring system of professionalism among actors. This score will then be compared to the two other components of the survey to identify the relationship professionalism has between craft and awareness.

Part one of the survey asks nine distinct questions aimed at identifying how much of the character the actor has present in his psyche (See Appendix 1). More specifically the survey aims to establish whether or not the actor has more character or more self residing in the psyche. This part of the survey assumes the actor is in performance and thus actively engaging the creative mindset of portraying a character. This requires the actor to self reflect and self report on their experience. Using the dual process model as a backdrop, the expert should exhibit higher ratings in this part of the survey meaning his psyche has the cognitive functions to embrace a character and reduce the amount of *self* in conscious awareness as opposed to a hypothesized lower level of awareness in the novice. This scoring is based on a one to five scale, asking surveyors to rate their tendencies to engage in certain cognitive activities related to performance. The scoring will render an answer of more character awareness with a five and more self awareness as a one. The cognitive functions addressed in this part of the survey include items such as recall, self-reflection, and focus. For example, question two states, “After performance, I easily separate myself from my character” and asks the surveyor to rate from a one, “I

never do this” to a five, “I always to this”. Using our model as a guideline it is hypothesized the expert actor, who has a far richer representation of character, will respond with “I never do this”. In this case the response of one is awarded five because it represents more character awareness than self-awareness.

Part three of the survey asks eight questions that ask the surveyor to reflect on past performances and how successful they feel they were at creating their role. This measure is a quantitative assignment of craft. It is hypothesized that surveyors who rate high in professionalism will rate higher in craft than their counterparts in the novice category. This supports the notion there is an identifiable difference between what the novice is capable of and what the expert brings to the table in terms of creating a role. These three measures will be statistically analyzed together to identify anomalies and relationships between craft, awareness, and professionalism.



## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

#### Statistical Significance

There were eighty surveys completed in the study. Actors currently studying performance, performance faculty, and practicing professionals completed these surveys. An extreme sample group was created using the top thirty samples to serve as the expert group. These top thirty surveys had the highest rated scores on the professionalism scale of one to eight established in part two of the survey. This expert group was about 38% of the total sample size. The bottom twenty-three samples were used to serve as the novice groups while twenty-seven samples, representing an average range in the middle, were left out. The novice group represented approximately 29% of the total sample size (Table 4.1) The creation of an extreme sample group, excluding samples averaging in the middle, provides clarity and a more strident contrast of the grouping's characteristics.

Using the extreme groups analysis a T-test was run to find out if Craft and Awareness scales were statistically significant means of measurement in relationship to the extreme grouping. The T-test statistically compares the variables being measured to identify if they have the correlations necessary to be statistically significant. As Table

4.2 shows, the t-test for equality of means yielded a positive result. The scales for Awareness and Craft are statistically significant because the 2-tailed significance was below a .05. The awareness scale score on the nine initial questions yielded a 0.039 while the craft scale based on eight initial questions yielded an even more convincing 0.001. These numbers provide quantitative evidence of a statistical relationship between the scales created to define craft and awareness.

### Professionalism vs. Awareness and Craft

Now that the scales used to define craft and awareness were found to be statistically significant, the extreme sample group was then applied to the awareness and craft scales created using part one and three of the survey. Using the results (Table 4.31) a graphical representation (Figure 4.3) was created that shows the results of the Awareness Scale in comparison with the extreme grouping of experts and novices. The x-axis represents the different items being investigated in the survey. The y-axis serves as the scale measure of one to five given to the subject to select a rating. The two shades designate the expert from the novice. Using these results it can be determined the expert has a higher awareness of character than the novice. The awareness scale defines the level of character awareness as the questioning has investigated what the actor experiences as he performs. According to table 4.4, the expert mean average for awareness was 3.5 while that of the novice was 3.3.

If the novice rates lower in awareness of character perhaps the self is getting in the way. According to the dual process model the novice has more self awareness as he portrays his character, which may illuminate why the awareness score for character of the

novice rates lower than that of the expert. The expert on the other hand has created a character in which his conscious awareness is more filled in and facilitated through character than self. This would also explain why the expert ranks higher in the awareness scale as his awareness of character is far greater than the awareness of self, as it would seem to be the case for the novice. The two items statistically separating the expert from the novice to the greatest extent are not surprisingly centered on self-reflection and conscious focus. These attributes point towards a condition in the actor that is very much rooted in a psychological behavior. In terms of awareness, these results point towards more efficient cognitive functions within the expert. These cognitive functions allow the actor to stay in character and operate out of the character level of consciousness, limiting the effect of the self. Conscious focus is the other item contained within the awareness scale that expert and novices differed significantly on. According to the dual model of awareness, the expert has constructed a schema or network of information for their character in the psyche that is superior to that of the novice. Therefore, it would be expected for the expert to have to elicit less conscious effort, or effort from the self, to maintain the character he has constructed. The evidence that conscious focus seems to be rated higher among novices supports the notion they have more *self* working in the dual process than that of the expert.

Like the awareness scale, the craft scale had direct correlations to the expertise of the subject. Craft had much closer relationships to expertise than awareness and the results are seen in the group statistics of tables 4.5 and figure 4.51. In most categories of craft the separation between the novice and the expert was greater than that observed between awareness and expertise. This is perhaps because of the high amount of

emphasis placed on actor training, and a large majority of the study subjects had at least a little bit of formal education. Therefore, it could be argued the subjects who were seeking an education in the performance field understood the importance of learning the craft and thus recognized their own expertise or inexperience more readily than a performer who is not familiar with formal training.

The categories furthest apart in terms of the novice and expert were the ones centered on this notion of training. The item focusing on a high degree of craft and the item focusing on technique had the most apparent differences, with novices rating quite lower than the experts. This seems to point towards the actor's acknowledgement of the existence of some type of craft or technique to successful acting. These results identify the actors' self-diagnosis that acting involves an intrinsic skill or technique to be successful. The dual process model of awareness suggests more developed cognitive functions, perhaps developed through training, which allow the more experienced actor to create a more thoroughly fleshed out character.

As evidenced by the craft scale and the awareness scale, craft and awareness both have a direct relationship to expertise. As the expertise of an individual increases so does the level of craft the individual achieves. Additionally, as the expertise of an individual increases so too does the awareness of character in the psyche of the actor. This also means that as the individual's expertise increases the awareness of self decreases. This idea of self and character existing simultaneously *is* the defining characteristic of a dual process of awareness. Because awareness and craft appeared to be so closely related it was interesting to see if the items from both categories when combined would share any similarities. A rotated component matrix was run combining the items from both

categories into one statistical grouping of seventeen items. The results are presented in table 4.6.

The two areas of interest, awareness and craft, actually contain six distinctly separate statistical categories. These categories are represented in table 4.6 as components one through six. Out of these six components there were three that contained statistical significance in relation to one another. These three groupings were novel because they showed statistical significance with items from different groupings. One of these components had items from awareness and items from craft that had a statistical relationship. It was decided to take these three groupings and do a statistical grouping to find out if, compared to the extreme grouping of the experts vs. the novices, there was a statistical relationship. This basically created three more scales similar to the scales created for awareness and craft.

Component one showed the strongest convergence with four items defining its characteristic. All four items were contained under craft and are as follows: Believeable, Creating Tactics, Circumstance, and High Degree of craft. This meant these four questions were all questioning the same statistic. It was decided this statistical measure would be defined as 'Creativity' and the scale would be derived from the four items statistically significant within component one. Creativity was chosen as the measure because it seemed to be the determining factor connecting all four items. Creating and implementing character were the focus of the items so creativity encompassed all four adequately. Component three saw two items that were statistically relevant to one another. Unlike component one, both of these items were contained within the awareness category. The two items were Recollection and Forgetting. These two items made since

together because they both were identifiable to the concept of memory. Both lines of questioning, contained under the awareness category, asked the subject to identify with cognitive processes such as going up on a line and being able to recall past performance. Therefore, this new scale was termed, as the 'memory' scale.

The second component was the most interesting because it yielded three items statistically significant to one another but from different categories. Refocus and Pursuit both fell under the awareness category, while Technique, which was clearly a related item, fell under the craft group. Because of the items' similarities in describing technical prowess, this scale was termed 'technique'. The three components yielding statistical potential were then compared through a statistical grouping with the extreme group of experts and novices. The results are displayed in table 4.7.

The results of the group statistic were quite interesting. The newly developed Memory and Technique scales turned out to be very similar in rating when looking at the expert compared to the novice. Perhaps memory and technique are more common to both or are developed at a steadier pace as the actor gains experience. Perhaps also a larger or more diverse sample size might yield a correlation between these two scales and expertise. What was interesting about the results was the new "Creativity" scale. According to table 4.7 and figure 4.71, the level of creativity is directly related to expertise. The expert rated significantly higher in creativity than the novice, and the independent samples tests proved the relationship to be statistically significant at 0.004. This means the expert has some cognitive process going on within the psyche that is uniquely creative and more developed than that of the novice. Something is happening in the mind allowing the expert to have a more creative prowess.

## Implications for Further Research

There appears to be at least some statistical evidence supporting the relationship between expertise and awareness. It has also been discovered there exists a relationship between expertise and creativity. Further research pursuing these factors of awareness and creativity could delve deeper into just how the actor creates and organizes his or her character in the mind. The following is a proposal for possible experimentation testing the depth of character development of the actor across time. Developing a character from a cognitive psychological perspective entails creating a rich schema from which to pull character. A dual process approach allows the actor to create this character while still maintaining the psyche of the self. However, it would be expected the actor with more expertise could develop a far richer schema because the cognitive processes or awareness of character, as we have shown above, is greater in the expert than in the novice.

I strongly believe the organizational structure of concept maps mirrors how our own minds, and the mind of the actor, store information. The hierarchy created from a concept map is in close relationship to the manner in which memory is stored long term. Raymond Gibbs writes, in his text *Embodiment and Cognitive Science*, theories in psychology, like the dual process theory proposed here, seek to explain a process for categorizing such concepts in a conceptual memory structure (Gibbs 81). Secondly, concept mapping may have an intrinsic value for actors. Constructing their character development in the same manner the mind encodes could yield valuable benefits in the

creative process and possibly lead to a richer character whose given circumstances are so deep and engrained in the actors' psyche the actor has almost made his job easier. Lastly, concept mapping will allow empirical data to be gathered. That is to say, working on actually creating the concept map actually aids the actor in creating a more in depth character. As my approaching analysis will demonstrate, it will be possible to assign a numerical value to character development. It will be empirically possible to define the depth of the actor's development of a character that exists outside of the conscious awareness of himself, implying a dual process is at stake.

The first part of the experiment consists of the actor's ability to create a concept map. To aid in this aspect, the actor will construct the map using guidelines set out through the distribution of an instruction sheet. This document will detail how the actor is to go about mapping their character. For example, when creating a concept map one does not want to begin by formatting and building the actual structure of the map. Instead, as detailed in the handout, the actor begins by brainstorming and having a free flowing, unhindered, conscious evaluation of their character. I borrow some methodology from Dr. Hershey and his extensive understanding and use of concept mapping. In his psychology courses, Dr. Hershey gives out instructions to aid the subject in creating a map. Some of these instructions include having the subject write lists of words related to the concept, selecting general concepts, and forming the map systematically from these proceeding exercises. During this time an actor may jot down things about his character including physicality, emotional states, climate, psychological restraints, time period, relationships etc. I expect to find all of the actor's analysis to filter into the categories outlined in Figure 3. The final step put to the actors is to



construct their maps using *links* and *nodes* detailing how they are connected when possible. The propositions created from this mapping process will serve as the focal point for an empirical evaluation and analysis.

There are two main approaches to analyzing the depth of character development statistically. This analysis will highlight the differences between experts and novices in terms of their ability to enrich long-term memory, and develop strong cues for retrieval in later performance. The first approach seeks to create an index for what I will call *Depth of Development*. Utilizing a three level point system for analyzing each proposition of a subject's mapping exercise will render this *Depth of Development Index*. It is important to note, a proposition is two nodes and the link that connects them. Therefore, I anticipate one node may have several links to it and each one of the corresponding links connects to a different proposition. That is to say, one singular node may result in multiple propositions. The point system will be structured as follows: The subject/actor will be assigned one point if the proposition created is the sole result of reading the script. This point identifies the proposition as simple, relatively uncreative, and lacking any skill or technique other than the ability to read or be read to. The subject/actor will be assigned two points if the proposition has scriptural integrity but has been detailed or enhanced outside of known script components. This point seeks to hone in on the actor's ability to analyze the script, infer, and make character choices committed to the narrative. The subject/actor will receive three points for a proposition not found in the script that still holds up the integrity of the narrative or seems to support other propositions being made. This point focuses on the creative aspect of craft and technique I expect will not be as prevalent in novices. Since many of these point assignments may lend themselves to be

seen as subjective, an inter-rater will be used to validate this type of point assignment coding schematic. The inter-rater will be another individual who has the merit, qualification, knowledge, and training to make appropriate designations for a given exercise. Finally, a statistical index will be created to assign a numerical value to the actor's development of the character. Based on the point assignments, it is my expectation experts will have a far higher index value than novices. This route of analysis will provide a statistical value to actor's development of character and depth of detail. Through this analysis I hope to be able to illuminate the difference between the expert and the novice and the ability of the expert to enrich their long-term memory character representation to a higher degree than the novice.

The second route of empirical study for the concept mapping exercise is focused on the analysis of multiple maps over time. Since the subject matter is actors, in this case the time frame would be the rehearsal process. The concept mapping exercise would be given to the actors during three specific time periods in their character development. The first exercise would be given after the very first week of rehearsal. This is a valuable time to collect data because several milestones have already occurred for the actor. The actor has experienced the first read through, perhaps extensive table work, and may just be starting to block the show. At this point, the actor should have knowledge of his character; to what degree of depth is the subject of our exercise. The second mapping exercise will be administered during technical rehearsals. This is a good time to collect data, not only because the actors may be sitting around for hours but also because, developmentally, the character has finally reached the end of working rehearsals. This means, generally, most of the major decisions for the production have been made. At this

time in the rehearsal process the actor may just be “polishing” up scenes. At this point the expectation would be for a more deeply developed sense of character manifesting in a more deeply developed map. Again, this reinforces why mapping is a good form of analysis because of its intrinsic value to mirror the existence of the character in the actor’s long-term memory. It is of interest to note this period of the process as perhaps the purest form of interaction between the two levels of awareness occurring as the actor is forced to think and operate out of both the characters’ psyche and his own. The final exercise will be given after the show closes. This is an optimal time to get a final character mapping because of what every actor goes through during dress rehearsal and the run of a show; *they discover new things*. Add costumes, lights, scenery, makeup, curtain calls, intermissions, notes from directors, and exhaustion and actors *discover* new things about themselves and their characters. This is why a final collection of mappings for the actors should be done after closing, because their representation of character may be enriched more at this point than at any other point in the process and decay has not yet come in to consideration.

The three mappings will then be graphed individually based on a number of different quantitative characteristics. Those characteristics will include number of propositions as well as categorizations of propositions falling under the four main categories listed in Figure 3. Statistically graphing the change in mapping from Exercise 1 to Exercise 2 should yield an index of depth of characterization in the form of slope. This slope can be calculated by positioning time, in the form of the three testing times in the rehearsal period, on the x-axis. Different y values could be used to create different graphs. A potential y sample size might include the number of propositions, number of

three-point, two-point, and one-point propositions, and the number of propositions falling under certain categories of development such as given circumstance and climate. I expect to observe the slopes of the experts to drastically differ from that of the novice in several instances. Firstly, I expect for the beginning mapping exercise to yield the expertise at a higher point of character development. I also anticipate from the first exercise to the second for the expert's depth of character to exceed that of the novice to the extent that the slope may be slightly higher for the expert but conclude at more elevated peak. Again, from the second mapping exercise to the third I expect to see a slight increase in slope in comparison between the expert and the novice. It would not surprise me to see similar slopes positioning the expert at a higher point of initiation along the y-axis than of the novice. The results of this graphical representation of character development will provide more evidence of the difference existing between the psyche of the expert actor and that of the novice. The difference at stake here appears to be in the ability of the actor to create a schema or propositional network, which I term *character representation*, in long-term memory for future retrieval and utilization in the active consciousness of the actor's awareness which we refer to as working memory.

### Conclusion

Psychology and performance are tied together more tightly than any other time in history. Both psychologists and performing artists are becoming more and more intrigued with what the other discipline can illuminate about their own. Theatre journals around the country are calling for papers containing cognitive approaches to performances and devoting entire issues to the pursuit of a psychological understanding of creating. Likewise, psychologists, counselors, and practicing psychiatrists are

discovering the power of role-playing and treatments such as Drama Therapy. It is impossible to get inside the human brain and evaluate the functions and processes on hand. However, through understanding the creative mind it is possible to begin identifying the creativity that makes the human being a novel creature.

The aim of this thesis was to attempt to identify a working mode of the creative mind of the performer. Using a cognitive psychological perspective a survey was created to identify the role of awareness and craft on a sample of actors. A scale was created identifying the actors as experts or novices. This scale was then statistically compared to a measure of awareness and a measure of craft. It was revealed that expertise relates directly to both craft and awareness. Creativity was also identified as being directly related to the expertise. These results seem to point towards a special quality within the expert. It is the contention of this author that the expert possesses a more developed set of cognitive processes that allow him or her to utilize a dual awareness to create and live out a created character. These processes are developed out of experience, rehearsal, and research and increase the potential level of creativity available to the actor. Perhaps in the future exercises will be developed to address certain cognitive processes of creation allowing the actor to create a role based on a personal scientific knowledge of how his or her psyche functions artistically.

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APPENDICES, FIGURES, & TABLES

Appendix 1

**SURVEY**

PART I

*Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability, being as accurate as possible.*

*Rate your tendency to do the following: 1- I never do this*

*5- I always do this*

Refocus to your character when you become aware of yourself in performance.	1	2	3	4	5
After performance, I easily separate myself from my character.	1	2	3	4	5
Pursue strong clear objectives as your character.	1	2	3	4	5
Change tactics, improvise, & recover while in performance	1	2	3	4	5
Easily recall lines during a performance.	1	2	3	4	5
Analyzing or self-reflecting while performing.	1	2	3	4	5
Forgetting a line while in performance.	1	2	3	4	5
Have a difficult time recalling lines/blocking during performance	1	2	3	4	5
I don't have to consciously focus on my characters words/movements.	1	2	3	4	5

PART II

Have you ever been paid to act?	Yes	No
Have you ever acted in a professional company or tour?	Yes	No
Have you ever acted under a professional contract?	Yes	No
Have you ever had professional acting training outside of an educational setting?	Yes	No
Have you received a degree in acting?	Yes	No
Have you ever been a member of an acting union?	Yes	No
Are you qualified to or have you ever taught acting?	Yes	No
Do you consider yourself a professional actor?	Yes	No

How many years have you been performing? \_\_\_\_\_

How many roles have you played professionally? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_



What is your education? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your race? \_\_\_\_\_

### PART III

*As actors one observes many times there are successes and failures in every performance. Based on your past experience rate yourself as closely as possible in regard to the following criteria.*

*How successful were you at the following: 1-Not at all successful  
5-Completely successful*

Creating a believable character.	1	2	3	4	5
Creating and implement tactics for you character.	1	2	3	4	5
Remembering exactly what you did immediately after exiting the performance space.	1	2	3	4	5
Incorporating self-characteristics into your character.	1	2	3	4	5
Easily recalling your movement during performance.	1	2	3	4	5
Creating detailed imaginary circumstances about your character.	1	2	3	4	5
Bringing a high degree of craft to your performance.	1	2	3	4	5
Having a system, routine, or technique for learning material (lines, block, etc)	1	2	3	4	5

### PART IV

*Please respond to the following questions as best as you can by whatever means you choose.*

What do you think about while you are performing? What is going through your head?

How can you best describe how you think and feel after a performance you feel you succeeded at?

Describe, to the best of your ability, what is going on in your head when you drop a line.

Describe, to the best of your ability, what you do immediately before you go on stage.

Describe, to the best of your ability, what “gets you into character”.

## Appendix 2

### CASE STUDY

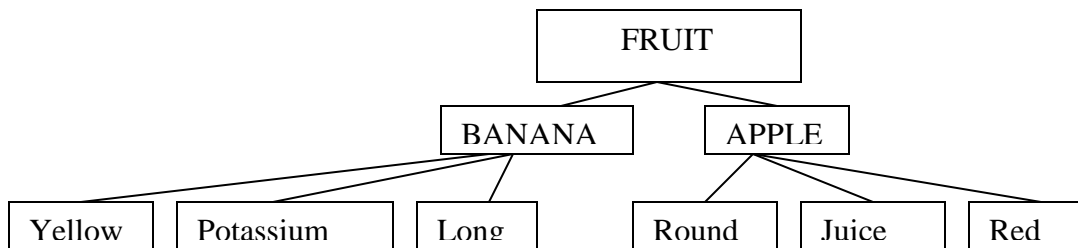
**The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze how it is an actor creates his character. More specifically, how the character exhibits manifests through the mind of the actor.**

**Throughout the rehearsal and performance process you will complete the following exercise a total of three times. The exercises are structured in a way to benefit you as an actor while simultaneously participating in the research.**

**For this case study you will be asked to create visual character representations. These representations are based on your character work and most closing resemble a web diagram or concept map. The exercise can be done at home but no collaboration is allowed with fellow actors participating in the study and or any other person.**

### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

**Obtain a blank piece of paper. On this sheet of paper you will create a diagram that links together the characteristics you believe to exist as a part of your character. These can include any type of character quality, both qualities originating in the text and attributes you create. However, the diagram should be exhaustive and include every possible facet of your character and their given circumstance. Likewise, the diagram must be organized into a hierarchy with subcomponents classified under more general categories. For example, if I was building a diagram about fruit it might look like this in a basic sense.**



- 1. Take your time, be complete**
- 2. Your Diagram should be as detailed as you can make it**
- 3. Complete the exercise in a single sitting**
- 4. Start by simply listing ideas, brainstorming, and free writing, takes as much time as you need.**

5. When you feel you are ready, begin to construct your diagram
6. When you list an item as subordinate to another be sure to comment on the line connecting the items with a specific relationship. Ask yourself, "What connects these two items?" Then, write down that connection on the line. For example, in the example presented above, on the line connecting "Banana" to "Yellow" you may write "is" or on the line connecting "Banana" to "Potassium" you might write "contains". Remember, this is a basic example, do not be hindered by your own creativity or any aspect of your character. Write/Connect Everything.
7. Feel free to erase, augment, and alter if you see fit as long as you stay within the 3<sup>rd</sup> instruction.
8. Start with your character's name as the main heading and begin linking
9. When done, look over your map and make sure all of your links are complete and make sense to you and your character.

Figure 3.1

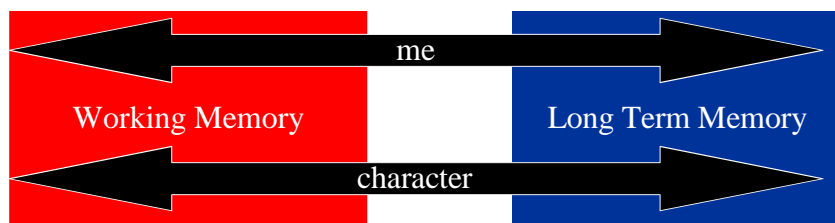


Figure 3.1: Dual Process Model of Awareness in Acting

3.2

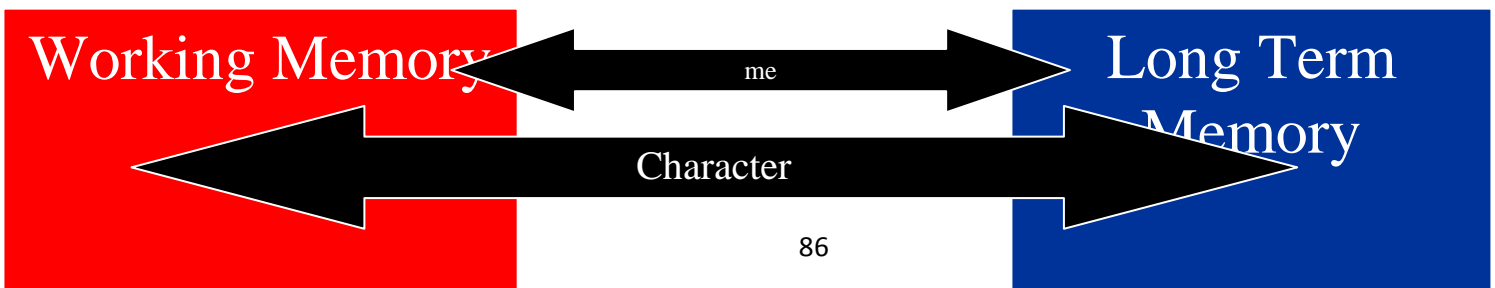


Figure 3.2: Dual Process Model Expert in Performance

3.3

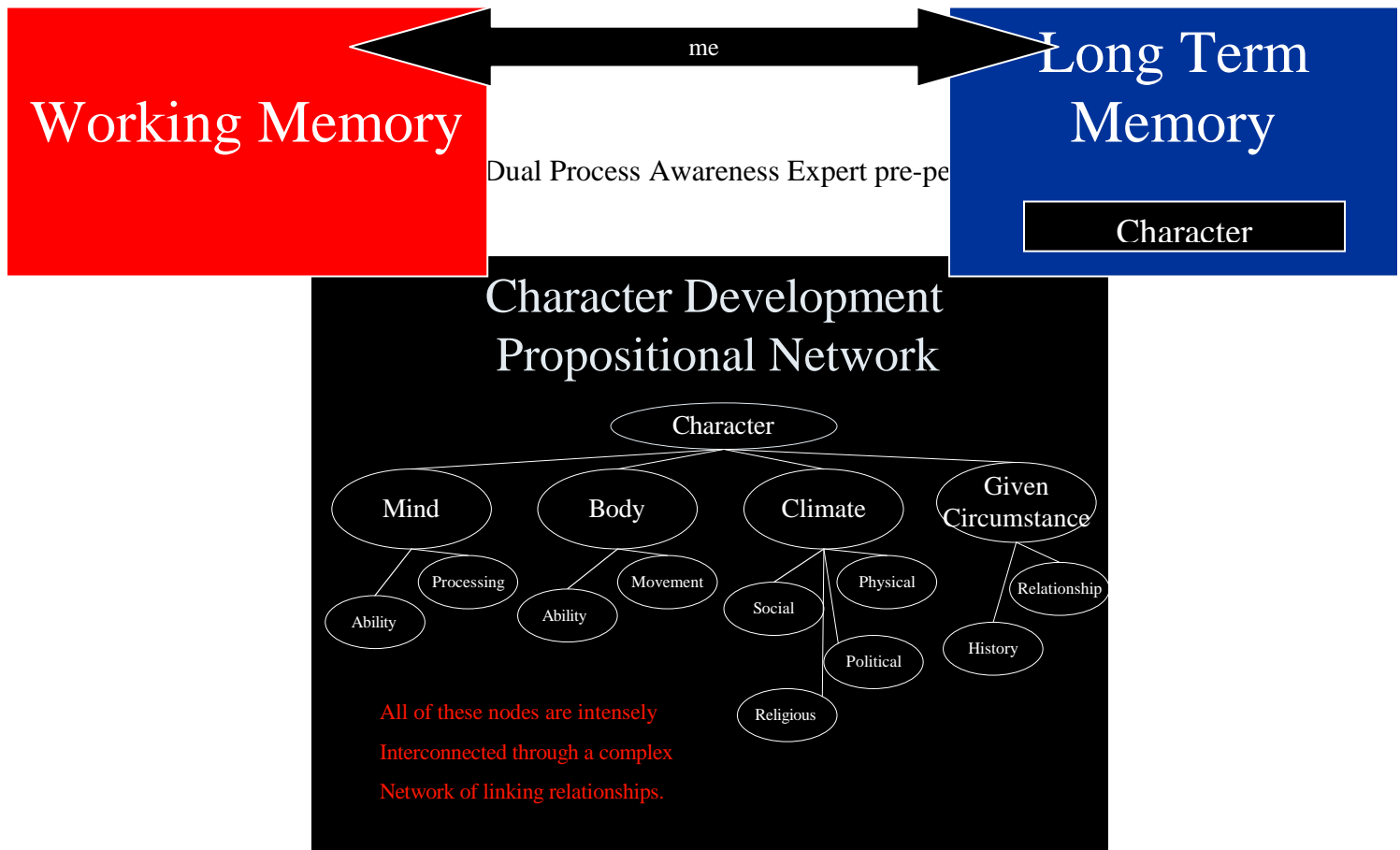


Figure 3.1: A Long Term Memory Representation Model of Character Representation

Table  
4.1

### Statistics

#### ExtremeGrp

N	Valid	53
	Missing	27
Mean		.4340
Median		.0000
Minimum		.00
Maximum		1.00

#### ExtremeGrp

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	30	37.5	56.6	56.6
	1.00	23	28.8	43.4	100.0
	Total	53	66.3	100.0	
Missing	System	27	33.8		
Total		80	100.0		

4.2

#### Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Awareness scale score based on 9 initial items	Equal variances assumed	-2.115	51	.039
	Equal variances not assumed	-2.107	46.772	.041
Craft scale based on 8 craft items	Equal variances assumed	-3.496	51	.001
	Equal variances not assumed	-3.574	50.433	.001

Table  
4.3

T-test Awareness vs. Extreme Groups

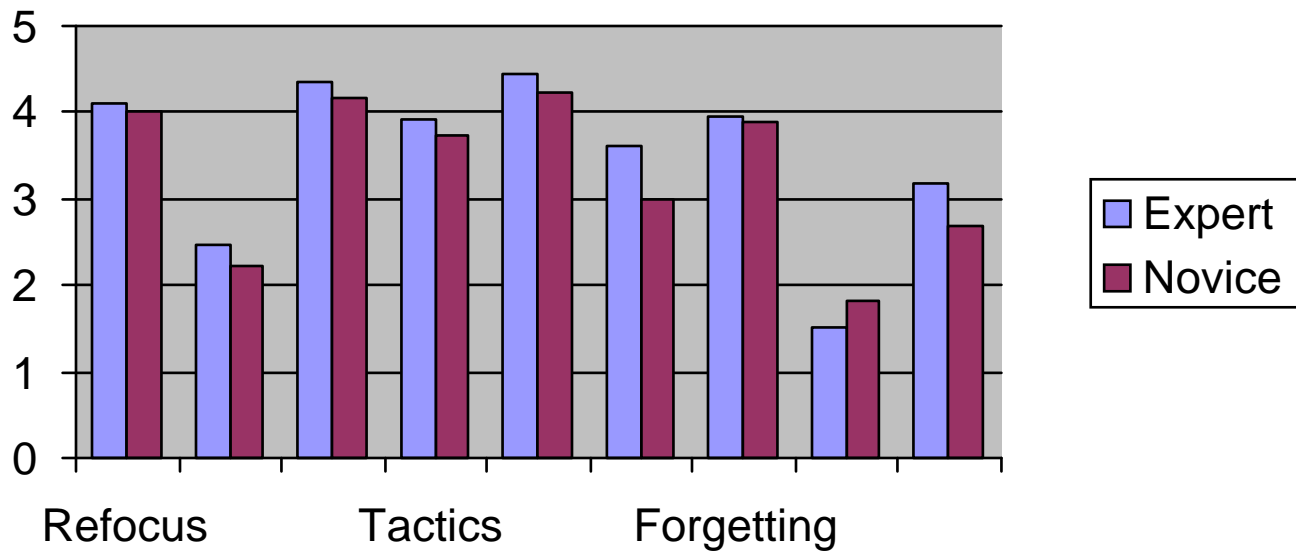


Table  
4.31

**Group Statistics**

	ExtremeGrp	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Refocus	.00	30	4.0000	.83045	.15162
	1.00	23	4.0870	.84816	.17685
SeperationReverse	.00	30	2.2333	.89763	.16388
	1.00	23	2.4783	1.20112	.25045
Pursuit	.00	30	4.1667	.69893	.12761
	1.00	23	4.3478	.71406	.14889
Tactics	.00	30	3.7333	.78492	.14331
	1.00	23	3.9130	.84816	.17685
Recollection	.00	30	4.2333	1.00630	.18372
	1.00	23	4.4348	.78775	.16426
SelfRefReverse	.00	30	3.0000	.98261	.17940
	1.00	23	3.6087	1.07615	.22439
ForgettingReverse	.00	30	3.9000	.75886	.13855
	1.00	23	3.9565	.97600	.20351
Diffrec	.00	30	1.8333	.83391	.15225
	1.00	23	1.5217	.73048	.15232
ConsciousfocReverse	.00	30	2.6667	.95893	.17508
	1.00	23	3.1739	1.19286	.24873

4.4

**Group Statistics**

	ExtremeGrp	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Awareness scale score based on 9 initial items	.00	30	3.3074	.32842	.05996
	1.00	23	3.5024	.33813	.07050
Craft scale based on 8 craft items	.00	30	3.4542	.37354	.06820
	1.00	23	3.7935	.31670	.06604

Figure  
4.5

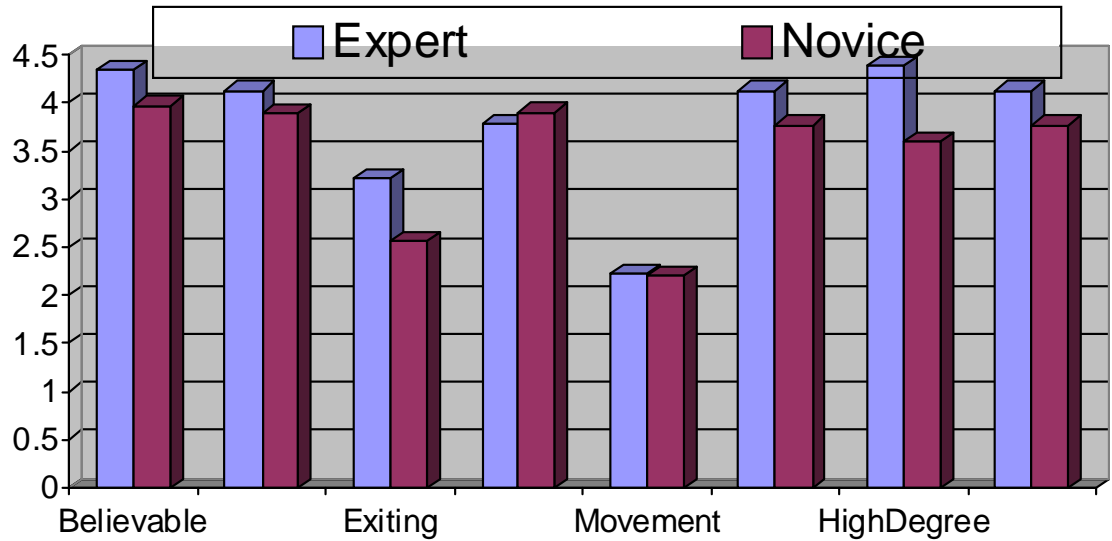


Table 4.51

Group Statistics

	ExtremeGrp	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Believable	.00	30	3.9667	.49013	.08949
	1.00	23	4.3478	.57277	.11943
CreateTactic	.00	30	3.8667	.62881	.11480
	1.00	23	4.1304	.62554	.13043
ExitingReverse	.00	30	2.5667	1.04000	.18988
	1.00	23	3.2174	1.04257	.21739
Incorporating	.00	30	3.9000	.75886	.13855
	1.00	23	3.7826	.90235	.18815
MovementReverse	.00	30	2.2000	.76112	.13896
	1.00	23	2.2174	1.08530	.22630
Circumstance	.00	30	3.7667	.89763	.16388
	1.00	23	4.1304	1.01374	.21138
HiDegCrft	.00	30	3.6000	.77013	.14061
	1.00	23	4.3913	.72232	.15061
Technique	.00	30	3.7667	.93526	.17075
	1.00	23	4.1304	.69442	.14480



Table

4.6

Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Refocus	.038	.679	.194	.192	.101	.104
SeperationReverse	-.253	.281	.235	-.025	-.517	.014
Pursuit	.301	.601	.088	.189	.328	-.179
Tactics	.145	.104	.107	.715	.268	.058
Recollection	.168	-.047	.704	.056	.363	-.170
SelfRefReverse	.201	-.331	.355	.529	-.450	-.046
ForgettingReverse	.078	.117	.796	-.003	-.086	.070
Diffrec	-.301	-.281	-.497	.027	.080	-.003
ConsciousfocReverse	.041	-.205	.162	-.678	.071	.112
Believable	.764	-.087	.226	.070	-.106	.022
CreateTactic	.662	.105	.157	.386	.142	-.009
ExitingReverse	.031	-.106	.199	-.145	.001	.795
Incorporating	-.105	.165	.183	.097	.677	-.130
MovementReverse	-.105	-.022	-.286	.091	-.175	.748
Circumstance	.644	.285	.068	.030	.271	-.210
HiDegCrft	.668	.461	.040	-.242	-.173	.051
Technique	.240	.686	-.008	.043	-.136	-.231

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.

4.7

Group Statistics

	ExtremeGrp	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Creativity based on mean of Believable, CreateTactic, Circum, HiDeCra	.00	30	3.8000	.52686	.09619
	1.00	23	4.2500	.53831	.11224
Based on mean of Refocus, Pursuit, Technique	.00	30	3.9778	.63084	.11517
	1.00	23	4.1884	.52055	.10854
Based on mean of recollection and forgetting	.00	30	4.0667	.73968	.13505
	1.00	23	4.1957	.79400	.16556

Table

4.71

**Independent Samples Test**

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Creativity based on mean of Believable, CreateTactic, Circum, HiDeCra	Equal variances assumed	-3.053	51	.004
	Equal variances not assumed	-3.044	46.964	.004
Based on mean of Refocus, Pursuit, Technique	Equal variances assumed	-1.297	51	.200
	Equal variances not assumed	-1.331	50.686	.189
Based on mean of recollection and forgetting	Equal variances assumed	-.609	51	.545
	Equal variances not assumed	-.604	45.675	.549

## VITA

John Bryson Baker

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: A MODEL OF THE ACTING EXPERIENCE: DUAL PROCESSES OF  
CONCIOUSNESS

Major Field: Theatre Performance

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in Theatre at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2011.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2009.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Liberal Studies at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2009.

Experience:

Graduate Teaching Assitant at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK  
2009-2001

-Theatre History, Acting, Stage Combat

Over 20 roles on Stage and Film

-Jody in *Lonely Planet* \*Irene Ryan Nomination

-Ferguson in *Left of Center* (Feature Film)

Training

-Studio work with Kevin Doolen and Matthew Tomlanovich

-2 playwrihting workshops by professionals

-4 acting workshops by professionals

Name: John Bryson Baker

Date of Degree: May, 2011

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: A MODEL OF THE ACTING EXPERIENCE: DUAL PROCESSES OF  
CONCIOUSNESS

Pages in Study: 100

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Arts

Major Field: Theatre Performance

Scope and Method of Study:

This study is focused on the fields of cognitive psychology and acting. More specifically, the study focuses on the psychology of acting and how the performer's mind functions and may exist as performance occurs. The study presents a model of the acting experience that relies on a dual process of awareness. Surveys were administered to subjects to quantitatively study the experience of actors in their performance and craft. From the surveys scales were created to statistically identify relationships between awareness, craft, and creativity in regard to expertise in acting.

Findings and Conclusions:

The findings of this study revealed a relationship that exists between expertise and the awareness, craft, and creativity of the actor. This relationship supported the working model of dual awareness presented. Further investigations in this area may reveal differing depths of character development juxtaposing the novice against the expert.