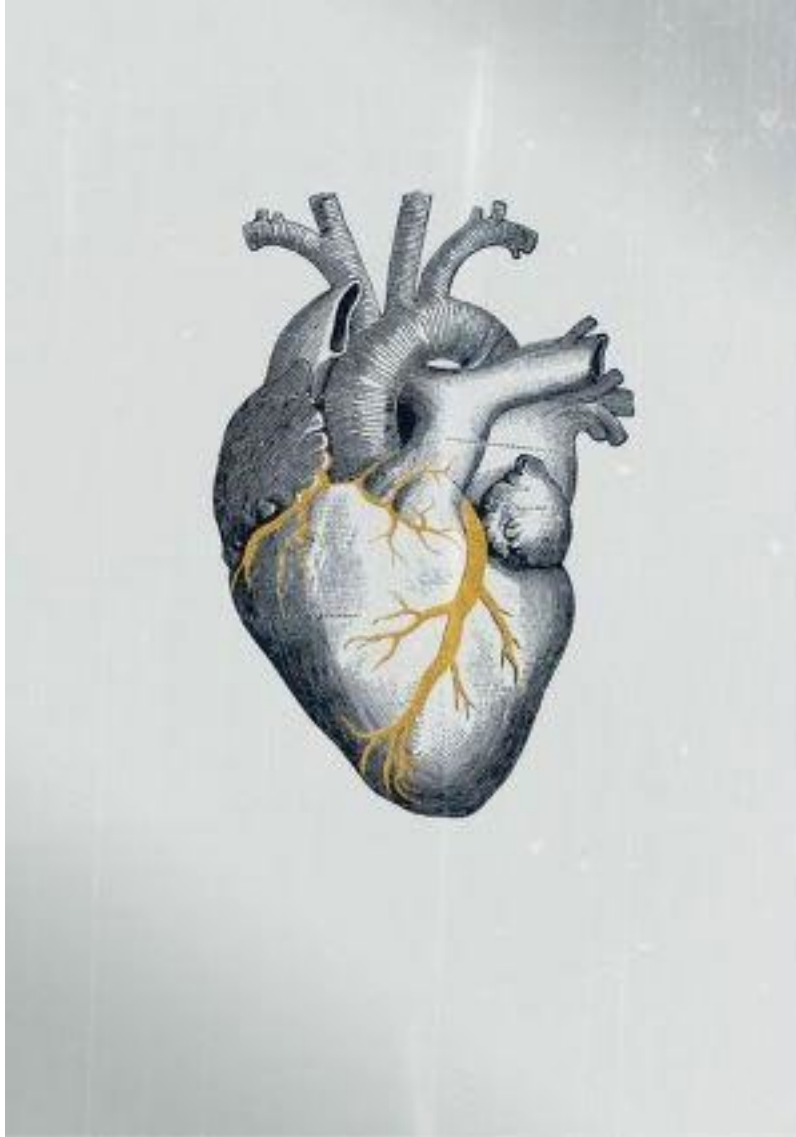


Toward a Process-Oriented Theater Practice

holding theater practitioners and the creative process



**A final project submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the diploma in Process Work**

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September 2023

To Phillip Zarrilli (1947-2020)

Who I am sure has built a 'studio' on the other side too

Until we meet again

To those who have the calling to make theater

To all who struggle to belong

Acknowledgments

To my biological parents, N. and L., thank you for *dreaming* of me, even if it was only for just a moment, it was enough and cannot be destroyed.

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¹ As described by Clarissa Pinkola Estés in her book *Women Who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype* (1996)

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• Terminology

The nature of this project is such that I use a lot of process-oriented terms, though not so many from theater. All the terms are written in italics, and their definitions are available, in alphabetical order, in the glossary that is attached in Appendix A. Additionally, many of the terms are discussed in detail in chapter three, where I also give basic information for both fields and explanations of all theater terms used.

• Gender and language

I use feminine pronouns throughout the text when I refer to the *actress*, in order to raise awareness about the marginalization of women (along with all femininities) in the profession, both in Theater Practice and in the theoretical/academic field. Speaking about the situation in my country, but being fully aware that this is not a local issue, more than 90% of the high-ranking positions are occupied by men, and only in 2022 a collective movement was created by women theater practitioners² to address the issue. Additionally, from a linguistic perspective, in the Greek language, there is only one word for actor/actress, which is masculine (*ηθοποιός* ~ *ithopios*). In the English language, in which this text is written, though there are two words, actor and actress, the second is hardly used (although many people work toward changing that), and it is negatively charged regarding efficacy and professionalism.

It is August. In Athens. Greece. 35 degrees and higher some days. It is the month of the summer vacation. The city is empty and quiet. Silence. I am writing my final project. The last two years have been a global challenge due to the pandemic of covid (among all other challenges). During these two years, both Process Work and Theater were severely impacted. Togetherness in its physical form was wounded. Thankfully both fields can touch without touching.

² Under the name WOM.A (women in arts)

Prologue

Imagine a room

A circle room, earthy floor, no ceiling

The circle wall is made from myriads of tiny little golden stones, an ancient technique; extremely complex yet simple, both rustic and royal.

It smells like earth after rain

Night, starry night

The sky enters the room from above

Listen

A spring brings water from the mountains

Every here and there, flowers come out of the wall

Part of the ancient technique is to plant flowers in the roots of the wall and knit them inside the stones. It needs to be done with tenderness so the flowers have space to grow. And patience. Wait for them to grow and as they do, build little by little the wall. A flower should reach the point of potential falling, and then the wall grows to support it. If done earlier the flower is imprisoned. If done later the flower falls. When done with artistry stones and flowers hold each other in a balance that seems fragile yet magically steady.

It might take decades to build a room

The flowers are a kind of wild Hibiscus. Deep red and dark pink.

A Persian handmade carpet

Glasses and plates, made from the same golden stones of the wall. Their shape is not exact.

Here we eat with our hands

Figs, almonds, goat cheese, fresh warm bread

Red wine and wild mountain tea

Stay a moment

Breath in

Breath out

Thank you for imagining with me

Here I have invited two energies without whom I wouldn't be

And you

Guests in the golden room of my heart

Welcome

Introduction

Growing, living, and *dreaming* in the cracks

Never had I ever imagined that one day I would see as gifts the challenges that stole the carelessness of my childhood. Growing up in a ‘broken’ environment, I would either become ‘broken’ myself or I would connect the pieces, even those that seemed impossible or were forbidden to put together. There were times I would try to connect the pieces to find and maintain an old image someone told me was there; other times, to show others an image they wanted to see; and there were insightful times when fresh new images would appear. The cracks would always be visible reminders of the breaks and the ugliness. Gradually, I would discover their beauty. Making connections means living inside the cracks, sleeping on their curves, climbing their tops, and collecting the dust. The time spent inside the cracks draws them gold. Kintsugi³ in flesh. They become delicate and graceful. They transform into joints.

Making connections is something I did not choose but became my path. Vincent Van Gogh in a letter writes ‘I have a terrible clarity of mind at times, when nature is so lovely these days, and then I’m no longer aware of myself and the painting comes to me as if in a dream’ (To Theo Van Gogh 25. Sep. 1888). Connections come to me as if in a dream.

This project is about connecting Process Work and Theatre Practice. This connection has been healing and transformative for me. Hopefully, it will make sense to others too, and it will open new dimensions for both Process Work and theater practitioners in the future.

My decision to study Process Work was exactly for this reason; to be able to make this connection in depth, not only for me but for sharing it with the world. In the beginning, I was not aware that being a process worker would be such an important thing for me, and would

³ Ancient Japanese technique of repairing broken pottery with lacquer mixed with powdered gold. The philosophy behind this technique is that damage should not be hidden but illuminated. In that way, the object would reveal its eternal beauty by holding the memory of each crack. It is considered that pottery became more beautiful.

become one more thread of my professional identity nor that I was dedicating myself to a lifelong project.

Theater practitioner or process worker?

The main struggle with this project was to decide its form, which meant deciding from which point of view I was going to work. From the theater practitioner's or from the process worker's? From the artist's or from the therapist's? That struggle was a manifestation of my deepest *edge* ('...the limit of the known identity as well as a point of contact with unknown experiences or identities,' Diamond, 2018, p.20) since I was a child. How to embrace the many parts of myself, and end this brutal marginalization of some of them, in order to be accepted and recognized by others, and the world, as just one thing, and finally feel I belong. Later on, it will become clear how this edge is part of my personal history, formed inside the frame of my family of origin. My edge is clearly fed by a belief system saying that only a rigid focus on one thing can make a professional (and person) worthy. A paradox, isn't it? All of me is not enough but just one part of me is. Now I can challenge this edge because I know that being focused is different from being centered. The first is a West-oriented concept, a closed system, and a simplistic idea of human energy, which never led to exciting new thinking, and if it was a political system, it would certainly be absolutism. The second comes from Eastern cultures, it is complex and open yet simple and solid, it is democratic and in Process Work terms, it follows the concept of *Deep Democracy*. My personal balance exists in the center of a circle in which all my parts are present.

All of them will be present in the pages to come. Actress, trainer, theater teacher, process worker, therapist, and facilitator, and now, allowing to arise for the first time, a scholar. Some parts of this project are more poetic and others more practical, some more personal, and others professional. I will not perform, but the actress is present sharing many of the experiences I

have had, questions, and problems, ‘...understanding acting as a psychophysical⁴ phenomenon and process, examined from the actor’s position “inside” the experience of performing’ (Zarrilli, 2015, p. 75).

Acknowledging process workers who have worked on the same thread connecting Process Work and art

This is not the first time someone has worked on the connection between the two fields. There are process workers who have already drawn many lines of thought, and practice, on how Process Work tools can be applied to Theater Practice. There are also others who have worked on connecting the paradigm to other arts, i.e., music and dance, and of course, their work is valuable for theater too, as all arts have a creative process and source. There has also been a lot of work done on creativity as a process⁵. I am grateful to all for their work and for offering me the sense of being part of a shared idea. Some of them, apart from being process workers, are professional dancers and musicians, yet, I haven’t been able to detect work done on this connection by professional theater practitioners apart from the English director Phelim McDermott, who is not a process worker though, and a very recent discovery about a theater practitioner who is using Process Work in Poland at the Grotowski Institute⁶ - it is not in my knowledge yet whether he is a process worker (along with being a theater practitioner).

Nevertheless, more theoretical foundations and repetitive practice are required in order to keep this research going and deepen our understanding.

⁴ In theater the term stands for the focus of the practitioner on the constant relation between internal (psychic) and external (physical) movement. Later on, I will speak more about it through the point of view of Zarrilli.

⁵ Here all that I have in my knowledge, but maybe there are more: Ashperger (2010), Audergon (1994-1995), Jobe (1994-1995), Jobe and Goodbread (1994-1995), Lane (2011), Mindell (1995, 2005). Andy Smith and Sonya Slany (who has passed to the other side) have done amazing work on creativity. I attended a workshop with both in 2020, in Athens, Greece, but there is no reference for their work that I could find.

⁶ The Grotowski Institute in Poland carries out artistic and research projects that respond to the challenges posed by Jerzy Grotowski’s creative practice and document and disseminate knowledge about his achievements. J. Grotowski (1933-1999) was a theater director and theorist who worked on psychophysical theater and influenced Theater Practice in depth.

Research question and methodology

Questions are like Babushkas⁷, opening, and opening and opening. Questions are gestures of openness to the world. Questions are exercises toward openness of the self. Openness is an endless process.

My initial question was:

Can integrating Process Work into Theatre Practice reconnect theater to its ancient mission of embodying awareness, compassion, and imagination for society?

From that, the question gradually opened more and more. These are some of the questions I begin asking in this project:

1. Can integrating Process Work into Theater Practice equally support the well-being of theater practitioners and the creative process?
2. Is it possible to integrate Process Work into all stages of Theater Practice (teaching, pre-performative training, rehearsing, performing)?
3. Can a process-oriented theater practitioner, by clearly engaging with performative principles of awareness, compassion, and imagination, be more able to go deeper into the art of facilitation of groups and individuals, as well as delivering training for theater practitioners?
4. Can Process Work support deepening the phenomenological research of acting?

To support my line of thought I am relying on a wide theater-based bibliography that I have studied throughout the years, as well as a bibliography on Process Work, especially on points the two fields meet. To support my arguments, I offer examples either from my personal

⁷ Russian wooden toy dolls are found also as Matryoshka dolls. It is a big wooden doll that opens in the middle and has inside a smaller one and another and another...

experience as a theater practitioner or from the first experimental applications I have done when working with other theater practitioners.

This is a mixed-type research project using literature review, heuristic study (applying Process Work to myself as a theater practitioner), and case study (applying Process Work on other theater practitioners).

This project attempts to follow both a personal line and a professional line. Why me doing this project? Why Process Work and Theater together?

My hope is to contribute to creating more theoretical foundations on the connection between the two fields, which I believe can be meaningful for both. My lifelong project is to create a Process Oriented Theater Practice. I also hope this project contributes to identifying both Process Work and Theater as awareness practices, and one day practitioners from both fields to collaborate in the research of human experience.

Dare I say that I can make a contribution? I will share my own process and path, my struggles, as well as answers I found along the way, my hopes, and my dreams. Sharing answers is edgy because of growing up under the influence of a belief system where answers should always be right or perfect. The answers shared here come from my personal experience and understanding of Theater Practice since 1996. They are not meant to be fixed points, but like Tom Thumb's⁸ tiny pieces of bread, just crumbs so as not to lose the way. We need answers not in order to be sure, but to go further and give birth to new questions.

Limitations

The fact that I am much more experienced in Theater than in Process Work is the most important limitation of this project. All the examples of applications of Process Work to

⁸ Fairytale by the Grimm Brothers. At some point, the main character Tom Thumb spreads little pieces of bread in the forest in order to find his way back home.

Theater that I offer here have been done while I was studying Process Work. Since 2016 along with studying, I have been working as a theater practitioner (performing, training actors, directing or/and teaching theater to 80 students on a weekly basis), and I have also established a private practice as a process worker, so time has been another limitation. I am looking forward to creating projects especially focused on my research. Additionally, the broadness of the field (theater, Process Work, and their connection) needed constant narrowing down of the depth of the final project, while mapping the rest to continue in the years that come. Language is one more limitation on two levels 1) I am writing in English which is not my first language, meaning that there have been moments when I felt I had to sacrifice some kind of poetic language. Also, my work will not be accessible to Greek-speaking people who have no knowledge of the English language. 2) In order to be understandable to both Process Work and Theater practitioners I decided to write in the most simple way while being aware that the topics I speak of are huge, and in some cases philosophical. I hope I have not fallen into the trap of being simplistic. My *inner critic* has been of course present, as much as my *edges*. I will refer to them in the pages to come.

Description of contents

Chapter one: Something of me

In this chapter, I share my *childhood dream (memory)* to counterbalance the linear narrative of my curriculum vitae (which you will find in the end) with the *dreaming* processes, that formed me. In this non-linear ‘cv’ I found the roots and the strength to complete this project. This is where I learned to befriend the ‘unknown,’ which is one of the essentials of Theater Practice and Process Work. Through working on this dream (memory), I discovered this pattern: behind the specific fear, which I have experienced since childhood, of strongly wondering if I am at the right place or if I am somewhere I shouldn’t be, lies my deepest self. Inside the dream (memory) safeness comes in an unexpected environment, and the dark side of humans

transforms into beauty. In my opinion, Theater and Process Work do the same within their frames.

I also speak about ideas that were cultivated in me while growing up, and are now basic elements of my thinking around the connection between the two fields: how finding ‘places in-between’ helped me keep in touch with deep energies inside me; how inside those places I could experience ‘the impossible becoming possible;’ and how gradually I learned to ‘build bridges’. Finally, I explain how all these led me to become an actress, my path in Theater, what I missed, and how Process Work responds to this void.

Diving into myself has been one of the ways through which I understand the world, and diving into my personal history is one of the ways I use here to make my argument.

Chapter two: Process Work, Theater Practice, and the three principles in common

My intention is that this project will be readable, understandable, and hopefully interesting for both process workers and theater practitioners, which is already a wide range of potential readers. Consequently, in this chapter, I first give some information about the interests or the roots that the reader could potentially identify within this project, and basic information about Process Work and Theater Practice to support the understanding of readers from both fields.

Afterward, I step into the idea that Process Work and Theater Practice share three fundamental principles: awareness, compassion, and imagination (as access to the unknown). Just naming them raises the question of whether they are natural gifts or skills, whether they are principles or values, and whether they are teachable or not. I then elaborate on how each of them is met in both fields and on the essential role they play in both practices. In conclusion, I argue that even though the feeling position of these three principles is not teachable, and one has to find them inside her, they can be cultivated, and even trained, both through Process Work and Theater Practice.

Chapter three: Linking Process Work concepts to Theater Practice

In this chapter, I focus on main concepts of Process Work and separately speak about each in terms of basic process-oriented definitions, how they are met in Theater Practice, why they can be tools for theater practitioners and I also give examples from inside Theater Practice. In conclusion, I sum up all the above and propose that Process Work tools can support theater practitioners in their well-being, as well as enrich the creative process.

Appendices

In Appendix A there is a glossary on Process Work terminology. In Appendix B there is a table with all the examples (by title) that I give in the text; Process Work tools used in each example; The content and the result of each case; and Links to Appendix C. In Appendix C there are the various process-oriented exercises and/or explications of concepts and tools used in each of the examples in the text.

Thespians, who are they and what are they needed for?

Thespis lived in the 6th BC century and was a poet and singer of Dithyrambs (songs with mythological context), which were a way to worship one of the twelve Olympian Gods – Dionysus or Bacchus, the God of grape harvest, wine, and Theater. In Process Work terms, I believe it is legitimate to say that he is the God of accessing ecstatic *altered states*. One day, while participating in a ceremony, Thespis, stopped singing, physically separated himself from the chorus,⁹ took a mask, put it on his face, and started speaking from the role of Dionysus. The chorus followed his impulse and answered him.

Thespis is considered to be the one who invented drama and the first actor. What did he do? Did he put himself in someone else's shoes? Did he search for a dialogue, a relationship with

⁹ A group of singers who are moving and singing collectively as if they were one body. The chorus is an essential part of all Ancient Greek Tragedies and Comedies.

Dionysus? Did he search inside himself to find God? Did he say ‘I am the God’? Maybe all of that!

The word thespian, even though not widely used, when used, is a manifestation of respect toward theater practitioners. It connects their job to that amazing and frightening moment of having the call to jump into the unknown, as Thespis did. As a 21st-century AC female theater practitioner who, like anyone (regardless of gender, though women are always in a lower position) who is in the profession, at least in Greece, I am in need of that connection and the empowerment that comes with it. Being 45 years old, and in the profession for more than 20 years, I have studied many different aspects of the work, and have worked hard on how to stand for my choice, as well as, reclaim the value and rank of my profession. Yet, there has been (especially when I was younger) an infinitesimal reservation whenever someone asked me about my profession.

In his introduction to the Greek publication¹⁰ of Diderot’s ‘The Paradox of the Actor’, Vasilis Papavasileiou – an important Greek theater practitioner and thinker, and in my opinion philosopher – addresses the awkwardness that arises each time an actress is confronted with the simple, in other ways, question ‘For what are you useful’? He elaborates that in these uncomfortable moments, we can see how actors probably are not persuaded themselves on how, or for what, they are useful in society, and taking it even further, he adds that they probably have never thought of the possibility of not being useful at all. He finally invites us to contemplate a question. ‘What if actors embody the zero point of the idea of social usefulness?’ (2001, p. 7-8). In a world where usefulness is one of the highest values, we need

¹⁰ My apologies to non-Greek speakers for choosing a reference that is not to be found in other languages than Greek. This text has been an important influence on me and it is equally important to share it here in order to stress my point. I hope that I do it in a way that is understandable for the reader and respectful to the author. It wouldn’t be possible to translate all the text because of its complex philosophical atmosphere. The parts I mention here are free translations of mine.

to think again about the possibility that not being useful might be meaningful, or even revolutionary. What changes if the initial question becomes ‘What are you needed for? The theater is not something we can make use of, and yet it has walked together with human civilization for centuries because we need it. Some have the call to make theater. We all need to see theater. This need is deep because it relates to the human will to understand the self and the world. It is a bodily experienced, philosophical, and spiritual need. Theater is one of the paths through which we can meet ‘God’ in us, and therefore actors are mediators.

A. Artaud in his ‘Theater and it’s double’ describes that like an athlete who has a system of muscles that supports her to rise above physical limits, an actress has another system of ‘muscles’ that supports her in meeting and challenging psychophysical limits. Their courses are similar yet the actress’s course is inward. He refers to the actress as an ‘athlete of the heart’ (Artaud, 1958, p. 133).

Sometimes when thinking about the process of acting I see the actress as a psychophysical narrator of human experience, as a storyteller of inner-life tales. ‘The storyteller takes what he tells from experience—his own or that reported by others. And he, in turn, makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale’ (Benjamin, 1936, p. 3). An actress puts her awareness in the service of others, and this is a point where acting and Process Work organically meet.

Being an actress is a tremendously challenging path for many reasons, but most of all because, firstly, one moves between *levels of awareness*, and secondly, part of the job is to consent to be transformed, and in constant relation to processes of change. ‘Only continuous contact with the unknown gives you the right feeling for the work; you are a student of change, not the changer’ (Mindell, 1993, p.74). Even though it is early I will dare to say that by doing so, actors and process workers are allies and ambassadors of transformation and change in the world.

Acting is a very practical process too. During the 20th century, there was an evolution of methods and approaches, systems of exercises, and practices in the actress's training based on the idea that creativity can be revealed only through disciplined techniques. It takes a lot of studying, analyzing, training, reflecting, composing, decomposing, repetition, discipline, trying, and failing.

I like to see theatre practitioners as mechanics or architects. Gaudi created these unbelievably beautiful buildings – once in Barcelona I remember that being inside one of his creations felt like being inside myself and did not want to leave, it was a touching and emotional moment – but for sure to build them he did a lot of technical work too. Having an insight / an idea is one thing. Knowing how to put it on stage and structure, piece by piece, a meaningful experience for yourself and for all, is another.

Theater practitioners are both sensuous humans and scientists, not useful but needed, revolutionaries against a culture of usefulness. They are working day and night to create a dream meant to be collectively experienced, a dream that erases itself the moment it appears, and the only chance to stay alive is in the memory, in the heart, and in the body of the audience.

The intensity of the work, especially for a trainee, though not exclusively, might often lead to body symptoms, triggering personal history, bringing to the surface relationship problems, creating wide questions about the self or the world, burnout, creative blocks, and more. Yet still, the current situation, at least in Greece, is that there is no mental care specifically for theater practitioners provided, neither in drama schools nor in the profession. The rhythm in drama schools is exhausting from morning till night, with the excuse that trainees need to prepare for the profession that is demanding. The rhythm in the profession is also exhausting, working in many projects at the same time (teaching, rehearsing, performing, etc.). The stress

of financial survival is huge. Working conditions most of the time are unacceptable. The list can go on for pages. On top of all, there is the lack of an ethical code in the profession.

It is of great importance that theater practitioners are aware of their responsibility to society, and vice versa. A world that does not care about the well-being of its artists is a world that is not mothering its own *dreaming* processes.

Chapter one

Something of me

'Shamanism is an archetypal form of behavior that appears in you when you are faced with unsolvable problems' (Mindell, 1993, p. 8)

My Childhood dream (memory)

It is alive in my memory, being in the car with my mother, in silence. I am around 5 years old, not sure. My parents divorced when I was six months old. My mother took me a few times to her beloved aunt Anna and leave me there for some hours. I shouldn't tell anyone about all of this. Aunt Anna lived in the center of Athens, alone, in the house of her family of origin. When we arrived, my mother would wait in the car until I got in the house and then she would drive away. The door was heavy, one of those old wooden doors of neo-classical style houses that make a strong sound when they close behind you. At the entrance, a black and white chess floor made me feel like Alice in Wonderland¹¹. Aunt Anna was very old so she would wait for me upstairs at the end of the whirling wooden stairs. Some stairs would creak and I would step on them very carefully. I was afraid. This house was like a giant waking up. Also, I knew that nobody would agree to me staying alone with her. Aunt Anna would wait for me at the door with her scary looks, and yet, sweet smile and strangely warm voice. She would always wear old-fashioned clothes and have her white-silver long hair up in an old-fashioned bun. She had a small humpback. She did not smell fresh and clean. She smelled old. She would hug me and then we would go into the main house. In her hug, I would feel disgust and warmth at the same time.

¹¹ English children's novel by Lewis Carroll (1865). The main character Alice, falls through a rabbit hole into a world made from imagination where she experiences many unique adventures.

All the rooms were closed and dark, with white sheets covering the furniture, like ghosts. Only one bedroom, the kitchen, and the bathroom were open. A small warm light was coming from her bedroom. At the entrance, there was a table with chairs and a wood-burning heater from cast iron which was decorated with many patterns. Nearby, lay pieces of wood. The fire was always on, spreading a warm light to the room. I would stare at the dancing fire a lot. Aunt Anna would always bring me an egg to eat. Because of the general untidiness, I was not comfortable eating, but in the end, the egg was always delicious. Then she would read me stories. On the table, there were piles of books and newspapers. There were children's stories written in foreign languages. Aunt Anna spoke many foreign languages. I would stay there listening without understanding anything, as for me, they were unknown languages. Strangely, it was nice, safe, and tranquil. All these qualities were not usual for me as a child, and it was strange to meet them in an environment where I shouldn't be in the first place.

Aunt Anna was a progressive woman of her time, she studied and worked. She never got married or had children. She loved her nieces. The narrative in the family was that years ago, she came back from the summer holidays at the family's cottage, and she never got out of the house again. No one knew or ever said (to me) what happened that summer. They said she was mentally ill with some kind of schizophrenia, which also was an experience that one of my mother's sisters had.

I am always afraid before going on stage. I am now afraid to do this project. Same as going up those stairs in aunt Anna's house back then. Behind this fear, I always meet my deepest self, safe and in stillness. This fear is my paradoxical compass. So, probably this project is where I should be. I will push that heavy wooden door once more, open my imagination and dive into the unknown, as aunty Anna taught me to do.

This one will be a long dive. And down the rabbit hole, we go.

Oh, I forgot to say that I feel more comfortable with people from other cultures rather than from mine, and with unknown languages. I improvise singing sometimes in an invented unknown language. I do not remember when it first happened but it must have been during childhood.

Spaces and Places in between

The memory of my childhood is (or used to be) very weak. Some of the most important memories of me as a child came to me during my therapy over the last eight years. I grew up in a fragmented environment, in many different houses, and each had a different way of living, lots of people with unprocessed and bad relationships, and absent parents, especially my mother who was out of the country for months every year.

I naturally became a field-sensitive and extremely perceptive person. That led me to be mostly sad and stressed. The task for me was to find a way to fit in, so, a kind of chameleonism grew in me as I was receiving all this input, all these little pieces, a mosaic of foods, hobbies, clothes, music, aesthetics, belief systems, and states of mind, from all these different people and houses. To fit in and feel accepted, I had to be one thing; the one with which each person or house was identifying, but that was challenging for me as a little one, as I was unavoidably sculpted by all of them.

Only in stories, books, movies, and theater plays, in complete silence and aloneness, or in my dreams could I experience some continuity of myself. Only in these spaces in between. Aunt Anna's house was also a space in between. Spaces between *levels of awareness*, spaces where my *assemblage point* was shifting.

My family consists of people who failed to meet their dreams, so they were mostly angry or/and sad.

Someone had to be the dreamer.

I am.

Making possible the impossible

Chameleonism, spaces in between, and being field sensitive were back then ways to survive.

Since I survived, now, they are *metaskills*, and the source of my creativity.

The process that led me to the decision to become an actress when I was sixteen years old is not clear in my memory. But I do remember that also in acting (in the theater group of the school) I would have this experience of self-continuity mentioned before. Being on stage became for me another space in between where the impossible was possible, even just for a short time, though I could hold on to this experience off stage too. Of course, I would need more and more, and at some point, it seemed like an addiction. 'A true calling is like an addiction that must be nourished' (Mindell, 1993, p. 61).

The impossible for me was to feel as a whole, to feel that I have roots somewhere, that someone knows my story, that I am part of a story, to feel togetherness, to feel being at home. To belong.

A space in between is a space between something and something else. A potential bridge. It was impossible to connect my experience in *consensus reality* and my experience in *dreamland* or *essence*. That is the exact nature of theater; on stage space, time, even matter, and sense of reality are relevant. Theater became for me a bridge. A point or/and a moment of contact and connection between the possible and the impossible. Bridges are to walk through them or/and find shelter underneath them. They transform space into a place. Places in between. There I found a sense of home and this is where I belong.

Building myriad bridges

In theater, I found a home where I could make sense. Where not only I did not have to hide my multiple pieces, but they were a gift. Where all *levels of awareness* were acceptable, and means of creativity, not survival. Yet, that was far from becoming an artist. I spent many years *burning my wood* on stage - in Process Work terms, processing my personal history and inner life - through roles and theater plays. Something was missing, and I was missing something.

In search of that, the journey of my studies started. I traveled between three different approaches to Theater Practice, in which I was trained for several years each, attended workshops, and masterclasses, and worked as a professional actress. Then I studied Drama in Education, an approach to Theater Practice for children and adolescents, which can be applied in many different contexts. At some point, I started teaching, which was not my intention but came naturally - it is, in a way, a process of building bridges. In every one of these approaches, I would discover new knowledge and unmapped areas of myself, as a theater practitioner and as a person. Gradually my wish was to connect them.

The knowledge I have after all these years lies in these connections. I believe learning processes are transformative, and I became an unstoppable learner to find what I was missing in Theater Practice, and to transform my personal history and the inheritance of my family by following a dream. Making connections is healing for me, and what I have to share with the world. I remember myself twenty years ago saying ‘we need one more role in Theater Practice, someone from the field of psychology.’ I had no idea what I was talking about but I was nostalgic for some future to come. I was dreaming. When I graduated from drama school one of my beloved teachers, and an amazing actress, told me ‘You are not what sells, you are what is missing’. My twenty-two years old insecure self heard that I would probably not make it in the theater profession, but the grower inside me kept these words and gradually helped me develop my awareness around what was missing and my connection with it.

In 2010, I met Phillip Zarrilli, a world-renowned theater practitioner and scholar who created a psychophysical approach to Theater Practice through Asian martial/meditation arts. His work around phenomenological research of acting has been extremely important. His approach is intercultural, interdisciplinary, and always developing. Being his student is about theater, and unavoidably, life. Back to the basics, breath, senses, presence, awareness, and flow. He would say that what we were doing, which was amazingly challenging physical-wise, was 80% mental and 20% physical, because he was talking about how to navigate our energy and not forcing the exercises on our bodies. He was talking about an ‘approach,’ and not a method, inviting us into a position of active curiosity as the only way to reach new knowledge – fields covered with fresh snow yet unmapped. In the unknown, this is where we would meet ourselves, the role, the group, the audience, and the world. What is happening in between an inhalation and an exhalation was the area of our psychophysical research. Training and working with him strongly formed who I am today as a theater practitioner, pedagogue, and thinker, and always felt like being at home. His influence is fundamental to my line of thought in connecting Process Work to Theater Practice.

In 2014, I met Process Work. I started therapy with a Process Work practitioner and then decided to go for the diploma in Process Work. From the first moment, my instinct was telling me that I was very close to what I had been searching for. But to realize it, to see it in practice, I had to confront once more the feeling of not belonging, as my identity was struggling between Theater Practice and Process Work, and to build another bridge.

Process Work and Zarrilli’s approach to Theater Practice, both bring Eastern thinking to our Western thinking-oriented world.

By doing this project I am becoming my whole self, and probably what I have been missing in Theater Practice.

Places in between, my need for making possible the impossible, and making connections like building bridges have proven to be my allies in the process of weaving Theater Practice and Process Work together.

There are moments when this project feels like nesting.

Chapter two

Process Work, Theater Practice, and the three principles in common

'This space between is that place where the potential for impulse and action reside; therefore, it is the space where acting begins' (Zarrilli, 2015, p85)

To process workers and theater practitioners

Dear both,

I invite you to look at each other, to be aware of each other's presence.

Inside me, you have already met as figures who offer the exact same gesture to the world, and I will do my best to share this meeting, and create the ground for others to experience it.

In order for this project to be understandable to both process workers and theater practitioners who might have or not already been acquainted to other's professional fields, I will give some basic information about both fields.

I have an agony that this might be boring for process workers and not understandable for theater practitioners. My intention is for this to be interesting and understandable for both. The readers probably need to be people interested in both fields, or perhaps interested in one of them and in any new thinking and dimension, experimental work and application, further exploration and research.

A new question arises that might potentially be for me a future research question. To which kind of theater practitioners am I speaking? I will not go deep into that question here, yet I need to address some of the issues it brings to the surface, in order to help the reader.

Theater Practice is a huge field of different approaches, methods, and theories. Hopefully, these pages can be relatable to all, but surely can be easier followed by theater practitioners who have

some experience in psychophysical actor's training, body-mind work, and meditation. The examples offered are from my personal experience of professional life and studies with specific teachers, while I will mostly refer to Zarrilli and his approach to psychophysical training and theater. Furthermore, this is meant for advanced theater practitioners, though it is in my future intentions to make all needed additions in order to work with, and refer to beginners.

All the above are meant to make a clear statement of my intentions and therefore the factors that impact the way I write. Any person who has a love and curiosity about Theater or/and Process Work is absolutely welcome.

Basic information about Process Work and Theater Practice

Process Oriented Psychology – Process Work - short definition

Process work is a cross-disciplinary approach to human experience. It was developed in the 1970s by Arnold Mindell and his associates. Process Work has its roots in Jungian Psychology, Quantum Physics, and Taoism. It is a holistic approach that offers a new understanding and way of working with personal, interpersonal, and social conflicts. Its main purpose is to achieve conflict resolution and personal and social change through the development of awareness skills.

“Originally [it] developed as a therapeutic modality. Over the last thirty years of application and research, process work is now more commonly described as an ‘awareness practice’, as its methods are applied in a wide range of situations, as a form of personal and leadership development, as a facilitation method for organizational and group work, conflict situations, and large public forums’. (Process Work Institute of Portland, USA, website¹²)

¹² <https://www.processwork.edu/>

Working towards a Process Oriented Theater Practice the focus on Process Work is that of a phenomenological, teleological, ‘awareness practice,’ and as such a practice that entails following instead of leading, learning instead of knowing, attending instead of assuming, and finally, being instead of doing.

Stages of Theater Practice

The different stages of the collective work that is done by theater practitioners in order to make theater are: (1) Pre-performative training: to prepare, train, and cultivate specific skills. It can be met in teaching/studying processes (classes in Drama Schools and Universities, workshops, rehearsals, etc.); (2) Rehearsal: working on the creative process toward a specific performance; (3) Performing. When I do not specifically mark to which stage I am referring, I imply that what is proposed is potentially applicable to all stages.

I am speaking about Theater Practices that are based on co-creative processes, and not so much about practices where the specific concept of the director is leading the process. But again, what is proposed here potentially can be relatable to different ways of working.

Theater practitioner and her multiple roles

A theater practitioner potentially occupies multiple roles: teacher, trainer, director, actress, often scholar,¹³ and for sure has been a student/trainee. Many theater practitioners work professionally in more than one of the above-mentioned roles, some from research-based interests, and others from the need to survive financially. I will refer mostly to acting and the actress, but most of what I am proposing is applicable to all roles. When I refer to the latter, I will be using the words theater practitioner.

¹³ There are countries that strongly separate practice from theory like Greece, and others who do not, like the UK or USA. Personally, I believe that practitioners potentially can produce important theory, exactly because they are coming from inside the practice.

Role and Score

Both words refer to the material on which the theater practitioner is working. In mainstream realistic theater, the actress is working on her role. In psychophysical theater, she is working on a score, meaning a sequence of inner and outer actions. Here the role is seen as a process and not as a character. I will be using both, firstly because I am working with both, and secondly, in order to assist theater practitioners from different approaches in following the text.

The studio

I will be talking about the theater practitioner working in the studio meaning the place where pre-performative training or rehearsal is taking place. The studio is a place where theater practitioners grow by confronting first and, mostly, their own self. ‘The studio...a place of hypothesis, and therefore a place of possibility...where something can come of nothing’ (Zarrilli, 2002, p. 160).

In the studio, theater practitioners are working simultaneously on multiple levels, as there are multiple processes happening and needing to be followed: (1) Individual process, which includes the inner life of the practitioner, emotions, challenges, *growing edges*; (2) relationship with the environment - any stimulus that is coming from the space, the given conditions of time, temperature, etc., and other practitioners; (3) relationship with the role/score, including the level of liking it or not, the way it touches practitioners inner life; (4) relationship with the system of processes, which live inside the play (social and cultural issues, human relationships, etc.)

The three principles in common: Awareness, compassion, and imagination (as access to the unknown)

Awareness, compassion, and imagination are basic principles of both Theater Practice and Process Work. A process worker without them, especially awareness, would break the ethical code of the paradigm, and would not be able to do impactful work with people. A theater practitioner wouldn't create art but produce bad-quality theater, and probably be hurtful or even abusive to herself and others (collaborators, trainees, etc.). Furthermore, when these principles are missing, the result is a poor perception of what the acting process is, both by practitioners and the audience. A culture that promotes acting as something easy and simple, which needs just talent and sensitivity (without any intention to imply that they are not valuable), impacts equally the quality of the theater being produced, and the well-being of the theater practitioners.

Are these three principles or values natural gifts, or skills? Is it possible to teach them, to cultivate and train them?

The concept of *metaskills* in Process Work describes "...the feeling attitudes, values, and beliefs that inform our personal way to work with others" (Process Work Institute glossary). Amy Mindell stresses that therapy is not only about technique and theory but also about the "feeling attitudes that form the way we interact" (Mindell, 1995, p.23-24). She considers *metaskills* as elements of spirituality. Therefore, "Metaskills can be cultivated and practiced in much the same way as other spiritual art forms" (Mindell, 1995, p. 43). When theater is practiced as a spiritual art form, as done in Zarrilli's psychophysical approach, all three principles are cultivated and trained. In both paradigms, the basic requirement is the full engagement and dedication of the trainee to a process that needs time, as spiritual arts are not result-oriented, and are challenging, as they require constant work with one's self. My personal experience studying both has been life-changing, as what I considered known about myself

was constantly challenged, and there were moments of such big movements in my inner life, perceived by me as cultural change, as I was witnessing my belief systems shifting.

Awareness

In January 2017 Joe Goodbread came to Greece to teach one of the workshops for my cohort in the Process Work training program I was attending. I remember his humble and almost desperate way when at some point he said “I cannot make it into a method. It is an awareness thing”. In Process Work, there are tools that help one map the flow of awareness, and constant work with the self is also putting points on that map, but at the end of the day, it is all about willingly and curiously taking this path.

Theater practitioners need to have psychophysical and social awareness. On the one hand, they need to be able to track experiences that arise in the studio by being psychophysically attentive. In Process Work terms, they need to be able to notice how the experience is presenting itself through all *channels* and *levels of awareness*, as well as, all of its turning points and changes. Experiences that arise in the studio can be divided into inner and outer, what happens inside the practitioner and what happens around her. Amy Mindell invites us to think of two attitudes of the therapist that complement each other: the attitude of the ‘scientist’ and the attitude of the ‘shaman’. The first brings outer awareness, meaning the ability to perceive input from the environment, others, and our analytical mind, and the latter, awareness¹⁴ of our inner reality, given that it is the ability to perceive “...inner -sensations, feelings, and images, follow them and let them guide us” (Mindell, 1995, p. 135 – 136). I believe this is totally the same for the actress. Being able to follow with awareness inner and outer experiences creates access to *meta-communication* (communicating what is happening by being able to keep a part of oneself

¹⁴ Term rooted in Shamanism. In Process Work is used to describe a kind or trained awareness toward aspects of our experience that we tend to ignore or think as irrelevant.

‘outside’ the process as a witness capable of tracking the experience), a key skill for theater practitioners in order to be able to reflect on the work. Access to meta-communicate is interwoven with inner and outer awareness. This is what knits little by little the composition of a performance.

On the other hand, theater practitioners, also need to be aware of the social-political circumstances and cultural differences (1) in which they are working; (2) which constitute the world of the theater play; (3) in which the play has been written, because all that impacts the work being done in the studio.

Awareness constantly informs the artistic work and also ‘holds’ the practitioner by creating frames and vessels. Furthermore, it makes it possible to track inner and outer processes, and therefore to reflect, re-visit, and go further with the work.

This is not new to Theater Practice but what I propose here is that Process Work has tools to support the cultivation of awareness, and adds the fundamental idea that what happens to the theater practitioner is directly connected with the *field*, and the material at hand.

Compassion

The etymology of the word originates from the Latin *compati*, which means to *suffer with* (Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology, 1966, p197), but *pation* / *passion* relates with the Greek *pathos* (Greek:πάθος) from the verb *pasho* (Greek: πάσχω) , which means also *something happens to you/having an experience*. I focus on the meaning of *having an experience with another* because it is energetic and carries the potential of personal and collective change within a shared experience; in this case, Theater Practice and performance.

The definition of compassion in Process Work is:

“... nurturing, caring for, and attending to those parts of ourselves that we like, and identify with while *attending equally to* and appreciating those parts that we do not like, that we disavow, and that are far from our identity. Further, compassion involves helping all of these parts to unfold and reveal their essential nature and meaning” (Mindell, 1995, p. 61).

Putting together the etymology of the word and its process-oriented definition, compassion here means having an experience with all parts of ourselves, of the role/score, of our collaborators, and potentially of society, as only through compassion, can we create as artists bonds with the diversity within our audience.

Theater practitioners in the studio confront parts of themselves and parts of the role/score, which are far from their identity, and which they dislike, or disavow. In those moments, process-oriented compassion is crucial, it supports the practitioner to grow as a person, and as an artist, and enriches the texture of the work. Furthermore, it is absolutely necessary to be able to perform those roles/scores that are called negative, as they carry the dark side of human nature, and by doing so, go closer to these parts of ourselves as practitioners or/and audience. Compassion impacts the way theater practitioners approach each of the above by creating an atmosphere of learning each and every moment and cultivating a subtle quality of being with.

It would be simplistic to see compassion only as a feeling position. Compassion is closely related to awareness by noticing the moments that we tend not to be attentive to something - in Process Work terms the moments when we reach an *edge*. Mindell speaks about the ‘accuracy of awareness and technology of compassion’ (Mindell, 1995, p. 73) needed for the work in therapy. The same is true for the work in the studio or on stage.

Imagination and access to the unknown

By imagination, I refer to *'embodied processes of imagining in the studio or on stage...the chiasmic inter-twining of the "invisible" and the "visible" (Zarrilli, 2020)*. In a way, imagination is the access to what is not visible, and therefore, remains unknown. The amazingly skillful, warrior-like access to what is unknown is another point where Theater Practice and Process Work meet and can support each other.

In Process Work, relating to and accessing the unknown (what is not known to the identity) is maybe the most essential element in the work, as the unknown is considered to be an immense source of potential knowledge, and is deeply respected. Accessing is done by being extremely attentive to the way it is making itself present through body experiences, dream images, double signals (communication signals that do not go along with intended communication), projections, things that happen to us, figures in our dreams, unintended movements, unintended sounds, subtle sensations or movement tendencies. The therapist and client will then work through *amplifying* and *unfolding* the unknown, using all *channels* and all *levels of awareness*. They are working toward an embodiment of the unknown - in Process Work terms a *dreamfigure*.

In psychophysical Theater Practices, the actress is trained to 'imagine', Phillip Zarrilli explains:

“...imagining is a psychophysiological act of the entire body” and continues “This is the physical aspect of thought,” which is the counterpart of “thinking with the body,” both of which are essential for the actor if he or she is to be a *complete* artist capable of *creating thoughts with the body*” (Zarrilli, 2002, p.195-196).

Dreamfigures as embodiments of the unknown and 'creating thoughts with the body' are like a double-sided coat. Later on, I will speak about how practitioners from both Process Work and Theater can benefit from each other's tools and theories.

To hold on to a psychophysical experience in the studio, which enters what is unknown (meaning following psychophysical impulses without pre-planning) until it explains itself, means to sustain a long deep dive into the human condition and nature, while at the same time, letting the unknown impact the way you breathe, move, etc. At this moment one both leads and lets go until something makes sense, which will be shared with colleagues in the studio and at some point, with an audience. One both directs and is possessed. This is a point where Theater Practice meets the shamanic thinking of Process Work. ‘To work with the unknown, some combination of respect, ruthlessness, courage, and cuddling is necessary’ (Mindell, 1993, p. 86).

Process Work has the tools to break down the act of being attentive, and Theater Practice has the tools to psychophysically enter with stamina the realm of the unknown.

Another point to be made here is that all humans have imagination irrespective of culture, ethnicity, or socioeconomic factors. Through imagination, which will be referred to from now on for this project as *access to the unknown*, we can meet, and yet yours and mine can be absolutely different. Like this timeless game in which we both look at the same cloud up in the sky, and I see an umbrella and you see an elephant. Both are there. If you guide my eyes, I will see your elephant and the opposite, but initially, we will have seen something else. The subjective way that one perceives the world makes her unique as a human being, and therefore as an artist. The theater practitioner must train and identify her unique way to access the unknown in order to reach her deepest creative energy, and take care of her well-being while living in this profession.

Conclusion

To conclude for the moment, these three principles are inter-connected and at some point, through repetitive training become interwoven. In my personal experience cultivating

awareness, compassion, and access to the unknown through Process Work enabled me to grow, strengthen, and deepen my work as a theater practitioner, become connected to my deep creativity, map myself as preparation for ‘The studio...a liminal place, between... A place to map, temporarily... Therefore, a place of erasure, of risk, of loss, and always, as anyone who steps on the stage knows, of potential failure’ (Zarrilli, 2002, p.161). At the same time the skills I had from my psychophysical theater training with Zarrilli enabled me to enter Process Work practices fluidly. Therefore, I am persuaded that actors and Process Workers can learn from each other, and can support each other in different kinds of challenges they are confronted within their work.

Going back to the question posed earlier: Are these three principles or values, natural gifts, or skills? Is it possible to teach them, to cultivate and train them? I can now report that they are constituted by skills, but they also form a way of being. They need to be found inside us, and then they can be cultivated and even trained. They are *metaskills*.

Developing skills is something we probably all are capable of doing, but cultivating ways in which skills can be in service of others is a calling, not all of us necessarily have. I have always stood against the idea of talent being enough or easy for a theater practitioner, as hard and copious work has always been a requirement for high-level art. I see talent as a natural manifestation of one’s calling, connected with the *dreaming* process from which everyone’s personal path and myth is originates.

Process workers and theater practitioners potentially model awareness, compassion, and access to the unknown, as all three are principles that form the foundation of both practices and values that form ethics for the practitioners of both fields.

Chapter three

Linking Process Work concepts to Theater Practice

'Being a phenomenologist, a process scientist is a sort of mystic and an empirical, rigorous scientist in one' (Mindell, 2011, p. 24).

Process

The idea of process is very old but still, it seems that we are discovering it, again and again, out of the need to find a counterbalance to this state-oriented and rigid world we have created, at least in the West. 'The term 'process' in 'processwork' refers to the shamanistic act of journeying directly with the river' (Mindell, 1993, p.20). The word 'river' is used here as a metaphor for the flow of '...changes in perception, to the variation of signals experienced by an observer' (Mindell, 2011, p.11). A process worker is trained to follow the traces of a person's or a group's experience manifested through language, movement, body sensations and experiences, and other *channels* of perception. It is a deeply skilled and courageous act of sitting calmly and attentively in the midst of constant change, using and putting your awareness in service of the process; your own and that of others.

A theater practitioner is called to do the same in a different context in the studio. As mentioned earlier working in the studio is about following and tracking inner and outer processes. No artistic result can be met if the practitioner does not walk through a specific yet infinite, given yet personal, process. All the following Process Work tools can support theater practitioners to follow the complexity of the multiple processes in the studio, but most importantly teach them how to trust that the process has its own wisdom, even though it often manifests as disturbances, blocks, difficulties, and problems in relation to inner life, creativity, the material we work on, or the relationship with colleagues. Following all processes in the studio feeds the creative process, as we are discovering the personal, and therefore unique, creative force of theater

practitioners, and step by step, touch upon the creative energy of the project itself (performance). At the same time, it supports the well-being of the practitioners because we can meet personal growth goals, blocks and disturbances are transformed into creative material, and relationships potentially become sustainable.

Additionally, the way theater practitioners train, rehearse, and relate with their art is unavoidably impacting the kind of theater performance produced. So, the question is what kind of theater do we want? If we do not learn how to track and trust the process in class, in rehearsal, etc., we then create theater that is not processing anything on stage, and therefore we are neither creating the space for the audience to process something. Theater becomes a passive individualistic event instead of a deep inner touch, experienced collectively with other human beings. Artists become skilled creatures who talk, move, sing, dance, and express feelings with virtuosity instead of researchers of human nature. An evening at the theater becomes a social event instead of a sacred one. All that is not a problem of esthetics, it is a cultural problem because theater is an invaluable social tool that can have an immense impact on cultural growth and change if used as such. Every performance is part of an individual, group, collective, and world process.

Quantum thinking

Since the presence of the audience is already mentioned, it is important to add at this point a fundamental principle of quantum physics, which is one of the roots of Process Work. The observer has an impact on what is being observed; in other words, the observed is changing according to who is the observer. Mindell (2011) says:

‘Quantum theory challenged classical physics, forcing it to realize that the observer plays a crucial role in the outcome of quantum events. Every observation disturbs events in at least two ways: by the choice of a particular apparatus to measure a special variable and

by the use of energy for the observation itself. A third type of disturbance, the momentary psychic disposition of the observer at the time of the experiment (his dreams and body states), is not yet included in modern physics' (p.12).

When I am on stage I think of the audience as active witnesses. Most of the performances I have worked on required actors to be on stage before the audience begins to enter the theater. It was something I really wanted to do even though it exposed me to all this energy coming from outside. It is a fact that the actress has a specific score to meet on stage, and this will not change, yet, every day the performance is different. The biggest difference is that of the audience. So, being on stage while they were entering gave me the opportunity to sense the energy and the atmosphere of the audience, and relate to that energy knowing that today it will change me.

An actress is observed in many circumstances, some of them very stressful. Being aware of the impact of the observer creates a strange but useful letting go of holding all the responsibility, and maybe control.

Primary and secondary processes

Definition

In Process Work primary and secondary are concepts coined by Arnold Mindell to differentiate experiences in terms of their proximity to a person's awareness. What is close to one's awareness is primary, and what is further away is secondary. What is close to my sense of identity is primary, and what is further away is secondary. The expression of human identity is constantly moving between them, and this process forms a dynamic relationship between primary and secondary.

Secondary processes are art's source

I believe it is legitimate to say – and even to see as common ground between all artists, regardless of ethnicity or era - that creativity lives in the realm of the secondary processes. Artists are in constant dialogue with secondary material. Inspiration and creative insight come from our relationship with secondary material. ‘The creative process has a feminine quality, and the creative work arises from unconscious depths – we might truly say from the realm of the Mothers’ (Jung, 1966, p.134).

Being aware of, and tracking, primary and secondary processes in the studio has been an amazing source for my growth and my well-being as a theater practitioner, and in many cases enabled me to give birth to creative material capable of embodying this sense of unbelievable freedom that we all are ‘hunting’ for in the studio.

Example 1: Secondary processes are art's source

In the winter of 2022, I was working in the studio with a colleague using an advanced level of training on improvisation with specific rules. Our work was based on the Contemplative Dance Practice of Barbara Dilley (Dilley, 2015), not following the entire practice, but mainly the parts of personal awareness, group awareness, and closing every session with a sitting meditation. The main idea was to work with the flow of having impulses arising and dissolving in the space, alone and together, following all kinds of different actions: i.e. abstract movement, activity based on senses or sensation or anatomy, running, sitting, standing, lying, devising a score together on the spot. We were researching how to create something out of just attending to the present moment, as it is becoming present through our individual perception, and through the relationship with each other, with space, and with time. No story, no concept, no roles; nothing. This is a particular type of work, working with many dimensions, which requires practitioners capable of being in a state of being, and at the same time observing - following, and at the same time leading.

For some time, we had been working only physically. At some point, we decided to add the dimension of sound in space (speech, song, abstract sound) under Dilley's instructions about sounding i.e. cloud talking: associative talking; stream of consciousness: whatever comes up, instructions/list; everyday conversation: monologue- dialogue; storytelling (autobiographical material); musing: a philosophical question, echoing/repetition, singing. One day, words started to come out of me. I was talking, saying things about daily life jumping from one to another (i.e. I woke up. I went with my dog on the hill. The trees are green. I made coffee. I like the smell. The fruit basket was empty, etc.). Even though it was part of the instructions (as mentioned above, stream of consciousness) therefore allowed, my *inner critic* would not take it, and my belief that I was not in contact with my artistic self made me feel unsatisfied, unsafe, and failing. That was my identity, my everyday self, my primary process of experiencing, feeling, and saying, 'I am not, and should not be possessed by my monkey mind. Being a good practitioner means being a Saolin¹⁵'. While reflecting at the end with my colleague I realized that what was important was not what I was saying but the way it was coming out. My *inner critic* got in the way and I was not able to become aware of that while working. The unintentional and disturbing jumping around of my mind and speech was secondary in my creative process. Now I knew, and the next time it happened I was able to follow it, meaning noticing what was happening while working, sustaining my attentiveness to the experience, in this case, sensing the rhythm of my speech and the 'jumping around' of my mind which, was leaving every sentence incomplete. Gradually my breath started overworking. It started unfolding in the *movement channel*, making me change directions in every inhalation – very quickly and in a stressful way, as if something or someone was turning me. That

¹⁵ Saolin is a Buddhist monk who is trained from early childhood in martial arts and meditation among other topics and practices. Being a Saolin in relation to being a good theater practitioner means for me to be absolutely centered and tranquil embodying the 'no mind' state of Zen Buddhism which is characterized by the absence of thought (through the analytical mind).

transformed into walking and then running from wall to wall in the studio. During all this time, the stream of speaking was continuous until it stopped, and left only movement. The running changed finding a pattern into circles, and gradually became a very slow walking in circles in the studio. Sound came back, this time revisiting aspects of what I had said before through singing. Walking in that circle was a different way of constantly changing directions, and singing was a different way of following the mind. Finally, the act of revisiting was also important, as I was no longer in the experience of the 'monkey mind.' I was singing it. I was in a meta-position, which gave birth to a figure that was meaningful for me; a human being searching for wholeness inside the craziness of daily life in this modern world of ours. A struggle was there but also a dream of wholeness. That day I made a note: 'The experience of wholeness is about giving permission to experience, to a superlative degree, non-wholeness – being fragmentary, being a fragment myself'. The creative process was completed for the moment and I was satisfied. My training in Process Work gave me access to my *second attention*, which enabled me to notice the disturbing element in my experience, as well as, a way to track and unfold that disturbing element until the experience revealed its meaning, and thus enabled me to accept a part of my process that I had the tendency to marginalize. Finally, it brought awareness to the presence of an *inner critic* when working, as a potential means to notice secondary material. All of these created the opening needed for the artistic material to come to life in all its richness, almost as if it were a separate or autonomous entity.

Tool to analyze the role and the play

Primary and secondary are parts of each process. Any process that one is tracking has both. This has many applications in the studio. Above, I chose an example where there is no play, or role, in order to focus on the actress's process. Imagine now analyzing in this way the play and the role. What are primary and secondary for the role and the play?

Primary and secondary processes, impact the way a person psychophysically exists each and every moment, thus they can enrich the embodiment of a role/score.

Levels of awareness

Definition

Mindell explicated the idea of multiple *levels of awareness* (Mindell, 2010, p. 15,42,117,144), which form the multiple dimensions of experience. The first level is *Consensus reality*, which refers to the dimension of space and time, measurable experiences, and all that we as humans have agreed on, and consent to recognize as real. The second is *Dreamland*, which refers to dreams, fantasies, projections, communication signals that happen unintentionally, and the subjective dimension of an experience. The third is the *Essence* level, which is the dimension of spacetime, where nonduality and *nonlocality* govern, the realm of “unbroken wholeness,” (Mindell, 2004, p 71-72, Bohm, 1980, p. 158). We experience this dimension as subtle sensations, therefore experiences on this level are not easy to put into words. These are parallel, co-existing dimensions.

Theater Practice moves through all levels

Theater Practice is the unique expression of a specific time, in a specific place, with the presence of specific people. What happens in the studio (and on stage) erases itself each moment. It is a life that is birthed and dies in front of our very eyes. In the studio *consensus reality*, *dreamland*, and *essence* live together, as in all life, and a well-trained practitioner is capable of moving between them fluidly. The studio is a sacred place in between where practitioners (and in the theater the audience too) have the opportunity to give permission to be in touch with their dreams and their deepest selves, therefore connected to all that is around them, and the world. Everything happens in the here and now but is connected with some kind of continuum of time and space. Sometimes, the experience is like interrupting the flow of time

or the shape of matter. In there lies the potential of great freedom and great power too. The power of ‘stopping the world’¹⁶ as Don Juan says in Carlos Castaneda’s ‘Journey to Ixtlan’ (1991).

How does using levels of awareness support the theater practitioner

Noticing in which *level of awareness* the creative process is presenting itself at each moment, as well as the changes between levels, offers a trackable path in the labyrinth of creative material. It is a way to map what seems - and probably is - impossible to be mapped. This map enables the practitioner to study afterward and reflect, to discover new areas about the work and herself, and with that new knowledge enter the studio and the material on which she is working every day anew. Further on, this material is together with her all the time, despite her being awake or asleep. Information or/and insight might come at any time of day or night, through any *level of awareness*, and if she is perceptive and ready to grasp it, she can then integrate it into the creative process. This is how magical moments are created in performance; by opening the gates and traveling between levels.

Again, all the above can find application to the role/score and the play by just studying, analyzing, and sensing the presence of levels, as well as their changes. On different levels we behave differently, we perceive differently, and we create a completely different atmosphere. This will inform the way one embodies a role/score. Analysis of the performance’s composition of scenes through that scope can also help the performers to map, and therefore track, and move fluidly inside the composition.

¹⁶ Explaining Castaneda in Process Work terms: Stepping out of Consensus Reality for a minute, meaning, not focusing there, and noticing Dreamland or Essence experiences.

Example 2: How using levels of awareness supports theater practitioners in rehearsal

In 2018, I was working in a theatre production as a performer, and as a pre-performative trainer for the group. The play was written on demand by a very skilled theatre writer in Greece and was about the life of Clara Schumann¹⁷. Everything was symbolic; the play with no linear narration, the cast, and the direction. I.e. on stage, we were two women as Clara - me (an actress) and a pianist, and two men as Robert Schumann - an actor and a classical singer. The scenery was not realistic either. Based on the idea of the director, an artist in collaboration with the scenographer, created many spheres made of glass, and inside each was an amazingly detailed realistic installation related to scenes from the play.

One day, in the training before rehearsal, I led an *inner work* exercise¹⁸ based on the process-oriented concept of *flirts* (fleeting things that catch our attention for a second). I invited everyone to think of a question that they had around their role, and then to sit in front of the spheres, close their eyes, let go into a dreamy state, and then half-open them, and with a foggy-dreamy gaze notice if something from the spheres and their installations caught their attention. When they were ready, I led them to closely observe whatever that was. I continued for some time supporting them to go further into shapeshifting into whatever had caught their attention - in Theatre Practice terms conduct psychophysical research - forming gradually a figure with movement and sound in the space. In the end, I invited them to stay deeply in the state (of mind) of that figure, and from there go back to the initial questions and notice what insights might arise.

¹⁷ Clara Schumann (1819-1896) was a German pianist and composer and married to Robert Schumann. She lived in an era when women were not supposed to have a career but she managed to become a very famous pianist, even though she gave birth to eight children and experienced huge tragedies in her life through the death of some of her children and the mental health struggles of her husband.

¹⁸ See Appendix C - 1 for the detailed description of the exercise.

What we basically did was move from one level of awareness (or dimension of our experience) to another. Starting from *consensus reality* through putting a mind-oriented question, moving then to *dreamland*, through giving permission to catch a *flirt*, which has no explanation or logical connection with the question, going further to *essence* discovering and embodying a figure, and finally connecting the levels by taking answers from the *essence* and bringing them back to *consensus reality*.

Each one found a personal source that from then on fed their relationship to the work in their own unique way, the pianist and the baritone stepped in more fluidly performing in a theatrical way, and the spheres on stage were part of each one of us, and we of them. The *dreamfigures* discovered were never on stage but they were absolutely informing the way we all were embodying our scores.

Additionally, *dreamfigures* are potential anchors in the ocean of the creative process, and on the map of the score that has to be realized anew, again and again, in each rehearsal or performance.

Each second of performative time is a place in between the three *levels of awareness*.

“By offering such concentrated, interpersonal, and “wish”-oriented moments, theatre becomes a privileged, intimate area of human experience within which one can demand that the promise of another dimension of existence be revealed, and that the impossible be achieved/experienced here and now, in the presence of other living human beings—the impossible, namely a sense of unity between what is usually divided in our daily life: the material and immaterial, the human body and spirit, our mortality and our propensity for perfection, for infinity, for the absolute.”(Chaikin as cited in Dollan, 2005, p.6)

Dreambody

Definition

Arnold Mindell refers to the concept of the *Dreambody* as the ‘forerunner of process work’ (Mindell, 2011, p.xv) and defines it as ‘the entanglement between body experience and dreams’ (Mindell, 2011, p.xvii). The *dreambody* is a transmitter of information – ‘emerging patterns beyond our identity’ (Audergon, 1994-1995, p.68), which appear from night or daydreams, body experiences, relationships with others, and the world. It includes body symptoms, any kind of disturbance, and anything that is unintentional. For example, while in this period of intense writing, I noticed that when I eat, my stomach gets sick and my body is very heavy. I do not want to eat at all but that is not possible so I started eating only raw food, a small portion every two hours, and got better. Then I did some *inner work* following my experience of the sick stomach and discovered a figure doing intense gestures with her hands saying ‘Go out, get out of me’. It makes total sense to me. I am writing something that has been inside my system for a long time, and even though it is hard and makes me confront all of my edges, it is really time to get it out of me in order to be light again and find pleasure in doing my next steps and taking in new ‘food’. It also makes sense to me that my stomach cannot digest/process cooked food. I just need the humbleness and simplicity of raw material to get the energy from nature itself. Working with this experience connected me with a deep need to cross my edges and continue writing, getting it out of me, so my writing became more fluid, and fast. Additionally, I got help on how to handle the stressful complexity of writing both for process workers and theater practitioners, by going back to the basic nature of both and speaking as simply as possible.

The *dreambody* in Theater Practice

In the studio, we work with our *dreambody* whether we know it or not, independently of any specific practice, but for sure with psychophysical-based work. There is definitely a connection

between the concept of the *dreambody*, and theater in practice and theory. The main question and core of all research on psychophysical Theater Practice have been: How to access the immense creative source of the body? Writings and problems around it have been addressed by the most important theater theoreticians and practitioners, such as Stanislavski, Chekhov, Barba, Grotowski¹⁹, Zarrilli, and others. The answer from the perspective of the Process Work paradigm is that *dreaming* is a potential *door* to access the body's source. Arlene Audergon, in her method 'Process Acting,' has already talked about the link with roots of the Theater Practice:

'Process Acting methods confirm Stanislavski's discovery that an immense creative source lies within the actor and that the psycho-physical connection is the key to tapping this source. Process Work adds a dimension to this psychophysical connection with Mindell's concept of the "dreambody"...Process Acting also adds the finding that just what feels "off" is the path to the truth for the actor, the character, and the play. Becoming aware of our most disturbing experiences and annoying communication signals is an endless creative source' (1994-1995, p.68)

Dreambody and the metaphysical element of Theater Practice

While in the first year of training with Zarrilli, I was introduced to the idea of 'making the body all eyes'. He explains:

'...a student gradually begins to embody the ideal state of accomplishment assumed in practice – a state where, according to the popular folk expression (India), like Lord Brahma, the thousand-eyed, "the body becomes all eyes" (meyyu kannakuka). This is an optimal state of awareness and readiness, often compared to the intuitive, instinctual state of an

¹⁹ Eugenio Barba (1936), Michael Chekhov (1891-1955), Jerzy Grotowski (1933-1999), Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938). Theater practitioners whose impact has formed Theater Practice as we know it today.

animal in its natural environment where it is ready to respond to any stimuli in that environment' (Zarrilli, 1998, p.19).

This is a state where one is, and is not exactly, present, where one does without exactly doing – we are in a place between presence and absence. This is where the practitioner needs to be extremely attentive to what arises and choose when and which wave of experience she will ride. Zarrilli speaks of that choice through the idea of the 'necessary':

'In the metaphysical studio, one of the most fundamental questions to explore is how to discover what is "necessary" in the performative moment. The "'necessary" is not a decision of the mind, but one of learning how to embody a sedimented decisiveness in space, through time; the how of that embodied relationship as it happens' (Zarrilli, 2002, p.164-165).

In my understanding, we are talking about what in Theater Practice we call impulses, and in Process Work is referred to usually as tendencies. We are talking about what Mindell in his earlier work refers to as an aspect of the concept of the *dreambody*, and in his later work as *essence*. 'Dreambodywork is a matter of sensing your body sensations and allowing them to direct the way you live... Shamans refer to it as "'becoming a warrior on the path of the heart' (Mindell, 1993, p. 23). These body sensations are gates to the unknown. Each moment when I let go and follow an impulse I am stepping into the unknown and as terrifying as that is, there is always new knowledge at the end, but above all, there is the force of the living power. 'Then we identify with being not only a real person in daily life but also a spirit, independent of the real body' (Mindell, 2011, p. xxviii).

The practitioner needs to be fluid enough to step into the unknown and let it guide until it reveals its own meaning, and all that needs to be done in relation to the material in hand, in relation to the input of other practitioner/s working together in the space, and with any other stimulus that might arise in the studio.

‘As a paradoxical place where it is impossible to hide, and where our experience and our “selves” are always reflected back to us, the studio offers a place for the unremitting examination of such everyday questions of experience. Perhaps our task, then, in the studio, is to “practice metaphysics,” i.e., to thoughtfully tease out in our specific modes of embodiment the assumptions and presuppositions about the body, mind, “self,” and “action” that are at “play” there, informing what we do and how we do it. That means systematic exploration of the nature of the bodymind, our consciousness, and our “selves,” not as an empty “academic” or intellectual exercise, but as an active experience “on the edge of the absent”—that place where we “risk” losing our craft, and our selves’ (Zarrilli, 2002, p.164).

Yes, in a way, theater practitioners are practicing metaphysics as they voluntarily step into all dimensions of human experience, living this life in between. We cannot measure what is immeasurable. We do not know where the limit that separates the known and the unknown is. Don Juan in Castaneda’s book ‘Fire from within’ (1991) says at some point that there is the known, the unknown, and that which cannot be known. He speaks about a final limit and the fact that there is something that is out of human capacity to know. What we can do is build bridges in order to map the places in between. Humanity has done that through religion and other spiritual practices. Theater is also one of these ways. Zarrilli defines the term psychophysical:

‘... to mark the constant dialectical engagement of the actor between the “inner” and “outer” processes and experiences that constitute acting as a phenomenon and process taking place in and through the immediate stream of consciousness and experience of the performative moment’ (Zarrilli, 2015, p.75).

He also uses the term ‘body-mind’ as ‘embodied consciousness’ (Zarrilli, 2015, p.76). Within Theater Practice, the concepts of body-mind and psychophysical are bridges, and the concept

of *dreambody* can be an invaluable ally toward opening new paths of theory and practice in theater. ‘The dreambody bridges the gap between our measurable, physical bodies and the immeasurable experiences of the so-called mind’ (Mindell, 2011, p. x-xx).

Example 3: The Dreambody in rehearsal (A)

This year I was invited by an actress whom I have known for years and have collaborated many times, to work with her on a project for a solo performance on Medea²⁰. She is a well-trained and experienced theater practitioner and has also been trained with Zarrilli, so we share a lot of common vocabulary in Theater Practice. I invited her to notice if any body-experiences or symptoms would arise during this period of work, and if yes, to share it with me and work on it in a process-oriented way.

In the Process Work paradigm body experiences (symptoms) are seen as vehicles toward change of ourselves and as alarms of our awareness. A symptom is seen as a system consisting of the victimizer (in Process Work terms the *creator of the symptom* - the energy of the symptom) *and* the victim (the one who suffers from the symptom - the experience of the effect of the symptom on the body). Usually, the energy of the symptom is an energy to which we have no access in our daily lives, and that is why it arises as a disturbing experience. By working on symptoms we can gain access to new knowledge about the process - in this case, the personal process of the actress in relation to the role she is working on.

One day, she came with one that she was experiencing: her tongue being cut on the sides as if the skin was opening, though she knew that nothing had cut her. Through our process-oriented

²⁰ Tragedy by Euripides, performed in 431 BCE. In Euripides’ retelling of the legend, the Colchian princess Medea has betrayed her family of origin, left her culture, and married the hero Jason. They have lived happily for some years at Corinth and have produced two sons. As the play’s action begins, Jason decides to cast off Medea and marry the daughter of Creon, king of Corinth, in order to gain rank. After a dreadful struggle between her passionate sense of injury and her love for her children, Medea determines that she will punish Jason by murdering not only her own sons but also the Corinthian princess. She carries out the murders and escapes in the chariot of her grandfather, the sun-god Helios. Despite the monstrosity of Medea’s deeds, Euripides succeeds in evoking sympathy for her. (Britannica.com)

work²¹, we found the *creator of the symptom*, which was a knife that was cutting with great preciseness, determination, strength, and force. As we were working on embodying this figure (the knife-like cutting energy) a smile that arose on her face every now and then, caught my attention. Assuming that was a *double signal* connected to the new and edgy energy that she was accessing, I shared my observation and invited her to focus on it. The smile became stronger and bigger. It was a sneaky smile of wild delight. She kept on working intensely physically, and her action was so precise that it made me ask her what this knife-like energy is cutting. She immediately had an image (the experience unfolded in the visual channel) that she was cutting heavy red fabrics as if she wanted to undress something. We kept working trying to get more insight from this figure, and gradually connecting it to *Consensus Reality*. The figure's state of mind was to defend herself. She was doing that by undressing herself from layers of the threatening world (the red fabrics), which had covered her body, her life, and her existence. When all the red fabrics were cut the actress fell into stillness and reported from the state of mind of the figure, 'Now everything is white.' At the end when I invited her to look (from the state of the figure) at her everyday self working on the role of Medea, she reported, 'Be undressed. Do what is right for you, it's ok. Cry, it's ok, and please give yourself an ice cream.' That was touching for the actress because it felt like self-care and compassion.

Reflecting on the work afterward, we found that she personally misses self-care in her daily life (due to the hectic way of living in the city, being a mother, working, etc.), and that as a practitioner she needs to be compassionate toward herself when working with such heavy material. Then we also connected the work with the role.

²¹ See Appendix C - 2 for the detailed description of the exercise.

Reflecting on the work afterward, we found that she misses self-care in her daily life (due to the hectic way of living in the city, being a mother, working, etc.), and then we also connected the work with her solo on Medea. Medea misses self-care and compassion to a superlative degree in the myth, but also within the centuries, it hasn't been easy for humans to approach what she did with compassion. This performance would follow the form of a meta-narration: how to say this tragic story today, and why? Can you imagine a performance on this tragic and negative figure of Medea opening with a woman in front of a fridge, eating ice-cream, and at some point, inviting the audience to eat? Ice cream is a common comforting food for children. Can the spirit of Medea be an eternal figure offering ice cream for all time?

Here working with the *dreambody* brought awareness for the actress in two ways: for her daily-life self and for her artistic self. A particular kind of playfulness was liberated and brought out authentic creativity, which always leads to the paradoxical beauty of art. The artist also grasped more of what she wanted to say with this performance in general, but also in connection with women today, and the lack of self-care and compassion they experience. Of course, the creative process was fed with ideas about staging this tremendous story of Medea.

The experience of doing deep work effortlessly (without suffering physically or psychologically) was invaluable for the actress. When following the *dreambody* 'you move through the world as if you knew it like a map' (Mindell, 1993, p.106) – 'Not-doing does not mean not doing anything, but working in such a way that the dreambody accomplishes things and the ego rests' (Mindell, 2011, p. 60).

Theater as the collective *dreambody* of society

It is already clear that in Theater Practice we constantly work with and through the *dreambody*. At first through the subjective experience of each practitioner, then through the shared experience of the ensemble, and finally through the collective experience of the ensemble and

the audience. ‘The dreambody is a deep sensation that is personal, but which also belongs to the world’ (Mindell, 2011, p. xxvi). I think of theater practitioners as those who protect and maintain the connection with the *dreambody*, for if that is lost, we are all to be lost. ‘A shamanic view of dreambodywork is that following your body is like following the lost parts of your soul’ (Mindell, 1993, p. 106).

Body Symptoms

Why *symptom work* can be crucial in Theater Practice

In the previous example, I mentioned a symptom that was not making the practitioner suffer physically, but there are those too. Theater practitioners often experience body symptoms while working, maybe more often than the average person. Theater Practice is intense psychophysical²² work, and its intensity has an impact on the body, the mind, and our inner life. Conditions are often not right or hard, and adding to that – in Greece at least - most theater practitioners have to do more than two projects at the same time, in order to financially survive. Being aware that all the above is fertile ground for body symptoms to arise, I would like to focus on how *process-oriented symptom work* can support theater practitioners in their well-being and personal growth, but also in their creative process.

‘The basic message of dreambody work is that a symptom is not only pathological defect of normal health, but a big dream’ (Mindell, 2011, p. xxi). In Process Work symptoms are seen as bottles with messages inside, sailing in the ocean of our experience. Symbols that ask us to decode them.

²² In theater the term stands for the focus of the practitioner on the constant relation between internal (psychic) and external (physical) movement.

Back in 2000, in drama school, we were working with one of our teachers on Electra²³ for our diploma exams on performance. One day, while in rehearsal, he was talking about this hardcore element, met in ancient Greek tragedies, of speaking the unspeakable, and as we were discussing how it is possible for a practitioner to embody this immense scale of meaning and human experience, he told us an old story about a legendary Greek actress who was part of performances of tragedies in the ancient theater of Epidaurus that have stayed in history. While working on Electra, this actress suddenly lost her voice without any physical warning or any other indication of being ill. Many years have passed, and I do not remember the story in detail, but I think he also told us that this has happened to other actresses while working on the same role.

It is surely important to acknowledge that working on these texts, and in Epidaurus, is a task that reaches the limit of the psychophysical process, but what would have been revealed if we could work on that symptom?

Recently I met a friend from back then (we were in the same cohort in drama school) who had this experience while working on Electra. She would often open her mouth but for some moments sound would not come out, and she was unable to speak. As I was telling her about my work on Process Work and Theater, she said to me ‘Oh, that’s great. It would have been very helpful to me back then. It was terrifying. I was so young and inexperienced and had no idea what to do. Nobody was able to help me. I did ask for help from teachers.’

²³ The action in Electra (Greek: Ēlektra) follows the return of Orestes to kill his mother, Clytemnestra, and her lover Aegisthus in retribution for their murder of Orestes’ father, Agamemnon. The main focus is on Orestes’ sister Electra and her anguished participation in her brother’s plans. To gain admittance to the palace and thus be able to execute his revenge, Orestes spreads false news of his own death. Believing this report, the despairing Electra unsuccessfully tries to enlist her sister Chrysothemis in an attempt to murder their mother. In a dramatic scene, Orestes then enters in disguise and hands Electra the urn that is supposed to contain his own ashes. Moved by his sister’s display of grief, Orestes reveals his true identity to her and then strikes down his mother and her lover. Electra’s triumph is thus complete.

Example 4: The Dreambody in rehearsal (B)

In 2011, I was a member of a theater group working mainly psychophysically, for which all of us were trained. We were working on a production of Albert Camus's²⁴ play 'The Justs' and the performance was going to be staged in a museum in Athens 'Memorial site 1941 – 1944,'²⁵ which was a detention center of Commandatur during the German occupation of the Second World War. The place is underground and under one of the busiest squares of the city. We were rehearsing in the museum for months, mostly at night, because the museum was open in the morning. The most unbelievable thing for me, which caught my attention from the first day, was that we could not hear a sound from upstairs, and of course, no one above could hear anything from down there. The play was based on a real event that happened in Russia in 1905 when a group of terrorists threw a bomb into the carriage of Duke Sergei and killed him in the name of justice. In the performance, I was embodying two roles, one of which was the Duchess. Gradually during rehearsals, I started having a symptom in my ears, but when I went to the doctor, he couldn't find anything. I had no Process Work tools back then, but I revisited and worked on this symptom later. The symptom was that I could not hear well in my daily life. Working on it²⁶, I discovered an *altered state* of suddenly being totally disconnected from the environment, looking around without being able to name what I was looking at. Inside that state, there was a pain for missing life as I knew it, but also, detachment and connection with something bigger. The Duchess was on stage for only one scene, visiting in prison the terrorist who threw the bomb. Her process had two parts that contradicted each other. One was a part of her that was still in the moment of the explosion with all the pain and anger toward the terrorist, and the other was the part of her that was able to understand and forgive him. Both of

²⁴ Albert Camu (1913 – 1960) French philosopher, author, journalist, and political activist who won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1957.

²⁵ See the bibliography for the website of the museum to look at pictures.

²⁶ See Appendix C - 2 for a detailed description of the exercise.

the elements of the *altered state* that I discovered by working on my symptom, were elements of the role's process. Additionally, I was working in a space where people were imprisoned and tortured, disconnected from life as they knew it, and on the walls, there were still engraved words that informed us that they were trying to connect with something bigger. Was I able to do my job even without this information? Yes, and I also did it well. But I am sure that working with the symptom and the awareness that comes, would have been a great help for both accessing the *altered state* of the role, and for holding myself inside such challenging work.

Being a theater practitioner myself, I know that there is this vague territory where I become transparent – a channel for the story and the role/score. To whom does the symptom belong? It is surely revealed through the physical body of the actress, but does it belong to her only? Is it connected to the role? Is it connected to a collective *edge*? Does it bring information about the culture? Probably all. 'It takes courage to let yourself be a potential channel for someone else' (Mindell, 2011, p. 38).

Channels - Signals and double signals

Theater as communication

In the Process Work paradigm, there are concepts based on Communication theories²⁷. Those can be extremely useful in Theater Practice as tools to study, analyze, and reflect on the creative process, and also cultivate self-awareness, which can lead to self-directing, supporting the actress either in difficult professional situations or in revisiting the creative process again and again. Making theater is like creating life, and one core element of being alive is communication – theater is all about communication on many levels and meta-levels. There is the life that is happening on stage, there is the life that is happening in the area of the audience, and there is the life that happens in the space between them, where stories and ideas are being

²⁷ Study human communication

communicated. Finally, there is also the life that will happen outside the theater when the audience will communicate what they experienced with others.

Channels of perception – definition

Earlier I mentioned Mindell's idea about seeing the process as a train, and now adding more elements that complete his image: *channels* of perception are the tracks on which the train moves (Mindell, 1985, p 13). *Channels* are different ways through which we perceive ourselves, others, and the world. Also, they are ways of communicating and expressing ourselves. Mindell talks about six channels of perception: visual, auditory, movement, proprioception, relationship, and world.

'Each of us has different channels for perceiving and expressing information. You have visual and auditory senses through which you see and hear. You sense yourself through feeling, through movement, and through other people. You also have a world channel through which you communicate with the world in ways that cannot always be reduced to the physics of seeing and hearing' (Mindell, 1993, p.42 - 43).

Example 5: Noticing the channels of perception and using them to map a performative score, while in the moment of giving birth to it during an improvisation

In 2019, I worked with Zarrilli, Kaite O'Reilly (an award-winning playwright), and a group of students of his, in his studio in Wales. Each day we were doing his psychophysical training, and then applying it on performative tasks, working on stage. One day, we were doing an exercise in which we were using paintings that each had chosen, and text written by us, under the direction of O'Reilly. We then proceeded to go on stage in couples, where one read her text inspired by a painting, and the other (who also had chosen the same painting earlier) worked psychophysically on stage embodying the text on the spot. I was the one embodying. At some

point, my partner narrated that the woman in the painting²⁸, who was drinking coffee on her own in an empty coffee shop, heard the door opening. Perceiving all the information and the atmosphere that was being gradually created, I ‘heard’ the door opening from behind. The text said that the woman did not turn, but how to embody hearing something from behind without moving? My eyes, which until then had been looking at the cup of coffee that the woman was holding in her hands, were now up, looking in front, and then turned to my right, trying desperately to see behind, without moving the rest of my body, apart from a subtle movement in my spine, as if air touched me from behind. The rest of the group reacted with their breath, something like ‘wow’. What had just happened was a moment of creating an intense atmosphere on stage, and embodying shifting the energy in space and time, by doing almost nothing – visible at least – because, in moments like this, the actress is doing a lot. But how to do it again? How to revisit it?

At that point, I was already studying Process Work and was exposed to its tools and concepts. Being able to break down and analyze the process, I could notice that, in Process Work terms, my psychophysical experience manifested first through the auditory channel, listening to my partner reading her text and the door ‘opening’, then through the *coupled channel* of proprioception and movement, feeling the air that came from the opening of the door, touching me from behind, moving my eyes and spine, and finally through the relationship channel with whomever it was who ‘opened’ that door, and with my partner reading the text, because without them I could not exist on stage²⁹. That is a map that I could revisit. Through perceptive

²⁸ ‘The woman’ by E. Hopper (1927)

²⁹ As always in theater, I was working on two levels of awareness: in consensus reality with my partner, her voice, etc., and in dreamland imagining and embodying the atmosphere of the painting and the text. That is also useful for mapping in theater in order to revisit.

channels, the actress perceives and also expresses the role or score. These are two processes happening simultaneously and tracking them is challenging.

Signals and double signals - definition

Channels are sectors of information expressed in the form of signals of communication. Signals can be *primary* or *secondary* meaning intentional or unintentional. Unintentional signals are also called *double signals* and are not congruent with what i.e., one is saying, they can be unfinished, not making sense, etc. ‘They are what makes you amazing, impossible, incomprehensible, powerful, and troubled’ (Mindell, 1993, p. 26).

Example 6: The double signals of a role³⁰

‘The actor’s intended communication includes both intended and unintended signals of the character. There is an additional set of signals which are unintended by the actor. These are the signals which most disturb us in a poor performance, and which can lead to the depth and refinement of a great performance’ (Audergon, 1994-1995, p.64).

Back to the example of the performance in the museum. The other role I was holding was that of one of the terrorists, the youngest in the group and the least experienced, who at some point was very afraid and wanted to give up and leave. As I said before, back then I had no Process Work tools but now I can see clearly that working on that role was about embodying constant double signaling. He was there because of a belief system of justice, but at the same time, he was deeply afraid, and even questioned and doubted the act of killing a human being, even if he was the Duke. All this needed to not be visible to his comrades, yet visible to the audience as subtle *double signals*.

³⁰ See Appendix C - 4a and 4b for Process Work theory on the concept of *signals* of communication and an exercise in detail.

One day we were working on a scene between my role and the leader of the terrorist group. My psychophysical exploration led me to do all the scene whispering. Afterward, there was a strong interaction between my partner on stage who was pissed off by the whispering, and the director who was standing for the idea of keeping this for the final composition of the performance. I think what happened, or at least part of what happened, was that it was not exactly my partner who was pissed off but the role he was embodying - the leader of the terrorist group who was receiving all this *double signaling* from one of his soldiers in the most important day of their operation. None of us was aware of all that, so we just had tension between us, and inside us - the director with the other actor, and me internally as I was very careful (unfree) from then on when we were working on that scene.

After the performances, I received a lot of positive feedback from the audience. A lot of people shared that they felt they could see themselves, and that it was so real. None of them was a terrorist but all of them experienced this situation of sending or/and receiving *double signals*, and probably, especially in a situation where they were somewhere they wanted to leave but were not able to say it. *Double signals* are part of human communication, and as such, strong relating points between the stage and the audience.

Example 7: The world channel in performance

‘I call the sense, or communication channel for environmental experience, the ‘world channel’ (Mindell, 1993, p. 42). In 2017 I was working in the ancient theater of Kavala, a town in northern Greece. The performance was directed by Laura L. Tesman, an American director who had created a dramaturgy based on the myth of Io,³¹ and focused on the constant stinging

³¹ ‘Io, in Greek mythology, daughter of Inachus (the river god of Argos) and the Oceanid Melia. Zeus fell in love with her and, to protect her from the wrath of Hera, changed her into a white heifer. Hera persuaded Zeus to give her the heifer and sent Argus Panoptes (“the All-Seeing”) to watch her. Zeus thereupon sent the god Hermes, who lulled Argus to sleep and killed him. Hera then sent a gadfly to torment Io, who therefore wandered all over the earth’ (Brittanica.com).

by the gadfly, which was driving Io to wander the world without rest. I, together with another actress, was holding the role of Io. There was a piece of text, a long monologue, that I really liked. It was speaking about finding peace, beauty, and being in connection with nature. I delivered that monologue from a spot outside the main stage of the theater, climbing on a big ancient rock.

Why I went there to speak this monologue, in one of the rehearsals, is still unknown to me. Everybody was saying that the acoustics in that theater are not good if you step out of the main stage – acoustics and working with the human voice is a huge issue in open ancient theaters – but when I tried, it was fine. I was sure this was the spot. ‘Finding the right spot on earth is a matter of world channel awareness’ (Mindell, 1993, p. 59).

The production was part of a festival, so we were going to perform only once. On the night of the performance, when I climbed on my rock and started speaking this text, I heard a bird ‘talking’ together with me. I knew about a bird called *Gionis*³² presenting itself in areas where ancient theaters are and had heard it myself as an audience member. My whole body was listening to the bird. I deeply wanted to listen to it more and more. A part of me was aware that if I wanted to follow that experience, the rhythm of my speech had to change – rhythm is an important element of performing, and also agreed with the director and ensemble – and even though it was a monologue, meaning that I wouldn’t cause confusion to a partner (which would be the case in a dialogue), any change on the spot creates a kind of confusion to the system of a performance, and yet, a performer should be free to follow an impulse if she feels it is ‘necessary,’ as Zarrily taught me, in order to open a new path of awareness for the performance. These are complex moments in performance that need some kind of performing matureness

³² Written here as heard spoken in Greek. The official name of the bird is Otus Scops or Scops Owl. All kinds of owls symbolize wisdom in ancient Greek thought because they are birds with high visual ability inside darkness meaning that they are able to see what is not seen. An owl was also the symbol of Athena the goddess of wisdom.

and quick decision-making. Another part of me was warning me that I might forget my lines, that I might get lost and make a fool of myself on stage, but it was impossible to let it go – it was the only way. The bird would ‘speak/sing’ with me when I was not speaking. We were breathing together. At some point, we found a pace together; the text was flowing, and the bird was inhabiting my in-breaths. It was an amazing experience of wholeness, and I was so grateful.

Later on, I thought that it made sense. Io is a mythical figure who cannot find peace. In this performance, the director with this text created a moment of peace for her. I do not know if it was Io, or her connection with each femininity in this world who is ‘cursed’ not to find peace, or something else, but I do know that the *world channel* was supporting that moment with all its magical and yet unknown power. I was just there doing my job, which means being open, attentive, and fully present to whatever comes and connecting everything in a meaningful way.

Afterward, people from the audience shared with me how touched they were, my director was not angry with me, a legendary theater practitioner who happened to be there that night told me he admired my maturity on stage, and last but not least, a member from the ensemble with whom we did not have the best of relationships shared with me that it was a very emotional moment – that was the only moment of peace between us.

‘You must consider the possibility that each of us is a channel for the world, just as the world is a channel for each of us’ (Mindell, 1993, p. 45). Ancient theaters are spaces of high intensity and the *world channel* is really open there. Theater in itself is a gesture, an action that creates high intensity, which then leads to a potential opening of the *world channel*, therefore theater is a way to bring to life the interconnected nature of the Universe.

Second attention

Roots and definition

The *second attention* is a concept coming from Shamanism and Buddhist meditation. It is the ability to notice what we usually do not, inside or around us. So, in Process Work terms we have ‘first attention’ which is attending to perceptions that are close to our identity and belong to our *primary process* and have to do with the materialistic world, our daily life, our goals, and concerns, and we have ‘second attention’ which is attending to perceptions that are further away from our identity and belong to our *secondary process*. Through our *second attention*, we can notice small movements, subtle experiences, accidents, lapsus of language, etc. It leads us to the *dreaming process*, the unconscious, as it presents itself at any given moment.

Second attention and being fully present in Theater Practice

Until now it has been made clear that a theater practitioner needs to be extremely attentive to herself, others, the environment, and the world. Additionally, she has to be attentive while doing so – has to let go and follow impulses and *secondary* material, while at the same time, mapping, so that she is then able to study, analyze, reflect, and finally, revisit. Being attentive needs trained perceptual skills. Zarrilli (2015) says on this matter:

‘Therefore, actor training might productively be viewed as a specific form of “perceptual apprenticeship” (Downey) through which the actor learns increasingly subtle and complex modes of directing one’s attention and opening one’s sensory awareness in/to/through the specific tasks, actions, and qualities that constitute the horizon of a performance score actualized in a specific theatrical environment. How might training in perceptual skills such as directing attention and/or opening a specific sensory awareness be taught to actors as a way of enhancing the actor’s ability to more fully engaged/embodied/experience each task/action of a performance score’ (p. 83)

In his approach, this was happening through training in Yoga, Tai-Chi, and Kalarippayattu (a South Indian martial art). Being in an open dialogue with him, I add that Process Work can offer great help in training perceptual skills even for beginners in drama schools – maybe, especially for them.

Being attentive in Theater Practice, as described above, demands a kind of personal strength and stamina in order to sustain attentiveness, a kind of ‘warriorship,’ as Mindell puts it: ‘As a warrior, you use your second attention, flexibly step out from time, and leave the cycle of problems behind. You get off the wheel of life and death and become your whole self by flowing with experiences’ (1993, p. 28).

By training *second attention* one trains perceptive skills, meaning the access to notice *signals* from all *channels*, and the ability to notice also the subtle ones, and those that are not wanted, seem wrong or are unacceptable. *Second attention* needs, and in that way trains, a kind of compassion towards self as, at these moments, one trusts her perception towards all things that arise, considering all are parts of her nature and of the nature of the moment. ‘Become your whole self,’ says Mindell, and the translation of this in theater language could be being fully present. Zarrilli in his essay ‘The actor's work on attention, awareness and active imagination: Between phenomenology, cognitive science, and practices of acting’ (2015) stresses the fact that being attentive is not passive but energetic; one is doing by not doing.

By directing attention, one is potentially fully present in each moment – present to what is visible and to what is invisible, to what is known and what is unknown. Being fully present is a subjective experience based on perception that leads to unique personal and artistic processes. When actors are not present on stage their creative process is dead, and that produces poor performance, but when they are fully present, the stage becomes a place of high intensity, which

gradually feeds the field around it. These are the performances, or at least moments, one cannot forget.

To conclude, being attentive, or in Process Work terms using the *second attention* is crucial for Theater Practice for two reasons (1) it supports a deep way of being fully present, which is a major thing in theater, and (2) it can potentially enrich the creative process.

Second attention, being fully present, and when the impossible is the only possible

Moments of full presence are moments when *consensus reality* touches *dreamland* and furthermore *essence*. Moments of complete unity of all levels. Moments when the impossible is the only possible. In the previous example in the ancient theater, the bird was not part of the composition of the performance. It did not happen on stage intentionally. It was part of the landscape of the ancient theater, yet by welcoming it, these two worlds (the world of Io and our world) became one.

I believe that when actors use their *second attention* and are totally present in the moment, theater can train the audience's perceptive skills through modeling.

The invisible, when perceived, has an impact that is visible. Within these moments lies the potential possible in the impossible, which is comfort food for our souls, a reassurance that this world can be a better place, and hope. Jill Dollan talks about these moments coining the concept of 'utopian performatives':

‘Utopian performatives describe small but profound moments in which performance calls the attention of the audience in a way that lifts everyone slightly above the present, into a hopeful feeling of what the world might be like if every moment of our lives were as emotionally voluminous, generous, aesthetically striking, and intersubjectively intense’ (2008, p. 5).

Edge

Definition

In Process Work, the *edge* is the limit of what we think we are and what we think we are not, the line that separates what we know about ourselves and what we do not. ‘Edges are names for the experience of confinement, for the limitations in awareness, for the boundaries of your own identity’ (Mindell, 2014, p. 67). *Edges* are personal but they are also collective and cultural, and sometimes it is difficult to separate. Crossing an *edge* is always a dynamic experience, and when *edges* are explored or crossed one is more fluid with her identity. ‘Liberation in process language means being aware of your edges and being able to move with them or around them’ – ‘Liberation is detachment from edges and the cycling processes, which give you the repetitive, hopeless and bored experience of life’. (Mindell, 2014, p. 67)

Art is all about crossing *edges*

One of the functions of all art forms is to cross *edges*. Artists often cross many cultural *edges* and many have been loved or/and marginalized because of that. Theater in itself is by definition crossing the *edge* of exposure and meeting the deepest fears, mistakes, and traumas of human nature and history. Theater is made by a sequence of crossing *edges* done by many people (dramaturg, theater practitioner, roles in the play, audience, etc.), and in different eras has had unique meaning and connections with social, and political circumstances.

The theater practitioner and the multiple *edges* with which she is confronted

In the studio, multiple *edges* might occur for theater practitioners while working: (1) personal *edges* that come from their personal history and are triggered by the work; (2) personal *edges* that come from their relationship with the role; (3) *edges* of the role in the frame of the story; (4) cultural *edges* of the practitioners' own culture, of the culture in the play, and of the culture of any specific audience; (5) *edges* of the theater form itself. I believe that edges referred to in (1) and (2) are never spoken about, those referred to in (3) more easily and often, and those

referred to in (4) depending on the awareness of the group working. Finally, those referred to in (5) are always a matter of research for practitioners/innovators who are working towards creating a new understanding.

When a practitioner is confronted with personal *edges* she needs support, otherwise the *edge* sucks her personal and artistic energy and exhausts her, and in some cases, it can also create confusion, and body symptoms. Working on that is crucial for the practitioner's well-being, as well as the creative process. If one does not work on her own *edges*, how would she embody this process of crossing the edge for a role? If we are not aware of the fact that some *edges* are not only ours but belong to cultural beliefs, how are we going to address them through our artistic language? In the example that follows (example 8) I will elaborate on this line of thought.

Theater as a point of *edge* and its potential contribution to *edge work*

Until now we have seen the studio and the stage as places in between, and places of high intensity. Going further, I am now adding that it is an *edge* place. It is the limit between *levels of awareness*, the known and the unknown, the visible and the invisible, me and not-me. Hellene Gronda says about the *edge*: 'It is both a place and an event. It is both a constraint and an activity.... It is also a place of meeting the 'not-me.' The edge is 'the boundary' and 'a point of contact' (2013, p. 27)

Her thinking is deeply beneficial when seen in the context of Theater Practice. The studio and the stage are 'the boundaries' and 'the point of contact,' and theater practitioners are *edge* workers who are doing work for themselves, and for all, trying to grasp and hold moments of making possible the impossible through their own individual artistic language. Gronda continues:

‘Inhabiting your individuality may mean negotiating cultural edges, deep-seated norms and taboos; and this is why I am convinced that by increasing awareness about edges and edgework we can reduce some of the unnecessary suffering on both personal and social levels that occurs at this negotiation point between individual and culture’ (2013, p. 98)

Theater through processing *edge* experiences on stage (through the role/score, play, etc.,) is a potential means of ‘increasing awareness about edges and edge work’ and in this way a means of potential contribution to ‘reduce some of the unnecessary suffering’.

Example 8: Interconnection of the actress’s deep personal edge and the play

Around ten years ago, a huge *edge* of mine, and my lack of awareness of it at the time, or/and ways to work on it, led me to the very hurtful, personally and professionally, decision to leave my theater group. I was working with my theater family at the time, a theater group created by a team of young theater practitioners working on psychophysical theater. We were rehearsing for our next production, which was on the play ‘Woyzeck³³’ by Georg Buchner³⁴.

The play has four main roles, and more than ten others, each of which appears in the play for one scene only, all carrying deep symbolic content. Our director had the idea to cast four actors with one role each, and one actress with all the other roles but as one figure, which includes all, and which would be the main dramaturgical lever; a figure that is narrating this story through time, and forever, so that it wouldn’t be forgotten. That actress was me.

³³ Dramatic fragment by Georg Büchner, written between 1835 and 1837; it was discovered and published posthumously in 1879. The main character is a religious man preoccupied with sin and guilt. An army barber, he endures psychological humiliation by his captain and painful physical experimentation by his doctor to make extra money for Marie, his common-law wife, and their child. Woyzeck is jealous of Marie’s affair with a drum major. Filled with rage, he explodes into violence. Büchner did not organize the work into acts, and there is no definitive text of the play. The events, rather than appearing in definite chronological sequence, are presented as a series of related occurrences. (Britannica.com)

³⁴ Georg Büchner (1813 – 1837) was a German dramaturg, author and poet.

During rehearsals, the process got really heavy for me, even though I was producing deeply rich performative material. It is important to mention that it was also a period when our relationships in the group were suffering; one member had already left, and after me, another one followed, and then another one, until at the end the entire group changed, apart from our director. I was constantly on-stage rehearsing, as this figure would be constantly on-stage in the performance, and I was desperately researching a way to embody this big one who includes all, and who moves fluidly within human nature, through ages and genders, through love, hate, detachment, sarcasm, pain, pride, embarrassment. I was working intensively in rehearsal and outside, studying, analyzing, searching for material, searching, and searching. Gradually, I was building something that made sense but at the same time, I was diving deeper and deeper into *secondary material*, until almost every rehearsal was a gate to an *altered state*.

One day, in an improvisation, the basic gesture of that figure was revealed to me, and it was whirling. I had no experience in whirling nor had I ever trained in it but I was very well trained in psychophysical theater and had physical and psychological stamina - all of us did and were doing amazingly demanding things on stage from a psychophysical perspective.

The way we were working was by conducting psychophysical research on selected scenes of the play. We would have one hour of training, then we would discuss a bit about the scene(s) we would work on, and afterward, we would go on stage starting from a point zero, just standing, breathing, and being attentive. Gradually, and by following impulses, personal and in relation to others, the piece of text selected to be worked on would come to life. This way of working is extremely demanding as it is a dive into the unknown, per se. When we discovered something that we wanted to keep for the final performance, we would keep training on it within in rehearsals, and at some point, it would become easier; like an athlete who at some point jumps over barriers, as if it is the easiest thing to do.

Whirling was the glue for me that put all the pieces together and through that, I could follow a path of many psychophysical transformations - *shapeshifts* in Process Work terms - while also being able to be in touch with that big one, which included all. I was enjoying it deeply, and at the same time, was afraid of this process. I hit a huge *edge* of mine, and only became aware of it some years later while studying Process Work; the *edge* I mentioned in chapter one, of being multiple yet one, fluid yet solid. I started questioning even the creative material I was producing and felt I would be professionally embarrassed with this performance. Being unaware of all with which my *edge* was knitted, while also struggling with relationships in the group and other pressures I had at that time in my personal life, I left the group. I remember my director saying to me 'Please don't throw this material in the garbage' but I was not able to listen to him nor share the fear I was experiencing. In Process Work terms I had no access at all to *metacommunication* or *eldership*. The performance went ahead, but without replacement; the figure was not on stage. This figure inhabited my dreams for years, and I still want to go back and do this performance one day.

This *edge* was fully mine, connected with my personal history and inner life, as mentioned in Chapter one. Perhaps it was a gift from that figure to hit on it because it then started to become more visible, and from then on has had a huge impact on my personal growth.

At the same time, it also belongs to the culture I am in, a world that asks me to be one thing only in order to be recognized. Of course, all women are confronted with that, as we are asked to be mothers, wives, lovers, professionals, etc., while the culture (at least the one I come from) feeds us with the mindset that we cannot be successful in all and that when we focus on one role (part of ourselves) we fail in another. I.e., if a woman focuses on her career she cannot be a good mother or if she focuses on her children she will never have a successful career. Many examples can be found that impact men too.

Finally, this *edge* also belongs to the play. All the characters are put in the play by the author not with their names but with their characteristic status (doctor, captain, drum major, child, grandmother, etc.). All roles are just one thing, and they are not allowed to be anything else.

Arlene Audergon writes:

‘As the actor’s internal struggle was made explicit, it often mirrored the core dramatic conflict of the play. In fact, when we were unable to grasp the core conflict of the play or scene through reading it, working with the actor’s edge led to a useful analysis of the play’s meaning’ (1994-1995, p. 66).

As said earlier the studio and stage itself is an edge and therefore ‘...a site of negotiation and the ever-present opportunity for growth.’ (Gronda, 2013, p. 99)

Art is a path of individuation, and walking this path the artist meets and is confronted with all kinds of *edges*. Probably/hopefully the audience too.

Dreams

Definition

‘Seen from the viewpoint of the river, dream reports from the night are pictures of deep processes that have occurred. Remembered dreams are unconscious aspects of yourself frozen in time. They are like a photo album of an awesome trip’ (Mindell, 1993, p. 21).

Process Work has a respectful attitude toward the unintentional and the unknown that might reveal itself in any way, through any channel. Therefore, in Process Work, *dreaming* is a process, and dreams are points or snapshots of that process. The word *dream* includes night dreams, daydreams, the first phrase, image, music, atmosphere, or mood with which we wake up in the morning, or/and the last before we slept, but also includes sudden fears, feelings, or ideas that are disturbing us during the day. Working with dreams aims at making visible the

interconnection between dreams and daily life, and between a source, from which they originate, that is deep-seated inside of us and our daily self, the background of our experience.

Theater as a dream door and finding my roots in dreams

This source is also the motherland of our creative impulses, and where the heart of the artist pulses.

When I was little, theater was the *dream door* that led me to connect with this source. Theater was the only place my existence made sense. Maybe because of that, I still see theater as a *dream door* for practitioners as well as the audience, the community, and society. This is the theater I work for and love.

Working with my dreams as a person and as a theater practitioner feels like being held like a child by her mother. It helps me acknowledge and identify with my roots, see where my ideas and aesthetics originate, and recognize creative patterns. Additionally, it helps me feed my creative process in a unique way and give birth to authentic artistic work, relate with immense depth to any given material of work, and follow my own creative, artistic, and professional path, against all odds. That is why I am persuaded that *process-oriented dream work* would be an invaluable tool for theater practitioners themselves, for the creative process, and for theater as a form of art and as a medium for collective dreaming.

Dreams and theater in history

Before sharing some examples let us see a brief history of the relationship between humans and dreams, which I find very interesting, as it helps me understand why theater as a profession has always been partially marginalized, or not been taken under consideration with the respect it deserves. At the beginning of human civilization, the first societies did not separate the world of dreams from reality. They considered it as a continuation of reality, so their dreams were a source of guidance. At the beginning of the 19th century, dreams were denounced as people

believed that they were coming from stress, noise around the person who was asleep, or even dyspepsia. At the beginning of the 20th century, Freud revived the importance of dreams and their meaning, which was a revolution at the time. During the same period, quantum mechanics introduced the idea of tendencies. In 1920, Heisenberg³⁵ argued that the wave function represented a tendency toward something that could happen in reality - i.e., there is a realm of tendencies (non-dual realm, spacetime) from which everyday reality (duality, realm of space and time) arises. During this century, quantum theory and the concepts of conscious and unconscious appeared, and Einstein introduced his theory of relativity. Freud introduced the idea of dreams being “the royal path to the unconscious,” and later Jung saw dreams as teleological. Likewise, theater in ancient times, in many different cultures, thrived. It was holy and sacred, connected with God, and a means of discovering knowledge. I believe that the history of dreams and the history of theater share a lot in common. This is for me a point of further exploration in the future.

Example 9: Dreams as a creative source and a way to touch the memory and emotions of the audience³⁶

Artists often share that it was a dream from which they got the idea about something they created. In 2012, I was rehearsing with my previously mentioned theater group on Franz Kafka’s³⁷ ‘Metamorphosis,’³⁸ holding the role/score of the Mother. One night, I had a dream: A woman was wearing a big dress and as she was moving, I realized that the dress was also a chair, so every now and then, she was sitting on it. The next morning, in the rehearsal I realized

³⁵ Werner Heisenberg (1901-1976), German physicist and one of the pioneers of Quantum mechanics.

³⁶ See Appendix C - 7 for a detailed description of an exercise working on a dream.

³⁷ Franz Kafka (1883-1924) is a German speaking novelist.

³⁸ Symbolic story published in 1915. The opening sentence of The Metamorphosis has become one of the most famous in Western literature: “As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect.” (Although Samsa has sometimes been described as a cockroach, the German word Ungeziefer does not refer to a particular bug.) His tyrannical father forces him to hide in his bedroom, and, after his father throws an apple at him, Gregor slowly dies from both his family’s neglect and his own guilty despair. (Britannica.com)

that I had been working with a chair for some time already - a chair that was like my role's 'island' or private space in the studio, and later on stage. Without Process Work tools back then, I started noticing, while in psychophysical research, that there was already a relationship built between me/the role, and the chair. Taking this further, I started moving in the room with the chair attached to me, not an easy task as it was not exactly a chair but a small armchair. All this started making sense for the role; a woman who could not take a stand to protect her son, a woman who was existing like a piece of furniture, and who also was trying to find her own safety and privacy. My director and the scenographer saw a meaning in all of this and decided to make it the aesthetical code of the performance. All actors on stage had a piece of furniture painted in the same color as their costume so that at moments, it seemed like the furniture was part of the costume. Often, there were deep comments from the audience about that. That image narrated much more than words did, in this specific play (adaptation of the novel). A dream is mine but it does not belong to me. Through a dream, one can touch others in places and parts of themselves that live in exile.

'A great work of art is like a dream; for all its apparent obviousness it does not explain itself and is always ambiguous. A dream never says "you ought" or "this is the truth". It presents an image in much the same way as nature allows a plant to grow, and it is up to us to draw conclusions' (Jung, 1966, p. 136)

Dreams come as we are working. Some are obvious, others not. Some are pleasant, others not. I believe that creating the space to work with dreams with theater practitioners would bring a lot of new information to the creative process. Working with dreams creates psychophysical anchors for the actress. Anchors of the kind that one does not have to worry about whether she would be able to revisit, nor if the creative material would still be alive tomorrow. They are

always there, like the strings of an instrument that she can touch anytime and listen to the same tone each time.

Example 10: Who is *dreaming* of me? Connecting with the *dreaming* source of the project.

How do we choose plays? Do we choose roles or do roles choose us? Why this play/role, and why now? These questions travel inside me often and are potential research questions for further exploration in the future, one that would entail seeing the sequence of personal history and life of an actress in relation to the roles she has performed. I am sure that there are multiple and complex factors that lead a theater practitioner to each project, coming both from *consensus reality* and *dreaming*. The process-oriented idea that the actress and her project are all dreams too, is one that inspires me, because through it I can always meet a source of strength, and in many cases, give birth to insightful creative material.

While working with the actress I mentioned in example 3, on the solo performance on Medea, in our first session-rehearsal, we did a process-oriented *inner work* exercise³⁹ to connect with the *dreaming* source of the project. When I do this kind of exercise with experienced theater practitioners, I dive a bit deeper into psychophysical research. Through this kind of work on the role and over time we found the main lever of the narration and the dramaturgy. From the beginning, the actress had inside her the question of, why Medea? Why this story again? Do we not know it? Who wants to tell this story again? Well, for this project it is Kalachia, a *dreamfigure* that we found (the name was invented and given by the actress immediately after we finished the exercise, it has no meaning that we know of), a Goddess of the sea with the main characteristics of freedom, fluidity of transformation, and destigmatized access to pleasure. She wants to tell this story again, through this actress. This will never be revealed to

³⁹ See Appendix C - 8 for a detailed description of the exercise.

the audience, but it is a source of inspiration and spirituality, as much as an inner continuation for the actress, and practicality for the construction of this performance. It is of course a unique connection between the material and the actress. And it makes absolute sense to need an ancient and wise mediator between a woman of the 21st century and Medea. Kalachia is a source of connection, and at the same time, a source of detachment, and that combination is needed for the actress who works psychophysically. Remember the ice cream in the narration of example 3? Kalachia can start narrating the extreme story of Medea by eating and offering ice cream, the basic comfort food for all children and a symbol of childhood, for she is a child herself, and a mother of all.

Example 11: Following the *dreaming* process in rehearsal as pre-performative training

In 2017, we were working with a director, who is a good collaborator and a soulmate in the profession, on creating a performance for the Athens & Epidaurus festival. The performance would be on Lycabettus hill and begin at sunrise. This director is researching and working on a ‘body-landscape performance practice’⁴⁰. When one performs outside the theater, one needs to be constantly aware of, and embracing of changes that appear through the environment. For that reason, we were rehearsing both indoors and outdoors from the beginning of the rehearsing process, in order to train.

That day we were in a big park in Athens, which has ancient findings, moving from site to site, doing psychophysical research through individual improvisations based on a given material. I chose a story about the Acropolis, in which there was this persistent question, ‘What if the Acropolis falls?’ The director gave us some time to prepare and then each to share. I chose my spot in the park but had no impulse to prepare as usual, working towards a score that I would then share with the group. That day I just wanted to lie down and breathe. That meant I would

⁴⁰ Tzakou, geopoetics.com

have to try doing it on the spot. I felt a bit disoriented and disappointed with myself because of that mood of mine. When my turn came, we moved to my chosen spot, where now were some people with their dogs. I was certain I would not be able to do it. As we were getting closer, the dogs started barking at us. I have no idea what got into me. I went very slowly on my hands and knees, like a dog, and started my improvisation from there. I walked like this until I found the center of the field in which we were, and I lay down there as if sleeping. The dogs were still barking at me, and my group was kind of disoriented but gradually understood that I was going to do it and sat on some rocks to see and support me with their presence. The smell of chamomile, which covered the field, took my attention. A minute later the dogs calmed down. What a mystery! I have no idea how that happened, but I do know that chamomile is used to reduce insomnia and anxiety! The people accompanying them realized that we were doing something and left. It was like tension in the space was released and now there was peace. The sun was setting slowly. I was following my impulses without giving any space to the voice in my head yelling ‘What the hell are you doing?’ I got on my knees and my hands and started ‘running’ around like a dog, finding little objects on the ground and taking them to the feet of the people in my group who were witnessing, just as my dog does when he finds a good piece of wood at the park and brings it to me to play. I noticed my nose really woke up; I could smell all the smells in the park. Then, I suddenly got up on my feet and walked slowly in the other direction, having my back to my group. I sat on a rock, looked around, and smelled. I saw another rock, smaller yet still big. I stood up, walked there, took it in my arms, then went back and sat on the big rock. I took out my one breast and started ‘feeding’ the rock while singing. The sun was setting, and all the colors were different.

I really did not know where all that came from but working on this material that day, it became clear that the only thing I could do was meet and make peace with my animal side, connect with this land, and ‘mother’ these ancient rocks so that they will not fall - ‘breastfeed Acropolis’

as a symbol of holding alive ancient wisdom, mind, and beauty. I could stay there doing that forever.

My group witnessing was deeply touched. Who did this work? How many forces were working simultaneously? The initial material, the ancient rocks in the park, the dogs, the sun, the chamomile, ...? My experience was that of being moved to do as opposed to that of doing, like a *dreaming process* was moving me and like I was part of a *dreaming process*. That day 'I no longer "attacked" the activity or the moment. My body and mind were being positively "disciplined", that is, for engagement in the present, not toward an end or goal.' – '...sensing myself simultaneously as "flowing" yet "power-full", "centered" yet "free", "released" yet "controlled" (Zarrilli, 1995, 2002, p.183)

'The artist is not a person endowed with free will who seeks his own ends, but one who allows art to realize its purposes through him. As a human being, he may have moods and a will and personal aims, but as an artist he is "man" in a higher sense – he is "collective man", a vehicle and moulder of the unconscious psychic life of mankind. That is his office...' (Jung, 1966, p.133)

It is essential to say that, by then, I was studying Process Work. In retrospect, it is clear to me that cultivating my relationship with the *dreaming process*, along with my well-trained psychophysical apparatus and previous experience, was making me a practitioner I did not yet know a lot about. I was finding out – and will continue to, forever, each and every time anew – that from one point on it is not about knowing that the *dreaming process* is there, it is about giving permission to follow it.

Following a *dreaming process* on the spot in the studio is a demanding process that requires warriorship, artistry, and subtlety, as well as courage and a deeply loving feeling for the human condition and nature.

‘The High Risk Theatre actor is an actor/warrior. They must develop their energy in order to reach the state where being a warrior means to be genuine, and to be a genuine warrior means to be an Actor, with a capital letter. It means to have the energy and the courage to maintain ourselves in the living instant, in synchronicity of mind and body. It is to have the power to remain in authentic reality. To run away from the present, to live as if death did not exist, is cowardness. In the actor/warrior path, it is fundamental to live in the present, with open eyes. To celebrate the moment in which natural hierarchies blossom. To feel the melancholy of the artist facing the world’ (Nunez, 2019, p. 277-278).

Example 12: Collective dreaming in performance

In 2006, I went to the ancient theater of Epidauros to see a performance of Sophocles ‘Antigone,’⁴¹ directed by a legendary director and performed by an amazing ensemble. The entire performance serves as a reference point since then, but I want to share a specific unforgettable moment. At one point in the text, in a very intense scene between Kreon and Antigone, the latter has this line: ‘I was born to share love, not hate.’ During that scene, I looked around me and saw all of us witnessing the scene with every cell of our bodies. It really seemed as if we were all breathing together. When the actress playing Antigone, an amazing practitioner and beloved teacher of mine, uttered this line, all – around ten thousand spectators - burst into applause. The air was full of excitement, emotions, warmth, respect, and gratitude.

⁴¹ “Antigone is the daughter of Oedipus, the former king of Thebes. She is willing to face the capital punishment that has been decreed by her uncle Creon, the new king, as the penalty for anyone burying her brother Polyneices. (Polyneices has just been killed attacking Thebes, and it is as posthumous punishment for this attack that Creon has forbidden the burial of his corpse.) Obeying all her instincts of love, loyalty, and humanity, Antigone defies Creon and dutifully buries her brother’s corpse. Creon, from conviction that reasons of state outweigh family ties, refuses to commute Antigone’s death sentence. By the time Creon is finally persuaded by the prophet Tiresias to relent and free Antigone, she has killed herself in her prison cell. Creon’s son, Haemon, kills himself out of love and sympathy for the dead Antigone, and Creon’s wife, Eurydice, then kills herself out of grief over these tragic events. At the play’s end Creon is left desolate and broken in spirit. In his narrow and unduly rigid adherence to his civic duties, Creon has defied the gods through his denial of humanity’s common obligations toward the dead.” (Britannica.com)

‘Communitas, a term popularized in performance studies scholarship by anthropologist Victor Turner, describes the moments in a theater event or a ritual in which audiences or participants feel themselves become part of the whole in an organic, nearly spiritual way; spectators’ individuality becomes finely attuned to those around them, and a cohesive if fleeting feeling of belong-ing to the group bathes the audience’ (Dollan, 2008, p. 11).

What is it to be human and what is justice? These are the eternal questions of theater, and sometimes it happens that these questions are posed like an arrow striking its target right in the center. For me, that was a moment of collective dreaming of a better world, a just world. I do believe that this is one of the most extraordinary elements of theater, its potential immense social impact and, therefore power. Theater creates psychophysical anchors for the audience too. Anchors of the kind that one will always carry and will go back to find shelter, strength, inspiration, reference, or just a moment of being with oneself. ‘...the audience as a temporary community, perhaps inspired by communitas to feel themselves citizens of a no-place that’s a better place’ (Dollan, 2008, p. 15).

‘Whenever the collective unconscious becomes a living experience and is brought to bear upon the conscious outlook of an age, this event is a creative act which is of importance for a whole epoch’ (Jung, 1966, p. 128).

Inner work

Definition

Inner work is a way to work on ourselves. It is a process-oriented way of meditation. The most important element is the application of *deep democracy*, a principle that stands for fairness and equality toward all experiences that might be present. All are valuable and important and all carry information, which when seen and addressed, leads to knowledge. *Deep democracy* apart from a principle is also *metaskill* - feeling attitude with which one works on their inner

experiences. Inner work has steps and needs one to be trained in it, but at the same time is flexible and applicable to different situations; one can create special exercises for specific frames i.e., rehearsal, class, etc.

How *inner work* can support Theater Practice

Through *inner work* exercises, one cultivates (1) *second attention*; (2) awareness of perception on two levels, what is here that she attends to, what is here that she marginalizes; (3) awareness of *channels*; (4) compassion toward the self, which enables one to go deeper in any experience; (5) access to the unknown, as one is following what arises without planning; (6) *metacommunication*, which comes from growing a fair observer who is detached and able to track and talk about the experience. Through repetitive practice, one is gradually developing awareness of changes and *edges*, as well as *inner critical voices*, so she can stay with them and work, get to know them, and hopefully discover new knowledge either for the self, for the task at hand, or both.

Using *inner work* in Theater Practice trains and cultivates all the above extremely important elements for the work and deepens and enriches the creative process, as described in detail in the previous examples. Additionally, it creates an atmosphere of working without hunting for a specific result, of getting familiar with the idea that through working with one's self one is working for others too, and last but not least, it creates a sense of becoming an ally for one's own self.

Another observation I have made when applying *guided inner work* in groups is that it supports the process of team building. Firstly by getting to know each other through our *metaskills* and *dreaming processes* and secondly, by identifying a common space where we all share the experience of being at an *edge* and having *inner critical voices*. It also trains people in it so in time they can practice it on their own.

Until the present day, I have applied *guided inner work* exercises for individuals and groups in rehearsals and classes. Some of these exercises already existed and were given to me throughout my training in Process work, while others I created. As time goes by, I create more and more my own exercises.

Many of the examples in this dissertation are based on *inner work exercises* (see Appendix C). The exercises focus on (1) feeding the creative process and giving birth to creative material by processing the material we are working on and building the personal relationship of each practitioner to the work; (2) preparing practitioners to enter the work with awareness of their own process in relation to the work at hand; (3) grasping the creative source and force of the project; (4) processing challenges that arise i.e. *edges, inner critics, etc.*

In many cases, inner work helps us to process personal history and unprocessed elements of inner life, which might get triggered, while working, by the role, material, condition of work, or relationship with colleagues - in Process Work terms to *burn our wood* and grow. Otherwise, as anyone in Theater Practice knows, we *burn our wood* on stage, which might be a temporary relief but firstly, does not really help us grow, and secondly, does not make us complete artists.

I have often also used *inner work* as check-in and/or check-out, to support people to wholly arrive and let go of their hectic daily life, while at the same time informing me, and the group, about what is present in the field each day, as well as what people take with them when leaving.

Theater as guided *inner work* for the audience

Have you ever been in the theater feeling that, while witnessing the performance, you are understanding, or even processing, something from your personal history? If theater does not interrupt life, if it does not evoke the audience's inner life, if it does not create vibrations or even a small shock; if it does not become a place for the audience to meet themselves, then it has failed.

In *inner work* exercises, we are turning inside toward the self, and following the process as it arises each moment, like following a river. Performance is like a partiture for music. To a high degree, it is fixed, yet this fixed way of playing the partiture needs to be met each evening anew. If we look at the fixed part of it as a process, a river, which we have mapped in order to create an experience - a river made by light and darkness, words and silence, gestures and stillness, actions, and pauses - we can say that making performance is like creating an *inner work* exercise, which we first do ourselves, and through which then we guide others.

When I create an *inner work* exercise for the class or rehearsal, I do not know how it will land on others nor what it will evoke for each person, but I do know why I made it and the materials I used. In the example earlier about the moment in Epidaurus when thousands of people were applauding the line of Antigone 'I was born to share love, not hate,' no one in the ensemble knew that this would happen, but they all knew that they were mapping a river in order to process what is justice and how a human being can stand for it.

Group process, Worldwork, and Field

Definitions

Group process is a process-oriented tool applied to discover multiple experiences, voices, and *roles* that exist within the group, define *polarities* present and facilitate interactions between the poles, and explore the *secondary* processes of groups. *Group process* focuses on a specific theme. The theme is chosen through *sorting* which is:

'The beginning phase of a *group process*, in which participants raise issues and topics they would like to process, and the group comes to an agreement (*consensus*) about what to focus on during the remaining time of the *group process*' (Process Work Institute Glossary).

In some cases, the theme is chosen by the facilitators. In a *group process*, facilitators are there to support the group by noticing and *framing* all *primary* and *secondary* processes that manifest through *signals*, while also supporting participants to express and go deeper in their experience. Every group can be seen as a *field*, and each participant is part of, and a channel for, that field. The elements that constitute the environment of the group (light, colors, shapes, *atmosphere*, etc.), the social-political factors of the time, and the cultural background of the group are also parts of the *field*. When we are in a group we perceive the field through all *channels* - the sensory grounded ones, as well as *relationship*, and the *world channel*.

Deep democracy is again a major principle underlying process-oriented facilitation of a group process.

When a group is working on a theme, it is doing work not only for itself but for the world too, in the sense that a group is a channel for the global field.

Worldwork is a process-oriented community building and conflict resolution activity for small or/and big groups based on *group process* and the principle of *deep democracy*. *Worldwork* is a methodology with which one can work on the challenges created by the different social issues.

Process-oriented facilitators use the various methodologies of Process Work and its tools in order to support the group to track, follow, *amplify*, and *unfold* its process.

Group process as community building in Theater Practice

Sometimes, when I teach or train groups of theater practitioners, I do *group processes* to work on issues of the profession that always come up: systemic oppression, rank dynamics, marginalization due to many different reasons, being used as a machine rather than an artist, not feeling valued by society, feeling that making theater is pointless in a world that is falling apart, etc. Processing these issues creates a feeling of being in a community, and most

importantly, a feeling of community even while being in conflict. I believe that cycles of open *group processes* for theater practitioners would support community building among theater practitioners in a fresh and deep way..

Group process as ensemble building in Theater Practice

When working in or with an ensemble, whether in class or performance making, there is a sense of togetherness that is essential to build, and many methods have been created in order to work on that. The work is about (1) getting to know each other in terms of personality, artistic language, way of thinking, and way of relating; (2) creating a common understanding of the play; (3) creating a common language on stage. Furthermore, through ensemble building, we are trying to create a way of being together on a personal, artistic, psychophysical, and intellectual level. In a way, we are trying to create a common ‘culture’.

Group process supports this cultivation of togetherness in a unique way because it invites the group to revisit what it means to be together. In process-oriented thinking, togetherness means standing and holding together whatever comes up between us with awareness, compassion, and curiosity. Thus, in all the above sentences the word ‘common’ would mean not one and exactly the same, but a shared mosaic of many, often different, or even in conflict energies; i.e., not one and exactly the same understanding of the play but a shared mosaic of many experiences of the play.

It has been etched in my memory how a group of teenagers worked with *group process* in the context of theater classes for youth that ran throughout the academic year. They were between 14 and 16 years old, and some of them had been my students for several years. I was using *group process* in the context of the class to process themes present in the theater plays we were working on. One day, they came up with the proposal to do a *group process* every three months on issues that trouble them. They suggested that at the end of each *group process* they split into

small groups and create improvisations using the awareness raised in the *group process*. I agreed and we proceeded to work in this way. During that year the work that was done was impressive in terms of their growth both as individuals and as theater students. When I asked them what was so important for them in this experience, they replied that they do not have a place where they can speak about what troubles them and that putting their discoveries (from the *group process*) on stage made them feel that they can affect the world and change it (even though there was no audience since it was a closed class). Last but not least, they said that they experienced a strong bond between them.

Group process to analyze the play

Analyzing a theater play is part of the rehearsals in order to approach the world of the play. A play is a tight structure of words, actions, emotions, relationships, thoughts, etc. In order to put a play on stage there must be a good understanding of it, to know each corner of its structure. There are many approaches to the analysis of a play, some done around the ‘table’ as described in the theater language, meaning through reading, discussing, analyzing the language, etc., and some done on stage through improvisations and acting exercises.

At some point, I started experimenting with how *group process* could be a way to analyze a play. Applying *group process* for this purpose, with theater practitioners in rehearsals and students in classes informed me that: (1) People jump in with much enthusiasm, perhaps because this new tool in rehearsal is refreshing and intriguing; (2) It offers a holistic approach to the play, using both the analytical mind and psychophysical research.

The modality with which I have been experimenting includes the following steps and is a combination of *group process* followed by what I call ‘cyclical group improvisation,’ which I created based on existing improvisational tools that I have encountered throughout the years. It is meant to be done in several days, each step on a different day, and can be repeated

depending on the context of the work. Day 1: First, we do a reading of the play with the group. I then invite them to write on a big piece of paper (paper rolls are helpful as you need a piece of paper, several meters long, depending on the size of the group, so all can write) themes they identify in the play, places that appear, atmospheres, problems that make it difficult to put the play on stage (i.e. natural aspects as the sea, unnatural figures, magic, violence, etc.), questions that arise in or through the play, associations. Day 2: Grouping and summarizing all these, we arrive at some core themes, and we chose one to step into a *group process*, which we proceed to do. Day 3: With the knowledge and awareness from the group process, we enter the improvisation. The group sits in a circle on the ground. I provide stimulus to the group from the large piece of paper on which we first wrote. The members of the group are invited to follow psychophysical impulses. I.e., one person gets in the middle of the circle and starts an improvisation. Gradually, more people step into the improvisation, always by following their own impulses in relation to what already is proposed. When the improvisation has explained itself (you never know exactly when that has happened but noticing the energy is a good way to judge) I invite the group to go back to the circle, and I give the next stimulus. Over time I also give them selected phrases from the play, and they are also free to use music, costumes, objects, etc., gathered by the group in relation to the play, and placed in the room outside the circle. I often give one hour for this but with experienced practitioners, it can go on for longer, as it is an endless process.

What happens here is that through the first phase of the *group process*, the play becomes a vehicle for the group to understand itself and the world in which the group is embedded, grasp the complexity of the play, as well as, meet with a certain kind of inner fluidity and compassion, realizing how each role is part of the other and vice versa – like in life. The awareness raised feeds the acting process, the play, and the staging of it. Finally, the reality produced on stage is authentic and capable of looking at the audience straight in the eyes.

Much more research on this is needed, and I am still working on it myself, but the following are some challenges I have identified thus far when doing *group process* with actresses as part of the preparation for a performance: Theater practitioners might have the tendency to (1) take a position and then stand for it until the end, maybe because in *group process* we name 'roles' the different voices that arise, and actors hold tightly to their roles; (2) play, perform and not be there as themselves, noticing what happens to them trusting that their own experience, reaction, emotion is of value and can inform the creative process; (3) dislike facilitation because they experience it as if someone is holding them back from playing-performing. It also gets complicated when relationship issues between them arise, in which case, they need to be worked on and then connected to the creative process.

Theater as Group Process and Worldwork

Despite the fact that the medium is different, thinking of theater as *group process* and *worldwork* connects us with the deep social root of art, that of art as a political or/and activist action.

Every play and every story narrated on stage includes and addresses questions, symbols, and conflicts that travel through time. It is in itself a group process, in the sense that we have different roles relating to each other, and following the play or story we delve into the experience of each role, the interaction between them, and the new knowledge that we meet for ourselves, the other and the world. The theater is a place of high intensity where world issues are processed and as Jill Dollan explains:

'Theater and performance offer a place to scrutinize public meanings, but also to embody and, even if through fantasy, enact the affective possibilities of "doings" that gesture toward a much better world' (2008, p. 6).

In a *group process* and in *worldwork* there are facilitators and participants who speak, and others who remain silent witnesses and are holding the space. In traditional theater performance, the audience remains silent (of course there are other modalities where the audience is invited to actively participate). Performance does not exist without an audience. It is mandatory to have at least one spectator. As mentioned again, the audience has a big impact for many reasons but also because it changes in every performance. If the audience is there holding the space, then there is a relationship between them and the performance.

‘...such spectatorship might encourage them to be active in other public spheres, to participate in civic conversations that performance perhaps begins. - [but are also] arenas for the formation and enactment of social identities, then audiences at performance can be seen to be actively forming themselves as participating citizens of a perhaps more radical democracy’ (Dollan, 2008, p. 11)

Often, at the end of a *group process*, I am left with the feeling that there is a special bond that has been developed between the people who have been in it together. They might have entered the room as strangers but they leave with this bond. If we see the audience through Dollan’s eyes:

‘.. [I see] the audience as a group of people who have elected to spend an evening or an afternoon not only with a set of performers enacting a certain narrative arc or aesthetic trajectory but with a group of other people, sometimes familiar, sometimes strange. I see, in this social choice, potential for intersubjectivity not only between performer and spectators but among the audience, as well’ (Dollan, 2008, p. 10).

But what brings this specific group of people today to the theater? What brought these specific thousands of people to Epidauros to see Antigone (example 12)? I do not know the answers to these questions, but I am sure that every audience is meant to have an experience together and

sometimes the momentum is such that apart from each one's subjective experience of the performance there is an intersubjective experience which is there even if not expressed.

Based on the line of thought described in the previous paragraphs, for the last few years, I have been working on an experimental modality of performance and have applied it to teenager and adult audiences. It is a performance with participatory and educational lines, which is held by theater practitioners and process workers - the performance is followed by a *group process* with the participation of the audience - and aims at working on social challenges. The audience is a maximum of thirty people. We first all meet in a circle and just share our names, and then the audience is given participatory instructions. The educational line of this kind of performance has to do not with teaching the audience, but with creating the time, space, and procedure in which we can all learn something new about ourselves, others, and the world. The participatory line has to do with participatory actions, prepared during rehearsals using tools from Educational drama⁴² and *Process Work* and 'knitted' into the play and the performance. I.e., at specific and chosen moments the performance stops – 'islands' of time and space are created – and the audience is invited to take part in some participatory action (through writing, moving, drawing, etc.,) which is related to what is happening in the play at that moment. I facilitate the participatory parts, the duration of which is ten to fifteen minutes each. The audience then sits down, and the performance continues until the next 'island'. At the end of the performance, there is a *group process*, facilitated by process workers who are present from the beginning of the performance, in order to process the experience (of the performance and the participatory parts), and give voice to the audience. The whole procedure lasts three hours with no breaks.

⁴² A form of theater art with educational aim. Was developed in the UK during the second half of the 20th century inside the frame of Progressive Education. Its techniques are based on active thinking, problem-solving, using imagination as a means to understand, creating meaning, and more fundamental ideas of informal education.

The feedback has been strongly positive, probably for many reasons, but I think mainly because this modality meets the need of people to gather and search together for what can be done in these troubled times in which we are living, to sit closer to themselves and others, even for just three hours. Nicolas Nunez speaks about his participatory theater performances using the term ‘High-risk theater’ and explains why he named it such:

‘In order to go through the different stages of our participatory theater designs, a certain kind of physical, mental and emotional effort is needed. Certainly, the High Risk dramatic structure demands quite a lot from the participant but, for that very reason, it returns benefits’ (Nunez, 2019, p. 267)

He sees this theater as a ‘cultural device’ that can play a major role in personal and collective well-being through ‘keeping the soundness of our social body as well as to nourish our spirit’ (Nunez, 2019, p. 276)

Example 13: The inner *group process* of a role

I always feel that when you meet a person you meet a group of people, meaning, all the different sides this person is experiencing inside. We are all a *group process* internally! Here is an example I have done, working on a role from that point of view.

How many roles live within a human being? How many roles does a person inhabit? How many roles lie within one role of a play? I’m going to refer again to the project on solo performance-making on Medea. For this project, I listened to what the practitioner wanted to create and then worked out a sequence of process-oriented exercises to support her in reaching her performative goals. The form was going to be a solo performance, text-wise a monologue, and a sequence of psychophysical transformations on stage. It would be a meta narration of the myth, meaning: (1) the actress would not be Medea, but embody her process; (2) there would be multiple materials in use, mainly text from the play of Euripides but also songs, poems, text

written by the performer, etc. It is a project based on the personal relationship that the actress had and wanted to explore with Medea. Therefore, that was where I focused on, exploring those two processes - the actress's and Medea's - as well as, how they met each other in the present. First, we worked on some guided *inner work* exercises to explore the *dreaming* source of the project (which has been mentioned in example 10), and then on *flirts* to explore how Medea was presenting herself to the actress, and, in a way, vice versa⁴³.

Following that, we worked on breaking down the process of Medea into the multiple roles she inhabits in the myth and then saw all of them as a system, a *field*, and a *group process* happening constantly within her⁴⁴. Medea is stigmatized throughout the centuries as the mother who murdered her two sons, and of course, brilliant performances around the world have tried to defend her, or at least understand how she ended up doing such an action. Yet, every actress confronting this role is awed by this action of infanticide. We wrote down the roles we could identify in her, each role on a different piece of paper, and put the papers on the floor creating a big circle, as if all of them were sitting in the room. Woman, mother, wife, princess, witch, healer, betrayed, killer, foreigner, daughter of the Sun, *inner critical voice*, angry, and more. In the weeks that followed, we worked on different levels of psychophysical exploration: First, *shapeshifting* into each role, exploring how she moves, looks, speaks, and the state of mind. Then, moving, *shapeshifting* from one role into the other, exploring the inner movements happening in between. Up to the current moment, we have discovered that the glue is some kind of struggle toward deep freedom to move between extreme experiences of anger,

⁴³ See Appendix C - 10a for a detailed explanation of the work.

⁴⁴ See Appendix C - 10b for an explanation of an exercise based on the concept of *Group Process* and on improvisational tools.

tiredness, love, hate, tenderness, fighting, etc. The next step is weaving all that with the text. The project is still in progress and will be performed in December 2023.

In the reflection that followed our work, the actress was constantly sharing what a relief and pleasure it was to do such deep work without suffering, which is a common experience for many performers. To avoid any misunderstanding, the work is not easy; to the contrary, it is extremely demanding, but it is non-aggressive towards both the role and the performer. Both have time and space to present themselves to each other and relate, in their own unique way, as much as possible, each day. Aggressivity is present in Theater Practice in several ways, i.e., forcing practitioners towards results, and often, in very little time. I find the idea of non-aggressivity crucial for today's art. 'Genuine art – dharma art – is simply the activity of nonaggression' (Trungpa, 1996, p.2)

Critic and creative blocks

Working with myself, as well as, with other theater practitioners in my practice as a process worker, both in rehearsals and in classes, I see that process-oriented work can be a game changer when working on an *inner critic* and creative blocks. It is impossible to follow a process without, at some point, confronting inner criticism. The process surrounding inner criticism involves dealing with what can be personified as an *inner critic* - a 'marginalizing force that is usually structured by a belief system' (Process Work Institut Glossary). Dealing with the *inner critic* means, making space for this inner figure to speak, as well as interact with the identity. There is usually either a message or an energy that needs to be picked up, and used. This is not work done once and then completed. It is an ongoing process to relate with our *inner critic* and the blocks that come with the creative process, or in our professional path.

The art industry, anyway, includes critics looking at the art; every work of art is meant to be criticized. There are professional critics whose work it is to judge art, and for many reasons, they should be doing this work. It is an ongoing discussion in the field of art, whether or not, and how, criticism is indissolubly connected with art itself. I believe it would be refreshing, to say the least, for this conversation, to invite critics and artists for a series of *group processes*.

Altered states

Definition

An altered state is an alteration of what is supposed to be a normal state within factors of culture. Altered states are possessive experiences, and we tend to dislike, marginalize, and see them as illnesses. Strong emotions like anger, despair, pain, sadness, jealousy, etc., can lead to an altered state. Altered states, in the Process Work paradigm, are considered parts and manifestations of our human nature and we are invited to see them as experiences which if treated with respect and curiosity, reveal their wisdom.

Altered states in daily life

For the purposes of this project, I am focusing on how these experiences are present for all of us in daily life, and not on how they are, or should be, treated in a therapeutic frame. As Mindell says: ‘At one time or another, we all live between two impossible worlds: the world of everyday reality and the world of inexplicable nature’ (Mindell, 1993, p. 39).

Altered states are experiences that are out of our control and as such, they bring us in front of / or inside unknown areas of ourselves. When the unknown is entered without preparation ‘...you become possessed by moods, spirits, emotions, complexes, and symptoms’ (Mindell, 1993, p. 82).

In daily life *altered states* often present themselves through moods and complexes. In both cases, we find ourselves inside the experience without awareness of how that happened, and

without access to our ability to explain our experience. In the Process Work paradigm, we work with moods by supporting the person to experience the *altered state* and notice what arises, trying to find out what is behind them. For example, I often get sad suddenly, and most of the time my *inner critic* has attacked me without me noticing it. Complexes are stronger experiences than moods because it is very difficult to get out of them and it is impossible to focus on anything else than this experience. They might be connected with strong *edges*, or/and rooted in traumatic experiences. For example, I often get into a complex of not feeling enough, which is rooted in my childhood. When inside these kinds of experiences, the way we see ourselves and the world is different from the way we normally do.

The ‘assemblage point’ and entering altered states with awareness

Carlos Castaneda, in his book ‘Fire from within’ (1991), where he talks about his apprenticeship with a shaman named Don Juan, coins the term ‘assemblage point’. Mindell defines the assemblage point as ‘the way you identify, assemble and conduct yourself and your sense of reality’ (Mindell, 1993, p. 5-6). Schwarz adds the idea of ‘...a specific type of shift in awareness’ (Schwarz, 1996, p. 6).

Both Process Work and Shamanism stand for the knowledge that can be found in the unknown, and both have tools to prepare a practitioner to be able to go into the unknown and track their experience. ‘The focus in Process Work and shamanism is not upon developing the ego further but rather developing awareness of change’ (Mindell, 1993, p. 27). It seems, that the key is the ‘awareness of change’, with which a trained person can enter the unknown without losing herself.

Connection of the above with Theater Practice

In the introduction of this work, Thespis and Dionysus have informed us of the root of Theatre Practice in rituals, as ways of reaching states out of the ordinary, and of theatre itself having

been born inside such a state. It has also been mentioned earlier that an actress dives deep into human nature, that actors are the guardians of dreaming, and that they train themselves endlessly in order to sustain their job.

An actress cannot step from daily life into rehearsal or performance. Training as a warm-up is mandatory in between, in order to create a kind of a 'shift in awareness'. As elaborated earlier, an actress needs to be deeply attentive in order to be fully present in each moment on stage. A specific kind of concentration is needed, as one has to direct attention equally to inner and outer processes. Training is the time when one is heightening her awareness in order to consciously 'shift her assemblage point'. We can say that theater practitioners voluntarily step into *altered states* of consciousness. Preparing with Zarrilli this shift happened by practicing Asian martial/meditative arts. In Process Work, it happens through getting familiar with *dreaming* processes, noticing *signals* and *double signals*, being aware of all *channels of perception*, and all *levels of experience*, etc. This is an element of the work that might be inspiring for some and terrifying for others, but I believe all should be aware of it.

Apart from this being an implicit element of Theater Practice, the actress will be confronted with *altered states*; either her own or those of the role/score. In both cases, process-oriented tools would be extremely helpful for her own well-being, and/or the creative process. In example 4, a symptom helped me to grasp in a sensory-based way the *altered state* of the Duchess. In example 8, the figure in relation to my personal edge was putting me in an *altered state*. In example 3, Medea is in an *altered state*.

Every role is someone in an *altered state* because good plays are not narrating ordinary stories, and process-oriented thinking around these experiences helps me to think that the actress's job is to reveal how this state is meaningful within the context of the play, and not only.

Conclusion

For all the above-mentioned Process Work concepts I have given definitions, spotlighted how they are essential elements of Theater Practice, explained how they can be invaluable tools, and offered examples within Theater Practice. The main points that have been made are that Process Work methods and tools can:

- Be applied in all stages, pre-performative, training, rehearsal, and performing.
- Support personal and artistic growth.
- Support the well-being of practitioners by processing disturbances, blocks, inner critics, edges, altered states, and body symptoms.
- Enrich the creative process by connecting and transforming all the above into creative material, discovering the personal and unique relationship between the practitioner and the material she works on, and therefore leads to genuine art.
- Help track, map, and therefore be able to study, reflect, and re-visit the creative material.
- Be tools to analyze the play or the role not as story and character but as processes.
- Work toward ensemble and community building, and sustainable relationships.

Working in this way there is an effortless feeling not in the sense of easiness but in that of non-aggressiveness toward the practitioners themselves, the play, and the audience. Additionally, process-oriented tools are means to cultivate awareness, compassion, and access to the unknown. Finally, all the above impact the theater being produced, and the way practitioners think about their practice, as they are capable of seeing theater as a way to access *dreaming*, a way of awakening and producing values, and as a place where the impossible is possible, where people can find hope. Through all that, a deeper relationship with the audience is created and a reclaiming of the value of theater as art and as a powerful social tool.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown that adding Process Work to Theater Practice can be valuable and innovative.

Both fields are very broad so I have just scratched the surface of the connection between them. For the last few years, I have been experimenting with applying Process Work to Theater Practice, either on myself or on other theater practitioners and students, and I have structured some theoretical foundations around my practical experiments. Each time I try something out, at least one more potential application opens up in front of my very eyes. As with all processes, this project is endless.

In chapter one, I shared aspects of my personal history showing how they have formed my dreams and therefore my creativity. Hopefully, I also showed how Process Work helped me to truly inhabit this source as a means of creating something new. As I am reaching the end of this paper, I also know that sharing the processes, which have led me here is a way to ‘mother’ myself, through appreciating my roots, laying either into people or into dreaming processes. ‘Mothering’ is also a deep part of my creative process. Being aware of the foundations of my creativity has been extremely important for me as an artist both in terms of my well-being and my art.

I truly believe that every drama school or drama department in universities should have a process-oriented class to support students in processing their personal history, and its relationship with their creative process. That would support deeply their well-being and enrich their creativity, both while studying and after. Studying theater is also studying yourself. At the same time, I strongly believe that theater students should have access to individual therapy sessions while studying. In Greece, there is not one drama school that offers that, even though we have more than twenty drama schools in Athens. As I have shared in this paper, in many

ways, theater practitioners step into challenging areas of relating with themselves, the others and the world, and they need support and tools to work with all that in a way that equally supports their well-being and their creativity.

In chapter two, I introduced my core idea about weaving Process Work and Theater Practice, which is that awareness, compassion, and access to the unknown are principles they have in common. Based on the process-oriented concept of *metaskills*, coined by Amy Mindell, and her argument that they can be cultivated as all spiritual art forms, and on Zarrilli's psychophysical approach to Theater Practice as a spiritual art form, I led my line of thought to the realization that Process Work can support Theater Practice to be more aware of these three principles, and by doing so, to reconnect theater to its ancient mission of embodying awareness, compassion, and access to the unknown for society. I explained how Process Work paradigm as a thinking system and practice can be of great help to theater practitioners in order to break down these concepts and track, step by step, how they are part of the creative process. These three principles are also a source of inspiration for theater practitioners, and empowerment around their position in society in an era when arts in general, and theater especially, are undervalued. They are a way to reclaim the lost value of the profession and redefine the relationship between artists and the audience.

In chapter three, I linked basic Process Work concepts to Theater Practice through theory and examples of experimental and research-based applications that I have done. In this chapter, in essence, I wrote the theory behind these applications. One of the main questions in Theater Practice, throughout the years, has been how to access the unconscious creative self through indirect non-analytical means. I show that Process Work can be an invaluable ally in this endeavor, in many ways, but mainly through the tools to access the unconscious creative self and to open paths, which one can revisit. I used different examples to show how Process Work

can be integrated successfully into all parts of Theater Practice (pre-performative training, rehearsing, performing), enriching the creative process and holding theater practitioners in challenging moments. I also showed that Process Work apart from tools is also a way of being, and therefore, it informs and impacts the way one teaches. Last but not least, I pointed out the immense help that Process Work can offer to the phenomenological research of acting through its tools to track human experience. It is important to know more about what acting is in order to understand why it is essential to humanity, and therefore hopefully, to use Theater Practice with all its potential power towards growth.

There are more Process Work concepts, which are potentially useful for Theater Practice, about which I have not written in this paper because more time is needed for further experimental applications in order to share thoughts and findings.

At the beginning of this paper, I was wondering whether what I introduce, links only theater practitioners from specific 'schools' (i.e. psychophysical), and whether it can be applicable to both experienced and beginners in Theater Practice. Now I am able to partially answer that question. If Process Work is integrated into the beginning phase of studying Theater Practice, which requires making all the necessary adjustments for beginners, it can be applicable to many (if not all) theater methodologies. In professional rehearsal and performance theater, practitioners already experienced in psychophysical processes, body-mind, and meditation techniques, are more likely to respond to this kind of work and benefit from it.

Writing this paper is sharing what I already have found, and at the same time, giving birth to plenty of new questions that await further exploration.

It is time for me to get out of the rabbit hole for now.

If you are a process worker, I dream of you going to the theater tonight. If you are a theater practitioner, I dream of you searching for a process worker nearby.

I dream all of us will always dance! Dance the known, the unknown, and the space between them!

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Appendix A

Process Work Institute glossary

Following is a list of terms that are used in the field of Process Work. References in brackets refer to the following: [SF] Mindell, Sitting in the Fire, p. 41-43 [Y1] Mindell, The Year 1 p 148 – 151 [PMW] Diamond and Jones, A Path Made by Walking [DD] Mindell, The Deep Democracy of Open Forums

1. Altered state: A state of mind that is not our primary, logical, typical state from which we function (unless we are someone who typically functions from an altered state!)
2. Amplification: Part of the unfolding process. It is an attempt to increase the amount of energy/awareness that is with the secondary signals, once they have been identified.
3. Assemblage point: A way of describing your identity - the way you see yourself “assembled” together. A transformation process may involve a shifting of you assemblage point, so that you see yourself and/or the world in a different way.
4. Atmosphere: A surrounding influence or environment. Awareness of the atmosphere is an important facilitation tool.
5. Attractor: Something that draws our attention in a positive way. It is often part of a secondary process.
6. Big U: A state where both the primary and secondary identity are integrated. This term is often used when doing vector walks. It helps create a state where there is access to a larger sense of self, which supports eldership and more effective facilitation.
7. Burning your wood: Doing “inner work” so that one’s buttons are not so easily pushed in triggering or challenging situations.

8. Channel: The way in which we perceive and experience. Includes vision, hearing, movement, proprioception, relationship, and world.
9. Channel switching: The act of consciously or unconsciously moving from one channel of perception to another in order to broaden awareness.
10. Childhood dream: A recurring dream from childhood that is connected to one's life myth
11. Congruence: When signals expressed are congruent with experience and description. When there is a lack of congruence we often experience "double signals".
12. Consensus: An agreement to address a certain topic or follow a direction.
13. Consensus reality (CR): The everyday world of time and space that is generally agreed upon as "real" and is perceived through everyday awareness [PMW p. 13]
14. Coupled channels: "A coupled channel is one in which an experience is simultaneously conveyed in two channels"(Diamond J. and Spark Jones L., 2018, p.65)
15. Critic: A marginalizing force that is usually structured by a belief system, which renders an experience secondary. [PMW p. 102] one given to harsh or captious judgment [MW]
16. Crossing an edge: Crossing from a primary to a secondary process. It usually involves venturing into unfamiliar territory. It may be a momentary experience or a more long- term experience of expanding identity.
17. Deep democracy: Helping the various parts of a group to come forward and interact with each other, including those parts that have been silenced or seen as disturbing. Out of the interaction between all of these parts, conflicts can be resolved and a deeper sense of community created. [PMW p. 11]

18. Double signal: An unintended message contrary to another present message, which usually confuses communication [Y1]
19. Dream door: A secondary signal that provides an opportunity to go more deeply into the dreaming process.
20. Dreaming or Dreaming processes: Energies that have an impact on us but do not belong to the realm of Consensus Reality.
21. Dreamland: The world of the dreams, projections, emotions, fantasies, and the like [PMW p. 13]
22. Edge: A point of contact between the everyday identity and an unknown, or dreaming, experience. It is the boundary between the primary process (everyday identity) and the secondary process (emergent identity). Edges are also dynamic moments of transition, in which a known way of understanding oneself is disrupted and transformed by something new. A primary process marginalizes certain experiences, thereby creating an edge. Once secondary experiences are brought into everyday awareness, they become primary, rendering other experiences secondary and creating new edges. [PMW p. 126] A communication block that occurs when an individual or group, out of fear, represses something that is trying to emerge. [SF]
23. Edge behavior: A collection of signals that indicates one is close to an edge. These could include giggling, being quiet, signs of embarrassment, resistance, shyness, etc.
24. Edge figure: A role/voice that tries to convince you that it is not a good idea to cross your edge.
25. Eldership: An attitude of support and caring for the well being and diversity of viewpoints of a group or community.
26. Escalation and de-escalation signals: Signals which indicate escalation or de-escalation of a process. For example, an increasingly loud voice could be an escalation signal.

27. Essence (or sentient) level: A sentient reality beneath the threshold of awareness, an unbroken wholeness out of which signals, dreams, and all other experiential phenomena arise [PMW p. 13-14]
28. Feedback: An indication about the success of a particular unfolding process.
29. Field: The atmosphere or climate of any community, including its physical, environmental, and emotional surroundings. [SF] A vague atmosphere that we sense with our feelings, fantasies, and hallucinations, capable of differentiation and interaction between roles or parts [Y1]
30. Flirt: A subtle signal of a secondary or tertiary process.
31. Group process: A method for exploring the secondary process of a group.
32. Inner work: The process of focusing on one's disturbances, reactions, signals, in order to integrate them into a larger understanding and experience of one's identity and process. Doing Process Work on oneself.
33. Level change: A shift in the awareness level of an individual or group. This could be from consensus reality to dreamland, dreamland to essence, or in the other direction as well. This is significant for a facilitator to notice, as it points to the type of intervention that will be effective.
34. Life Myth: Jung originally coined the term to describe a patterning for life-long personal development... A person can work with a life myth consciously and creatively instead of being unconsciously propelled by it. [PMW p. 148]. The life myth may be revealed through childhood dreams, chronic body symptoms, relationship patterns, and other recurring experiences.
35. Little u: The self that is connected with one's primary identity
36. Metacommunicator: A part of oneself that is "outside" of the process and can communicate about what is happening.

37. Metaskills: The feeling attitudes, values, and beliefs that deeply inform our our way of working with others. Metaskills encompass beliefs about life and death, nature, learning, and growth, as well as the feeling with which skills are applied. [PMS p. 32] The feelings with which theory, information, and techniques are applied. [SF]
38. Mood: A conscious state of mind or predominant emotion [MW]
39. Nonlocality: The principle in physics describing the apparent lack of space between two signals[Y1]
40. Polarity: The quality or condition inherent in a body that exhibits opposite properties or powers in opposite parts or directions [MW] One role or side of an external or inner conflict.
41. Primary process: The self-description, methods and culture with which you and your group identify yourselves. “Process” in primary process emphasizes how identity changes in time. [SF] Our common, habitual identity and focus. [Y1]
42. Process: The flow of overt and covert communication within an individual, family, group, culture or environment. Process includes inexpressible feelings, dreams, and spiritual experiences. [SF] The flow or exchange of information; a perceptual matrix; a pattern describing a network of interconnecting signals and channels. The total process
43. ... is a combination of ... identified and potentially identifiable signals. When process is used as a verb it means enabling the above signal and message flow to occur. [Y1]
44. Process Mind: A state of mind which welcomes all other states.
45. Rank: A conscious or unconscious, social or personal ability or power arising from culture, community support, personal psychology and/or spiritual power. Whether you earned or inherited your rank, it organizes much of your communication behavior, especially at edges and in hot spots. [SF]
46. Rank awareness: An awareness of one’s rank in a particular context. This is often used in the context of becoming aware of where one has high rank.

47. Relationship channel: Experiences or events that are communicated through, or felt in relationship to someone else... If other people feature strongly in a person's speech, this suggests that the process is being experienced in the relationship channel. [PMW p. 67]
48. Role (or timespirit): A cultural rank, position, or viewpoint that depends on time and place. Roles and timespirits change rapidly because they are a function of the moment and locality. Roles in groups are not fixed, but fluid. They are filled by different individuals and parties over time, keeping the roles in a constant state of flux. [SF]
49. Secondary process: Aspects of ourselves that we, as individuals or groups, prefer not to identify with. Often we project these aspects onto people we view as the "enemy." We may marginalize or admire these qualities, creating inferior or superior traits in other groups. [SF]
50. Sentient level: See essence level.
51. Signal: A momentary, elementary perception in a particular mode or channel; a piece of information [Y1]
52. Sorting: The beginning phase of a group process, where participants bring out issues and topics they would like to process, and the group comes to an agreement (consensus) about what to focus on during the remaining time of the group process.
53. Timespirit: See roles.
54. Unfolding: The process of exploring a secondary signal or signals.
55. World channel: [The channel] in which experience is centered in the environment (for example institutions, world events, the earth, nature). [PMW p. 25] One is often in the world channel when one experiences events "happening to" oneself.
56. Worldwork: Community-making and conflict-resolving approaches to small and large groups (up to about 1000 people) based on deep democracy... [DD p. 2]

Appendix B

Table of examples

	TITLE	CONTENT and RESULTS	PROCESS WORK TOOL	DESCRIPTION
1	Secondary processes are art's source.	Example of noticing and unfolding a secondary process during a training session on improvisation resulting in increased flow of creativity.	Noticing and unfolding a secondary process.	Detailed step-by-step description is in the text.
2	How using levels of awareness supports theater practitioners.	Example of noticing and unfolding a flirt during preparation phase of performance resulting in each theater practitioner connecting with a personal source that from then on fed their relationship to the work in their own unique way.	Innerwork based on the process-oriented concept of flirts.	In Appendix C - 1 there is an exercise that describes an <i>inner work</i> for catching and <i>unfolding a flirt</i> .
3	The Dreambody in rehearsal (A).	Example of noticing and unfolding a body symptom occurring to the actress during a rehearsal period resulting in enriching the creative process and taking care of the well-being of the actress.	Body symptom work.	In Appendix C - 2 there is an exercise that describes an <i>inner work</i> for <i>unfolding a body experience (symptom)</i> .
4	The Dreambody in rehearsal (B).	Example of revisiting and unfolding a body	Body symptom work.	In Appendix C - 2 there is an exercise that describes an

		<p>symptom occurring to the actress working in a challenging theater production resulting in gaining awareness of (1) how to embody the Altered state of the role; (2) the interconnection between the play, the role, the place where the performance is taking place; (2) how the actress is a mediator.</p>		<p><i>inner work</i> for <i>unfolding</i> a body experience (symptom).</p>
5	<p>Noticing the channels of perception and using them to map a performative score while in the moment of giving birth to it during an improvisation.</p>	<p>Example of using the Process Work paradigm's tracking of process by tracking the flow of experience through the channels of perception resulting in assisting the actress to map a performative score instantly therefore being able to revisit the score easily.</p>	<p>The tracking of experience by noticing its flow through the channels of perception.</p>	<p>In Appendix C - 3 there is Process Work theory on channels of perception.</p>
6	<p>The double signals of a role.</p>	<p>Example of noticing in rehearsal how the secondary process of a role expresses itself through the double signals resulting in increased psychophysical work of the actress.</p>	<p>The tracking of signals and double signals.</p>	<p>In Appendix C - 4a and 4b there is Process Work theory on the concept of <i>signals</i> of communication and an exercise that describes an <i>inner work</i> for catching and <i>unfolding</i> a <i>double signal</i> to discover the experience that</p>

				belongs to your <i>secondary process</i> .
7	The world channel in performance.	Example of how awareness of the existence of a world channel, and practice noticing it, can create highly intense moments in performance for both the actress and the audience.	The awareness and tracking of experience coming from the world channel.	In Appendix C - 5 there is Process Work theory on the concept of the <i>world channel</i> and a note on how to use it.
8	Interconnection of the actress's deep personal edge and the play.	Example of how the lack of awareness of that connection as well as of the actress hitting a personal edge can be a deeply hurtful experience artistically and personally.	The awareness of hitting an edge, the access to working around it. The awareness that an edge is not only personal and the access to notice interconnection with culture as long as with the play.	In Appendix C - 6 there is Process Work theory on the concept of the <i>edge</i> and the work around it.
9	Dreams as a creative source and a way to touch the memory and emotions of the audience.	Example of how working with dreams creates psychophysical anchors that the actress can revisit. How working with the actress's dreams in the rehearsal can feed the work and support her well-being.	Dream work and the awareness of dreams being parts of ones process.	In Appendix C - 7 there is an exercise that describes an <i>inner work</i> on how to work with a dream.
10	Who is dreaming of me? Connecting with the dreaming source of the project.	Example of how awareness around this source creates a unique bond between the actress and the role resulting in the necessary connection and at the same time detachment of the	Innerwork based on the process-oriented concept of flirts.	In Appendix C - 8 there is an exercise that describes an <i>inner work</i> on how to catch and <i>unfold</i> a <i>flirt</i> , and finally connect it with the <i>dreaming</i> source of the project.

		actress towards the role.		
11	Following the dreaming process in rehearsal as pre-performative training.	Example of having access to following the dreaming as it presents itself at the present moment resulting in grasping the ultimate state of the actress of following and leading at the same time – becoming an actress warrior.	The awareness of the warriorship needed in order to dive into dreaming without losing your metacommunicator.	Detailed step-by-step description is in the text.
12	Collective dreaming in performance.	Example of theater’s impact on the audience resulting in collective connection towards a better world.	The awareness of the field and anchoring of a collective experience.	Explanation in the text.
13	The inner Group process of a role.	Example of looking at a role as a Group process resulting in (1) identifying the many parts that constitute the role and the relationship between them which explains the way the role acts (2) helping the actress to track and map each part on its own and then to easily to move between them through several psychophysical transformations.	The awareness that each person has many voices inside and the concept of Deep democracy.	In Appendix C - 10a there is an explanation of the task I gave to the performer to track how the role was presenting itself to her in her daily life. In C - 10b there is an explanation of an exercise based on the concept of <i>Group Process</i> and on improvisational tools.

Appendix C

Exercises and Process Work theory

The Processwork paradigm has a basic methodology applied in all work areas. This methodology is based on the precise perception of intended and unintended communication signals, close to or further away from the person's awareness, and the feedback they signify. This feedback to the practitioners' intervention is the information that points to the direction that needs to be followed next.

Before you share some of these exercises, please experience them yourself - try them out physically. We are all most likely to be able to serve as guides for others, if we have first experienced our own process of discovery.

1 Exercise: Inner work for catching and unfolding a flirt

This is a simple process-oriented exercise that one can try on herself.

1. Write a question that is on your mind. (In Example 1, I invited the practitioners to put a question they had in relation to the working material. They worked individually, but all at the same time.)
2. Close your eyes. Relax your body. Relax your mind. Focusing on your breath might be helpful. If your mind is 'noisy' or travels away notice it, and gently invite it to come back in the here and now. Remember the sensation you have just before falling asleep.
3. Stay in this state for some moments. Without leaving it, open your eyes slightly and with a foggy gaze look around. Notice what is catching your attention. It could be anything i.e. object, color, light, shape, atmosphere, image, etc. If many things catch your attention, choose the one that seems to be the strongest just now.

4. Focus on that thing that caught your attention. Observe it. Which atmosphere does it carry? Stay with this atmosphere. Sense it.
5. Shapeshift into this atmosphere, become it, until you completely embody it. You can follow movement or sound that might arise. Notice the figure that has arisen.
6. Stay with it for some moments. Sense the state of mind of this figure. Without leaving it recall the initial question you had. How can this figure answer this question? (In Example 1 the initial question each practitioner put around their role.)
7. Step out. Make notes of your process if you like. Finally, contemplate how can you integrate that answer into your feelings, thinking, and daily life. (In Example 1 and general in Theater Practice the case is how to integrate the insight from the exercise to the work at hand.)

2 Exercise: Unfolding a body experience (symptom)

This one is a more complicated process-oriented exercise that needs a facilitator. When I use this exercise in rehearsal, I work on body experiences that have arisen while the practitioner is working on a specific role. The aim is not to cure the symptom but to have access to the information it carries that could enrich the creative process. If a strong and challenging body symptom arose, I would work with the actress in private session(s), my thinking being, that aspects of her personal history might have awakened and if that were the case, it would be important to create a private space for her outside the rehearsal. It is crucial to recognize the limit between the enrichment of the creative process, and the well-being of theater practitioners. Using process-oriented tools in Theater Practice requires sufficient knowledge of both.

1. Choose the body experience (symptom) that you want to focus on. (In Example 3, it was the experience of little cuts at the sides of the actress's tongue)

2. Focus on that part of your body, sense your experience, and describe it with information based on senses, as if you wanted the other person to sense your experience in her own body. Focus on the energy of the symptom, not on the impact it has on you. (In Example 3, we focused on the sensation of the cuttings and not the feelings of the actress because of the cuttings on her tongue.)

3. From the previous description continue with finding the energy which creates the symptom. You can use a pillow or a partner. Create that symptom on the pillow or partner. (In Example 3, we worked physically and the actress stood. I invited her to think that the space in front of her is her tongue, and she is the energy that cuts). As you do it, observe the energy you are embodying. Follow the movement and add sound. Ask yourself ‘Who would move, stand, look, and sound like this’ (In Example 3 it was a knife-like cutting energy.)

4. Shapeshift as much as you can into that figure. That is the figure of the *symptom maker*. Walk, look, speak like this figure. Notice its state of mind. How do you perceive yourself or the world from that state?

5. Stay with that figure and through its eyes look at your daily self. Is there something you would like to tell to yourself?

6. Step out. Reflecting, you can contemplate whether that figure and the energy you discovered is close or far from your identity; do you have a tendency to marginalize that energy, and if yes why? (In Example 3, at the end, we also connected our findings with the role the performer was working on.)

3 Process Work theory: channels of perception

In the Process Work paradigm, the term *channels of perception* refers to the different ways a *signal (primary or secondary)* appears. Therefore, *channels* are different ways through which we perceive ourselves, others, and the world, as much as, ways of communicating and expressing ourselves. They are carriers, and at the same time, means of expressing information through communicational signals.

Basic channels:

‘Signals and processes are channeled by our senses’ (Mindell, 1985, p.13)

1. Visual: internal and external images, fantasies, visions, dreams
2. Auditory: internal and external sounds
3. Movement/kinesthetic: internal and external movements, experiences of stillness
4. Proprioception: body sensations, emotions

Composite channels (mixtures of the basic ones):

‘...there are other important channels which are compositions of these fundamental sensory perceptions. The special nature of these compositions might vary from person to person, yet their general quality is that they cannot be broken down into more fundamental components without disturbing the overall perception’ (Mindell, 1985, p.17)

1. *Relationship*: ‘Experiences or events that are communicated through, or felt in relationship to someone else... If other people feature strongly in a person’s speech, this suggests that the process is being experienced in the relationship channel’ (Process Work Institute glossary-Appendix A)

2. *World*: ‘The channel in which experience is centered in the environment (for example institutions, world events, the earth, nature). One is often in the world channel when one experiences events “happening to” oneself’ (Process Work Institute glossary-Appendix A)

The *process* might also use more than one *channel* at the same time in order to *unfold*. These are the *coupled channels*. (i.e. in Example 5 as i was in the process of embodying the figure of the painting gradually more *channels* were being used)

When tracking a *process* one is following closely how *signals* of communication arise through *channels*, and how the flow of signals flows between *channels* (i.e., changes channels) as one goes deeper into the experience, gaining more and more information.

4a Process Work theory: signals of communication

Signals of communication are a constant flow of information. Tracking *signals* as they arise informs us about the *process* at hand.

Intentional signals are those with which one is identifying and has awareness of sending. They express and match with what consciously one wants to communicate. They are consistent and complete, and they make sense.

Unintentional signals are those with which one is not identifying and has no awareness of sending. They do not express nor match with what consciously one wants to communicate. They are inconsistent and incomplete, and do not make sense. In the Process Work paradigm, they are also called *double signals*. *Secondary processes* arise through *double signals*. To capture their meaning and therefore access *secondary processes* one has to catch, focus on, and *unfold* them.

4b Exercise: catching and unfolding a double signal to discover the experience that belongs to your secondary process

1. Sit comfortably and close your eyes. Drop inside: notice your breath and allow your attention to turn towards your inner life. Check the basic *channels*: visual (is there any image arising?), auditory (is there any sound arising?), movement (is there any tendency to move?), proprioception (are there any body sensations?)
2. Use your *second attention* to notice subtle movements, sensations, sounds, images or anything that you might ignore in any other circumstance. Is there anything that catches your attention? If there are several experiences that ask for your attention choose the strongest one, the most mysterious, or the most disturbing to you.
3. Sustain your attentiveness to that experience and *amplify* it (i.e. if it is a movement make it faster, stronger, let it spread to all your body, lighter, etc.)
4. Add more *channels* (i.e. if it is a body sensation add image, if it is a sound add movement, etc.)
5. Keep on researching this experience, and building it up by adding *channels*.
6. If at any point the energy gets lost you probably have hit an *edge*. Notice it and go back to the moment before that happened, go back to the moment with the strongest energy.
7. Gradually allow yourself to embody more and more of that energy until you shapeshift into a figure (could be a person, a weather phenomenon, a spirit, a cartoon, an element of nature, etc.). Move, look, speak, sit, breath like this figure.
8. Notice in which state of mind it leads you, how do you perceive yourself and the world through the eyes of that figure?

9. Step out. Ask yourself is the energy of that figure missing from any area of your life?
What would be different if it was present?

5 Process Work theory: World channel

Channels are different ways to perceive ourselves and the world. They are sectors of information and ways through which information arises in the form of communicational *signals*. Each *channel* is a different way for a *signal* to arise (movement, sound, image, body sensation). Through the *world channel* arise signals from the environment around us: ‘I call the sense, or communication channel for environmental experience, the ‘world channel’ (Mindell, 1993, p. 42). In Example 7, the song of the bird was a signal from the *world channel*. We do not usually notice these signals, as they are not causally connected to what we are focused on, at any given moment. Therefore, what is important is not whether these signals happen but whether we perceive them.

The *world channel* is the place where quantum physics and psychology potentially meet, Mindell explains:

‘Since Process Work is based upon a phenomenological viewpoint, terms such as psyche and matter, inner and outer, psychology and physics, are replaced by the experiences, awareness and observations of a given observer. Thus, the physicist’s approach to ‘purely material’ events is, in principle, no different than the process worker’s approach to body, dream, or relationship experiences’ (Mindell 1985, p. 47-48)

Mindell in his book *River’s Way* (1985, p. 48-49) explains how the *world channel* is based on one-world concepts found in physics (Bohm, 2002) and psychology (Jungian concept of synchronicity). One-world concepts mirror the Buddhist philosophy that all events behave in

conjunction and are equal to each other, while all together, create a universal process, as well as, the Taoist philosophy of a common flow that organizes the world.

Perceiving *signals* from the *world channel* requires the cultivation of detachment and *metacommunication*. One can explore this easily, for example, while doing any of the exercises, by being equally attentive to what happens around - what the world is offering.

6 Process Work theory on the concept of the edge and the work around it.

According to the Process Work paradigm, when a person is on an *edge* she has *edge behavior* - 'A collection of signals that indicates one is close to an edge. These could include giggling, being quiet, signs of embarrassment, resistance, shyness, etc.' (Process Work Institute Glossary). Integrating Process Work into Theater Practice would mean, in this case, being able to notice and perceive when an actress has *edge* behavior in order to support her. The *edge* could be a personal *edge*, or an *edge* of the role. I suspect that probably most of the time there will be a connection between the two. The priority would be to support the actress, and then to connect her experience to the work at hand, enriching the creative process.

In Process Work we explore the area and experience of the *edge*. As mentioned above, noticing and naming the *edge* is the initial step. Next step would be trying to cross it or exploring it. To explore the *edge*, one explores the belief systems and the mindset that arises through the *edge*, i.e., finding the gatekeeper at the *edge*, in Process Work terms, the *edge figure*, 'A role/voice that tries to convince you that it is not a good idea to cross your edge.' (Process Work Institute Glossary)). Exploring and working around an *edge* is as important as crossing it. *Edges* ask for respect, as they are formed either from personal history or from culture. *Edge* work is in my opinion crucial for an actress, as it potentially offers her more fluidity between different, and even polarized energies, and fluidity is precious for acting, and in general for the creative process. Trying to cross an *edge* might involve imagining someone (i.e. a person you know, a

person that exists but you do not know, a natural element, a mythical creature) who could cross the edge and supporting the person to become this figure.

7 Exercise: working with a dream

I would recommend writing down and keeping a journal of your night dreams while working on a performance, especially during the period of rehearsals when your creative process is at its highest level. As all theater practitioners know, while working toward embodying a role/score, it often inhabits our dreams. Working on them might offer insights, enrich our creative process, and raise awareness around our relationship (whether challenging or not) with the role and play at hand.

1. Write down the dream and see which are the important figures in it (characters, objects, elements of nature, etc.)
2. Write down your associations to each of these figures.
3. Choose the most strange, unfamiliar, scary figure of the dream. Use your imagination to observe the figure in detail, to study it.
4. Now start working on embodying the figure until you shapeshift into it. Stay attentive to all changes in your body, breath, etc. until you can grasp a clear image of the quality and the energy this figure brings.
5. Make a movement that expresses this figure, and gradually make the movement slower and slower, while keeping the energy of the movement (like in slow motion). In what state is this leading you? What is the core element of that state? That is the deep essence of the figure.
6. Without losing the connection with the figure, look at yourself working on the role you are working on now. Is there any piece of advice that you would like to give from within the state of the figure to your working self?

7. Step out. You can now contemplate how the energy of the figure is needed for your role. How might it impact the way the role moves, speaks, etc.? Then you can see how this energy is connected with the play; is it an energy that is allowed or marginalized by the culture of the play's world?
8. You can also contemplate your relationship with that energy. Is it familiar or not? Is it difficult for you to embody that energy? If yes, you have hit an *edge*. Ask yourself, which belief systems create that *edge*? Are these part of the play too?

8 Exercise: Inner work for catching and unfolding a flirt in order to reveal the dreaming energy behind the project

Every time we start a new project we all have a very personal relationship with it. Apart from all the *Consensus Reality* reasons that brought this project in our path, there is also a *dreaming* energy that organizes things. This energy is a huge source of inspiration, and it maps a deep relationship between the theater practitioner and the role/play at hand.

1. Step in the exercise with the question: Who is dreaming of me playing this role?
2. Close your eyes. Relax your body. Relax your mind. Focusing on your breath might be helpful. If your mind is 'noisy' or travels away notice it and gently invite it to come back in the here and now. Remember the sensation you have just before falling asleep.
3. Stay in this state for some moments. Without leaving it, open your eyes slightly and with a foggy gaze look around. Notice what is catching your attention. Could be anything i.e. object, color, light, shape, atmosphere, image, etc. If many things catch your attention choose the one that seems to be strongest just now. (In Example 10, the performer chose a deep crack on the wall. We were working in a renovated studio, and it seemed like this crack was the only old element.)

4. Focus on that thing that caught your attention. Observe it. Which atmosphere does it carry? Stay with this atmosphere. Sense it. (In Example 10, the performer had an image of an ancient vulva.)
5. Shapeshift to this atmosphere, become it, until you completely embody it. You can follow movement or sound that might arise. Notice the figure that has arisen. (In Example 10, it was a figure of an ancient vulva in the ocean, opening and closing, a Goddess of the sea. In the end, the performer had an insight entailing the name, Kalachia.)
6. Stay with it for some moments. Sense the state of mind of this figure. (In Example 10, the figure's state was freedom, fluidity of transformation, and destigmatized access to pleasure.)
7. Step out. Make notes of your process if you like.

10a Using flirts to track how the role is presenting itself in the daily life of the actress

The task for the actress is to notice all the times that she meets something in her daily life that instantly connects her with the role she is working on - in process-oriented terms, *flirts*. It could be anything: the shape of a tree, a photograph, a taste, a sound, a smell, a texture she touched, etc. Subtle and momentarily experiences that get lost in the ocean of daily life.

The next step is to collect all these by photographing them, recording them, etc., creating a bank of *flirts*, either in photographs or in recordings. Depending on the timetable of the production, give a specific timeframe but not less than a week. Then give some days in rehearsal to unfold the flirts and see how they might feed the creative process.

Stick all photographs on the wall. Invite the actress to look at them and choose which one is calling her the strongest. Unfold this *flirt* using the exercise from Appendix C - 1. You can

keep on working for some days until you unfold as many as you can. The important thing is at the end to connect your findings to the creative task at hand.

10b The inner Group process of a role: exercise based on the concept of Group Process and on improvisational tools.

1. Write on a piece of paper the different roles that you can identify in the character on which you are working. Put each role on a different piece of paper. Put all the papers on the floor in a circle, as if all of them were sitting in the room. Sit or stand (if it helps you remain active) in that circle too.
2. You need a helper for this exercise. Helper speaks out loud the name of one of the roles written on one of the pieces of paper. The actress steps inside the circle and starts improvising on what she hears. Follow psychophysical impulses. Start working without using text yet. When the improvisation is over the actress goes back to her spot in the circle, and the helper speaks out loud the name of another role, from another piece of paper. Keep going until you explore all of the roles - you will probably need more than one rehearsal. Depending on the stamina of the actress, this exercise can be of long duration. Videotape or keep notes in order to be able to revisit your improvisations.
3. After exploring all of the roles, step into the next phase of doing the same, this time adding text too. Notice and write down which part of the text arises with which role.
4. Reflect after each application. What atmosphere is created between all these roles? How did you experience each of them in your body? Ask yourself where are the points where there is tension between two roles. Identify this tension inside the world of the play. All these roles, and the relationship between them, are the inner life of your character.

5. You can use this exercise either as just a psychophysical exploration of all roles within your role, or as material to use in your final synthesis.

Curriculum Vitae

Maria-Olga Athinaïou is a Greek theater practitioner born in Athens, in 1978. She graduated from the Higher Drama School “Morfes” (Embros Theatre). In Berlin, she studied the method developed by Russian director Jurij Alschitz (AKT-ZENT / I.T.I. / UNESCO). Since 2010, she has been training and guided by Phillip Zarrilli in his approach to psychophysical actress training through Asian martial/meditative arts. She received a specialization in Educational Theater in Athens. She has attended several international workshops and masterclasses by important theater practitioners. She will soon receive her diploma in Process Oriented Psychology and is working towards an interdisciplinary approach to Theater Practice (Process Oriented Theater Practice). In 2014 she was invited to create and was directing until 2023, the Youth Theatre Education Department at the Athens Conservatoire Drama School. She has planned and applied many educational theater-based programs in different target groups and is creating artistic interventions for social issues. She has developed a way of working with children, adolescents, and youth combining psychophysical and ensemble techniques, Drama, and Process Work. Combining all the above-mentioned tools she has developed an experimental and research-based form of participatory educational theater performance in order to process social issues. Her credits as an actress include productions in Greece and around the world. She works in theater through different roles (actress/performer, trainer/pedagogue, director). She is currently teaching at the Youth Department of the National Theater of Greece, works in her private practice, collaborates with theater practitioners as a process worker, and prepares her next theater projects.