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Creating Character: A study into the possible synergies, differences and combined use of the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive

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A Research Report submitted towards a MADA

Declaration

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Topic: Research Report

I declare that this Research Report is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment towards the
degree of Masters of Arts (Dramatic Arts) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before in other degree or examination at any other university.

Ashley Kim Churchyard

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Glossary of terms:

- The Stanislavski System: The methodological approach to acting formalised by Constantin Stanislavski.

- Body as Archive: A Physical Theatre based methodology which uses the body as the source during the theatre-making process and mode of performance on stage.

- Character: A fictional person who only exists in the context of a theatrical performance. This character can be a person created in a dramatic text based script or be developed from an abstract process of excavating one's own personal history.

- Characteristics: The physical, emotional and mental components which make a character or person identifiable.

- Movement: Abstract physical movements such as are found in dance, mime, gestural or pictorial theatre.

- Personal narrative: An individual's life story consisting of their memories, emotions, experiences and thoughts.

- Emotional memory: A technique formalised in the Stanislavski System which uses repetition of memory and emotion recall exercises to develop an emotional experience.

- Sense memory: Memories linked to a sensory experience (for example, the memory of a smell).

- Theatrical Materials: Anything which is used as a source of inspiration for creating or developing theatrical work.

Abstract

Framed by the praxis of the workshop and rehearsal processes of 'Awkward', this research aims to uncover the similarities, differences and possible working in conjunction of Stanislavski's System and Body as Archive in the development of characters for performance through the use of personal narratives.

This investigation constructs a theoretical framework based on the main components of the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive, with particular reference to personal narratives, emotional memory, improvisation, impulses, visualisations and imagination. The research argues that in these areas there are similarities between the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive, despite one belonging to acting and realism, and the other to Physical Theatre and the abstract.

Through the combination of the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive in the development of characters and the narrative for 'Awkward', the research analyses how they could be used together effectively to access personal narratives in the form of emotions and memories and how these could, in turn, be developed into the basis for characters.

Introduction

During the creation of a theatrical performance in the space of a dynamic workshop and rehearsal process, there is a focus on personal narrative and its resulting components of emotion, memory, sense experience and perception (Mazarakis, 2009. Finestone-Praeg, 2002. Stanislavski. 1950. Magarshack. 1950).

The most prominent method utilised in contemporary Westerns realist acting is usually based on or developed from, the Stanislavski System. The reason for this is that Stanislavski's approach to and theories surrounding acting and, particularly, character have since been utilised and developed by practitioners such as Lee Strasberg, Peter Brooks, Stella Adler and Robert Lewis. Stanisklavski's theory of using personal narratives and particularly emotional experiences, as a means to bring life and context to a pre-existing texted-based character, is still used in contemporary theatre practices.

On the opposite end of the theatre spectrum, Physical Theatre, which is based on the abstract use of the body to convey a story, also utilises personal narrative as a base for creating character. Contemporary Physical Theatre broke away from traditional theatrical theories which saw the body merely as a tool for transmitting a story (Fraleigh. 1987). It developed alternative methods of involving the body as more than just a tool, and it draws on notions such as Body as Archive, which places the body at the centre of the theatre making process as an archive of all the memories, emotions and experiences had in one's life, in order to develop theatrical work (Mazarakis. 2009)

The initial stages of this research raised questions around a potential lack of previous research in theatre academia into the emotions used within the improvisation and creation of Physical Theatre. The focus within Physical Theatre research continuously draws the focus back towards memory and experience.

As a Physical Theatre practitioner, this apparent lack of research created my interest in how emotions are used in the creation and development of character. The Stanislavski System's use of Emotional Memory offered insight into a possible means for excavating and utilising emotions.

Two realisations became clear during the first encounters with the Stanislavski System in this context. The first of these realisations was that emotions and memory are fundamentally

linked as the performer's personal narrative and cannot be separated in the way in which they are used to create and develop character.

The second realisation formed the final basis on which the research continued. The Stanislavski System and Physical Theatre methodologies, such as Body as Archive, are completely isolated from each other in the way in which they are taught, studied, thought about and used within the theatre-making process. Yet through the comparison of their theories and methodologies, it became apparent that these two distant opposites in the theatrical world, in fact, share certain commonalities and similarities at their very roots.

This raises the question: If these similarities can be isolated and examined, how could they be used simultaneously in the theatre making process?

The Stanislavski System and Body as Archive have similarities embedded in their use of personal narratives to develop characters through visualisations and improvisations; these come together to produce an interesting and dynamic workshop and rehearsal process for creating a theatre performance. As a Physical Theatre practitioner, I am interested in interrogating different approaches to developing a character for performance through a devising process. As a dancer and choreographer, the work I produce can often be overly fragmented and appear as a number of separate micro-narratives, therefore the majority of my interest lies in locating a method of developing a stable narrative without losing the emotional integrity from the performers or myself. Certain similarities may be found in the use of personal narrative to develop and craft characters within both the traditional Stanislavski System and the Physical Theatre based Body as Archive work. As an ignition point, both of them appear to re-activate a memory, using techniques such as memory recall, improvisations and visualisations. These techniques are utilised to unearth memories, emotions, impulses and to recall details through the senses. It is in the use of these unearthed materials that Stanislavski System and Body as Archive become apparently different. Stanislavski's approach to these theatrical materials is to develop a realistic or life-like quality for a character to be played on stage. 'Theatrical Materials' as I have used it within the research, refers to that which can be used in the development or crafting of theatrical work, such as the use of emotions to craft the performance of a character. With the use of Emotional Memory Recall, for example, actors are trained to recall an emotion through repetition of recall exercises and this then gives them the ability to recall an emotion on stage the character, as if they, themselves, are experiencing that emotion in the present moment.

Body as Archive, on the other hand, uses these theatrical materials as a starting point for narrative, characters, theme and movement. 'Movement', as I use it in this work, relates to the physical movement of the body. It is an abstract form, such as that used in dance, mime or pictorial theatre, as opposed to the pedestrian movements of everyday habits. The appellation 'Abstract' suggests that this is movement without traditional logic or reason, such as that which is in a surreal space of imagination and dreams.

Thus it is here that I will focus my interests and my interrogation into the similarities of their theatrical materials, the differences in the way the materials are utilised and the relationships between these approaches to character development or crafting.

These two ways of developing theatre work are fundamentally different. The one is more familiar to those working in the theatre and can be located in a specific area of performance; the other is a physical mode of creating and developing performance located in an elusive paradigm, consisting of numerous performance practices which can be linked predominantly through movement and the body, as primary sources of making and communicating meaning. The Stanislavski System and Body as Archive come from vastly different times, countries and schools of thought. The final products which arise from them are also utterly different in form. Even the language with which I will be speaking about these two processes becomes deeply problematic, as Body of Archive is not a style a system, or any other easily-definable working practice. Therefore, finding a single phrase that can express the complexities in either the Stanislavski System or Body as Archive is a complicated task. Yet, despite the differences shown through the observation of how the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive are taught, utilised and studied, there are greater possibilities for these two theatrical approaches to be used in conjunction due to their possible similarities. At the heart of both lies the firm emphasis on the use of personal narrative or history, which is made up of memories, emotions and our lived experiences, to create and develop a character for performance.

A Theoretical Framework

This research is underpinned by the following theoretical areas: the first is that of a formalised approach to realism acting, and the second is that of the theories surrounding an abstract approach to movement based-theatre. The theories of Corporeal Theatre are of great importance as they will act as a research base. Corporeal Theatre theories, such as those used in Corporeal Mime, are vital to this research as they ground the research primarily in the

body. The body will be used as the primary site of excavation for the personal narratives that will inform the development and crafting of a character for performance.

The theories which surround the formalised approach to realism acting can only truly be excavated within the context of the practitioners whose works define its methodology. These practitioners include Grotowski, Brook, Schechner and Stanislavski. For the purpose of this research the focus will be places on the work of Stanislavski and his Stanislavski System. The motivation for this focus is the emphasis that the Stanislavski System places on emotional memory and personal narrative.

The theories and techniques of the Stanislavski System were formalised by Stanislavski himself but were then developed further by American practitioners such as Lee Strasberg, Stella Adler and Robert Lewis. Even though Stanislavski has always been seen as the creator of the System, mainly because he was the first to put down the techniques used down in writing in *An Actor Prepares*, Strasberg believed that it had been practised before, as early as the first Greek theatre (The Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute. 2013). The System, in simple terms, is the use of real life experiences and memories and their resulting emotions to inform the new life of a character on stage. There are many techniques making up the System that are used to develop various aspects of a character but in this research the emphasis is on those techniques that deal with the excavation of personal memory and emotion, to be incorporated into the existence of a character, and which are used in the development of a character's physicality. Body as Archive also works with this excavation of internal and personal experiences to drive the development of performance forward, as the excavated materials inform every aspect of the theatrical work from the theme to characters and their characterisation.

This leads into the second group of theories which form the foundation of this research, which are those surrounding abstract methodologies of creating theatre through the body. This paradigm of theatrical performance, often referred to as Physical Theatre, is so vast and diverse that it would be impossible to consider every subgenre, such as mime, gestural movement, surreal theatre and contemporary dance, in this research. The broad nature of Physical Theatres makes it difficult to define and, therefore, difficult to locate a theory or theories that can express a single common way of working within it. This is the reason why this research will focus on the Body as Archive within Physical Theatres. Body as Archive

emphasises the use of emotions and memories as part of personal narratives which are a vital starting point for many physical impulses.

> "Choreography via an improvised process can become a rich site for the meeting of collective and personal histories. Graphs or fragments of memory are released that can be shaped and played with by the choreographer to create compelling images of the body and its relation to narrative, identity and history" (Finestone-Praeg. 2002: 118).

Personal history in its entirety is of the utmost importance to the creative processes associated with Physical Theatres, as this quote from Finestone-Praeg suggests. Athena Mazarakis takes this further by locating this view in Body as Archive practice and labelling this wealth of experience-related memory, housed in the body, the 'Archive' (2009). It is this unearthing and utilising of this archive to inspire new movement vocabulary and, more importantly to develop character, which will inform part of the research. It is Mazarakis's approach to Body as Archive that has formed the strongest grounding for the aspects of this research relating to Physical Theatre.

Different theories of emotion and memory

There is much writing on both The Stanislavski System and Body as Archive; however, these are some of the thoughts and opinions that have influenced my perspectives. The works of Stanislavski have been discussed and dissected by many academics since it was developed and made available for study and understanding with the publishing of his book *An Actor Prepares* in 1936. But it is Robert Lewis's simple breakdown and explanation of the 'method' in *Method or Madness* that I have found most useful (1960). In his analysis of the various sections that make up the Stanislavski System, I was most drawn to the explanation about Stanislavski's Emotional Memory. Emotional Memory is one of the techniques of the Stanislavski System through which the actor/actress recalls and mentally recreates a memory of an event that triggered a strong emotion. This reliving of the memory helps to arouse that same emotion once again. Through repetition, the emotion becomes easier and easier for the performer to access. Magarshack illustrates that it is the memory of an experience that is used to recall an emotion: "It is not the emotion itself but the conditions that led to the feeling, that one must try recreate" (Magarshack. 1950: 53).

This focus on the internal processes of character development was the leading area of study in the early years of the System's formation. The focus, however, shifted later on to an external focus, in *Building a Character,* where the training and crafting of the physical body became of far greater importance. In *Building a Character,* Stanislavski noted the advantages of the physical training found in ballet or gymnastics that strengthen the core, back, leg and arm muscles (1950). The belief was that a strong, well-trained body could articulate a movement or a gesture better than a body plagued by defects such as a swayed back or a barrel chest (Stanislavski. 1950).

The use of Emotional Memory, physical training and articulation in character development has a strong correlation to the Body as Archive work of Athena Mazarakis, in her Masters dissertation: *Body of Knowledge* (2009). Mazarakis, a South African Physical Theatre practitioner, performer, choreographer and lecturer, cites the body itself as the centre of all memory, which can be unlocked through improvisation and used as the source from which performance material can be generated. The connection is based on the use of a past experience that can be accessed through improvisational exercises (physical or mental) and used as a basis for theatrical material.

Body as Archive also uses memory, connected to the performer's personal narrative, to elicit physical and emotional responses as part of generating and developing character and 'choreography'. However, Finestone-Praeg, a Physical Theatre lecture at Rhodes University and a member of the First Physical Theatre Company, points out that memory is not a stable entity, and what we may consider the facts of our own experiences may be tainted by perceptions, time and even the memories of others (2002: 117):

> "If we agree that history is about interpretation and story-telling then similarly, we must concur that memory consists of constructed acts of selective recall. Memory is not personal truth, or authentic revelation… one of the greatest obstacles to memory is in fact, memory itself" (Finestone-Praeg, 2002: 117).

This unstable nature of memory of which Finestone-Praeg speaks may result in the use of fragments of memory and vague details in parts of a character's development. This in turn means that, even in the use of personal narrative, the character can only ever be made up of fragments of the performer's memories and emotions. Even when performers play themselves on stage they are only ever representing a fragment of themselves on stage. It is through task-

based activities and dramatic play that a performer is then able to craft and develop these fragments within a rehearsal process in order for them to become part of a seamless character.

What must be noted about memory is its instability, and that what we may consider as a true account of an experience is merely a collection of fragmented images of an experience that we have had to join together. This instability is illustrated in this quote from David Shields: "Memories have a quasi-narrative structure, constituting a story or a scene in a story, an inbuilt successiveness strong enough to keep the narrative the same on each act of remembering but not strong enough to ensure that the ordering of events is the ordering which originally took place" (2009: 32). This fragmentation results, in part, in our creation of our own narrative, as we subconsciously fill in the gaps in our own memory. Because of this, each time an experience is remembered the details may have shifted in one's mind and something new 'recalled'.

Stanislavski, in his use of Emotional Memory, sought to recall a single memory in accurate detail in order to trigger an emotion which was linked to said experience. This required a level of clarity and confidence in the memory, aspects which Phelps and Sharot suggest are heightened by the emotional nature of the experience, as is illustrated in this quote:

> "When recalling an event from our past we do not simply bring to mind the incident in question. Rather, we mentally re-experience the event. A growing body of evidence suggests that a primary way by which emotion modulates memory is by intensifying the recollective experience—that is, the subjective vividness of the memory, the sense of reliving the event, and confidence in the accuracy of the memory" (2008: 147).

The shifting and fragmented nature of memory can make this difficult as it cannot be held in static isolation and examined, whether it is an emotional or everyday memory. In fact, Phelps and Sharot further discuss how emotions, despite raising the confidence and recollective experience of a memory, do not make it more accurate (2008: 147 -148).

This is where body memory and sense memory become important tools. The sense of smell is of particular importance, as it has a strong link to the recollection of emotions and memories. This is best explained in this quote by Natalie Angier: "Importantly, the olfactory cortex is embedded within the brain's limbic system and amygdala, where emotions are born and emotional memories stored. That's why smells, feelings and memories become so easily and intimately entangled" (2008).

This is why sense memory plays an important role in Emotional Memory exercises, as parts of the details which must be recalled are the sounds, tactile textures, possibly tastes, sights and, most importantly, smells which, due to their close links in the brain, evoke the emotions far more clearly than just remembering what happened.

Both the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive utilise visualisation/improvisation exercises as part of the initial interrogation into character and theme (narrative). In *An Actor Prepares*, Stanislavski outlines several exercises he experienced during his training as an actor in the process of developing a character, such as, exercises in which the focus is on improvising in order to develop the way a character might walk, sit, speak or even react to situations. In *The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre*, Graham and Hoggett, the co-founders of the Frantic Assembly Theatre Company, describe exercises based on improvisation within a space to create ways of moving within it. These examples show how improvisational exercises are an important starting place for developing character, as they begin the process of accessing and exploring impulses and instincts about the work which can be used in further development.

However, with the improvisational exercises described by Stanislavski, it is apparent that the internal impulses began to mould the external actions of the performer. In the Frantic Assembly exercises, they used the external environment to excavate their impulses further. This reveals a possible dissimilarity in the use of improvisation within the Stanislavski System and Physical Theatre.

Augusto Boal, a Brazilian-born theatre practitioner, actor and director, expresses his view of character being about the 'will' of the character (1992: 40). In essence, this view of character suggests that a performer can only reveal a character through revealing what the character desires. This 'will' informs the motivation for the character's every action. However, it is through the performer's application of his experiential knowledge of the character's desires that he is able to reveal them accurately. This 'will', 'want' or 'intention' is, as Boal explains, more in line with the Stanislavski 'Super-Objective' and he asserts that focusing on simply developing the emotions of the character will lead to a very static portrayal (1992). Therefore, to develop a dynamic character, work must first be done to develop the 'will' of the character before moving on to develop the emotional reactions.

In contrast, Dymphna Callery, a senior lecturer in Drama at the University of Wolverhampton, notes a criticism of the Stanislavski System, expressing a concern that its

use results in "…actors imitating everyday human behaviour… merely 'kinship with the ventriloquist'" (2001; 10). Callery argues that, for a dynamic character, the actor's performance must truly be rooted in the body. Meyerhold, a former student of the Stanislavski System, is provided as a good example of this move towards the body. "His highly dynamic stage composition utilised the relationship between the actors' bodies to convey meaning rather than relying on words and behavioural gestures" (Callery. 2001: 10). This is a corporeal approach to performance as the body comes to the foreground in developing a dynamic performance. Duncan makes the observation that basing performance in the body allows for a constantly-evolving approach to performance and self-characterisation:

"…it does not primarily aim to describe facts and actual behaviour, but serves a markedly allegorical approach, which changes constantly through contact with different life experiences" (Duncan. 1998: 376).

The Stanislavski System and Body as Archive appear to approach character in varying ways. The Stanislavski System uses the performer's personal narrative to enrich a character by bringing internal context to their desires and motivations. Through Body as Archive the performer utilises his own personal narrative to create and develop the character as a whole.

Yet, as the research has revealed thus far, their approach to excavating personal narrative for the purpose of creating or developing character shows similarities in the techniques that are used. Throughout this research the focus will remain on further investigating these similarities, in relation to their differences, to understand the effects of breaking the divide between these two theatrical approaches and utilising them in combination.

In order to do this, it is necessary to examine further the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive separately at first.

Understanding the Stanislavski System

The Stanislavski System, a system of developing a life and history for a text-based character, derived from the actor/actress's own memories and emotions, was developed and formalised in Russia by Constantin Stanislavski. 'Text', as it appears in this document, refers very specifically to the written and spoken word used as part of a theatrical performance.

Within this system there are multiple layers and steps to developing the 'life' of a character, most of which can be classified under *imagination*, *concentration*, *given circumstances*, and *emotional memory*, to name just a few (Norvelle. 1962). The use and training of the body are also viewed as vital in the creation of the character, as this is how the internal life of the character is conveyed on stage, through the body. This theory of how the body acts as a transmitter for the internal workings of a character is clearly demonstrated in the quote from Stanislavski's *Building a Character*: "without an external form neither your inner characterisation nor spirit of your image will reach the public" (Stanislavski. 1968: 5).

Stanislavski developed the System through the work of the Moscow Arts Theatre, which he co-founded with Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko in 1898. It was taken over to America by Stella Adler in 1934, after working with Stanislavski in Paris (Norvelle. 1962: 33) (1960: 23). As a result of its introduction in America to the Group Theatre, Lee Strasberg became the greatest advocate for the Method, initiating the process of developing it into what we now know as Method Acting. In the modern form of Method Acting, the focus has shifted from translating personal lived experience (emotions and memories) into those of the character, to becoming and living the life of the character. Some present-day Method Actors believe in staying in character, even when off the stage, for this purpose of 'living the character'.

The focus of the Stanislavski System is on the use of personal emotions and senses reconstructed through the actor's imagination, to develop an 'authentic'[1] life for their character (The Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute: 2013). The internal development of a character is the first focus of the System and is the primary aim of Stanislavski's first book, *An Actor Prepares*, in which he outlined the use of emotional and sense memory to develop a character's personality, history, behaviour and attitudes (1936). This is what Robert Lewis, a trained actor and director himself, one of the co-founders of the Actors Studio in New York in 1947, considered as "what good actors are doing when they are acting well" (1960: 25).

The Method prizes the inner action of emotions and intention as the driving force behind all external action. However, Stanislavski himself warned against becoming too indulgent in the

[1] This notion of 'authenticity' or an 'authentic life' may be seen as problematic; however, even though it can be understood in its meaning as a "code towards honesty, economy, simplicity and eschewing a mannered overacting", the questions that surround 'the self', identity and even memory, may destabilise the notion of an authentic life on stage (Murray & Keefe, 2007: 21).

use of these emotions and advised controlling them through the use of "concentration, imagination and sensory perceptions" (Norvelle. 1962: 35).

It was this concern that led to the second focus of the System, which was that of the body and its training. The realisation was that even the most perfectly crafted internal work meant nothing if the external body was not able to articulate it clearly through carefully chosen and executed movement. This then became the focus point for Stanislavski's second book *Building a Character*, in which he expressed the importance of a trained body without defects. He used gymnastics and ballet as prime examples of the kind of physical training regimes that could be useful in achieving this articulate body (Stanislavski. 1968).

Stanislavski's work is extensive but, in contemporary acting training, the focus has shifted onto his work on *emotional memory*, *internal intention* and some *body training work*, as opposed to the much broader scope of his work, which includes work in yoga and certain forms of psychology. Much of this became lost in translation from Russian to English to make it more accessible for the American theatre worlds (Carnicke. 1993) & (Wegern. 1976). For this reason, within this research the focus within the Stanislavski System will remain on these three areas because of their common application in modern acting training.

This use of the body's internal and illogical landscape of emotions, memories and personal narratives in turn informs the external shape of the body and voice. This approach uses the body and its house memories and experiences as tools which shape the way a performer can express the character he is playing.

However, this very same internal and illogical landscape of emotion and memory can also be found in Body as Archive practices within Physical Theatres. Within Body as Archive, the body is viewed as an archive of memory, emotion and history from which physical impulses can emerge through improvisation and through crafting, and can be developed into character, theme and movement vocabulary.

Getting to the heart of Body as Archive

To understand Body as Archive fully, we must understand the framework that surrounds it. 'Physical Theatres' is a paradigm of theatrical work which takes place through and relies heavily on the body for source material. The roots of the term Physical Theatre can be traced

back to the post-modernist dance movement, a century after the Stanislavski System had come into being, specifically when it was coined by Lloyd Newson. Newson used the term to name his company, DV8 Physical Theatre, and describe their work (Mackrell. 1991). This work could not simply be defined as dance as it combined movement, text, video and set and sought to politicise dance. Most importantly for this research, though, is Newson's focus on personal narratives within his work. It became a mixing-pot term for other forms of theatre that were commonly located in the body. This is illustrated by Graham and Hogget as they attempted to explain this undefinable realm of theatre: "It appears that 'physical theatre' is used as an umbrella term for aspects of performance including dance theatre, mime, clowning and traditional pictorial or visual theatre" (Graham & Hoggett, 2009: 300). This is why Murray and Keefe refer to it as 'Physical Theatres', as their way of expressing the complexity held in this term and the multiplicity of the performance practices it covers (2007). This is a line of thought I share and, because of this, I shall be borrowing this term from Murray and Keefe for the purpose of this research when referring to the broader paradigm of Physical Theatres.

Within Physical Theatres, Body as Archive is a field of study and practice that focuses on the use of memory, emotion and personal narrative in the development of movement vocabulary, theme and character (Mazarakis. 2009). Body as Archive has roots in the Live Body concept which asserts that it is through the body that the world and life are experienced. Therefore experiences and the related memories and emotions are held within the body itself and it is from the body that they can be accessed. This Phenomenological approach to the body as a house of experiential knowledge is the basis for Body as Archive work where the body is the primary site for creation and development of theme, narrative, character and movement vocabulary (Fraleigh. 1987). This corporeal theatre places the body and its narratives at the centre of performance development. As Derek Duncan explains in his discussion of Corporeal Mime, where this focus on the body can be seen, "It is an attempt that seeks to see the self and the body as historical entities" (Duncan. 1998: 170).

Thus the body and its housed narratives become the source of inspiration and physical impulses which act as the building blocks for developing character at an internal and external level. These are 'excavated' through the means of improvisation, and fragments of memory begin to emerge, a process described clearly by Juanita Finestone-Praeg of the First Physical Theatre Company: "Improvised responses to given sources can provide the catalyst for

unleashing unconscious responses to material that emerge through a dreamlike logic" (2002: 118).

It is vital to acknowledge the fundamental differences between the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive work, particularly in the way in way they are perceived, used and studied; however, it is despite these differences that this research has sought out the existence of possible similarities between these two, located in their excavation and use of personal narrative to inform, create, craft or develop character. It is through these similarities that the boundaries between the realms of 'Acting' and 'Physical Theatre' can start to be diffused.

It is also important to note that within this research 'character' refers to both fictional individuals and the self-as-character, where the performer's natural state of being is used as the onstage character. 'Natural state of being' refers to the performer's sense of 'self', where their everyday physical habits, thoughts, emotions and attitudes are translated for the stage.

These are the reasons why the focus of this research remains on the corporeal engagement with the body through Body as Archive and the Stanislavski System's focus on the internal development through Emotional Memory and the Super-Objective/will of the character, articulated through the body and crafted through the use of the performers' personal narratives (Boal. 1992: 40). I believe that these approaches, whether in contrast or in combination, make for interesting, dynamic and authentic development of self-as-character and of fictional characters.

Praxis

Practical Component

Exercises

The practical component of this research took the form of a performance with two performers by the names of Palesa M and Malebogo (Lucky) M. From here on, they shall be referred to as P and L. P and L were chosen through an audition process. Due to the nature of this research process and extreme time constraints, there was an increased pressure on the selection process. The result of the pressure was a need to utilise performers who were available, committed and knowledgeable about the theories and processes involved in the research. P and L fulfilled these requirement and displayed a keen interest in the area of the research.

Before beginning the workshop process, P and L were briefed on the personal and emotional nature of the research. They read and signed consent forms, giving their permission for this research to include discussion of their involvement and experiences in the research process. (See Appendix B for copies of signed consent forms.)

During the workshopped portion of our process, different exercises were extracted from the practices of both the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive, to begin to excavate P and L's memories and experiences to generate material.

From the Stanislavski System, one predominant type of exercise was used to begin accessing the performer's memories, and that was visualisations. These visualisations were utilised to engage with what Stanislavski referred to as Emotional Memory and to aid the performers in tapping into emotions connected to past experiences. Stanislavski believed that, by visualising a memory in great detail and recalling the senses which were active, it is possible to experience again the emotions that were present in that moment. Stanislavski believed that if this exercise was repeated over and over again, it would eventually result in easier recollection of the specific emotion, which is the process of Emotional Memory recall.

It is important at this point to note the importance of memory in this praxis, as it has acted as the basis for many of the exercises used in the workshop process. The fragmented nature of memory played an important role in the way P and L uncovered parts of their personal narratives.

During these exercises the two performers were repeatedly taken through a visualisation process, which began with allowing memory fragments to surface in the form of thoughts and images, and then slowly narrowing their focus onto memories of embarrassing or uncomfortable experiences until they found one on which to settle. At this point, they were merely experiencing fragments of memories in a snapshot form. Once they had settled on a particular image, the process shifted into filling in the details of the memory through the use of the senses. They started with sight and what they could see (location, people, colours, light, etc.) and then moved into textures which they felt (from clothing, a chair they were sitting on, a table they were at or a wall they were against etc.). With the addition of the next two senses, the memory started to progress from a snapshot to a home video. This was with the sounds (music, talking, and television) being recalled and, lastly, what smells were present, before trying to view and experience the memory as if it was being relived. This process of reliving the experience should ideally, according to Stanislavski's theory, result in an emotional experience in which the emotions felt at that time are aroused. Once the performers felt that the memory had come to an end, and that there was nothing more to recall, they could allow the image to fade away while still trying to retain the emotions from that experience.

These exercises were valuable as a starting point for all workshop processes because not only did they arouse memories and emotions to be worked on further, they also served the purpose of focusing the performers.

The next stage of the Emotional Memory based exercises was to experiment with translating those emotions into a new fictional character. This was done by following the process as I have outlined above and, once the performer had reached the point of simply retaining their emotion, they then began to transfer this feeling mentally to a new character. They then began to fill in the details slowly, using their imaginations to create the situation, location and events that led to the character feeling these emotions, as well as some background and specifics on the character. This resulted in a shift from a mental state to a physical state as they began to explore with their bodies the ways in which their characters sat, stood, walked and fidgeted in this situation. Through these processes, the performers now had personal memories and emotions and the experiences of a fictional character to use in further explorations.

The outcomes of these Stanislavskian exercises also became the grounding for the physical explorations during this process. The first of these physical explorations started as a warm-up exercise in which the performers were instructed to walk around the rehearsal space. The next step involved the performers responding to the numbers one, two, three, or four being called, as well as being instructed to run, walk normally or walk very slowly. One meant a change in direction, two, a transition to the floor and up again, three, a spin and four, a jump. The performers were encouraged to find constantly varying ways to respond to each command.

This became a basic warm-up game which was used several times and was further developed by the addition of two steps. The first of these additional steps was constantly to limit the space in which the performers could move, until they were only left with a 1,5 metre by 1,5 metre space, while still responding to all the same commands. The second and final development on this exercise was for the performers to take on the fictional characters they had developed and still follow all the instruction of the exercises. This served as an interesting experiment into how, if possible, a character developed through a realist process could be transferred into an abstract space of movement.

The next physical exploration developed from one of the first workshops in which we had started an Emotional Memory visualisation. Leading directly from the emotions that the performers experienced during the memory recall, they were instructed to observe the physical impulses caused by the emotions. These impulses then led into physical responses and expressions, such as an impulse to curl into a ball being executed in varying ways, or a desire to hide being explored by trying to hide different body parts behind each other.

The final and most interesting physical exploration to take place during the workshop process was directly inspired by a workshop held by Athena Mazarakis (2010). For this exercise the performers were asked to bring three personal objects that were connected to a memory of an embarrassing situation. These objects were then used to create a life map, using paper to fill in the links between the objects. The performers then began to improvise around/in/with the maps, responding to the physical representation of their memories. This exercise explored concepts related to the experiences as opposed to the experiences themselves, and gave the performers an opportunity to investigate their impulses further.

These exercises were used in combination to examine the similarities and contrasts that resulted and how they could be used in conjunction with each other to develop a character for a performance. These combinations of the exercises from the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive highlighted their similarities, differences and their effectiveness as a combined process.

Exercise Outcomes

Personal Narratives and Memories

In this section I will examine the material that was generated from the various exercises and tasks. The memories and personal narratives of the performers formed the basis for the entire work so it is important to start with these. This research could very easily have translated into a study on how young men and woman perceive and respond physically to embarrassing memories, as P and L were drawn to memories that may be considered typical of their genders. P was drawn to two particular types of experiences, the first being humiliated in front of a crowd, such as being reprimanded in front of her entire class at school, and the second being humiliating romantic rejection. Both of these situations, as Andre Modigliani explains it, "reflect a threat to one's presented self or public image" (1968: 313). The same was true for the experiences that L recalled, the first and most prominent being a memory of being the goal keeper in a friendly neighbourhood soccer game and being injured by being hit in the face with the ball, after which a goal was scored past him. The second memory was of being caught by his family after taking five rand that did not belong to him. Embarrassment affects the ego which, in men and women, functions differently. Through observation it appeared that the process possibly exposed a distinct difference between P's and L's egos. P's ego seemed to revolve around ideas of beauty and being accepted in her social situation. For L, the ego appeared strongly related to his masculinity. These are points of interest to note in the research as they affected the final product of the performance.

Both P and L, when asked what helped them most to recall the emotion, felt very clearly that remembering the smells from their experiences had the strongest emotionally arousing affect. It was noted that once a smell was recalled, the emotion went from something that was remembered to one being experienced once again. The sensations of these emotions could include "blushing, sweating, tremors, fumbling, and stuttering" (Modigliani, 1968: 313). P

and L expressed a desire to hide and P experienced an urge to cry, while L noted a sense of helplessness. When these memories were transitioned from visualisations into physical improvisations, the emotional experiences intensified as they became embodied.

During the Body as Archive exploration, inspired by Athena Mazarakis's workshop in 2010, in which they made use of objects related to memories, P chose to bring objects relating to new memories which had not yet been explored in any previous workshop; however, they did still contain the two main themes of romantic rejection and confusion, and public humiliation. L chose to bring objects which connected with the memories he had already started to explore. These were the physical representations of fragments of different memories, and it was through reacting to the impulses related to these fragments that movement began to develop (Mazarakis. 2010). The most interesting development that came out of this exploration was P's confusing desire to leave these memories and experiences behind but, at the same time, being unable to do so. This led to a push-and-pull experience during this exploration, exposing a subconscious theme of which P was not necessarily aware beforehand. The observation of this exploration highlighted that it is used not simply to explore a single memory or experience, but also to investigate subconscious feelings or impulses that we may not have been able to express beforehand. This is something with which the use of Emotional Memory may not help; it was seen during the examination of the results of the Emotional Memory visualisations that it only enabled P and L to recall memories and those emotions. The Body as Archive exercises in contrast reveal larger underlying themes and concepts.

During the process P and L both exhibited a more distinct draw towards their own narratives and memories. This was possibly due to the natural connection to their own experiences. Observational data suggest this connection to their own experience enabled them to generate more material than when they focused on the narratives of the fictional characters that they had developed. Despite these characters having developed from their memories, they still displayed their own narratives to which P and L, when observed, appeared to have greater difficulty connecting.

Character Development

The Stanislavski System's approach to developing a character through the combination of emotional and internal development, and extensive physical development of the character, was utilised here in the development of P and L's fictional characters (Stanislavski. 1950).

Such an approach as this towards developing characters has specific usefulness in devised processes where the director is aiming to develop an original theatrical work. This is where generating material is seen as highly important, as what is created and developed by the performers is not just their own character's narrative, but the basis for the theatrical work as a whole. Stanislavski's use of his system towards characterisation was based in realism, where a performer would only portray a character they could realistically represent. The use of Stanislavski's System, as it developed within the praxis of this research, appeared to lend itself more to the abstract, absurdist and surreal approaches to theatre, where the performers do not need to be realistic physical representations of their characters.

The development of these fictional characters was extremely interesting and both P and L took very different approaches when building these characters. P developed a character that was as different from her as possible and, even though the situation of her narrative was based on the themes of romantic rejection and public humiliation that arose in P's own memories, the situation was still very different. L's character, however, was extremely close to him in culture, race, country, age (at the time of the experience from which L developed his character) and situation. P sought to escape her own embarrassing experiences by delving into the narrative of someone as far removed from herself as possible. L did not seek refuge in a character to which he could not relate. He used his character as a means of exploring the physicalisation of a young boy in shame and disgrace, instead of attempting to recall his own physicalisation.

To place this in better contrast, I will outline L's memory and the experience of his character. In his memory, L was at a much younger age. He did not divulge his exact age at the time of this incident, but did tell us that he was still in school. He had family (his aunt and cousins) staying at his family's home. He was sharing his room with one of his cousins, who had been given some money to buy food for the next day. Upon waking up the next morning, L saw this money; not realising it was his cousin's money, he took a five-rand coin, because he was hungry too. When his cousin woke up and told his mother about the missing money the

whole family began to search for it. L eventually returned the money and experienced the resulting punishment.

L's character was a young South African boy called Chipewa, who stole something (money or a pen) from a girl in his class at school. When reported, this caused the teacher to stop the class and demand that the stolen item be returned. When Chipewa returned it, he was reprimanded in front of the whole class.

The similarities between L and Chipewa are distinct but lent themselves to a connection between L as a young adult and a more childlike version of himself, and an exploration into how that child may react to his situation. The effect this had on L's physicality was quite profound, as he seemed to become visibly smaller in his posture, attitude and gesture.

Because L developed a character to which he could relate, and because the character was so young, it was easy to manipulate the character and work with him in other tasks.

P's character was both fascinating and problematic. As I have already mentioned, her character was intentionally developed to be different from her in every way such as age, gender, culture and country. She expressed a desire not to confront her own experience, due to the extent of the discomfort the related emotions caused her.

P's memory was during her matric year in high school, when she spent an afternoon at a friend's house where the boy that she liked, and who she believed reciprocated the feeling, joined them. Later on, when he was about to leave, she pulled him aside and attempted to kiss him. He rejected her, using the phrase, 'nah, chill', which became the way we referred to this particular narrative of P's during the rest of the process.

The character she created was a Brazilian man named Antonio, in his late twenties or early thirties, was in a shopping mall (in Brazil) with his girlfriend. He was about to propose to her but, when he did, she rejected his proposal and left with the man with whom she had been having an affair. This left Antonio standing in front of a crowd of onlookers, not knowing what to do.

The connection between their situations is quite apparent but the character himself was very far removed from P herself. This made it very difficult for P to relate to the character outside of his rejection situation and, as P herself mentioned, "I don't know how a thirty-year-old Brazilian man might run on the beach."

The ability or inability for P and L to translate their characters into other situations became even more apparent in the physical exploration, during which they were instructed to walk around the space and had to follow the commands to jump, spin, get onto the floor and change direction, in an increasingly small space, while staying in their particular character.

What became immediately apparent during this exercise was the difficulty of trying to transfer a character, which was conceptualised and developed in a realist manner, into an abstract space, in which they might need to do things that they would not naturally do. This resulted in the performers, particularly P, trying to find justifications for why the character may be doing these things, which became problematic in the abstract space of physical exploration, where movement is usually developed from irrational impulses rather than sound logic.

P noted that she had great difficulty transferring her character Antonio into this space, not only because she found the need to justify his actions but also because, as has been mentioned, she struggled to relate to him outside of the embarrassing situation from which he had been developed. She was unable to imagine what a thirty-something Brazilian man would do when stuck in an increasingly small space with another constantly moving male body, or why he might suddenly need to run and jump or spin.

Stanislavski believed that a character could be conveyed adequately on stage through the internalisation of emotions and intentions and by developing the physicality of the character (Stanislavski. 1950). I believe that there should be another requirement in this process of character development, and that is a connection through relating to the character. A performer must be able to connect, understand and interpret the actions of a character. Without this, all of their decisions regarding their character become guess work instead of instinctual decisions based on an understanding of the character.

This became the first noticeable stumbling block in combining a Stanislavski System approach with the abstract world of physical exploration in which Body as Archive is grounded. Mentally it becomes a challenge to shift a fictional character between the spaces of realism and the abstract, especially if the character is very far removed from one's self. However, if the character is, firstly, closer to the performer in nature and secondly, of a younger age, this becomes easier, as became apparent through L's experience of this exercise.

Through the observation of L's movement and responses during this task, it appeared that they came more naturally to him than P's did. This observation was then confirmed during discussion when L expressed that he found this exercise easier than P had found hers. The observational data of this exercise suggests this was because, with a young character, still in their early years of childhood, where logic may not yet completely dominate their thoughts and actions, shifting them into the abstract world of movement and play becomes much easier, whereas when working with a character that is anywhere from thirteen up, that shift starts to feel forced without the means to justify it. The second reason uncovered through observation is that L found this transition easier because his character shared many similarities with him already, enabling him to have a great deal of intuition regarding what the character would do and how he would react.

This exercise was extremely revealing and its outcomes suggested that the self-as-character or characters that are closely linked to one's self are better suited for the physical exploration of Body as Archive due to this greater level of intuition.

Observations

While observing the process and the results of each exercise, note was taken regarding the use of dynamics/shapes, vocal work and the interaction between the characters as they developed.

- Dynamics and shapes

What became apparent was that P and L responded very differently as they performed in each exercise because of the differences in their styles, approaches and preferences. However, there were some similarities that were exposed in their physical reactions. These similarities were particularly noticeable in the physical expressions that developed from their Emotional Memory exercises, where they were taking the visitations of a memory or a character and shifting into embodied expression and exploration.

In these exercises, both P and L demonstrated physical impulses to become smaller or hide. This resulted in a very contained and closed movement dynamic due to the characters' physical impulses to become smaller and not to draw more attention to themselves. When these physical impulses were kept in the realist space, the physical image that was presented

was often of an individual with hunched shoulders, arms folded in front of or behind the body, with feet often placed one behind the other, and this eyes either on the floor or shifting from place to place.

When the focus was shifted into an abstract physical exploration, this dynamic changed slightly. The abstract nature of these explorations tended to lead towards an expression of internal process and the result was movements which were larger. During one of P's improvised physical explorations, her movements changed from being very contained to being quite explosive and they included a very strong twisting dynamic. She noted afterwards that this was in response to the impulse to hide and was an attempt to 'hide behind herself'. P also demonstrated a heavy dynamic which developed from the feeling of not knowing what to do with her body, or not having control over her body, due to the shock of the situation she was recalling. L struggled to transition into this abstract space and tended more to act out the experiences, which resulted in a very static dynamic that did not evolve a much lot from realist to abstract.

This leads me to the different dynamics between these two performers. As performers they tended to lean towards different sides of the theatrical scale. P was drawn to physical expression and found her movements easily. She was able to abstract impulses, ideas and feelings quite easily. However, this then resulted in her more realist movements not being as developed as L's.

L preferred a more acting-based approach which resulted in his performance style, even in abstract movement, leaning more towards miming out events. However, when tasked with developing abstract movement from a physical activity such as fidgeting or playing soccer, both of which will be discussed later on, he was able to abstract those activities as they were already located in the body. This caused an interesting dynamic in the overall piece and process as P and L excelled in different aspects of the process and brought different energies to the scenes in which their characters were placed.

- Voice work

What became interesting in the development of the text for the performance was that P still remained inaudible, whereas L was quite happy to produce text, talk loudly and be heard. This observation revealed two possible causes. The first is where P felt more at home as an

abstract physical performer and L felt more comfortable as a realist text performer. So their preferences clearly did not just affect their movements but their text development as well.

This does suggest that there may be a performer with acting and movement training who when given a choice, however, will always lean towards their preference consciously or subconsciously. This indicates that, when using a combination of acting techniques such as the Stanislavski System and abstract movement such as that which can be developed from Body as Archive practices, we should carefully frame each section and guide the performers through it, if we are to avoid a performance that is particularly weighted to one side or the other.

The second reason that may have a link to the discrepancy found in their text development may be related to the difference observed and discussed earlier in how men and women cope with embarrassing situations. As was discussed earlier their egos were called into question when embarrassing experiences happened. For L, this resulted in the need to assert himself vocally and physically which means his reaction may have been to shout and curse, making himself very present. For P this reaction was very different and she mentioned an inability to speak or vocalise at all after experiencing a very embarrassing event. Women have a tendency to wish to disappear from these kinds of situations, and not vocalising helps them to draw less attention to themselves. Anna Richards expresses this theory in her discussion of voiceless female characters: “If, in the past, women have had their voices suppressed, ignored, or belittled, they have also chosen to say nothing as a means of expression or a strategy for resistance.” (Richards, 2002: 89). The suggestion is that females may reject verbal communication as a means of defence. So it is clear that vocal expression is as affected by the same varying factors as physical expression, as they are intrinsically linked.

In his work on character development, Stanislavski made the need for a trained body very clear but he included very little on the need for a trained voice in this part of his system. The impact that their memories and characters had on P and L’s voices, shows that this is as much a tool of expressing a character as the body is and, therefore, also requires a great deal of training to enable the performer to express the internal processes of a character clearly.

- Performer/character interactions and developments

In reflecting on the shift from the workshop process to the rehearsal and crafting process, it was observed that it was only at this point that P and L began to interact within the performance context. Initially the exercises and explorations were done individually, allowing each of them to develop material fully for crafting into a performance.

This first part of this process began with a feedback discussion with P and L to find out what they felt a stronger draw towards: their own personal narratives or with their characters. They made it very clear that they preferred to work with their own narratives. So we began to brainstorm together to pull out similarities that could help us to link the memories on which they had chosen to focus. The first two became obvious as they were both within and around school. P and L were being young at the time, with her memories of being reprimanded in front of her classmates and his of being injured and missing a goal save in soccer. From there the narrative began to develop fairly easily as P and L began to offer up suggestions to link different memories together further and from their narratives two characters developed very easily. This is a basic outline of the performance narrative:

- A boy and girl in school together daydream through their last class.
- She has a crush on him.
- School ends, he goes to play soccer and she goes to watch him with her friends.
- To try to make him like her, takes a kick at the ball and scores a goal past him.
- He is humiliated and wants revenge.
- She approaches him, thinking that he may like her, and she makes her move.
- He rejects her and, as he leaves, steals her personal diary.
- She is humiliated and, as she leaves, realises her diary is gone.
- She looks for it and spots him reading it.
- She makes a scene, screaming to have it returned, and further embarrassing both of them.
- They do not know whether to run away or confront each other.

This narrative made use of two memories from each of them: P's memories of school humiliation and what we referred to as the 'nah chill' story of romantic rejection, and L's memory of being injured while playing soccer and being caught out and reprimanded for stealing. These memories became the starting point for the crafting process, as we had to find

ways to turn their stories into a narrative between two characters. We worked the piece in two blocks, the first half and second half, before we put them together.

The first part of the process was to develop a scene based on realistic and abstract gestures that one might use when feeling awkward, embarrassed or uncomfortable. This scene became the first, and was set as if in the classroom, with the two characters bored and waiting for the lesson to end. The characters were introduced and their attitudes shown, such as P's crush and L's uninterested attitude towards his school work. This process simply demonstrated the contrast when moving from realistic gestures to abstract ones.

It was only in the second scene, as they moved to the soccer pitch, that the two characters actually began to interact. They both began to develop very stereotypical traits of young boys and girls, and played off each other's energies in this regard.

They began to develop more childlike gestures and mannerisms as they investigated their characters, their relationship and their narratives. This appeared to work in the same way that Stanislavski suggested Emotional Memory works, in that the more a memory and emotion are recalled, the easier it will become each time, enabling to performer to engage with it in varying ways. The assertion is that the more a performer engages with a character, the easier it becomes to recall who they are and where they are, and they can then develop their mannerisms. This is aided by their interaction. In the same way that one responds to an offered impulse from a partner in an improvisation, so P and L responded as they interacted as their characters. As one found their childlike gestures, it helped the other to find theirs by responding.

Mazarakis explains how, in the moment of improvisation, the impulses may consist of two polarities: 'movement responses' and 'perceptual cues' (2009). The 'perceptual cues' may include stimuli from external environmental influences such a music, props and, as was found during the workshop process of 'Awkward', even a fellow performer, whether it be in a movement duet or an improvised dialogue (2009). This idea supports the notion that, as P and L engaged as their characters and improvised within the context of a given scene, they began to feed impulses back to each other, thus furthering their development of their own characters.

Individually, the performers were able to develop their movement vocabulary and text further as the tasks became more specific. L's performance strength lay more in realism, which

resulted in the abstract movement he generated, leaning more towards mimetic gestures. When he was given a task with a specific theme, such as developing movement from soccer, he was able to do this far more successfully because he was able to tap into muscle or somatic memories of playing soccer which provided him with a base from which to begin working. Mazarakis simply explains that "somatic memory inscribes experience into the body-mind" and that these inscribed experiences become part of our 'internal cues' or archive which we can excavate during the act of improvisation (2009: 75). This appears to work in a similar way to Emotional Memory, as emotions from experiences are also inscribed into our body-mind. These are then excavated or recalled through Emotional Memory visualisations in the same way that somatic memories are excavated from the archive during improvisations.

Throughout the process the archive is therefore being excavated and experiences or emotions recalled and developed, not just in the initial stages, but also in the developing and crafting stages.

Throughout the rest of the rehearsal, we developed the contrast set up in the first scene, with realistic movement delivered in an acting-based style and abstract movement being combined to test the contrasts or similarities between them.

Performance

The performance of the piece, which was entitled ‘Awkward’, took place in the Mafika Studio in the Wits School of Arts. Additional elements such as costumes, lighting and music were kept very simple. Most of these choices were made according to the necessity of changing the context of the piece from a rehearsal space to a performance space. This was important, as this context helped P and L to channel their focus for a performance, whereas if the elements of a rehearsal were used, such as rehearsal clothing and the use of standard overhead room lights, their instinct may have been to treat it as a rehearsal with an audience.

The choices for costume were simply kept to the theme of two children in school, so school uniforms were chosen as they allowed greater freedom of movement. The lighting was limited to two fixed floor lights focused on the centre of the room. The set was kept equally simple and consisted only of chairs, which were used during the performance.

There is, as has been mentioned, a shift that happens in the performance of a piece when the context is changed from rehearsal space to performance space; this shift in turn may affect the way in which a character is delivered by a performer on stage.

In order for any changes, mental or physical, to be present, a deeper focus is needed and, to assist P and L in finding this focus, they were led through a visualisation before each performance. These visualisations were similar to the Emotional Memory exercises which were done at the beginning of the process, but instead of being aimed at personal memories, they were aimed at routing them within their characters.

In Stanislavski’s system, the many layers can be organised under four subheadings: imagination, concentration, given circumstances, and emotional memory. If Emotional Memory is used in the first stages of the creation process, then it is here that true investment in the three other areas begins. What this means is that when the context shifts from rehearsal to performance, the performer has no other choice but firstly, to concentrate and focus their energy onto the performance. This concentration then enables the performer, secondly, to engage fully with their imagination, building up the location and situation to produce, finally, the given circumstances in their minds. The visualisations through which P and L were led every night helped them to engage with the three remaining subcategories. They were instructed to visualise the character they had become, where they were, what they were doing, and to begin to develop the context in which their characters would be located.

P and L were able, by using the three remaining Stanislavskian tools, to take their performances from movements and text as another person and to become that person on stage. This was visible in their faces and as they took on the intentions, lives and situations of the characters a change could be seen in their eyes. This suggests that even when Emotional Memory is used in the development of a character, the true connection or taking on of that character only occurs when the context changes and the performer is forced into concentration, imagination and given circumstance.

This shift enabled them to carry their characters through the piece without dropping or losing the focus of the character or returning to themselves. Because of the more dance-based scenes in 'Awkward', this carrying through of the characters had been difficult during rehearsals. P and L tended to abandon their characters and resort back to their own thoughts in order to remember the movements. This snapping back into their own thoughts became a habit left over from the initial rehearsal stages. By leading them through the visualisation process and assisting them to engage with the principles of concentration, imagination and given circumstance, they were able to carry their characters through, even in the dance-based scenes. This was a major shift in how P and L engaged with their characters, but the research suggests that this can be limited to any one type of theatrical performance as the principles of concentration, imagination and given circumstance can be used in any performance to elevate a performer's engagement with and performance of the onstage material.

This buy-in from the performer has to take place externally as well as internally. If we shift the context from a rehearsal setting to a performance setting, without assisting the performers to engage more intensely with the principles of concentration, imagination and given circumstance and emotional memory, the performers would attempt to focus on the energies of the performance, but the connection with the character would remain superficial and forced. Vice versa, if the visualising process is done but the context is not shifted, the performers are able to gain an emotional engagement, but may not be forced into the same level of focus. So, to achieve this transformation in a performance, and to achieve full connection with the character, it is not enough simply to engage with Emotional Memory. One must engage with all aspects of the transition into performance.

Reflection on ‘Awkward’

The process of combining techniques and exercises from the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive proves to be extremely interesting. The workshopping and devising processes can prove difficult under time constraints because the natures of the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive are such that they require enough time to develop. It is difficult to have an idea of what one work may be when engaging in a process where the performers are given the freedom to choose their own direction. That said, ‘Awkward’ did develop into a primarily movement-based work and I believe that this is due to my stance as a dancer and a choreographer. Unconsciously, my preferences influenced their choices by my use of language such as ‘duet’, ‘solo’ or ‘routine’. These are words I use frequently as part of my vocabulary as a director.

This did not change the value of the outcome, however, as the work which resulted showed an interesting mix and, in some places, a blurring of lines between acting and abstract movement. What proved most interesting about developing a process and, as a result, a piece of theatre from the personal narratives of the performers, is that it is a work that could only have been created and performed by P and L. Theatre becomes a more unique and even more personal experience when the performers themselves form the building blocks. With two, or with six, different performers, ‘Awkward’ would not have been the same show and, indeed, even the research which it informed may have had different outcomes as different research data may have been discovered.

In terms of the narrative structure, it was found that the combination of the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive became extremely useful as a means of developing a stable narrative, while still accessing various personal narratives as the source material for the theatrical work. The use of Emotional Memory and other Stanislavskian techniques provide a method through which to develop a structured and logical narrative with distinct characters. The story, however, still maintained an abstract quality derived from using the body and movement as the primary methods of storytelling. This solid narrative results in a work that is more accessible for all theatre-goers as opposed to those who are more familiar with interpreting abstract theatre.

For P and L the processes proved to be therapeutic to a certain extent. P noted in a reflection that, through the process of recalling memories that were uncomfortable for her and then working with them and developing them into material, she was forced to confront and even

understand past experiences and the effects that they had on her. This almost purging of oneself into a theatrical process intensifies the emotional experience as it is not only personal, it is intimate. The audience is being invited in to share and witness parts of the performer's history, both good and bad, and this becomes a very vulnerable and emotionally-charged experience for the performer. This becomes more apparent when the performers play themselves as the characters, as opposed to taking on a fictional character, because the character provides a barrier between the performer and the audience, even if the character is developed from personal narratives.

Conclusion

This research set out to test the similarities within the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive, despite their differences rooted in the way in which they exist in the theatrical world and the way in which they approach the development of character and to test their effective combination through their use of personal narratives to develop character. A number of the similarities and differences, as became apparent through the process of creating 'Awkward', are based in the mental processes of creating a character.

When considering the similarities within the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive, it is noted that they are located very specifically in the use of personal narratives, visualisations, imagination, improvisation and how these aspects help to generate a character. Personal narrative is very simply at the heart of the System and Body as Archive, as the performers' own experiences and emotions are the foundation of the work. The System uses personal experiences and emotions to develop an internal narrative for a fictional character which may be taken from an existing theatre script or devised by the performer. Body as Archive uses that same narrative but excavates it for emotions, fragmented memories, impulses and themes which can be interwoven to create the theatrical work. This is an important similarity as without this common starting point in personal narratives, the two processes may not work effectively together.

The System and Body as Archive make use of visualisation processes firstly to help performers focus and bring their awareness to their bodies. Once the performers reach an optimum level of physical relaxation and focus, the process shifts to recalling and visualising experiences. Emotional Memory recall from the Stanislavski System utilises this recall to generate memories linked to specific emotions, which are used to develop a realistic character's internal landscape. Body as Archive utilises these visualisations to recall memories, and the impulses arising from the memories and the linked emotions become the beginnings for developing movement vocabulary. Through observation of a workshop in which P and L were led through two visualisations, it appeared that these two processes operate in a very similar way when allied in practice. One ended in the development of a fictional character based in realism, and the other ending in the generation of abstract movement vocabulary. This workshop revealed that both processes resulted in a strong emotional reaction that was intensified as it became embodied, which may, in fact, have become slightly more emotional during the abstract embodiment of Body as Archive.

Imagination and improvisation are key to the creative process of developing a character in the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive. To be able to access and develop impulses into material, be it abstract movement or developing an internal narrative for a character, we must be able to play and experiment. Stanislavski outlined several improvisations that he experienced during his training particularly, one where they were given a scenario (a madman was coming up the stairs to find them) and they had to react. In this improvisation the reactions were fresh and natural because they were not planned. On repeating this exercise, Stanislavski and his classmates re-enacted their previous reactions, which resulted in the reactions feeling forced and unnatural (Stanislavski. 1936). The System places great emphasis on using play and improvisation to find these natural reactions and to approach a scene as if for the first time every time. This requires a great deal of imagination to buy into a scene as if it is always a new experience. Body as Archive uses improvisations to excavate the archive and explore the impulses from it. Mazarakis stated in her Masters thesis that it was her belief that "embodied exploration in improvisation, as grounded within a training that seeks to develop and harness the workings of Physical Intelligence, becomes a tool that engages personal archives implicitly" (2009:60). In the same way that the System uses improvisation to create a natural response to a stimulus, Body as Archive uses improvisation to develop material directly from the archive through intuitive responses, to ensure that the material is not contrived or simply placed on top of a theme. This is important, as material which is not developed from within the theme or narrative may result in a performance which is emotionally disconnected. Both the System and Body as Archive use improvisation to ensure that there is a genuine emotional connection within the work. This became clear during the rehearsals of 'Awkward', as P and L both exhibited a deeper emotional connection to work that they developed through improvisation than to the end sequence, which was choreographed separately and added to the end of the work.

These point of similarities are all directly linked to the ways that the System and Body as Archive access personal narratives, and how they develop material from them to enrich the theatrical work with natural and authentic responses and an emotional connection.

The differences between the System and Body as Archive are located predominantly in the mental context surrounding them. The System must be approached in a realist mind frame and Body as Archive should be approached from an abstract or even surreal mind frame. Transitioning one's mindset from one to the other presents certain problems. If we are

working with fictional characters who have been developed from a point of realism, shifting them to an abstract space feels unnatural, and the performer may want to find justification or rationalisation for this where there are none to find. It cannot be easily justified why a character may break into abstract movement or dance in the mind of a realist scene, when realism is about showing what is happening on the outside and the abstract or surreal may be about expression that could be happening on the inside.

The conventions associated with realism and abstract work are also worlds apart. With realism there are strict rules, and with the abstract there are none; thus, using one conversion and then the other is confusing not only for the performer but also for the audience. With regards to performance, this stark difference makes an attempt to combine work from the System and Body as Archive problematic, as an audience may not be able to pick up when different conventions are being used.

In the same way that the System is a solid approach to acting that can be located in an area-specific context within theatre performance with set conventions, and Body as Archive is a broader paradigm within the even broader paradigm of Physical Theatre, with fewer strict conversations, so too are the theatrical contexts of realism and abstractionism which underpin them. The very nature and differences between the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive are derived from the very conventional structures which are at their hearts. This suggests that even if the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive are used in conjunction during a workshop and rehearsal process, the performance itself should only be based in one of the theatrical contexts.

It is in combination in the rehearsal process that the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive become an effective and dynamic method of developing a character for performance. Their differences are apparent in performance but in rehearsal, where play and experimentation are still the focus, they enhance each other. The System, which is based primarily in the mental processes and preparation of the performer and Body as Archive, is located in the physical embodiment of the performer's thoughts, impulses and emotions, so when they are combined, they present a holistic approach to developing a character. The similarities between the System and Body as Archive enable to performer to shift between the approaches during playing, making for a mental, physical and emotional experience where all facets of the performer's being are engaged in the making of a character and their narrative. This became

clear during the workshop and rehearsal processes for ‘Awkward’ where P and L were able to connect on all levels with the material they were generating. This was especially visible with the improvisation exercise, which began with an Emotional Memory visualisation and was then extended into a physical exploration, during which P had to stop. The experience had become too emotional due to the fact that she was so closely and completely connected to and invested in the material. This combination-style process must be carefully monitored because of the intensity of this connection but, when managed correctly, it results in a performance in which the performers are completely invested and connected.

The combination of work from the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive in performance may not work in strict contrast because of the stark difference in their conventions and mental approaches. The combination of these two lends itself more, in fact, to the abstract approach, as it is simpler to base the performance in the abstract with realistic moments to support the narrative. But the similarities that exist between them, in the way in which they access personal narrative and develop that into a character, combine in the workshop and rehearsal stages to make a powerful process. This process produces performers who have a direct investment in the theatrical story, as it comes from themselves. The performers are also engaged in an authentic connection with the work on all levels of mind, emotion and body because of the combination of the focus mental development and physical explorations. Combining the Stanislavski System and Body as Archive produces a holistic approach to developing a character for a theatrical performance.

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Appendix A

For videos and photographs for the rehearsal process and performance of ‘Awkward’, please see attached CD.

Appendix B

Form of informed consent

This process is for the purpose of Masters in Drama research. During the process the focus will be on using personal narrative (memories, thoughts or emotions), excavated through the use of techniques from Body as Archive and the Stanislavski System. These personal narratives will be used to develop a character for the purpose of a performance. The personal narratives which are excavated during the process will form part of the research material and may be referred to in the final research report.

I the event of material which is too painful or too personal being excavated and the particular performer would prefer that they would rather it not be used as part of the research, this will be discussed and dealt with privately between the performer and the researcher.

During the process the performers will be expected to keep journals and record rehearsal reflections which will include specific questions and personal reflections. These journals will be as part of the research material and will be collected at the end of the process. They will then be studied for research data and possibly referenced in the final research report. These journals will be kept by the researcher for a period of a minimum of five years after which they will be archived or destroyed.

The rehearsal process and the final performance will be film for documentation. These videos will be used as part of the research material and will be studied for research data and possibly referenced in the final research report. These videos will be kept by the researcher for a period of a minimum of five years after which they will be archived or destroyed.

Towards the middle of the process and the end an external observer will be invited into the rehearsal to provide subjective feedback on the process and the theatrical material which is being developed.

The final performance will involve the characters which were created during the process and the performance will be open to a public audience.

I, Palesa, understand the above information and have been fully informed about the process. I give consent to:

1. Be part of this Masters in Drama research process in which personal material will be used in rehearsals and possibly as part of the final product and as research material.
2. For my journal write to be used as research material and may be referenced in the final research.
3. Be filmed during the rehearsal process and the final performance.
4. Be observed by an external observe.
5. Be part of a final public performance.

Signature of performer: _____ Date: 01/11/2013

Signature of researcher: _____ Date: 01/11/2013

I, Lucky M Gobe, understand the above information and have been fully informed about the process. I give consent to:

1. Be part of this Masters in Drama research process in which personal material will be used in rehearsals and possibly as part of the final product and as research material.
2. For my journal write to be used as research material and may be referenced in the final research.
3. Be filmed during the rehearsal process and the final performance.
4. Be observed by an external observe.
5. Be part of a final public performance.

Signature of performer: _____ Date: 01/11/13

Signature of researcher: _____ Date: 01/11/13