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PERFORMING BELVILE:
DEVELOPING A TRANSFORMATIVE METHOD

By

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B.F.A Western Michigan University, 2018

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Masters of Fine Arts in Acting
in the Department of Theatre
in the College of Arts & Humanities
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ABSTRACT

Learning to act is a difficult process, particularly for a young adult who is still discovering the wide variety of human experiences that make up much of dramatic literature. As an actor in training, I have struggled to play characters whose experiences and given circumstances differ from my own. I am not resistant to this idea, I have, however, come to realize that my own personal habits continue to get in the way of making a full transformation into the inner life of the character. As a result, my characters are often similar to one another, even if these characters exist in different time periods, styles, or genres. This thesis will explore a personally concocted methodology that will lead me to depart from my typical process of character development. To begin developing my methodology, I will employ various techniques, some gained from my graduate training and some I'm researching independently for the first time, as I prepare for the role of Belvile in *The Rover* by Aphra Behn. Belvile is a banished English Colonel in 1600s Naples, which is very different from my own life as an American actor in 2000s Florida. It is an important developmental stage in my training to utilize a transformative methodology to build the life of this character. The techniques will focus on opening my senses and inner life to a new perspective: the Belvile perspective. The physical senses will be developed through stretches and warm-ups all through the lens of Viewpoints. My inner life will be expanded through the creation of different supplemental paintings from the perspective of Belvile. These paintings will be done in the expressionist style outlined by Die Brücke and their expressionist manifesto. The results of these experiences will be logged in a journal to inform my future processes.

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Belinda Boyd

Christopher Niess

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MFA Acting Class of 2021

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Belvile is a banished cavalier, a 1650s English colonel left to roam Europe after Puritans overthrew the English monarchy. In *The Rover*, Belvile and the other Cavaliers find themselves in Naples, Italy during the time of Carnival. While most people in the city have partying and drinking on their mind, Belvile is focused solely on finding and marrying Florinda, the love of his life. Along the path to Florinda's hand, Belvile makes numerous mistakes. He wrestles with obstacles created by his own friends, and he attempts to outwit Florinda's overprotective older brother.

Overall, Belvile is a character that exists in a world very distant from mine. We don't live in the same location or time period, his profession is entirely different from my own, and his movement and speech patterns are guided by the style of Restoration Comedy. As a result, the role of Belvile presents an interesting challenge to this 21st Century actor.

In my experience as an actor thus far, I have found that many of my characters are similar to one another. This is feedback I've received from peers, instructors, and audience members. While on paper all of my characters come from different backgrounds and have distinct personalities, they all end up blending together when I'm on stage. All of these characters are clearly shaded by my own personality, making all of them just a slight variation of myself and my own habits. Belvile presented me with an opportunity to explore this challenge and see if I could devise a personalized method that could expand my ability to create a transformative role. As I developed this personal method, I asked myself these questions: What makes a performance "transformative"? How can Viewpoints aid me in changing my physical vocabulary for Belvile?

How can Expressionist art help me change my emotional and mental vocabulary for Belvile?

How do multiple methodologies meet one another in a single performance?

As I began to study Belvile, I immediately realized that there was a lot I needed to learn about Europe in the mid-1600s. I researched the following topics in particular: the English Civil War that Belvile fought in before the play begins, the playwright Aphra Behn, English social structures during the Restoration Period, Restoration Comedy tropes, Italian social structures in the mid-1600s, the various traditions around Italian Carnival, and definitions of the important words in the text. This research was an important first step to approaching *The Rover*, as it was the only way I could make informed decisions about how I would utilize Viewpoints and Expressionist art. Without this knowledge of *The Rover*'s given circumstances, my methodologies would be tools with no purpose.

Once I had a greater appreciation for Belvile's world, I began to expand my understanding of Viewpoints and learn about Expressionist art. These methodologies will be the focus of this thesis. By the end, I will have recounted my experiences using these approaches and elaborated on the ways in which they were helpful and areas in which I still need to work. More than anything, this thesis is a tool to enable and encourage further personal growth in the future. Careful contemplation of experiences such as performing Belvile can help me ensure that I never stall in my process of adding strategies to my arsenal of acting techniques. I hope the following chapters and the story contained within them can serve as encouragement and a guide to others that are experimenting with new approaches to acting.

CHAPTER TWO: BOGART'S VIEWPOINTS AND DIE BRÜCKE'S EXPRESSIONISM

In this chapter, I will describe the two techniques that I utilized during the process of rehearsing *The Rover*. This discussion of Viewpoints and Die Brucke's Expressionsim and how each technique aids actors in accomplishing performance goals will provide a framework for understanding my preparation, warm-up, and rehearsal plan. While investigating these two techniques, I discovered that they came from conflicting schools of thought. Wrestling with those contradictions and finding a synthesis of their ideas was another challenge I faced in creating this personalized method.

Anne Bogart's Viewpoints

In Anne Bogart and Tina Landau's *The Viewpoints Book: a Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*, they define the Viewpoints in three succinct statements.

“Viewpoints is a philosophy translated into a technique for (1) training performers; (2) building ensemble; and (3) creating movement for the stage.

Viewpoints is a set of names given to certain principles of movement through time and space; these names constitute a language for talking about what happens onstage.

Viewpoints is points of awareness that a performer or creator makes use of while working” (21).

Viewpoints is a lens through which artists can communicate effectively and succinctly about any onstage action. A deep understanding of Viewpoints is a deep understanding of the way in which bodies move through space. The Viewpoints are split into two categories: time and space. The Viewpoints of Time are tempo, duration, kinesthetic response, and repetition. The Viewpoints of Space are shape, gesture, architecture, spatial relationship, and topography.

Though the process of learning, training, and honing Viewpoints can be complicated, the possible benefits align perfectly with the goal of my thesis. According to Bogart and Landau, Viewpoints can lead an artist to the following gifts: Surrender, possibility, choice, growth and wholeness. Overall, this work is designed to liberate an actor so they may *allow* events to happen onstage, rather than *forcing* them. Once an event has occurred, Viewpoints then aids the actor in making a performance choice from a much wider range of options than their palette offered before Viewpoints.

The first step when approaching Viewpoints work is to “move through certain fundamental exercises...that are best understood through doing rather than describing” (Bogart, 22). These exercises vary between basic physical stretching, yoga, synchronized jumping or moving, and grounding visualizations. From this collection of exercises, the actors are meant to pull a few basic ideas that are currents throughout Viewpoints training.

One of the most fundamental concepts in Viewpoints is **soft focus**, or the idea of perceiving more by focusing less. Almost all Viewpoints work is done in soft focus, as it enables the actor to receive information from all of their senses. To speak concretely, a person is in soft focus when they relax their eyes and stop visually focusing on one or two things. Once the actor has softened their focus, the other senses will heighten to compensate for the relaxed eyes.

Ultimately, this allows for actors to receive *more* sensorial information than if they were to focus all their attention on sight. To develop soft focus, Viewpoint trainees will often play a game that requires them to find an awareness of seven moving people at once, something that can only be accomplished in soft focus (Bogart, 32).

Soft focus is of no use to an actor, however, if they are not employing some **extraordinary listening**. This kind of listening goes beyond the common idea that humans only listen with their ears. Instead, “extraordinary listening means listening with the whole body with an idea of the result. When something happens in the room, everybody present can respond instantly, bypassing the frontal lobe of the brain in order to act upon instinct” (Bogart, 33). To train extraordinary listening, people learning Viewpoints will play a game where they must move, turn, and jump in synchronicity with a large group of people.

Another pillar of Viewpoint training is **awareness of others**. Much like the previous tenet, awareness of others is closely tied to the other essential skills. Viewpoint trainees must use their extraordinary listening to gain an awareness of the time and space that their fellow actors are operating in. This is a key step in enabling the trainee to synchronize their movements with other people. “Unison movement represents the ABCs of Viewpoints training. Once you are able to move truly in unison with others, you can start to work with more advanced concepts of counterpoint, juxtaposition, and contrast” (Bogart, 33). To develop a constant awareness of others, Viewpoint trainees will play many games that involve running, jumping, and stopping as a group.

One last idea that must be understood before exploring the nine Viewpoints is **feedforward and feedback**. Once understood, actors engaged in the process of feedforward and

feedback act out of necessity and are much more available to the responses given to them by their fellow actors. “The theatre [is] a place of acute aliveness to both the drama of what *has* happened and what *will* happen next” (Bogart, 34). To practice feedforward and feedback, Viewpoint trainees will chase each other in a big circle. Each person in the circle must try to tag the person in front of them (feedforward), while not getting tagged from behind (feedback). This dual focus, both on outgoing and incoming energy, is a key part of releasing into the cycle of feedforward and feedback.

Once an actor has become familiar with the four crucial concepts listed above (soft focus, extraordinary listening, awareness of others, and feedforward/feedback), they are ready to start learning the nine Viewpoints. Bogart and Landau instruct that the Viewpoints must be learned one at a time. Layering too many Viewpoints too quickly will prevent them from “[being] explored with enough depth” (35). After each Viewpoint is learned, it is then synthesized with the previously learned Viewpoints until actors find they can keep an awareness of all the Viewpoints at the same time, Open Viewpoints.

The first Viewpoint of Time is **Tempo**, or an awareness of how fast or slow an action is performed. Tempo can be explored simply by performing an action at varying speeds, like walking on an imaginary grid. The objective of this exploration is twofold: One, Tempo exploration asks actors to discover the outer limits of their speed. How fast can one walk? How slowly can one crawl? Two, Tempo exploration gives performers a wider selection of speed options when they’re on stage. Once a new Tempo has been explored in practice, “[a performer] can call on that tempo with more consciousness and ease” (Bogart, 37).

The second Viewpoint of Time is **Duration**, or an awareness of how long an action is being performed. “Practicing duration increases the performer’s ability to sense how long is long enough to make something happen onstage” (Bogart, 40). Duration can be explored similarly to Tempo, by walking on a grid. This time, the objective of the exercise is to become aware of how long one stays at a given Tempo. The exploration asks the performer to consider *when* they make their changes in speed. Is it rhythmic? Are all of the varying Tempos being explored for the same amount of time? Or is the performer exploring very long and very short Durations? Similar to Tempo and many of the other Viewpoints, exploring Duration illuminates the actor to the medium-like nature of all their actions and guides them towards making more extreme, dynamic choices.

The third Viewpoint of Time is **Kinesthetic Response**, which Bogart tells us is “a crucial moment in Viewpoints training.” Kinesthetic Response is the means by which Viewpoints work encourages actors to make all of their decisions. Rather than allowing one’s inner consciousness to make decisions about a course of action, the decisions are made by the other humans and objects in one’s environment. The objective of Kinesthetic Response exploration is to develop “[an] immediate, uncensored response to external events around you” (Bogart, 42-43). Viewpoint trainees will explore Kinesthetic Response by walking on an imaginary grid as a group and allowing their decisions regarding starting and stopping movement to be made by the actions of others.

The fourth and final Viewpoint of Time is **Repetition**, or the reoccurrence of an action onstage, either by an individual or a group. Like the other Viewpoints of Time, it is possible to

explore Repetition by moving as a group on an imaginary grid. The objective with Repetition exploration is to be swept around the grid by constantly repeating the actions of others.

The first Viewpoint of Space is **Spatial Relationship**, or the space between bodies and objects onstage. Spatial Relationship can also be explored by group movements on an imaginary grid. In this exploration, actors are challenged to make all of their movement decisions based off of *where* other actors are standing. Like it was mentioned above, “we tend to operate in a space which is very middle-of-the-road...in Spatial Relationship this translates to a consistency of distance between bodies, usually two to five feet” (Bogart, 44). By exploring Spatial Relationship, actors can expand the range of choices they can make regarding their proximity to others. How does being very close to another performer feel? How does it make the audience feel? How does being very distant to another performer feel? What does that look like?

The second Viewpoint of Space is **Topography**, or an awareness of the map or pattern that is created by bodies moving through a space. An example of some very basic Topography is the imaginary grid that all of the exercises have relied on up until this point. When exploring Topography, the actor should consider *where* they’re moving, and the path they will take to get there. Then, as if there were paint on the bottom of their shoes, their movement through the space creates a map of their Topography. Similar to the other Viewpoints, the goal of exploring Topography is to enable actors to make an informed choice about the paths they take onstage.

The third Viewpoint of Space is **Shape**, or the visual information one’s body communicates to a viewer based on how it is positioned. Exploring shape can take many forms, but Bogart advises that actors begin by creating very simple, linear shapes with their bodies. As Shape exploration continues, actors are encouraged to incorporate curves and join their shape

together with another actor. This exercise not only helps actors expand the range of Shapes their body can take, “[it also serves] as a personal litmus test, a method for gauging where the individual’s strengths and weaknesses lie” (Bogart, 49). Is the performer creating a variety of shapes using their whole body? Or are all the shapes linear and focused on the legs?

The fourth Viewpoint of Space is **Gesture**, or a movement that is initiated by thought and has a clear beginning and end. Bogart specifies that Gestures fall into two categories. The first category is Behavioral Gesture, or everyday movements that one might see on the street. The second category is Expressive Gesture, or a gesture that expresses larger-than-life emotion. Both kinds of Gesture can be explored in a similar manner to the other Viewpoints. By moving about a space and experimenting with Gestures, the actor can begin to systematically ensure they’ve attempted Gestures with all parts of their body, even the parts they don’t normally use. In addition to developing special awareness, this exercise also promotes the crucial step of character creation for the actor. Developing a unique Gesture vocabulary for a character can help greatly in molding a performance that is transformative, so Gesture will be essential to my plan listed in a later chapter.

The fifth Viewpoint of Space and the final Viewpoint overall is **Architecture**, or an understanding of how one’s movements interact with the physical structures around them. For the exploration of this Viewpoint, Bogart encourages the actor to “dance with the room” (52). Rather than making decisions based off of other people, Architecture exploration asks performers to make their decisions based off the color of the walls or the size of the window or the shape of the room. This exercise helps the actor expand their range of onstage choices as they relate to the set and performance space.

After exploring all nine Viewpoints on their own, it becomes possible to explore them all in Open Viewpoints exercises. The simplest exercise is Lane Work, which focuses primarily on combining Kinesthetic Response, Spatial Relationship, Repetition, Duration, and Tempo. Actors in this exercise are asked to move back and forth along a lane. The actors can walk, run, jump, stop, and lay down at any moment, but they're encouraged to make all of those decisions based on the actions of the other actors in the room. "Lane work teaches the necessity to commit fully to an action while simultaneously being able to adjust and change based upon new events" (Bogart, 69).

Overall, exploring Anne Bogart's Viewpoint work can help actors achieve the following goals: Making physical choices onstage that are rooted in necessity and the actions of others, leaving behind self-consciousness and replacing it with hyper-consciousness, expanding and refining the palette of acting choices that an actor can make, and strengthening the instinct to use all of one's body in physical choices. All of these goals are highly compatible with the goals I have regarding Belvile. In particular, Viewpoints will help me explore physical choices for Belvile that are new for me and transformative in comparison to my past choices.

Die Brücke's Expressionism

Die Brücke, founded in 1905, was initially comprised of four young artists: Fritz Bleyl, Karl-Schmidt-Rottluff, Erich Heckel, and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. The group did not stay small for long, as by 1906 they had new members and an official manifesto. The manifesto, originally recorded in German on a woodcut print, can be translated into English as such:

"With a belief in continuing evolution, in a new generation of creators as well as appreciators, we call together all youth. And as

youth carrying the future, we intend to obtain freedom of movement and of life for ourselves in opposition to older, well-established powers. Whoever renders directly and authentically that which impels him to create is one of us" ("Home").

At the time of the movement's conception, Germany was under the rule of Wilhelm II. Wilhelm II enacted policies that greatly favored the upper-class members of German society, hoping to create a greater sense of German nationalism. The members of Die Brücke were all middle-class citizens attending school for architecture at Dresden when they read a new book by Nietzsche: *Zarathustra*. The book was filled with promises of mankind's potential, claiming that a spiritually enlightened human race was achievable. Such a human race, according to Nietzsche, would rise far above the rubble of chaotic modern society. "Quite soon, they were rather painting than drawing technical lines." Understanding the Nietzsche-based origin of Die Brücke's movement brings a lot of clarity to their manifesto, particularly the sentiments about the younger generation finding freedom from oppressive older generations (Karin, 109).

Once the manifesto had been created, Die Brücke began to create art together. One of their greatest desires as a group was to live and work in a small, tribal, island society. It was in these small communities that Die Brücke felt they could see the pure creative energy mentioned in their manifesto. Unfortunately, most members of the group had to settle for living and working in a working-class district in Germany. There, they mostly painted nude locals and began to establish the Expressionist style of painting. Some defining features of their style began to emerge: bold lines to define the expression of the models body and bright colors used in an unusual way to help express the emotion of the painter (Karin, 111).

In 1910, almost 30 Expressionist artists were rejected from an art show in Berlin, *Secession Berlin*. In response, Die Brücke and other Expressionist painters created their own show called *Neue Secession Berlin*. At this show, Expressionist paintings were hung up on a red wall and viewed by many shocked patrons. The paintings depicted nudity and raw emotion, something that was seen as primitive in the eyes of most critics at the time. Die Brücke wasn't concerned with the opinions of these critics, however, their art was targeted towards a fresh, young audience. The paintings served as a call to anyone who felt the chaotic climate created in Germany by the Wilhelmine Period. Die Brücke hoped they could stir those that agreed with their ideas into action. Ideas such as: German industrialization is causing more harm than good, as society becomes more modern German morals are deteriorating, the German government is becoming more oppressive of its lower-class citizens, and as cities develop they are beginning to affect our relations to one another (Karin, 113).

Today, critics distinguish Expressionist art by various qualities that aid the art in depicting subjective emotional perspective, rather than objective reality. One of those qualities is a simplification of the forms being depicted. In Expressionist art, the figures being painted are rarely rendered in high detail. Instead, they are almost cartoonish and outlined by thick, black paint. This gives the figures an accessible universality and encourages the audience to look for something more than a simple recreation. Audiences seeing these figures recognize emotions that they experience themselves. One famous example of this is Edvard Much's "The Scream". "Forms...become simplified, faces mask-like to emphasize the loneliness of man in the midst of a crowd" ("Expressionism").

Another defining quality of Expressionist art is the bold, atypical use of vibrant colors. Colors in Expressionist art operate almost like a new language, they're utilized to help the audience member understand the emotion being evoked in the painting. An example of this comes from "The Blue Horse" by Franz Marc. "Why blue when it's one color horses never are? Marc has chosen it precisely so that color shall have a role independent of nature." Marc believed that Europeans needed to let go of what they held dear about art, so that new work could enter a bold uncharted arena like Expressionism. ("Expressionism").

Overall, Die Brücke brought a challenge to Europe when they began creating Expressionist works of art: Let go of old traditions and embrace a new style of depicting the world around us. "No longer shall I paint interiors with men reading and women knitting. I will paint living people who breathe and feel and suffer and love" (Prideaux). This quote from Edvard Munch reveals the direction that Die Brücke wanted modern art to move towards: putting an image on canvas that contained more than just the sum of the paint used. Expressionist art shows its viewers the true emotional experience of whatever subject is being depicted.

Viewpoints & Expressionism

These two methodologies will guide the majority of my decisions regarding pre-rehearsal prep, warm-ups, rehearsals, and how I problem solve outside of rehearsal. In the next chapter, I will introduce Belvile into the equation. After giving a description of Belvile and his journey within *The Rover*, I will explain how these methodologies can help me approach the role. Finally, I will outline my daily plan for the whole process.

CHAPTER THREE: BELVILE

In this chapter, I will provide the research I conducted about the given circumstances of *The Rover*, provide my character analysis for Belvile, and explain how the techniques I studied played a crucial role in attempting to create a Belvile entirely different from me or my past performances. Finally, I will outline the specific plan I followed before and during this rehearsal process.

The Rover Research

Belvile's journey takes place in 17th century Naples, during Carnival time. This setting coupled with the contents of the play, lead me to researching the time period in three ways: the impact of religion on someone like Belvile, the social norms that Belvile would have followed, and 17th century Carnival.

While *The Rover* may take place in Italy, Belvile's life began back in England. At the time, "the church was omnipresent...and sought to regulate day-to-day life" (Thomson, 2). By the 1640s, England had entered a civil war with Parliamentarians on one side and Royalists on the other. Once the church had secured its position as the governing body in England, they began to persecute crimes that broke their moral code. Most relevant to this play, the church was firmly against any kind of intercourse that wasn't for procreation. Some specific examples include: premarital sex, incest, and adultery. While Belvile was a Royalist and would have left England by the time these laws were enforced by the new governing body, certainly the church's opinions on these topics would have been similar while he was growing up (Thomson).

Belvile's primary social engagement within *The Rover* is his journey to win Florinda's hand in marriage. Around this time period, many "early modern critics [claimed love was]

second string to economics and status in marriage.” This sentiment is even reflected in the text, as Florinda is expected to marry a Don because of his status, thereby ignoring her amorous feelings for the banished Belvile. Florinda’s older brother tells her she “must consider Don Vincentio’s fortune, and the jointure he’ll make you” (Behn, 10). Also during this time period, England was undergoing a commercial revolution, meaning it was much easier for the general population to purchase material goods. These material goods, often given to lovers as tokens of affection, displayed an individual’s wealth and suitability. This behavior serves as a sharp contrast to Belvile and the other banished cavaliers, who are far too poor to offer such tokens of affection (Robin).

In addition to understanding how money was involved in the courting process, Belvile also would have had an awareness of gender roles in his society. The following passage elaborates on the expectations placed on men and women engaged in the courting process:

“The man was more active in displaying his attraction and admiration for his female lover, than she was in returning these feelings...The ideal woman was serene and calm, while the man was the active pursuer of this purity and goodliness. If the woman became a wife, and then a mother, then appreciation and esteem for her purity became even greater, with the lover as mother transforming into a point of veneration. She became the bringer of and sustainer of life and lineage.” (Robin, 6).

Carnival is a longstanding Italian tradition that dates back to the twelfth century, and the occasion is believed to mark the end of a long battle. During the festival, people fill the streets dressed in masks and costumes. While the celebration may have started with noble intentions, “it

became a carnival of license and pleasure and was banned in 1797 by the King of Austria” (Mazansky, 1). This show, as can be seen consistently in the dialogue, takes place in a Carnival filled with pleasure seekers and courtesans. In fact, “the rampant sexuality of the play owes much of its zest and raciness to the reputation of Naples as a site of sensual indulgence” (Corse, 6).

Another layer of complexity in the nature of the Carnival occurring in this play comes from the political climate of Naples at the time. “Naples was a Spanish possession, and therefore its population was mainly Italian and Spanish” (Corse, 3). In fact, positive relations with Naples were highly coveted by many world leaders at the time due to its wealth and prosperity. Between the abundant wealth and sensual reputation, it’s understandable that a couple of rakish men like the banished cavaliers would find their way there.

Character Analysis

After researching the show as a whole, the next step in my process is to research Belvile. My goal with this research is to understand what kind of person Belvile is based off of the actions and dialogue written within the script. Before I can start using Viewpoints to make physical choices for Belvile or create Belvile’s Expressionist art, I must answer a few questions about Belvile. Questions like: Who is Belvile? Who are his friends and enemies? What does he like or dislike? Where does he fit within the world of the play socially, politically, and religiously?

Below is a table showing the results of my information gathering readthroughs of the script by Aphra Behn. Every line listed is either something Belvile says about himself, something

someone else says about Belvile, something the playwright says about Belvile, or something Belvile actually does.

Table 1 Belvile's Given Circumstances

Given Circumstances
What do I say about myself?
<p>"I have made no new Amours since I came to Naples" (13).</p> <p>"I have Interest enough in that lovely Virgin's Heart, to make me proud and vain, were it not abated by the Severity of a Brother..." (14).</p> <p>"I have recourse only to Letters, and distant Looks from her Window..." (14).</p> <p>"Where must I be? at the Garden-gate? I know it – at night you say – I'll sooner forfeit Heaven than disobey" (18).</p> <p>"I am mad he should throw himself into Dangers – Pox on't, I shall want him to night..." (36).</p> <p>"And but for a Vow I've made to a very fine Lady, this Goodness had subdu'd me" (40).</p> <p>"What a dull Dog was I? I would have given the World for one minute's discourse with her" (41).</p> <p>"Sdeath I have no patience – draw, or I'll kill you" (47).</p> <p>"I'll now plant my self under Florinda's Window, and if I find no comfort there, I'll die" (48).</p> <p>"I am here a prisoner" (51).</p> <p>"This is nothing to the Torture my Soul bows with, when I think of losing my fair, my dear Florinda" (51).</p> <p>"Perhaps you think this Crime enough to kill me, / But if you do, I cannot fear you'll do it basely" (51).</p> <p>"This Gallantry surprises me – nor know I how to use this Present, Sir, against a Man so brave" (51).</p> <p>"I'm impatient, Sir, to be discounting..." (52).</p> <p>"That thought destroys my Reason, and I shall kill him" (52).</p> <p>"I'm such a slave – to purchase her, / I durst not hurt the Man she holds so dear" (55).</p> <p>"I'll let him see how good 'tis to play our parts whilst I play his" (65).</p> <p>"I am so surpriz'd with Fears and Joys, so amaz'd to find you here in safety, I can scarce persuade my Heart into a Faith of what I see" (74).</p> <p>"I am as much surpriz'd at this as you can be..." (83).</p>
What do others say about me?

“Look pale and tremble; just as you did when my Brother brought home the fine English Colonel to see you – what do you call him? Don Belvile” – Hellena (9).

“He is so gay and so handsom” – Hellena (9).

“I knew him at the Siege of Pampelona, he was then a Colonel of French Horse, who when the Town was ransack’d, nobly treated my Brother and my self, preserving us from all Insolencies...” – Florinda (10).

“I wish only to be rank’d in [Florinda’s] Esteem, equal with the English Colonel Belvile...” – Pedro (10).

“Belvile, the Criminal for my sake, threw himself into all Dangers to save my Honour, and will you not allow him my Esteem?” – Florinda (10).

“He’s not so young and fine a Gentleman as that Belvile – but what Jewels will that Cavalier present you with?” – Pedro (10).

“Belvile has no Fortune to bring you to, is banisht his Country, despis’d at home, and pity’d abroad” – Pedro (12).

“Hadst thou been long enough in Naples to have been in love, I should have sworn some such Judgement had befall’n thee” – Frederick (13).

“Thou hast renwe’d thy Acquaintance with...Florinda...whom though lov’st in spite too, because thou seest little or no possibility of gaining her?” – Frederick (14).

“By this Light the Man is quite spoil’d...” – Blunt (14).

“He wou’d not touch another Woman, if he might have her for nothing” – Blunt (14).

“You have been kept so poor with Parliaments and Protectors, that the little Stock you have is not worth preserving...” – Blunt (14).

“Lending you Mony now and then; which is a greater Crime to my Conscience, Gentlemen, than to the Common-wealth” – Blunt (14).

“By this Line you should be a Lover” – Florinda (18).

“If she be thy Mistress, I’ll serve her...” Willmore (19).

“It must be he, and time he were removed, who lays Claim to all my Happiness” – Antonio (29).

“Be not so sullen; for tho you have lost your Love, you see my Friend frankly offers you hers...” – Valeria (39).

“He’s a model Sigher in Company, but alone no Woman escapes him” – Frederick (39).

“Pox of’s Modesty, it spoils him own Markets, and hinders mine” – Frederick (40).

“You are not only he who drew upon me last Night, / But yesterday before the same House...” – Antonio (51).

“Much to your Bravery’s due” – Pedro (56).

“The Colonel’s mad – I never saw him thus before...” – Frederick (56).

<p>“I deliver’d your Letter...to Belvile...never was a Man in so desperate a Condition” – Valeria (63).</p> <p>“News that will make you laugh in spite of Fortune” Frederick (64).</p> <p>“He’s a Cormorant at Whore and Bacon, he’d have a Limb or two of thee...” Blunt (68).</p> <p>“He’ll thank you for the justice” Florinda (68).</p> <p>“That mad Fellow will be as good as his word” Blunt (71).</p> <p>“By our long Friendship and my Obligations to thee, I am” Pedro (80).</p> <p>“Belvile, I did not expect this false Play from you...” Pedro (83).</p>
<p>What does the playwright say about me?</p>
<p>“Belvile, melancholy...” (13).</p> <p>“Belvile, who stands sullenly” (39).</p> <p>“Belvile in Rage” (47).</p>
<p>What do I actually do?</p>
<p>Get Frederick and Willmore to promise they’ll come with me to the Garden-gate (21).</p> <p>I help Willmore and Blunt fight off the Spaniards (29).</p> <p>Try to stop Willmore from visiting an angry courtesan (30).</p> <p>Go to meet with Florinda (46).</p> <p>Stop Willmore from taking further advantage of Florinda (46).</p> <p>Get arrested for Willmore’s crime while trying to help an injured man (49).</p> <p>Agree to fight Don Antonio’s duel (52).</p> <p>Fight Don Pedro for Florinda while disguised as Don Antonio (54).</p> <p>Attack Willmore for ruining my plan to marry Florinda while disguised (56).</p> <p>Bring Don Pedro to meet Blunt as a distraction to keep him from Florinda (68).</p> <p>Break down Blunt’s door to make fun of him (71).</p> <p>Marry Florinda (80).</p>

Once the information gathering readthroughs were done, I could begin using the facts within the script to answer the aforementioned questions. In particular, I wanted to consider questions about Belvile that fall into four different categories described by Constantin Stanislavksi in his book *Creating a Role*: Who is Belvile on a physical plane? Who is Belvile on

a social plane? Who is Belvile on a psychological plane? Who is Belvile on a moral plane? The answers to these questions are written from Belvile's perspective so as to cement the idea that when I'm performing as Belvile, these descriptions apply to me (26).

Physical: I am a physically active white English Colonel in my late 20s with brown hair and brown eyes. As a result of my service, my muscles have been trained and tested. However, recent months have left me poor and without a permanent home, meaning food and good rest have been hard to come by. This strange combination leaves a strong man feeling weak and a little desperate. My stature has been molded by the military, leaving me with a proud posture and a jutted chin. Overall, my appearance is that of a dignified military man struggling with some very hard times.

Social: I was once a member of the English upper-class, but my banishment has left me at the bottom of the barrel. No money, no land, and no country to call home. I spend my days with my fellow cavaliers: making a little money, finding a place to sleep, or finding a woman to spend the night with. The other cavaliers and I are friends, but we're also comrades in arms, a bond that runs deep. Back in England, my status as an English officer might be seen as a good thing, but here in Naples it puts a target on my back. The upper-class here in Spanish controlled Italy don't care for me, especially when I'm trying to win the hand of one of their sisters. Overall this place is not our friend, the cavaliers and I must tread lightly as we try and seek our Carnival pleasures.

Psychological: I am an extroverted, confident man who is certain of himself and the actions he takes. I think of myself as being relatively open-minded, but during the course of this story there is only one thing on my mind: marrying Florinda. The journey to marrying her sends my thoughts and feelings to some extremely low lows, but ultimately leaves me on the highest

high when I finally get what I want. My temper is explosive yet temporary, while the love and happiness I feel towards Florinda is deep and forever. Normally I can keep my cool and stay focused, but I have a few weaknesses that set me off: People not doing what I told them to do, betrayal by a friend, stupidity on the part of those I trust, and general skullduggery. Overall, I'm a passionate man that cares very deeply for one thing: Florinda.

Moral: My morals are loose compared to the high standards set by organizations like the Church of England. While I wouldn't flout my immoral activities, I'm also never one to stop my friends from giving in to their lascivious desires (unless I believe it may put them in harm's way.) More than anything in the world, I want Florinda's hand in marriage and I'm willing to do almost anything to make that happen. Despite what I know the church says about such activities, I am prepared to lie, steal, and kill if it means Florinda and I can be wed. Once this journey is over, my desperation lessens, and I see fewer reasons to behave so immorally. Now that I have Florinda's hand, all I need to do is ensure she stays safe, happy, and healthy.

Techniques and Belvile

My decision to utilize Anne Bogart's Viewpoints to help create Belvile's physical life came from looking at the way SITI (Saratoga International Theatre Institute) Company utilizes Viewpoints work in the creation of their own pieces.

SITI Company takes advantage of the Viewpoints ability to create an ultimate sense of freedom and play in the creative process. Their shows are often not written scripts, but instead works that are devised and created collaboratively. The actors and director take a theme or idea, then begin to explore movement, action, and interaction within the rehearsal space. This process

gives SITI Company actors the ability to follow their own artistic impulses, leading to a unique product that feels entirely their own (“Training FAQ”).

Once the company has explored movement in the space, sometimes for a day or sometimes for weeks, they then begin to layer in the text of their piece. “This unique approach to joining movement and text, which the Company believes adds depth to their work through its defiance of expectations, is a process that has been progressively refined by SITI” (Herrington, 9). Over the course of their 14 original works, they have refined the process and come to understand the importance of balancing the mind and instinctual responses. SITI Company members spend enormous amounts of time and energy researching the topic of their piece in order to enable their instincts to play when they finally enter the space. Sometimes, SITI Company shows will be worked on for over a year before they’re performed for an audience (Cummings).

The freedom and originality that SITI Company finds through their use of Viewpoints aligns with my goals for Belvile. Not only do these Viewpoints have the capacity to help me develop a new physical vocabulary for the role, but they can help me do so in a play that is stylized and very different from my own real-life experience.

Plan

With an understanding of Belvile and the world of *The Rover* in mind, I can begin to plan how I’ll approach this role both before rehearsal, in rehearsal, and during performance. This plan will be flexible and may be altered as the process unfolds.

Before rehearsal starts, I will refresh my memory of the different Viewpoints and their qualities by re-reading Anne Bogart and Tina Landau’s *The Viewpoints Book*. I’ll do all the

exercises listed within to the best of my ability and start to consider how experimenting with the Viewpoints can become a part of my daily warm-up. Another task I want to accomplish before rehearsal starts is to create some of my Supplemental Art. Some of the Supplemental Art will also be created later during rehearsal, as my perception of the character inevitably changes according to my scene partners and director.

Below are the steps for a daily warm-up that I will follow before each rehearsal and performance. This warm-up is an amalgamation of exercises given to me by multiple instructors over the course of my study at the University of Central Florida:

Step One: Do something big and physical to start blood flow and gain an awareness of the body. Some examples might include: shaking, dancing, running, or jumping jacks.

Step Two: Lie down on the floor and release to gravity. If certain limbs do not release, wind them into the body like rolling pins and then let them flop out again.

Step Three: Scrunch the body up into a tight ball, reach the body out to its full extension, shake the entire body wildly, and let the body flop back down onto the ground. Begin to stretch and move in any way that the body wants.

Step Four: Take stock of the body and identify areas that feel particularly tense today. Choose a stretch or movement that will help release those tense areas.

Step Five: Bring the body to standing on four exhales.

Step Six: Explore the body's full range of pitch.

Step Seven: Do some gurning, then release by doing voiced and unvoiced bilabial trills.

Step Eight: Explore all of the various plosive sounds to ensure they are crisp and clear.

Step Nine: Choose some of Belvile's phrases and try speaking them with a focus on using his words to create a clear image.

Step Ten: Try walking around like Belvile, maybe experimenting with the last step simultaneously.

The results of this plan are elaborated on further in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: REHEARSALS & ART

This chapter is filled with documentation of my process. The first section is the rehearsal journal I kept during *The Rover* rehearsals. The second section is a sampling of the supplemental art I created from Belvile's perspective before and during rehearsals.

Rehearsal Journal

11/18/19

Rehearsal Process:

This was my first day of rehearsal for *Rover*, despite the fact that the show has been rehearsing since the beginning of November. The past two weeks, I've been in tech and performances for *Water By the Spoonful*. So far, I've been receiving all of my blocking from the stage managers and my understudy.

Today, we didn't do a whole lot of blocking. Instead, David Reed came in and gave us a crash-course introduction to stage combat with single-sword. He began with a general introduction to the use of swords in plays, he then put us through some basic drills regarding stance and movement, finally he taught us blocks, thrusts, and swings. By the end of the night, we were practicing attacking and defending with various partners.

Response:

I found that the most useful Viewpoints in today's rehearsal were Spatial Relationship and Tempo. Spatial Relationship was essential, as it was constantly necessary to assess the distance between myself and my partner or my blade and their blade. Tempo was also critical, as

I had to find a speed that made both myself and my partner comfortable, while keeping my actions in constant motion and full of intention.

Regarding Belvile, I found it difficult to think about how he might hold a sword or how he might take his ready stance. This refresher on stage combat was much needed for me, so I found myself focusing more on just keeping up and doing the drills as David instructed, rather than preparing Belvile. Tomorrow, we're choreographing many of the fights, and that choreography will help me learn a lot about Belvile's sword fighting.

11/19/19

Rehearsal Process:

Tonight, David Reed was back again, and he taught us the choreography to every fight in the show. Each fight was learned in chunks, often with David demonstrating the choreography for us before having us do it. Once everyone in a given fight had learned the choreography, we ran the fights at quarter speed multiple times. David watched the fights and provided each of us with notes until rehearsal was over.

Response:

Tonight helped me identify the technical aspects of this choreography that I'll have to focus on before I can layer in Belvile's character. I learned three fights in total and each comes with a set of challenges. One challenge that permeates all three fights is learning the form. So far, I have found it very difficult to ensure my body is always in a ready stance, with my hips square to my partner, and my blade attacking with the cutting edge. Unfortunately, I return to *Water By the Spoonful* tomorrow night for our closing weekend, so I won't be practicing these fights in rehearsal until next week. Luckily, I'm good friends with the Fight Captain, Chris Creane, and he's told me he's willing to work with me whenever I'm free.

The Viewpoint that helped me the most tonight, and the one that I'll need to consider more in the future, is Duration. One of David's biggest notes for me was that I rarely follow through on my attacks. I feel trepidatious about swinging swords at my colleagues, so I always aim too far from the target. In my mind, it is to ensure their safety. In reality, it makes the fight look unrealistic and hinders my scene partners ability to do their choreography. Playing with Duration can help ensure I see every action through to the end.

11/25/19

Rehearsal Process:

My first day back now that *Water By the Spoonful* has ended, and we attempted to stumble through the entire show. The show is quite long and our director, Christopher Niess, decided to provide notes and work certain moments as we went through the show, so we didn't make it very far. This was my first night rehearsing any of these scenes, but the rest of the cast had been in rehearsal for three weeks. I was grateful for their knowledge of the scenes, because they often helped me remember the blocking that I've only walked through on my own based off of notes from the stage managers.

Response:

Entering a show so late in the game like this is extremely bizarre. There's a world established between the cast, director, and stage managers that I'm not a part of yet. They have an understanding of how certain moments in the show are supposed to work, and I haven't experienced them yet. In particular, they have created multiple bits that had to be explained to me, as they involved subtle physicality that was, understandably, not listed in the blocking notes.

This kind of experience seems to be what the Viewpoints practice was *meant for*. Each time I entered a scene, I could feel my senses go on high alert. I tried to stay in soft focus and

maintain high awareness of my scene partners so I could ensure I was helping to create dynamic stage pictures, as straight lines on stage have been made public enemy number one by the director. I wasn't always successful. I found that my mind was busy grasping for lines rather than being in the moment. I need to learn my lines better before I can really dive in with these other actors.

11/26/19

Rehearsal Process:

Tonight we continued the stumble through of the show, but we still didn't make it to the end. The show is extremely long and we currently run at a very slow pace. Especially because this is still more of a work through than a stumble through. The director is still deciding to give notes which definitely helps the show, but it means getting through each scene takes a long time. Once again, I was rehearsing scenes I had never done before alongside people who have been in rehearsal for a few weeks. This meant I was relying on blocking notes from the stage managers and the guiding hand of my fellow actors.

Response:

I worked on my lines as much as I could since last night, but they were still a big stumbling block. The adrenaline that comes along with the nerves of doing these scenes for the first time is tough to manage. Viewpoints work, I've found, benefits from steady focus and internal peace. My mind and body were anything but steady and peaceful when rehearsing these scenes tonight. There's a part of my mind constantly making excuses: "It's you're first time doing the scenes." "You've been in another show." But I'm trying my best to ignore those thoughts. My expectation of myself was that I'd be able to assimilate right into this show without

causing my fellow cast members any grief. I don't know that I accomplished this goal, largely because I'm not as confident on the lines and blocking as I should be.

I'm not sure that I'll ever be involved with a situation like this in the future, I can't think of many theatres that would hire me if I told them I had to miss most of the first 3 weeks, but I wish I had done a better job of preparing for this challenge.

12/2/19

Rehearsal Process:

Back from Thanksgiving break! Tonight, we finished the stumble through that we started before break. The director stopped giving notes in the moment, and just encouraged us to plow through to the end. Now, I've officially run the entire show once. It feels good to have at least one run under my belt. I feel more confident about how these last two rehearsals are going to go before we leave for winter break. I'm noticing how broken up this entire rehearsal process is going to be for me, and how much of a sprint to the finish it will be when we return from winter break.

Response:

Tonight, I found my Viewpoints work went right out the window. It wasn't even in the room with me as we did the second half of the show. That is the section of the script I have memorized the least, meaning it was a real struggle just to get the words out in a way that made sense. I even had to hold my book for most of the last few scenes. The big thing this communicates to me regarding Viewpoints is that utilizing them requires *preparation*. The Viewpoints are not useful to a mind that is desperately just trying to find a hold in the sheer cliff face that is unpreparedness. If I had my lines memorized by heart, and images attached to all of

those lines, working with the Viewpoints would have been the perfect way to tackle this awkward process.

In the future, if I decide a rehearsal process would benefit from utilizing the Viewpoints, I now know that the first step is to get off book before rehearsals even start. And not just memorize the lines by wrote but memorize the images they convey.

12/3/19

Rehearsal Process:

Today, we did a run through of our Act I, which leads us to the end of Act III in the script. After the run, our director gave us notes and told us to prepare for a full run tomorrow night.

Response:

Tonight felt much better than the past few rehearsals. I felt so much less panic and anxiety about running the show because I had already done it once. I also found that it was useful to take a moment and check in with myself during my warmup. I reflected on the past few rehearsals and asked myself: “How can I be better prepared tonight?” “What was fun about the past rehearsals and how can I invite more of that into the process?” These few moments where I took the time to talk to myself ended up being invaluable. It wasn’t perfect by any means, but it helped me handle the high-tension rehearsal a little more proactively, rather than reactively. I felt like tonight was one of my more productive rehearsals thus far

I believe I found two or three moments that I might use for inspiration in creating my supplemental art. I’m looking for the moments of highest tension for Belvile, or the moments that are the most important to him. The first moment I identified was when Belvile received the instructions on where to meet Florinda, another moment was when he realizes he missed his

opportunity while talking to Florinda, and the last moment was when he finds Wilmore in the garden with Florinda. My plan is to make supplemental Expressionist art from Belvile's perspective based on these moments, as I believe they are very crucial moments for the character.

12/4/19

Rehearsal Process:

Tonight, we attempted to stumble through the entire show. We started a little before 7:00, only took a break for intermission, and still didn't make it to the end of the show by 10:30. The show is extremely long, probably the longest show I've ever been in. The director had one major note for us before we leave for winter break: become experts in this show. My plan is to follow that direction, because we need to be experts if we're going to pick up the pace as much as we need to.

Response:

Once again, I did a thorough warmup before rehearsal, including my Viewpoints work and the smorgasbord we've learned from our voice teacher. The smorgasbord includes work from Fitzmaurice, Berry, and Alexander. Like last night, I asked myself a few questions about what I was trying to accomplish in this rehearsal, and I found that to be useful in focusing my efforts. It even helped me identify where my weak spot is in this show: the end. The second act is really where I start to fall apart.

To help combat this, I'm going to be sure I start by learning the lines in the second act over break. As I learn the lines I'll go through the motions of the blocking, because I found that was also where I knew the blocking the least. I also think it will be beneficial to write out a Character Journey for Belvile. Character Journeys essentially describe the story that an

individual character goes through in a play, ignoring the plots of the other characters. I'll be asking myself: "What happens to Belvile?" "How does he get from Point A to Point B?"

1/6/20

Rehearsal Process:

Over a month has passed since our last rehearsal, but I've been hard at work over the break. It's a good thing I prepared, because tonight we tried to do a full run-through of the show. Once again, we weren't able to make it all the way through the show. We almost made it to the end of Act IV before we had to end rehearsal.

Response:

Before rehearsal, I did my typical warm-up while experimenting with the first Viewpoint of Time: Tempo. My plan was to experiment with the Viewpoint throughout the run of the show, but I immediately ran into a problem: stress and tension. The environment in the rehearsal room is unbelievably tense, as so many of us are nervous about lines, opening night looming around the corner, the nearly 4-hour run-time, and the lack of rehearsal time. The stress got to me as well, and I found myself completely forgetting my methodologies and instead focusing entirely on floundering my way through a show I hadn't rehearsed in a month. I didn't think about Tempo once.

The question is: how do I combat this? One option might be to allow myself to fail in some areas for the sake of focusing on another. Another could be to spend more time outside of rehearsal practicing the director's notes and implementing the techniques we're learning in class so that they become second nature when I perform, instead of being my primary focus. This issue with this second option is that it isn't very practical or sustainable. My current class and

rehearsal load is leaving me with only enough time to squeeze in 8 hours of sleep each night, there isn't any spare time for extra practice. I will try again tomorrow and see how it goes.

1/7/20

Rehearsal Process:

Today, we started rehearsal by working on our fight choreography with David Reed, then we finished the run that we started last night, and we ended rehearsal with scene work.

Specifically, we rehearsed the chunk of Act II, Scene I where the men dressed as cuckolds enter and the Cavaliers make fun of them.

Response:

Before rehearsal, I did my usual warm-up while experimenting with the second Viewpoint of Time: Duration. I found that working on our stage combat was a simple enough activity that I could rehearse our choreography while also experimenting with Duration. In fact, I found that Duration was a great tool for rehearsing swordplay. We're not yet at a point where all of our fights can move at show speed, so we have to move through the choreography slowly for the sake of safety. Moving in slow motion can be tricky, as committing to thrusts, cuts, and parries for a long period of time can be taxing. When I kept Duration in mind, it was easy to remind myself: "See this action all the way through. Don't cut any of these movements short."

When we finished running the show, however, I found myself in a very similar situation to last night: The excitement and tension of performing the last few scenes pushed Duration right out of my head. As I reflect on this problem, though, I've had a thought. When I first began my acting training, I was constantly asked to consider things other than being in the moment. My acting teachers asked me to consider my objective, they asked me to consider my tactics, and

sometimes they would even have me vocalize those things in the middle of my scene. Perhaps I can think of these new practices like that: I may have to sacrifice being in the moment for the sake of trying something new.

1/8/20

Rehearsal Process:

Tonight was the Designer Run, so rehearsal was extended thirty minutes. Thanks to that extra thirty minutes, we were able to finish the show for the sake of the designers. After we finished the run, Chris gave us some notes and sent us on our way.

Response:

Before rehearsal, I did my warm-up while experimenting with the third Viewpoint of Time: Kinesthetic Response. This was a tough thing to practice as I warmed-up, but I realized that this Viewpoint has already been an essential throughout this entire rehearsal process. I say this for many of the reasons I've already mentioned in this journal, but it remains true to today. This show is so immense and our rehearsal time (especially my own) so short that we often refer to our blocking as "the wild west." Each night when we get up to do this show, it's quite different. Not only because a lack of rehearsal, but also because our notes are given almost entirely via email and not in the moment. I don't always know how my fellow actors performances are going to change from night to night, and that isn't necessarily a bad thing. More than any show I've ever done, these rehearsals keep me on my toes!

Kinesthetic Response helps me navigate this show every single time we run it, because I never know exactly what everyone on stage is going to do. Each rehearsal is an exercise in intense listening and reacting. I'm not always successful in reacting honestly in the moment, but

I have found that my listening skills have been fairly successful from run to run. I notice when people do things differently and it's exciting to me. Now, I need to open myself up to making different choices based on my scene partners variations.

1/9/20

Rehearsal Process:

Something I have yet to mention in this journal is that our production was slightly shaken by a casting change halfway through rehearsals. Just before winter break, we were informed that our Willmore and Don Pedro were now both double cast. One weekend will feature performances of the original cast, and one weekend will feature performances of the new cast. Tonight, we rehearsed for the first time with the new cast. Once again, we didn't make it all the way to the end of the show, but we got closer than ever before! After we stopped running the show, the director gave us notes and sent us on our way.

Response:

Tonight, I did my usual warm-up while experimenting with the last Viewpoint of Time: Repetition. Once again, however, I found it immensely difficult to continue this experimentation while I was onstage. It was difficult to the extent that the feeling of failure is really beginning to wear on me. The failure also brings with it a nasty case of imposter syndrome. I find myself becoming irrationally upset at my own progress and I question whether or not I really belong here. One of the worst parts about this frustration is that it becomes a vicious cycle. Being upset with myself is a distraction from being in the moment, which leads to more missed moments and more being upset with myself.

I spoke to some of my fellow graduate cast members about this feeling, and they expressed that they knew the sensation. Their greatest piece of advice was that these feelings are normal, but to dwell on them creates a delusional sense of self-importance. My failure does not ruin this show, obsessing over the failure does.

1/10/20

Rehearsal Process:

Tonight, we finished the run of the show with the new casting and then we worked various moments of the show. The primary focus of the work session was the ensemble members that weave their way in and out of various scenes. The only scene of mine that we focused on was Act II, Scene I.

Response:

Tonight, I did my usual warm-up while focusing on the second Viewpoint of Space: Gesture. I skipped the first one for today, because Gesture directly applies to a note that I've been receiving from our voice coach, Vivian. When I was in undergrad, we did a production of *The Country Wife* and our director instructed us to examine Renaissance paintings for posturing inspiration. As a result, my posturing is tied in with habits of bending my knees and twisting my torso and neck to create an asymmetrical image. Vivian has instructed me that this habit is getting in the way of supported voice production. When I explained to her where my habits were coming from, she clarified that posturing should be used to emphasize my characters witticisms. In essence, I need to discover how this posturing can become Gesture.

Despite the methodology and the problem going hand-in-hand, I still struggled to implement the technique during rehearsal. Once again, I found myself caught up in the notes that

the director gave and struggling to maintain the basics of supported speech that we've been learning in our Voice class. To find more success with this Viewpoint, I think I'll explore some posturing on my own outside of rehearsal. If I give myself a vocabulary of Gesture to work with, it will be easier to pull from them without laboring over it in the moment during rehearsal.

1/12/20

Rehearsal Process:

Today, we had a long work session on multiple scenes: Act III, Scenes I, III, IV, and all of Act V. Rather than just running these scenes, the director gave extremely detailed notes and he honed in on exactly what he wanted to have happen in many moments that had been unclear until today. Today was also one of the last rehearsals where we will get to do anything like this, as we move into the space on Tuesday and we'll begin working on spacing/tech.

Response:

Before rehearsal, I did my usual warm-up while experimenting with the first Viewpoint of Space: Shape. This Viewpoint, while useful, did not end up directly applying to much of what we worked on in rehearsal today. The notes Chris gave us focused almost entirely on the timing of the show and where we were getting the motivation for our lines. As we worked, I noticed that while I wasn't conscious of utilizing the Viewpoints I've experimented with thus far, they seemed to be having an impact on my performance. The impact isn't nearly as drastic as I hoped it would be, but there were definitely moments where I found myself solving blocking issues before they were pointed out. This was thanks to some intense, full-body listening and an awareness of what our stage picture must look like from the perspective of the audience.

My next goal is for that awareness to be taken to the next level and impact even the most minute details of my performance so that it communicates clearly to the audience. If I had that awareness before I started this process, most of the notes I received today would not have been necessary. My journey with Viewpoints seems to just be beginning, and it won't come to a resolution by the time this production is over. I still have a lot to learn.

1/14/20

Rehearsal Process:

Today was our first rehearsal in the space! The process of spacing this show in our theatre is slow, as the director wants to give each cast a chance to do every scene. As a result, we didn't make much progress today. We did the first 3 scenes twice, flipping back and forth between casts. I was grateful for the chance to try these scenes out multiple times, as they are some of the trickiest, but it was definitely taxing. Especially because the stage was unbelievably hot.

Response:

Before rehearsal, I did my usual warm-up while experimenting with another Viewpoint of Space: Architecture. This lined up *perfectly* with what we were doing in rehearsal today, and I found that it really did have an impact on my rehearsal process. I felt extremely aware of how I was moving in relation to our set, and I surprised myself with multiple choices throughout the night. Luckily, the set is perfect for exploring architecture. There are all sorts of arches, ramps, stairs, columns, and doorways. I found myself leaning on columns, touching arches, sitting on steps, posturing on ramps, and exploring how I can make the most interesting and communicative stage picture.

As I invested in the architecture of the space, however, I noticed that awareness of my scene partners dipped. A few times, the director caught me forming a straight line with my fellow cast members. My challenge for tomorrow will be to see how well I can balance the two foci. How can I be conscious of my body in relation to the set *and* the other bodies in the space? I'll have to move like a dancing magnet, aware of multiple magnetic fields.

1/15/20

Rehearsal Process:

Our second rehearsal in the space. Once again, the progress was slow. We started rehearsal by working on the fights in the space, then we continued to work on spacing until we reached just before Act V. We continued to flip back and forth between both casts to ensure that each Don Pedro and Willmore had time to work in the space.

Response:

Before rehearsal, I did my usual warm-up while experimenting with another Viewpoint of Space: Spatial Relationship. Once again, this was a useful Viewpoint for a spacing rehearsal. However, I once again struggled with rubbing my stomach and patting my head at the same time. While I'm sure this Viewpoint would have made this rehearsal much smoother, I found myself in that same struggle between listening to my scene partners and executing technique. I was especially tempted to stop focusing on technique because spacing rehearsals present a unique opportunity to try new moments without the pressure of getting things exactly right. With the director focused on transitioning the show into the space, I found that my scene partners and I were free to make new discoveries.

The one benefit I experienced from exploring Spatial Relationship was a deeper overall understanding of the set. As I made my entrances and exits, I became very conscious of the size of doorways, the distance between platforms, the length of stairs, and the ground I need to cover when I make my entrances. I can tell the Viewpoints of Space are extremely useful for the transition from rehearsal studio to set, I once again regret that I didn't have a better understanding of them before rehearsal started.

1/16/20

Rehearsal Process:

The final spacing rehearsal. Last night, we discovered that the fights need a lot of work now that they're finally in the space. We're also beginning to work with our masks and cloaks as we fight, presenting an entirely new problem. As a result, we are working the fights whenever we have a spare moment in these rehearsals. Once we finished spacing the show, the director gave us some notes and sent us home.

Response:

Before rehearsal, I did my usual warm-up while experimenting with the final Viewpoint of Space: Topography. From now on, I'll be warming up and then experimenting with Open Viewpoints before stepping into rehearsal. Topography surprised me. I was concerned that this Viewpoint would be much like the others, difficult to incorporate in the moment. However, I found it easy because it fit perfectly with the experimentation that my scene partners and I were already doing. Exploring Topography feels very similar to exploring physical choices, which is an important part of truly inhabiting this new space.

The ease with which Topography entered my work tonight has me thinking about the other Viewpoints. Perhaps I've been thinking about them in the wrong way, thereby creating a mental block. I've seen them as some exterior technique that I'm layering on top of my process, but maybe I need to view them more as tools to make this experience easier. They are there to inform my choices, not to give me an assignment to accomplish by the end of rehearsal. I will try that shift in mentality tomorrow as we begin tech rehearsals and I finally begin working with Open Viewpoints.

1/17/20

Rehearsal Process:

Today, we began our tech rehearsals. We're running the full length of each scene, not going from cue to cue. This is an awesome opportunity for the actors especially because the nature of tech rehearsals means we get to run all of our entrances and exits multiple times. We only made it through about the first 3 scenes before we had to finish for the night. Tomorrow, we begin our weekend of all-day tech rehearsals.

Response:

Before rehearsal, I did my usual warm-up and then worked with Open Viewpoints for a few minutes. Trying to do this kind of work alone is tough, as *The Viewpoints Book* describes the experience as being inherently collaborative. However, I have to work with the tools I have at my disposal. None of my fellow cast members are studying Viewpoints, so I'm left to do my best on my own. Even though warming-up like this is strange, I still found the process valuable once we start rehearsing. In the future, I would want other actors to work in Open Viewpoints with.

Wherever I end up moving after school, I'll try to find some actor friends looking to do some Open Viewpoints before our rehearsals.

Once again, the rehearsal was spent focusing on elements other than the actors, which meant the cast and I were free to try some new things. I tried my new mentality around how I'm utilizing the Viewpoints and while it was helpful, it wasn't some magic switch that made it immediately easier. I still found myself obsessing over notes from the director rather than working on technique. When I step out into the professional world, I think it's important that I do please my directors, but for now it's also important that I take advantage of this playground.

1/18/20

Rehearsal Process:

Today, we had tech rehearsal from 10:00-3:00 and from 5:00-10:00. We continued incorporating tech into the show from where we left off last night, and made it all the way until the scene right before Act V. In between being on stage, we worked almost every fight in the show in the hallways around the theatre. By the end of the day, the cast and crew were thoroughly exhausted, but the show is starting to come together.

Response:

Before each section of the tech rehearsal (once before 10:00 and once before 5:00) I did my usual warm-up and then explored with Open Viewpoints on my own. I discovered that when rehearsals are this long and this repetitive, it takes a special kind of endurance to stay engaged. I would say that my warm-up felt fresh for the first 2-3 hours of each rehearsal segment, but I was feeling fairly stiff and tired for the last chunk of each session. Tomorrow, maybe I'll try doing

smaller warm-ups throughout the day as I feel my energy waning. This might be a challenge, as I imagine tomorrow will be just as busy as today.

The matter of remedying my small endurance could extend beyond my warm-up and Viewpoints practice. To ensure that I'm the kind of actor that can last in these lengthy tech rehearsals, I might want to start making some different lifestyle choices: eating better, exercising, and sleeping more. My lazy side loves to give some classic excuses about how much homework I have and how much time I have to spend at school, but in truth my life will always be busy. I need to learn how to make time for the things that matter, even when my days are completely packed with rehearsals and auditions.

1/19/20

Rehearsal Process:

Today, we had another tech rehearsal that went from 10:00-3:00 and then from 5:00-10:00. The morning was spent finishing incorporating tech into the show, and then working some particularly tricky moments. At night, we had our first dress rehearsal. We managed to finish the show, even though we had to go back and redo a few moments.

Response:

I did my usual warm-up before each section of rehearsal and explored a little with Open Viewpoints. The morning session was very draining, as it was repetitive and there was a lot of waiting around. I managed to sneak in a few warm-up activities in the middle of rehearsal and found it very useful to extending my endurance. At night, I discovered that this show is a *sprinting marathon*. There are very few moments that I'm not rushing from one entrance to the next, possible changing costumes along the way. As a result, there's not much room to do any

extra warming-up in between scenes, but there's also not a huge need as I'm hardly ever standing still long enough to get stiff. I think as I get more used to my track in the show, I'll find some moments to do a little extra prep before each entrance. Again, I feel that this will be an important part of performing this show as it is so long and complicated.

Running the whole show together for the first time, in costume, with lights, and with fights at show speed had me *frazzled*. There were only a few times I was able to reconnect with my goals for this rehearsal: supporting my voice, keeping the pace of the show *moving*, and utilizing Viewpoints to make strong physical choices. For the next dress rehearsal, I'm going to write my goals down beforehand and hopefully they will stay more at the forefront of my mind.

Supplemental Art



Figure 1 Foiled, painting by author

A common experience for Belvile in *The Rover* is having someone foil his plans to elope with Florinda. First, he does it to himself by not recognizing a masked Florinda while he speaks directly to her. Second, Willmore interrupts Belvile's planned rendezvous with Florinda in Don Pedro's garden. Third, Willmore identifies Belvile in front of Florinda's brother while Belvile is attempting to impersonate a Spanish noble. Each of these moments is an intense and important moment in Belvile's story, and so I painted this picture while contemplating those experiences. I wanted the colors to be a mixture of flesh, bile, vomit, and blood. The sensation of being foiled is unpleasant and rage inducing, I wanted this painting to make me uncomfortable when I looked at it.



Figure 2 Florinda, painting by author

Belvile's ultimate goal in this play is to elope with Florinda, ideally with her brother's blessing. Almost every decision he makes in the play is in pursuit of this goal, so I painted this picture while considering how love can drive someone to such wild, drastic measures. I found that this image was particularly useful to hold in my mind during rehearsal or performance. The

picture almost served as a mnemonic device for all of the discoveries I had made about Belvile and Florinda by studying the text.



Figure 3 Midnight at the Garden Gate, painting by author

For the first half of this play, Belvile is determined to reach one location: the garden gate. After receiving a promise that Florinda would be waiting for him there, I imagine he spent most of the night picturing the moment he'd finally reach the gate. I painted this picture while thinking about the way Belvile romanticizes how his encounters with Florinda will go. He sees their meeting as this exciting, utopic, clandestine encounter. My intention with the painting is to show the ideal outcome that Belvile has in his mind, pursuing that heavenly light just beyond the

garden gate. I found this painting was not only useful in motivating my desire to go to the gate, but also motivating my frustration with Willmore for ruining this perfect evening I had pictured in my mind.



Figure 4 Ungentlemanly, painting by author

Belvile's most relevant relationships in this story are to Florinda and to his fellow cavaliers. This painting focuses on the experience of being at Carnival with Willmore, Frederick, and Blunt. The four of them have a frantic, excitable nature to them. I wanted this picture to feel silly, unfocused, and wild. Belvile may not always join in on his friend's antics, but he is almost always there to watch and enjoy.

Overall, these works of art served as a way for me to attach my thoughts and feelings about crucial moments in the story to a concrete image. Not only through making the image relevant, but also by thinking about what I was painting as I worked. The meditative process of painting not only afforded me an opportunity to think more about Belvile, but it ensured that I had a strong association between each image and the corresponding idea in the play.

CHAPTER FIVE: REFLECTION

Through the process of preparing and performing Belvile in *The Rover*, I explored a personally concocted methodology that led me to depart from my typical process of character development. Through specific exercises, personal projects, and daily practices, I attempted to explore the world of the play through the character's senses. The intention was to develop a new process that will lead to the creation of the transformative experience necessary to uphold the truth of the character's life.

Ultimately, the plan I followed had a mixed bag of useful ideas and ideas that need further refinement. For example, the paintings I created were extremely helpful in motivating some of the more intense moments during the play. On the other hand, attempting to explore Viewpoints on my own was challenging. Despite the varying success, I still plan on working with some versions of all these techniques as I move forward with my career. This process has helped me identify the ways in which I need to hone the techniques so they can better serve me in the future.

Painting from Belvile's perspective was one of the most impactful experiences during this process. The images serviced me by allowing my mind to focus on an image that I heavily associated with thoughts and feelings relevant to the moment I was living in onstage. Moving forward with this work, I now know the supplemental art that was the most useful was also the most concrete. *Florinda* and *Midnight at the Garden Gate* were essentially depictions of my objectives, and they helped make those objectives real for me while I performed. *Foiled* and *Ungentlemanly*, on the other hand, depicted ideas or emotions and did not help motivate their corresponding moments as much.

Before working on this role, I had encountered Viewpoints work a few times and knew interacting with other people was an important part of exploring the technique. However, I decided to move forward with my plan of exploring the Viewpoints on my own and attempting to incorporate Viewpoints exploration into my daily warm-up. While this plan would allow me more freedom, as I did not have to rely on the presence of others to do my work, it also meant that I was not engaging with the Viewpoints to their full potential. This trade-off was noticeable almost immediately and if I were to do it again, I would adjust accordingly and find someone to explore Viewpoints and warm-up with me every day.

Overall, I do not think Belvile was wildly different from myself or the other characters I have played. The techniques I explored, while useful, did not inherently lead to the creation of a transformative role. As I look back on the plan, I notice that there weren't many moments where I made conscious choices to break habits and try moving in new ways that were specific to Belvile. My exploration of Viewpoints and expressionist painting was generally focused on preparing my mind and body for performance, but never got into the specifics of what makes Belvile as unique as any living person. As I move forward, there are two things I want to be more conscious of: Ensuring that every physical decision on a role is hyper specific to that character and adjusting my warm-ups and preparation mid-process, as opposed to adhering to the plan I made before rehearsal started.

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